

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.77</u>	SINC name: Crown Estate Meadows, Pontllanfraith
Grid reference: ST164953	Area (hectares): 23
Survey date: 4th July 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd)
(UDP policy reference: C11.82)	
Summary description	
<p>A series of fields divided by tall, dense hedges with large, mature trees. The majority of the fields support semi-improved neutral grassland of low to moderate diversity, with margins fringed by Bracken. A strip of Purple moor-grass-dominated marshy grassland and willow scrub extends beside the ditch through the southern section, and a few small patches of rush-dominated marshy ground exist in some of the other fields. The most northeasterly field supports a slightly more acid-grassland flora, with patches of Heather and Devil's-bit scabious. Scrubby young trees of Willows, Hawthorn and Downy Birch occur in several of the fields. The northwesterly extent of the SINC supports a mix of broad-leaved woodland, Bracken and scrub, with local concentrations of Cow-wheat and Bluebells.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Semi-improved neutral grassland with at least 8 indicator species.	
Marshy grassland with at least 12 indicators.	
Network of mature hedges.	
Secondary features	
Acid grassland.	
Scrub.	
Small streams/ ditches.	
Bracken.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>The site is likely to support a high diversity of invertebrates, and could potentially include uncommon butterflies, including Marsh fritillary and Small pearl-bordered fritillary, which are known to occur in the nearby SSSI.</p> <p>The field margins and marshy grassland areas have potential to support reptiles.</p> <p>The mature hedgerows and wooded areas are likely to provide good foraging and roosting habitat for bats.</p> <p>The well-connected hedge network has potential to support Dormice (though none are known in this part of the county borough).</p>	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>The area appears to have been unmanaged for several years and as a consequence the grassland diversity appears to be declining. Longer-term management problems are likely to include Bracken and scrub encroachment over the grassland area. Much of the marshy grassland has already become over-grown by scrub and tall herbs. Appropriate management, through the re-introduction of low-intensity grazing, would enhance its biodiversity. Tipping of garden refuse near to housing areas is a minor problem and has resulted in several garden plants becoming established at the site margins. Small fires, off-road cycling and motorcycling also take place on the site, but this</p>	

activity does not appear to be at levels that affect the site's nature conservation value.

Access/ community use

There is no formal public access to the site, but a well-used network of informal paths crosses it.

Additional information

The SINC status of the whole block has been retained at review, although several of the fields are borderline with respect to the SINC selection criteria, particularly given the recent lack of management. The site is allocated for employment and housing in the Unitary Development Plan and development proposals should seek to retain representative examples of the main qualifying features and enhance those habitats through positive management. The land at ST161952, south of the industrial unit, contains a mix of grassland, scrub and bare stone. It has a moderately diverse flora (including a moderate diversity of mosses and lichens) and appears very likely to support reptiles.

Species list (Dominant species, SINC Criteria, RDB or other notable indicator species)

(LBAP species shown in **bold**, species confirmed by 2007 survey in *italics*)

Hedge, scrub and woodland tree and shrub species: *Quercus robur*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Corylus avellana*, *Salix cinerea*, *Salix caprea*, *Salix aurita*, *Quercus petraea*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Betula pubescens*, *Betula pendula*, *Hedera helix*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Rosa canina*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Ulex europaeus*, *Ulex gallii*, *Cytisus scoparius*, *Acer campestre*, *Malus sp.*, *Populus tremula*.

Hedge and woodland ground flora: ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Viola riviniana*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Hypericum humifusum*, *Hypericum pulchrum*, *Urtica dioica*, *Chamerion angustifolium*, *Holcus mollis*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Carex sylvatica*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Mnium hornum*, *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans*.

Semi-improved neutral grassland species: ***Rhinanthus minor***, *Potentilla reptans*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Ranunculus acris*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Trifolium repens*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, *Leucanthemum vulgare*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Trifolium dubium*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Crepis capillaris*, *Knautia arvensis*, *Alchemilla cf xanthochlora*, *Lathyrus pratensis*, *Heracleum sphondylium*, *Hypericum maculatum*, *Achillea millefolium*, ***Dactylorhiza cf praetermissa***, *Festuca rubra*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Phleum pratense*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Carex hirta*, *Carex flacca*, *Luzula campestris*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*.

Additional acid grassland species in the north-east of the SINC include *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium saxatile*, *Conopodium majus*, *Solidago virgaurea*, *Festuca ovina*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Carex pilulifera* *Carex binervis*.

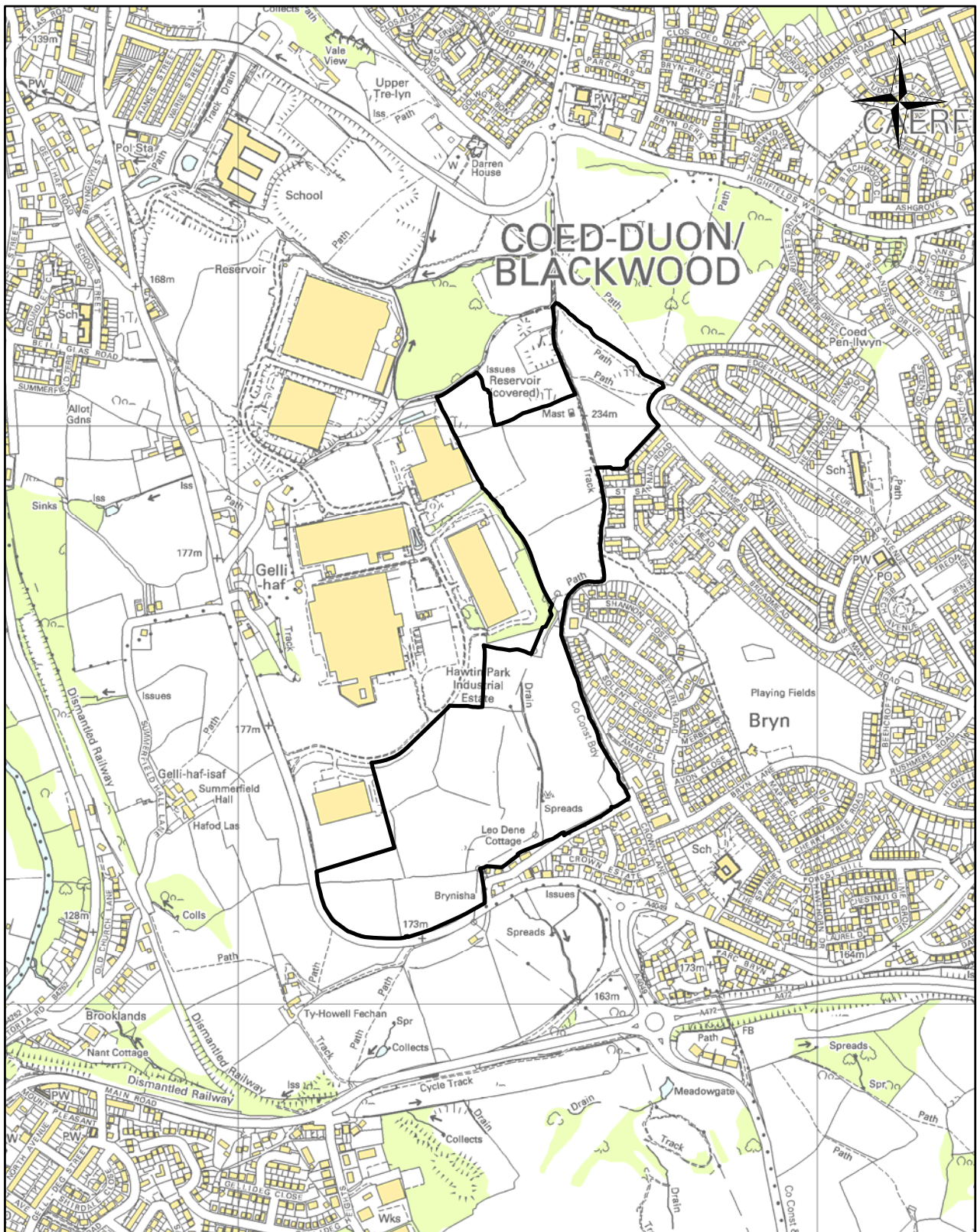
Marshy grassland species: *Ranunculus flammula*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium palustre*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Stellaria alsine*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Oenanthe crocata*, *Viola palustris*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Galeopsis sp.*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Carex viridula*, *Carex ovalis*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus bulbosus*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*.

Fauna observations: ***Bullfinch***, ***Song Thrush***, ***House Sparrow***, *Jay*, *Dunnock*, *Wren*, *Blue Tit*, *Goldfinch*, *Chiffchaff*, *Whitethroat*, *Meadow Brown Butterfly*, *Large Skipper Butterfly*, *cf Small Skipper Butterfly*, *Burnet Moth*.

Additional species noted from desk study: ***Water Vole*** (possible field signs recorded 1999). ***Marsh Fritillary Butterfly***, (within 200m of SINC). ***Reed Bunting*** (within 200m of SINC). *Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary* *Narrow Bordered Bee Hawk-moth*, *Dingy Skipper Butterfly*, *Green Hairstreak Butterfly* (all within 1Km of SINC).

Caerphilly County Borough Council
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Crown Estate Meadows, Pontllanfraith 23 Ha

1:10,000



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Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, 100025372, 2008.