

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.120</u>	SINC name: Mynydd Eglwysilan, North of Senghenydd
Grid Reference ST120927	Area (hectares): 504
Survey date: 11th & 13th September 2007	
Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)	
(UDP policy reference: C11.113)	
Summary description	
<p>The majority of this SINC is upland common with extensive areas of acid grassland, semi-improved acid grassland and Bracken. Frequent acid grassland species include Mat-grass, Common bent, Wavy hair-grass, Heath bedstraw, Heath grass, Heath rush and Tormentil. There are also several areas of marshy grassland and flush supporting Purple moor-grass and <i>Sphagnum</i> mosses, and locally including Cross-leaved heath, Bog asphodel, Cranberry and Round-leaved sundew. Greater tussock-sedge is locally abundant in marshy ground in the east of the area. Much of the common supports Bracken and semi-improved grassland with a relatively low diversity, but these areas still have value for some upland bird species. A small woodland in the north of the site supports ancient woodland with a canopy of Sessile oak, Alder, Beech and Rowan, and ground flora including Wood sorrel and Bilberry.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Extensive area of open countryside where semi-natural upland features predominate.</p> <p>Acid grassland / heath with at least 7 indicator species.</p> <p>Marshy grassland / flush with at least 12 indicator species.</p> <p>Ancient woodland with an assemblage of semi-natural indicator species.</p> <p>Presence of Cornish Moneywort.</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Rock outcrops/ dry stone walls.</p> <p>Streams.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>The area has potential to support breeding waders such as Curlew and Lapwing.</p> <p>Close-cropped semi-improved acid grassland is likely to support good waxcap populations.</p> <p>The areas of tussocky grassland, heath and scattered Bracken are likely to support reptiles.</p> <p>The broadleaved woodland is likely to be used by roosting and foraging bats.</p>	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>Sheep, with smaller numbers of cattle, currently graze the area. Bracken encroachment, and the associated potential for fires, is a problem over much of the area, and this is being controlled in some parts by cutting (this was taking place at the time of the survey). This is likely to be beneficial for biodiversity by allowing more diverse acid grassland communities to recover. Some parts of the common have been ploughed and re-seeded (most notably in the northwest and south-eastern parts), resulting in a very low diversity sward with little value for wildlife. Extension of this ploughing</p>	

to other areas would have a very serious impact, likely to cause irreversible damage to the existing habitats.

Access/ community use

The majority of the SINC is common land classified as open access land. Several roads and footpaths cross it, but a few areas at the edges of the SINC are not open to public access.

Additional information

Large areas of the common have been degraded by agricultural improvement and Bracken encroachment and would not meet the SINC criteria in their own right. However, they have been retained within the SINC as part of the larger upland area (single management unit) with the potential to support upland wildlife and because appropriate management would enhance biodiversity and allow these areas to recover over time. Several adjacent areas visible on aerial photographs may support habitat worthy of inclusion in the SINC at future review. These include marshy grassland / flush communities at ST135922, ST132927, ST114929 and ST131906 and stream corridors extending from the site at ST117921, ST124920 and ST129904. These should therefore be considered at future SINC review.

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

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

Acid grassland species: *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Ulex gallii*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Galium saxatile*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Nardus stricta*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Festuca ovina*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Aira praecox*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Carex binervis*, *Carex pilulifera*, *Luzula campestris*, *Luzula multiflora*, *Juncus squarrosus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*, *Cladonia* sp..

Hygrocybe conica was seen, and other waxcaps are also likely to occur.

Marshy grassland, wet heath and flush species (combined list as these tend to grade into one another): *Erica tetralix*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Narthecium ossifragum*, *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, *Montia fontana*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Viola palustris*, *Stellaria alsine*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Polygala serpyllifolia*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Callitriche* sp., *Scutellaria minor*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium saxatile*, *Vaccinium oxycoccus*, *Drosera rotundifolia*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Potamogeton polygonifolius*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Agrostis canina*, *Carex binervis*, *Carex panicea*, *Carex echinata*, *Carex viridula*, *Carex paniculata*, *Trichophorum cespitosum*, *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *Eriophorum vaginatum*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Juncus bulbosus*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Dryopteris carthusiana*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Sphagnum denticulatum*, *Sphagnum palustre*, *Sphagnum papillosum*, *Sphagnum fimbriatum*, *Sphagnum subnitens*, *Sphagnum fallax*, *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, *Sphagnum inundatum*, *Aulacomnium palustre*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*, *Riccardia multifida*.

Tree and shrub species associated with northern woodland area (ST109932): *Quercus petraea*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Betula pubescens*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Corylus avellana*, *Salix cinerea*, *Ilex aquifolium*.

Woodland ground flora species: *Oxalis acetosella*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Holcus mollis*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Juncus effusus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Mnium hornum*, *Thuidium tamariscinum*.

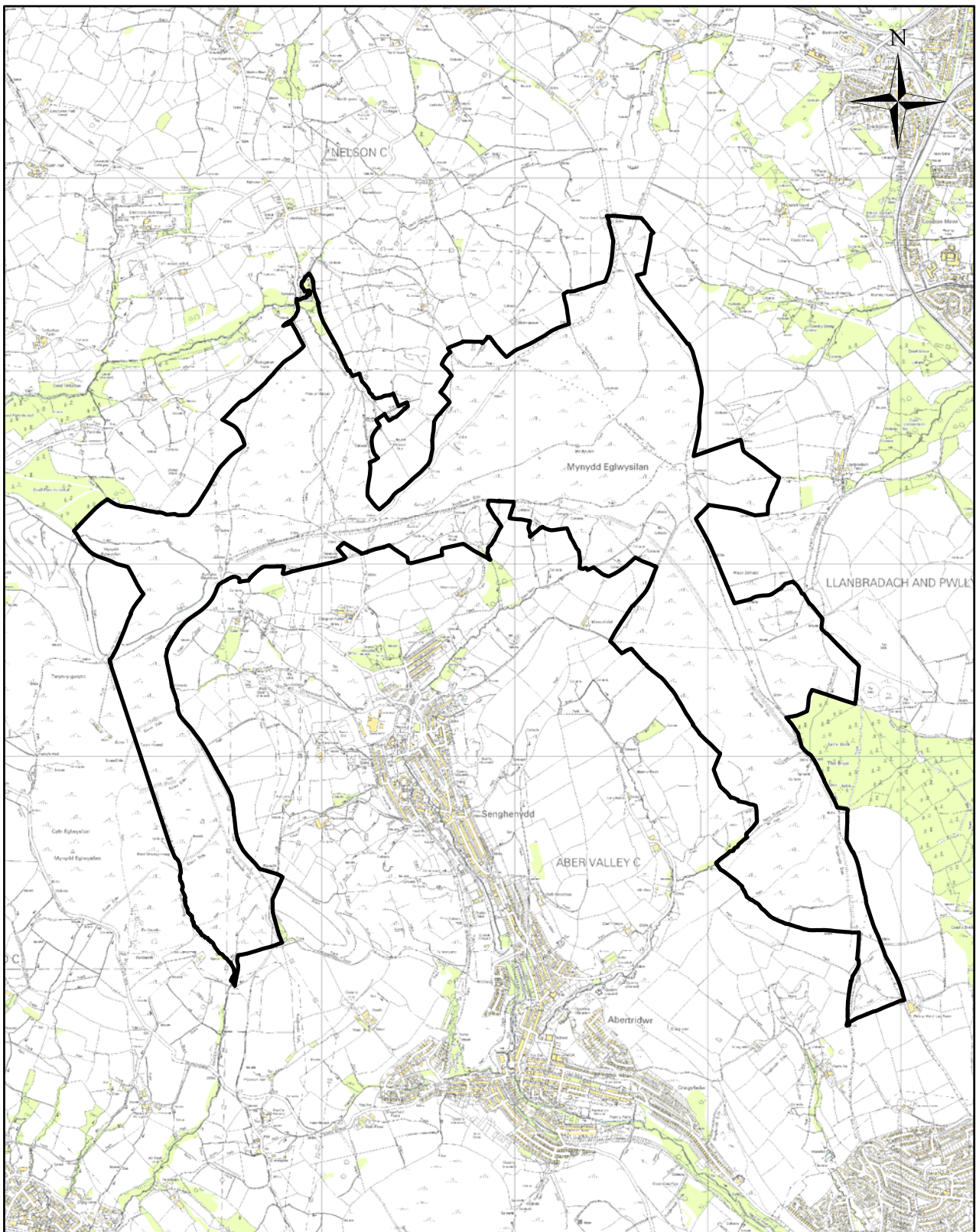
Fauna observations: Mole, **Peregrine**, **Buzzard**, **Reed Bunting**, **Bullfinch**, **Skylark**, Raven, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat, Chaffinch, Wheatear, **Common Frog**, Short-winged Conehead (ST133908), Small Heath Butterfly, **Golden-ringed Dragonfly**, **Common Darter Dragonfly**.

Additional records from desk study: **Brown Hare**, **Yellowhammer**, **Curlew**, **Grey Partridge**, **Green Woodpecker**, **Kestrel**, **Dipper**, **Lapwing**, Snipe, Dotterel, Ring Ouzel, Golden Plover, Hen Harrier, Quail, Whinchat, Snow Bunting, Pied Flycatcher, Short-eared Owl, Woodcock, Cuckoo, **Common Lizard**, **Bullhead**, **Brown Trout**, **Devon Carpet Moth**, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly, Green Hair-streak Butterfly, Grayling Butterfly, **Broad-bodied Chaser Dragonfly**, **Large Red Damselfly**, **Sibthorpia europaea**.

Water Vole has been recorded less than 200m away at ST107935.

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Mynydd Eglwysilan, North of Senghenydd 504 Ha

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