

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.84</u>	SINC name: Maescywmer Woodland and Meadows
Grid References: ST157941, ST167940, ST164936 Area (hectares): 41	
Survey date: 27th & 28th June 2007 Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)	
(UDP policy reference: C11.123)	
Summary description	
<p>This SINC comprises three separate parcels of land. Coed Gwernau at ST156942 is an area of ancient woodland with a canopy of Oak and Beech, and a ground flora including Bracken, Bluebell and Cow-wheat. To the south of the woodland are two fields of rush pasture and acid grassland, and to the west is a hillside dominated by Bracken and semi-improved acid grassland. A pond is located at ST167940. It is fringed by Willow and Hazel scrub, and supports wetland plants including Bulrush, Branched bur-reed and Bog pondweed. The land at ST164936 includes a series of damp fields with marshy grassland, with patches of wet heath and flush vegetation, dominated by Purple moor-grass and rushes. The diverse flora includes Meadow thistle, Heath spotted-orchid, Bog pimpernel and Bog asphodel. <i>Sphagnum</i> mosses are locally abundant. This is the only site in the vice-county for the liverwort <i>Barbilophozia kunzeana</i>. The vice-county rarity <i>Scapania paludicola</i> also occurs here. The Nant-y-Twyn stream flows through part of the site, which is fringed by mature trees of Oak and Alder. Several of the fields in the east of the area support semi-improved neutral grassland with locally abundant Devil's-bit scabious. A small pond is also present at ST167937.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Ancient woodland with an assemblage of indicator species.	
Marshy grassland / flush with at least 14 indicator species.	
Presence of rare liverworts.	
Secondary features	
Semi-improved acid grassland.	
Semi-improved neutral grassland.	
Stream.	
Scrub.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
The area has potential to support breeding waders such as Curlew.	
The fields with abundant Devil's-bit scabious have potential to support Marsh fritillary butterflies.	
The diverse wetland habitats may support additional species of uncommon plants.	
The areas of tussocky grassland and scattered Bracken are likely to support reptiles.	
The short-grazed semi-improved grasslands may be of value to grassland fungi.	
The woodland and tree-lined streams are likely to be used by roosting and foraging bats.	
The ponds have potential to support Great crested newt and other amphibians.	

Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)

Coed Gwernau at ST156942 has a Cydcoed management project, enhancing public access and biodiversity. Several large Beech trees have been subject to coronet cutting, Japanese knotweed has been treated with herbicide and recent improvements made to footpaths in the wood. Japanese knotweed is still present next to the sport pitches. The pond at ST167940 lies within a field of improved grassland and livestock has access to the pond margins (though no animals were present at the time of the survey). The pond would probably benefit from localised dredging and cutting back of scrub to allow more sunlight in and increase the area of standing water. Horses and cattle lightly graze most of the fields at ST157941 and ST164936. This type of grazing is probably the optimum management for biodiversity, although sheep are also present at ST157941, which probably detracts for the nature conservation value. Horses heavily graze the fields at ST165938 and ST167938 and a reduction in grazing pressure may be beneficial for biodiversity.

Access/ community use

Coed Gwernau is accessible to the public. There are no formal public footpaths, but there is informal access to the adjacent fields. There is no formal public access to the pond at ST167940 and the majority of the land at ST164936, although footpaths border them both.

Additional information

The heavily grazed semi-improved grasslands at ST165938 appear to be borderline with respect to SINC selection criteria, but have been retained in the SINC as they still support a moderately diverse sward and may be of value for grassland fungi. If fungi data become available for the field at ST169937, this may also need to be included within the SINC and should be considered at future review. Aerial photography shows a nearby area likely to support marshy grassland with Purple moor-grass at ST163940, which should be investigated at future SINC review. Several fields of damp grassland adjoin the SINC areas. Although these don't appear to meet SINC criteria, they are still likely to have some value for biodiversity. The parallel hedgerows near the pond at ST167940 are also potentially valuable as linear habitat and possible bat flight lines.

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

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

Tree and shrub species in Coed Gwernau: *Quercus petraea*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Betula pubescens*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Corylus avellana*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Betula pendula*, *Salix caprea*, *Salix cinerea*, *Cytisus scoparius*.

Ground flora species in Coed Gwernau: *Oxalis acetosella*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Stellaria holostea*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Viola riviniana*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Conopodium majus*, *Melampyrum pratense*, *Holcus mollis*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Poa trivialis*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Mnium hornum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Atrichum undulatum*, *Thuidium tamariscinum*, *Scleropodium purum*.

Species at pond at ST167940: *Salix caprea*, *Corylus avellana*, *Betula pubescens*, *Typha latifolia*, *Sparganium erectum*, *Callitriche sp.*, *Potamogeton polygonifolius*, *Ranunculus omiophyllus*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus bufonius*.

Marshy grassland, wet heath and flush species (combined list): *Erica tetralix*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Salix aurita*, *Salix repens*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Cirsium dissectum*, *Viola palustris*, *Stellaria alsine*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, *Narthecium ossifragum*, ***Dactylorhiza maculata***, *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, *Valeriana officinalis*, *Callitriche sp.*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium palustre*, *Epilobium palustre*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Mentha aquatica*, *Anagallis tenella*, *Pedicularis sylvatica*, *Lysimachia vulgaris*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Agrostis canina*, *Carex panicea*, *Carex echinata*, *Carex pseudocyperus*, *Carex binervis*, *Luzula multiflora*, *Isolepis setacea*, *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Juncus bulbosus*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Equisetum sylvaticum*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Sphagnum denticulatum*, *Sphagnum subnitens*, *Sphagnum*

palustre, *Sphagnum papillosum*, *Sphagnum squarrosum*, *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *Sphagnum fallax*, *Sphagnum cf angustifolium*, *Aulacomnium palustre*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*, *Calypogeia cf fissa*.

Semi-improved grassland species (combined list): *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium saxatile*, *Euphrasia sp.*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Achillea ptarmica*, *Rhinanthus minor*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Trifolium repens*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, ***Dactylorhiza maculata***, *Centaurea nigra*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Conopodium majus*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Nardus stricta*, *Bromus hordeaceus*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Aira praecox*, *Carex ovalis*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Hypnum lacunosum*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*, *Dicranum scoparium*.

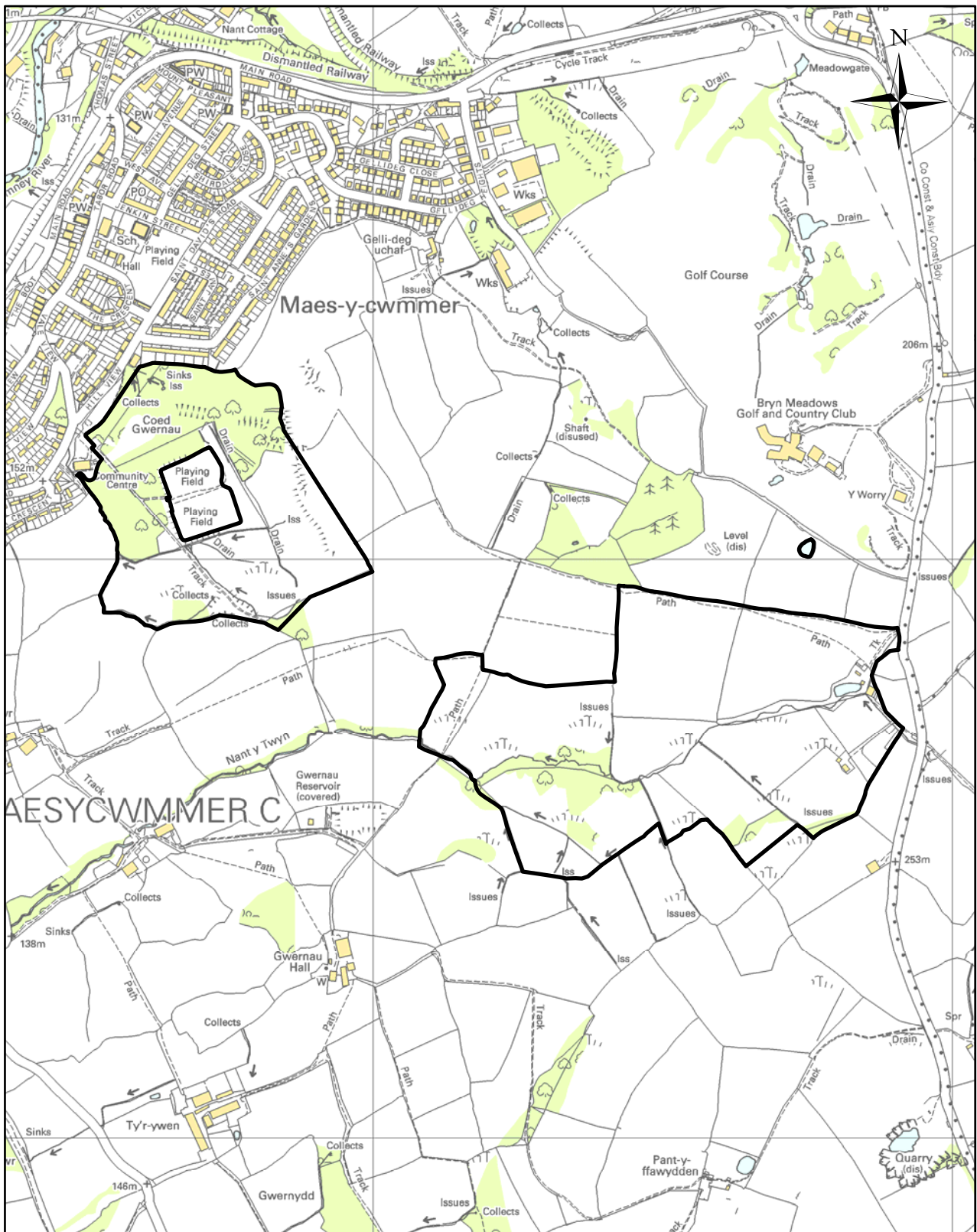
Fauna observations: Grey Squirrel, **Buzzard**, **Song Thrush**, Meadow Pipit, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Grey Heron, Robin, Blackbird, Greenfinch, **Common Frog**, Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly, Meadow Brown Butterfly, Large Skipper Butterfly, Speckled Wood Butterfly, Painted lady Butterfly, Small Heath Butterfly, Burnet Moth, Burnet Companion Moth.

Additional records from desk study: Pond at ST167940: **Newts, dragonflies and damselflies** (not species specific).

Land at 164937: Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly, Tawny Owl, *Caltha palustris*, *Genista anglica*, *Carex lepidocarpa*, *Erica cinerea*, *Stachys officinalis*, *Valeriana dioica*, *Stellaria nemorum*, *Barbilophozia kunzeana*, *Scapania paludicola*.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.84 (SINC 123)
Maescwmmmer Meadows, Maescwmmmer 41 Ha

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