

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.164</u>	SINC name: Caerphilly Common, Caerphilly.
Grid reference: ST153853	Area (hectares): 118
Survey dates: 6th June 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.162)	
Summary description	
<p>An unenclosed area of common land supporting a diverse mix of habitats. Bracken is abundant and in many areas it grades into Birch woodland. Areas of acid grassland and heath are present in a few places, particularly on rocky areas and where Bracken is controlled. Mature woodland is present in a few areas with the oldest stand being over an area of old coal workings in the east of the SINC (ST161852). Several small wetland habitats are present, with the main areas located at ST159851 and ST154851. These support a moderate diversity of wetland plants and willow scrub. An area of marshy grassland and scrub is located at ST149849. A disused quarry at ST157854 supports heath, acid grassland and scrub, and is the only recorded location in Glamorgan for the liverwort <i>Nardia geoscyphus</i>.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Acid grassland / heathland containing at least 7 indicator species.</p> <p>Marshy grassland vegetation with at least 12 indicator species.</p> <p>Ponds/ areas with diverse wetland vegetation.</p> <p>Presence of four species of reptiles (Adder, Grass Snake, Slow Worm, and Common Lizard).</p> <p>Presence of uncommon Liverwort <i>Nardia geoscyphus</i>.</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Bracken.</p> <p>Scrub.</p> <p>Broadleaved woodland.</p> <p>Rock exposure.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>The site is likely to be a valuable feeding area for bats and may also include roosting sites.</p> <p>The site is likely to support Dormice and Great Crested Newts, which both occur nearby.</p> <p>The habitats have potential to support breeding Nightjars (and many other bird species).</p> <p>The site may support other locally significant bryophytes.</p>	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>The area has been ungrazed for several years. This is the main reason for the dominance of Bracken and scrub, which have apparently increased at the expense of other, more valuable habitats, particularly heath and damp acid grassland. The Bracken also constitutes a significant fire risk and many parts of the common are regularly burned. Rolling, to encourage the return of acid grassland, has recently treated a few of the more open areas of Bracken. Use of fern-specific herbicide could be considered in areas unsuitable for rolling. Cutting locally controls scrub, but the area of clearance is relatively small. In the long term, the Bracken and scrub would best be</p>	

controlled by grazing by cattle or horses, which is likely to require traffic control, cattle-grids and/or fencing. The wetland habitats are all at risk from scrub encroachment, particularly at ST159851. These would benefit from scrub clearance and light grazing. The roadside ponds at ST154851 support the invasive plants New Zealand Stonecrop and Parrot's Feather, which are likely to increase in dominance if left uncontrolled. Japanese knotweed occurs patchily beside roads on the common. Areas of common land at ST156868 and ST149856 are managed as part of Caerphilly Golf Club.

Access/ community use

The majority of the SINC is open access land. The central area is well used by the public, but the marginal areas are relatively undisturbed. The Ridgeway Walk and several other public footpaths cross the common. There is no formal public access to a few areas within the SINC, including several domestic properties and the woodland at ST161852.

Additional information

Several other areas of biodiversity value adjoin the site and appear worthy of further survey. They include Bracken and acid grassland at ST146857 and marshy grassland at ST151847. These should be considered for inclusion 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*)

Tree and shrub species (combined list for whole site, including woodland areas and scattered scrub): *Betula pubescens*, ***Ulex europaeus***, *Quercus petraea*, *Salix caprea*, *Salix cinerea*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Buddleja davidii*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Larix sp.*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Picea sp.*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Malus sp.*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Corylus avellana*, *Ribes uva-crispa*, *Betula pendula*, *Rhododendron ponticum*, *Sambucus nigra*, ***Ulex gallii***.

Woodland ground flora species (combined list for whole site): *Circaea lutetiana*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Ceratocarpus claviculata*, *Alliaria petiolata*, *Viola riviniana*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Geum urbanum*, *Impatiens glandulifera*, *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Holcus mollis*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Poa trivialis*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Brachythecium rutabulum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Mnium hornum*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Scleropodium purum*.

Species in dry acid grassland/ Bracken areas: *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Galium saxatile*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Erica cinerea*, *Solidago virgaurea*, *Chamerion angustifolium*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Viola riviniana*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Festuca ovina*, *Festuca rubra*, *Nardus stricta*, *Aira praecox*, *Aira caryophyllea*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Luzula campestris*, *Luzula multiflora*, *Juncus effusus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*.

Several plants more typical of neutral grassland or disturbed ground occur locally near paths, including Centaurea nigra, Lathyrus pratensis, Cirsium arvense, Lolium perenne, Arrhenatherum elatius, Dactylis glomerata, Poa trivialis, Equisetum telmateia.

Marshy grassland at ST149849: *Potentilla erecta*, *Pedicularis sylvatica*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Galium palustre*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Galium saxatile*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Carex echinata*, *Carex viridula*, *Carex panicea*, *Carex ovalis*, *Luzula multiflora*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus conglomeratus*, *Juncus bulbosus*.

Marshy grassland at ST159851: *Potentilla erecta*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Erica tetralix*, *Viola palustris*, *Epilobium palustre*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Mentha aquatica*, *Galium palustre*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Juncus*

effusus, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Equisetum fluviatile*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Sphagnum cf subnitens*, *Sphagnum cf angustifolium*.

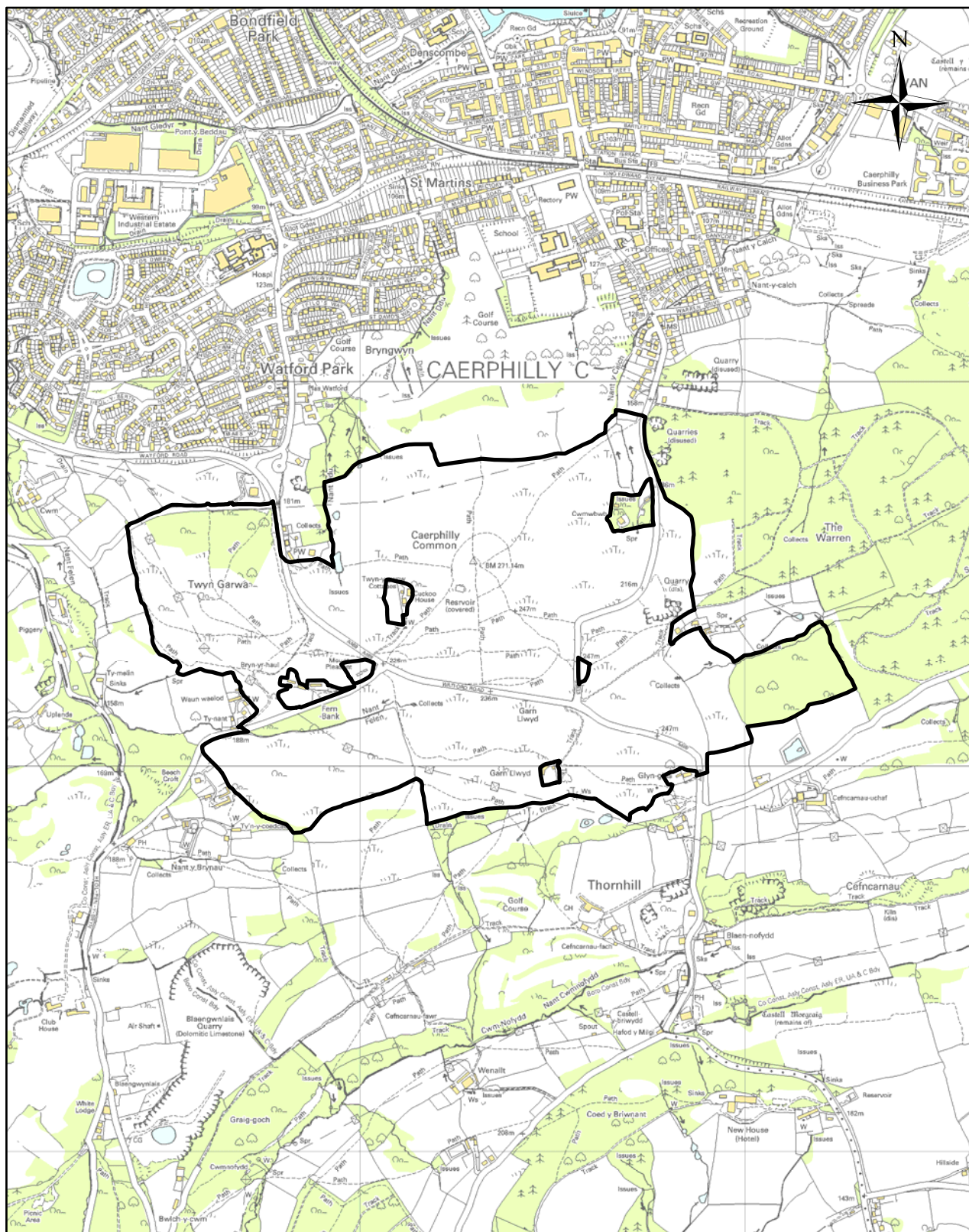
Ponds/ marshy grassland at ST154851: *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Viola palustris*, *Epilobium palustre*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Scrophularia nodosa*, *Mentha aquatica*, *Galium palustre*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, *Typha latifolia*, *Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Pulicaria dysenterica*, *Iris pseudacorus*, *Veronica anagallis-aquatica*, *Crassula helmsii*, *Myriophyllum aquaticum*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Carex ovalis*, *Carex nigra*, *Eleocharis palustris*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris carthusiana*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Equisetum fluviatile*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*, *Calliergon cordifolium*, *Straminergon stramineum*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Sphagnum cf fallax*, *Sphagnum fimbriatum*, *Sphagnum denticulatum*, *Aulacomnium palustre*.

Fauna observations: *Mole*, **Buzzard**, **Skylark**, **Bullfinch**, **Song Thrush**, **Green Woodpecker**, *Meadow Pipit*, *Stonechat*, *Blackbird*, *Robin*, *Willow Warbler*, *Tree Pipit*, *Chaffinch*, *Treecreeper*, *Great Spotted Woodpecker*, *Whitethroat*, *Wren*, **Slow Worm**, **Common Lizard**, **Palmate Newt**, *Small Heath Butterfly*, *Speckled Wood Butterfly*, *Small Copper Butterfly*, *Comma Butterfly*, *Large White Butterfly*, *Small Skipper Butterfly*, *Brimstone Butterfly*, **Emperor Dragonfly**, **Broad-bodied Chaser Dragonfly**, **Large Red Damselfly**, **Azure Damselfly**.

Additional species noted from desk study: **Common Pipistrelle**, **Adder**, **Grass Snake**, **Reed Bunting**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, **House Sparrow**, **Yellowhammer**, **Nightjar** (1981 record), *Cuckoo*, *Whinchat*, *Woodcock*, *Water Rail*, *Grasshopper Warbler*, *Garden Warbler*, *Nightingale*, **Kestrel**, **Common Toad**, **Common Frog**, *Emperor Moth*, **Emerald Damselfly**, **Common Hawker Dragonfly**, **Common Darter Dragonfly**, **Golden-ringed Dragonfly**, **Blue-tailed Dragonfly**, *Veronica catenata*, *Potamogeton natans*, *Briza media*, **Dactylorhiza praetermissa**, **Dactylorhiza fuchsii**, **Orchis mascula**, *Galium verum*, *Luzula pilosa*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Galium uliginosum*, *Lathyrus linifolius*, *Nardia geoscyphus*, **Hygrocybe calyptriformis**, *H. chlorophana*, *H. conica*, *H. citrinovirens*, *H. flavipes*, *H. glutinipes*, *H. intermedia*, *H. pratensis*, *H. psittacina*, *H. virginea*. **Dormouse** within 350m of SINC boundary. **Great Crested Newt** within 250m of SINC boundary.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.164 (SINC 162)
Caerphilly Common, South of Caerphilly 118 Ha

1:15,000



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