

## Monmouthshire County Council SINC

Site Code	Site Name	Grid Reference	Size	Main Habitats	LBAP Priority Habitats / Species	Full description	Wildlife Site Qualifying Features
WS/SO40/30	Allt y Bela	SO413006	39.85 ha	Neutral Grassland (MG5) Neutral Grassland (MG6) Neutral Grassland (U1) Marshy Grassland (M23)	Species Rich Grassland (HAP)	<p>This site is located 2km south of Gwernesney, 2km east of the B4235 and A449. It comprises moderately steep-sloping fields of varying aspect. The fields contain semi-improved grassland, bordered by tall non-stockproof hedgerows with trees. The higher drier fields support MG5; U1 is confined to the highest field and the wetter ground has a M23/MG5 mosaic. Marginal vegetation of <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>, <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> &amp; <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> occurs especially on the fields NE of Allt-y-Bela. The MG5 sward includes <i>Festuca rubra</i>, <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>, <i>Centaurea nigra</i>, <i>Lotus corniculatus</i>, <i>Carex flacca</i>, <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> &amp; <i>Pimpinella saxifraga</i>; <i>Potentilla erecta</i>, <i>Succissa pratensis</i> &amp; <i>Danthonia decumbens</i> are indicative of an MG5c community. The lowest northern fields contain anthills with <i>Thymus pulegioides</i>, <i>Genista tinctoria</i> &amp; <i>Danthonia decumbens</i>. Many old tracks within the site have herb-rich flora including <i>Linum catharticum</i>, <i>Hieracium pilosella</i> &amp; <i>Leontodon taraxacoides</i>. Wetter areas of M23 contain <i>Lotus uliginosus</i>, <i>Carex ovalis</i> &amp; <i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>. This continues eastwards from the streams at Cwrt-y-Bela. <i>Lolium</i> is rare throughout and indicates lower levels of improvement. Management is restricted to low levels of grazing due to lack of stock-proofing. Many of the fields were unrecorded in the CCW Phase 1 survey of 1991.</p>	H4 Neutral Grassland H7 Marshy Grassland