

**CYFOETH NATURIOL CYMRU
NATURAL RESOURCES WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST: CITATION

VALE OF GLAMORGAN

FFERM WALTERS

Date of Notification:

5 November 2015

National Grid Reference:

ST 099688

O.S. Maps:

1:50,000 Sheet number: 171

1:10,000 Sheet number: ST 06 NE and ST 16 NW

Site Area:

24.87 ha

Description:

Fferm Walters is of special interest for its exceptionally large area of species-rich neutral grassland, most of which has a particularly calcicolous nature and is one of the rarest types of grassland in Wales. Part of this grassland is undergoing restoration. The grassland is associated with woodland, hedgerows and scrub and smaller areas of damp grassland.

Fferm Walters comprises a series of fields on the western edge of Barry. It occupies a shallow valley through which a small stream flows in a westerly direction to join the River Waycock. The fields are therefore situated on gentle slopes with a range of aspects, primarily south-west and north-west facing. They range in altitude from 40 to 85 m. The site overlies thinly inter-bedded limestone and calcareous mudstone or siltstone of the Lias group, formed during the late Triassic and early Jurassic period. Soils are of the Denchworth Association and are wet clayey, slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged.

The site includes three separate areas of species-rich neutral grassland, amounting to approximately six hectares in total. Between and linking these fields are others which are, at present, in the process of recovery following ploughing and re-seeding in 2013.

The species-rich grassland is characterised by a range of grasses such as common bent *Agrostis capillaris*; sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, with herbs such as common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*; red clover *Trifolium pratense* and bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*. Common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* is often frequent. The calcareous nature of the soils at Fferm Walters is demonstrated by the presence of a suite of plants typical of such situations. These include quaking grass *Briza media*; glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*; agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*; lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*; spiny restharrow *Ononis spinosa* and hoary plantain *Plantago media*. More locally within the site yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*; fairy flax *Linum catharticum* and ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* occur. Certain species reflect the heavy clay soils. These

include creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*; meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*; hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius* and spiny restharrow.

Small areas of damp grassland are dominated by hard rush *Juncus inflexus* with species such as hairy sedge *Carex hirta*; false fox-sedge *Carex otrubae*; creeping bent; greater birds-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*; meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and water mint *Mentha aquatica*.

Several uncommon plants occur at Fferm Walters. Spiny restharrow; meadow barley and pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* are plants of southern lowland Britain which, in Wales, are most common in the Vale of Glamorgan. A small population of parsley water-dropwort *Oenanthe lachenalii* is present in the damp grassland.

Remarks:

Fferm Walters is adjacent to part of Coedydd Y Barri/Barry Woodlands SSSI.