

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU  
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION**

**SWANSEA**

**PENPLAS GRASSLANDS**

<b><u>Date of Notification:</u></b>	1992
<b><u>National Grid Reference:</u></b>	SS 634979
<b><u>O.S. Maps:</u></b>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 159 1:25,000 Sheet number: SS69
<b><u>Site Area:</u></b>	29.9 ha

**Description:**

The site comprises a series of low-lying pastures situated about 1km south-west of Llangyfelach on the north-west edge of Swansea. Lying at an altitude of 50-105 metres the site slopes gently to the north-west, and is drained by a tributary of the Afon Llan. Glacial drift overlying sandstones and shales of the Upper Pennant Measures causes the overall drainage of the site to be substantially impeded.

These pastures have largely been managed using traditional farming methods, and represents one of the largest and most diverse examples of agriculturally unimproved land within the lowland part of West Glamorgan. Such grasslands were once commonplace in Wales but lowland sites are now becoming scarce. Eight different grassland types have been identified on the site, including three types of purple moor-grass pasture, two of rush pasture, fen meadow, acid grassland and damp heath.

Just over half the site consists of acidic pasture characterised by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and ling *Calluna vulgaris*.

Several patches of dry acidic grassland also occur within the site and these are dominated by common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, mat grass *Nardus stricta*, field wood-rush *Luzula campestris* and tormentil *Potentilla erecta*. The poorly drained areas of wet heath are characterised by deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum* and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*. Small areas of the site are occupied by acid flushes, fen meadow and rush pasture together with deciduous woodland and shallow pools. This large and varied mosaic of enclosed wetland and grassland habitats at low altitude is unusual in West Glamorgan.

Notable plant species recorded at Penplas include whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, petty whin *Genista anglica* and royal fern *Osmunda regalis*.