
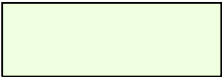





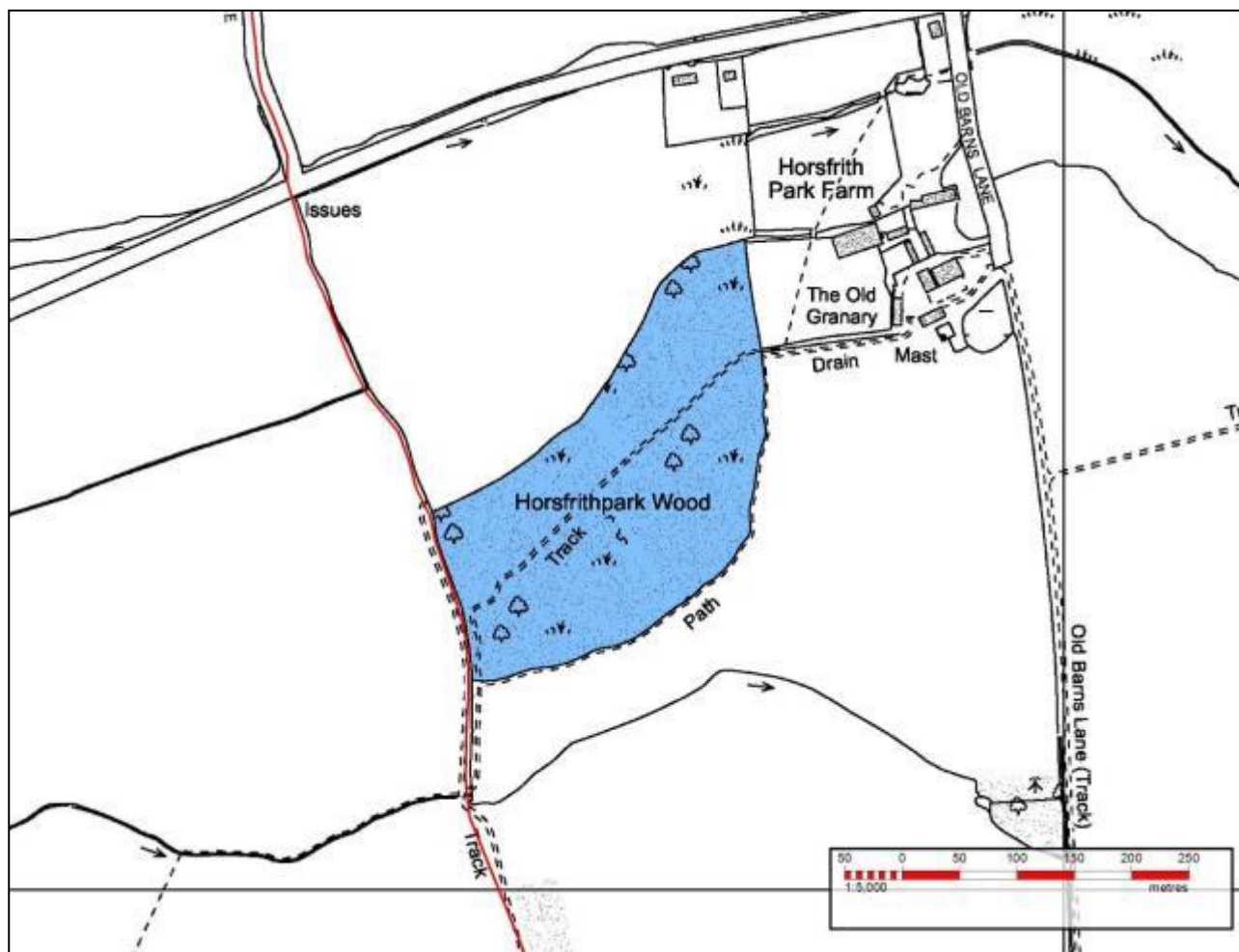
APPENDIX 2
Part 1, Sites 1-90

REGISTER OF CHELMSFORD LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

KEY

	Highlighted LoWS
	Adjacent Chelmsford LoWS
	Adjacent LoWS (other local authority)
	Potential Chelmsford LoWS
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Ch1 Horsfrithpark Wood, Radley Green (6.22 ha) TL 61610434



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The majority of this woodland is dominated by Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice and forms the high canopy. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) are generally found at sub-canopy level. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) form part of a well-developed shrub layer, though open areas allow light to penetrate to ground level. The ground flora has Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*) in abundance. Other recorded species include Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) and Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*).

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no public access. The wood can be viewed from a public right of way that runs along the eastern and southern boundaries.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Neglected.

Management Issues

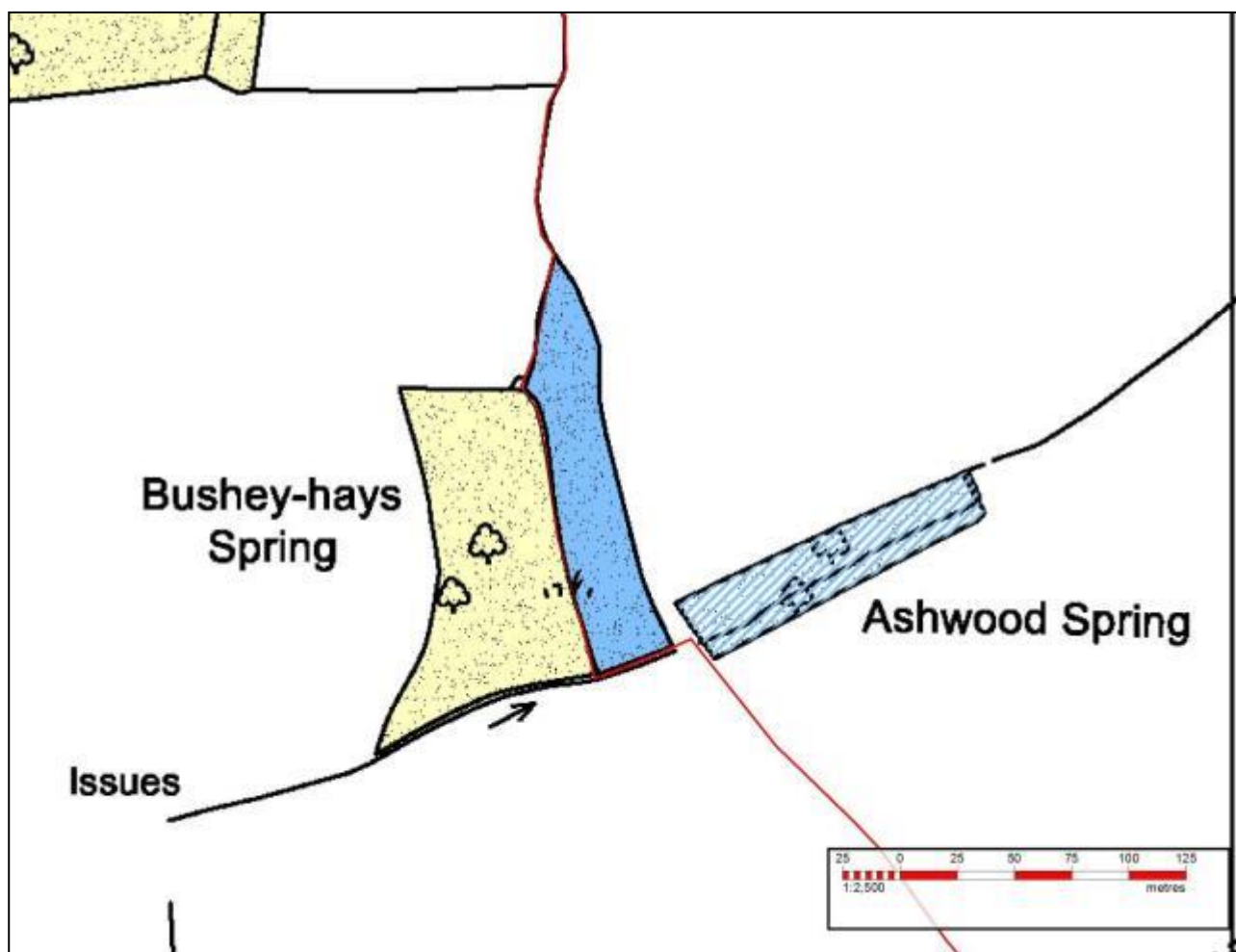
As with all old coppice woodlands, a resumption of coppicing is usually beneficial to maintain the high biodiversity of such sites. This may be challenging to reinstate given the likely deer browsing pressure and local markets for coppice wood products.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch2 Bushey-hays Spring, Roxwell (0.49 ha) TL 61710847



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This site comprises the eastern section of Bushey-hays Spring which straddles the boundary between the Chelmsford City Administrative Area and Epping Forest District. It has a variety of coppiced tree and shrub species including Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) along with a few interspersed Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is also found as coppice towards the northern end of the wood. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) is found within the shrub layer, particularly along the eastern edge. Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) is abundant in the ground flora, though Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*) form localised patches. Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) are also present.

Ownership and Access

This wood is thought to be in private ownership, with no public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and flora suggest that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

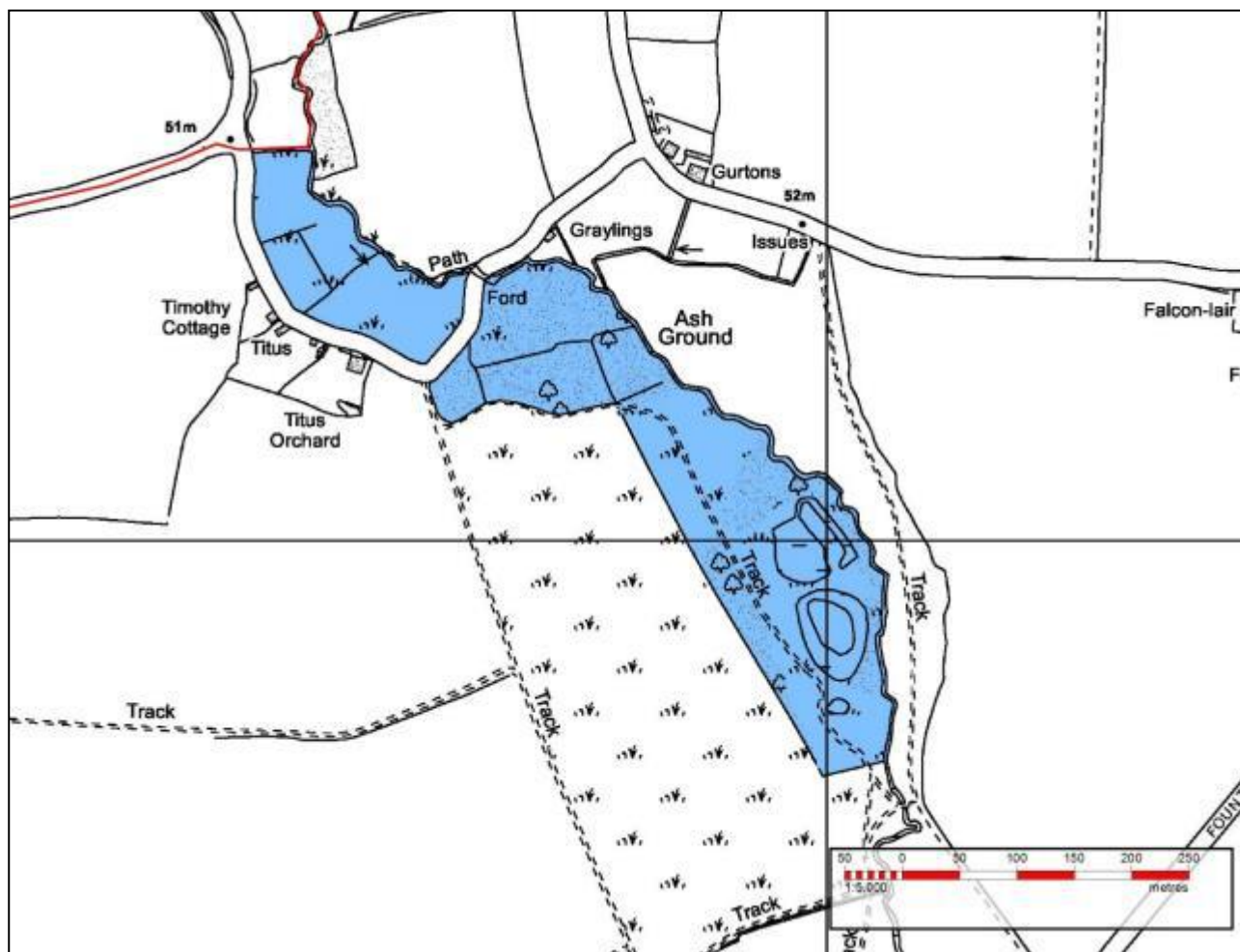
As with all old coppice woodlands, a resumption of coppicing is usually beneficial to maintain the high biodiversity of such sites. This may be challenging to reinstate given the likely deer browsing pressure and local markets for coppice wood products.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (Ashwood Spring removed from LoWS and given Potential LoWS status)

Ch3 River Can Floodplain, Good Easter (7.85 ha) TL 61811208



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This mosaic of river valley habitats follows the west side of the River Can. The site comprises grassland, woodland and scrub. Part of the woodland east of the ford occupies an area of very wet ground. Here, many fallen willow (*Salix* sp.) trees form a tangled network of vegetation. The waterlogged ground beneath has small stands of Lesser Pond-sedge (*Carex acutiformis*), with Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*). Further south the site becomes a mosaic of open grassland, scrub and marshy habitat, with several ponds. These have well developed and diverse marginal vegetation including Pond-sedges (*Carex* sp.), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*), Water Mint and rushes (*Juncus* spp.). The grassland component provides contrasting habitat where Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) is found.

West of the ford is an extensive area of secluded sedge bed, surrounded by woodland and scrub vegetation. Here, Pond-sedges are dominant though species such as Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) are recorded from the damp fringes where lower growing plants manage thrive.

The grassland of the western end of the site is in an equally secluded location surrounded by dense scrub and hedgerows. The meadows exhibit a long sward grassland structure. Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) and Bee Orchid are recorded from this area.

Ownership and Access

The site is thought to be in private ownership. A public footpath runs through part of the southern section.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Wet Woodland

Coastal and Floodplain Grazing-marsh (in a highly modified form)

Hedgerows

Selection Criteria

HC3 Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

HC14 Lowland Fen Vegetation (minor component)

Rationale

This site provides an uncommon assemblage of differing habitats in close proximity along the River Can corridor. The diversity and the secluded nature of some of the areas provide a valuable refuge for flora and fauna.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

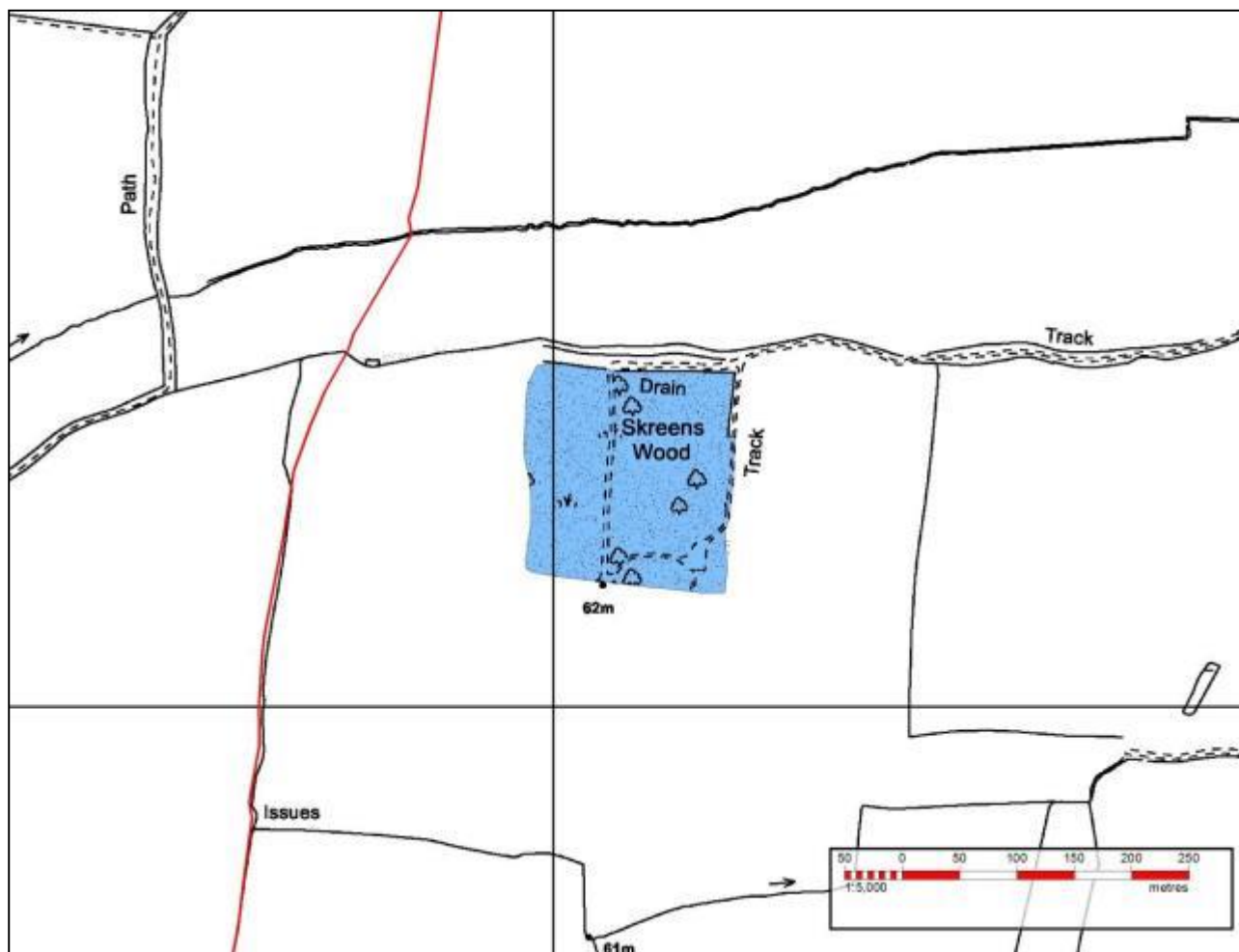
Maintenance of a high water level will be crucial to retaining the high ecological value of this wetland site. Whilst wet willow scrub is a desirable habitat, other scrub encroachment should be kept in check.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (northernmost field deleted); 2016 (northernmost field reinstated)

Ch4 Skreens Wood, Roxwell (3.30 ha) TL 62060920



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Skreens wood comprises Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with an extensive understorey of Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) scrub. Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), a species typically associated with ancient woodland, is also found here. Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) is a frequent in the ground flora. Other species recorded include Hairy St John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*) and Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) whilst Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) is prominent in damp areas of the north east corner of the wood.

Ownership and Access

The wood is in private ownership, with no public access. A public bridleway runs along a track to the north of the wood.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

Documentary evidence from old 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show that this is the remnant of a much larger ancient wood which once occupied the adjoining arable land. The structure and flora supports this ancient status.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice

Management Issues

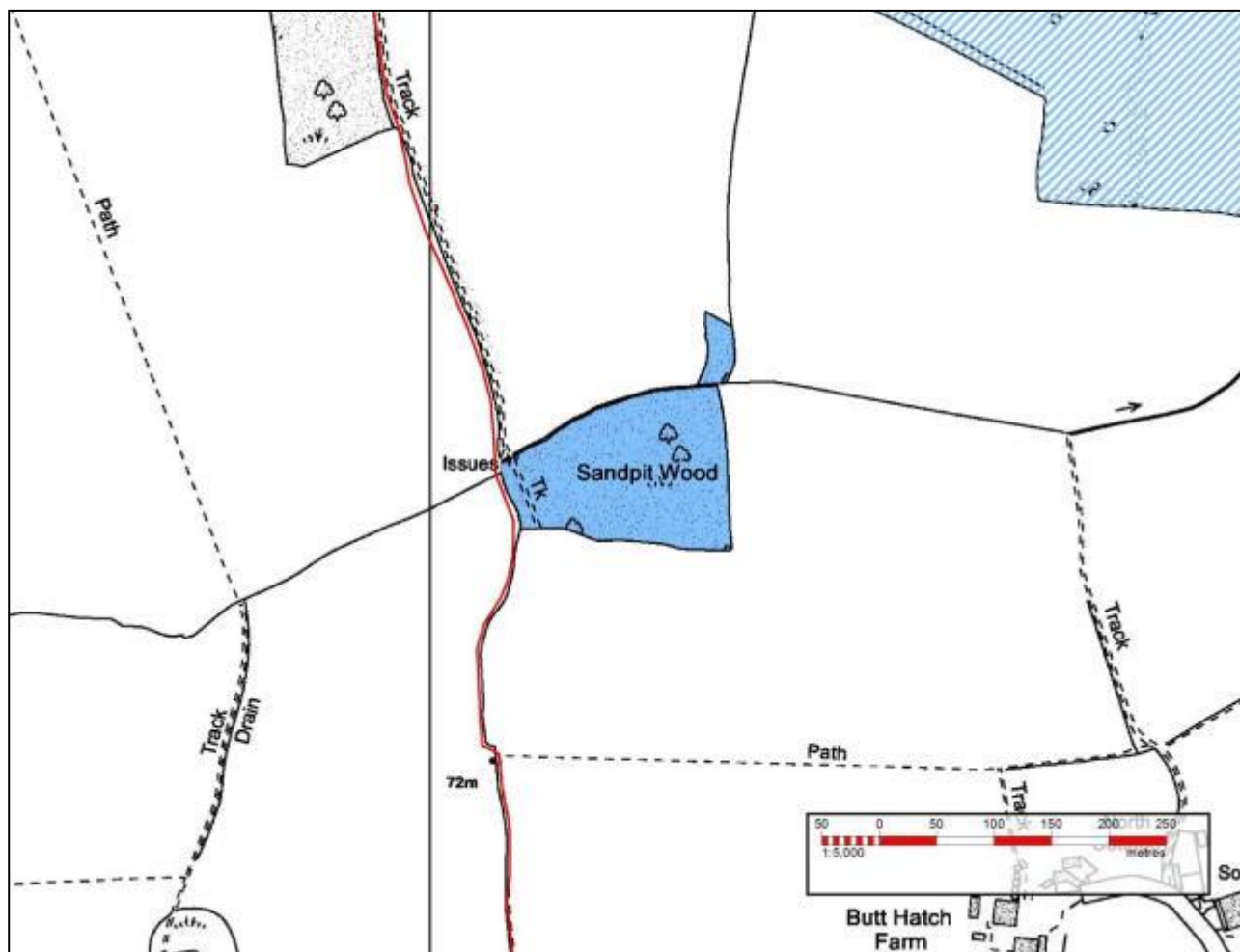
As with all old coppice woodlands, a resumption of coppicing is usually beneficial to maintain the high biodiversity of such sites. This may be challenging to reinstate given the likely deer browsing pressure and local markets for coppice wood products.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch5 Sandpit Wood, Roxwell (2.32 ha) TL 62180745



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Historically, this woodland was within the estate of Skreens Park. It has a high canopy mostly of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) rises to sub-canopy level and is found throughout the wood, whilst Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Elm (*Ulmus* sp.) generally occupy the wood margins. There is only a patchy shrub layer which includes Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). Where increased light levels penetrate through the canopy to ground level, Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg) and to a lesser extent Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) tend to dominate. The richest flora is found close to the woodland track where Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) are found. Other species typical of ancient woodland sites include Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*).

Ownership and Access

This site is thought to be in private ownership, with no public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

Documentary evidence, along with the structure and composition of this wood suggest that it is ancient in status.

Condition Statement

Neglected.

Management Issues

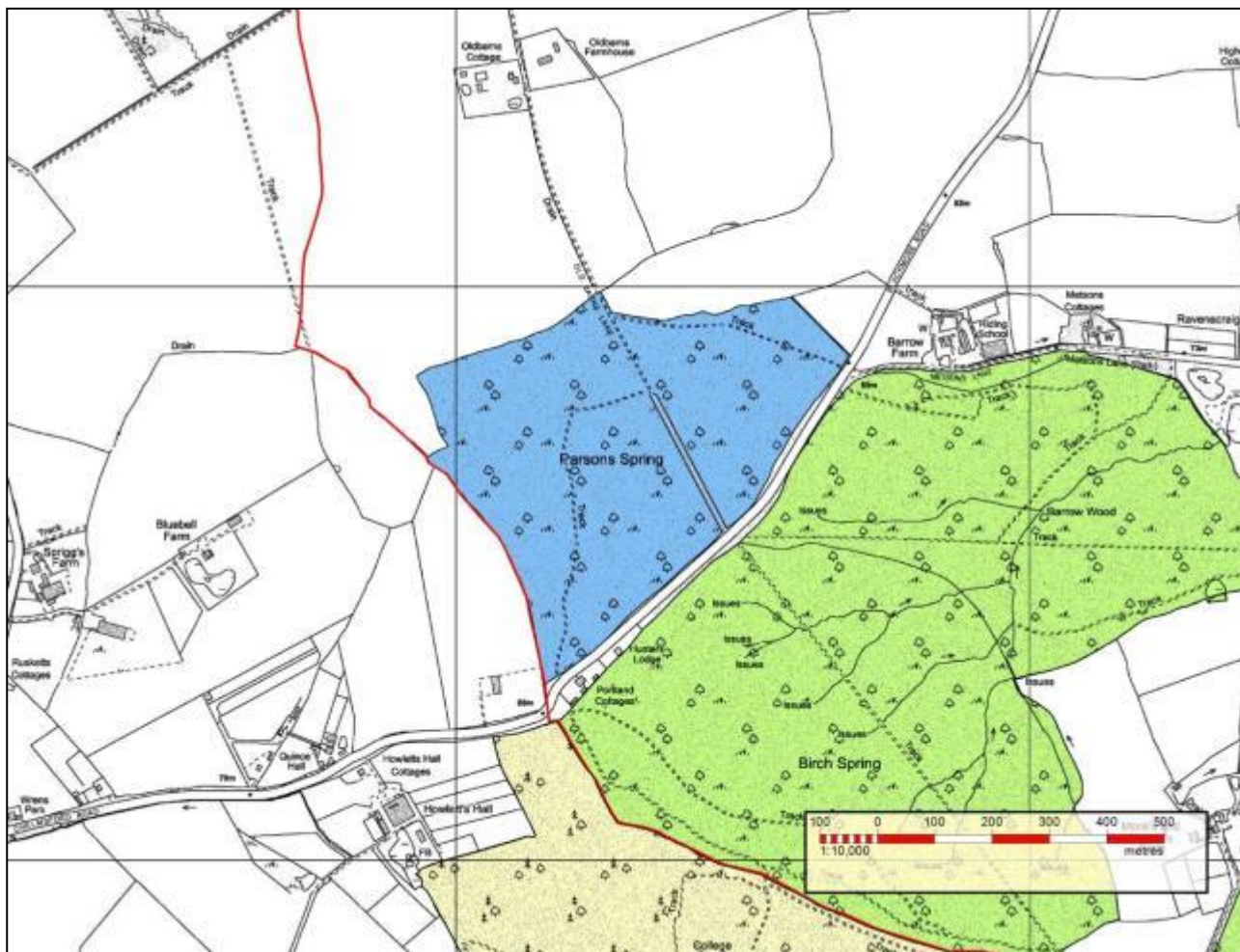
Excessive shading from the canopy may be suppressing the ground flora and overall biodiversity.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch6 Parson's Spring, Loves Green (27.48 ha) TL 62290271



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This large block of ancient woodland, which is located either side of Old Barns Lane, is part of the former Writtle Forest. To the west side of the lane, Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice on the west edge of the wood gives way to closely spaced Birch (*Betula pendula*) with mature Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards and some Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). Dense shading results and consequently a poor ground flora is to be found. Hornbeam coppice and Birch standards dominate the block to the east of Old Barns Lane. Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) is dominant beneath the Birch with other species characteristic of acid soils including Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*). Other plants of interest in the woodland include Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), whilst a wood-rush (*Luzula* sp.) and Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) are recorded in open locations by Old Barns Lane.

Ownership and Access

Two public rights of way run through the wood.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

This is one of a cluster of large ancient woods, part of the former Writtle Forest, of great historical interest in the county.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

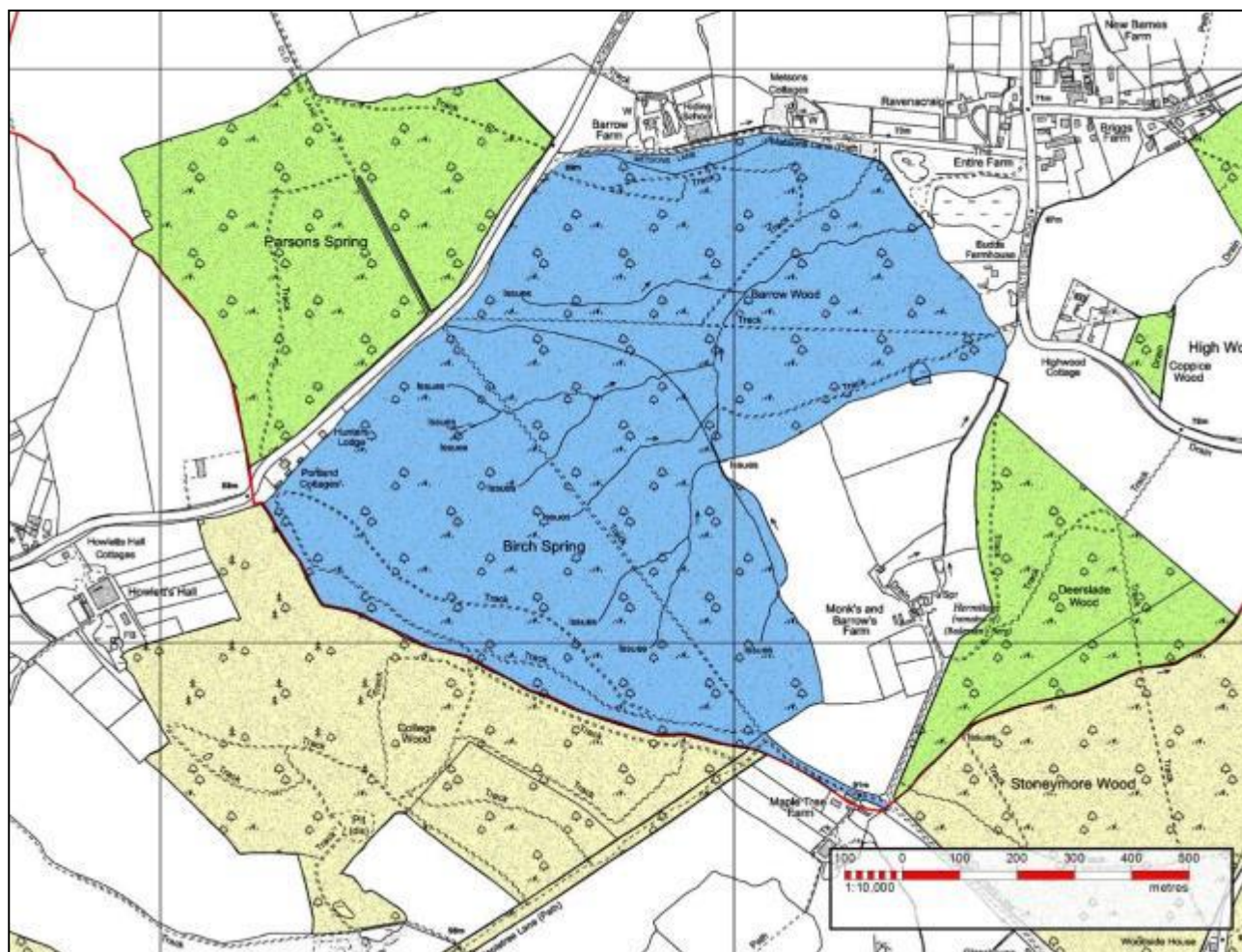
Resumption of coppicing would help improve structure complexity and overall biodiversity. Control of deer browsing and the spread of birch seedling, Bracken and Bramble would then become factors that might limit the re-establishment of a more diverse flora.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (minor boundary revision)

Ch7 Barrow Wood/Birch Spring, Loves Green (78.64 ha) TL 62820236



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This site is part of the former Writtle Forest. The canopy structure is mainly Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), all as coppice and standards. Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) and Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) are also found within the site and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) also occurs in the shrub layer. A generally species-poor ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Hairy Wood-rush (*Luzula pilosa*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*).

A short section Mapletree Lane (a LoWS within Brentwood Borough) provides connectivity for wildlife between this site and with Deerslade Wood within Writtle High Woods LoWS (Ch14).

Ownership and Access

Private ownership. The site is crossed by a right of way and a number of permissive paths.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hedgerows

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC30 Wildlife Corridors

Rationale

The site is a very large block of ancient woodland and is very important in its historic context as part of Writtle Forest.

Condition Statement

Neglected, stable

Management Issues

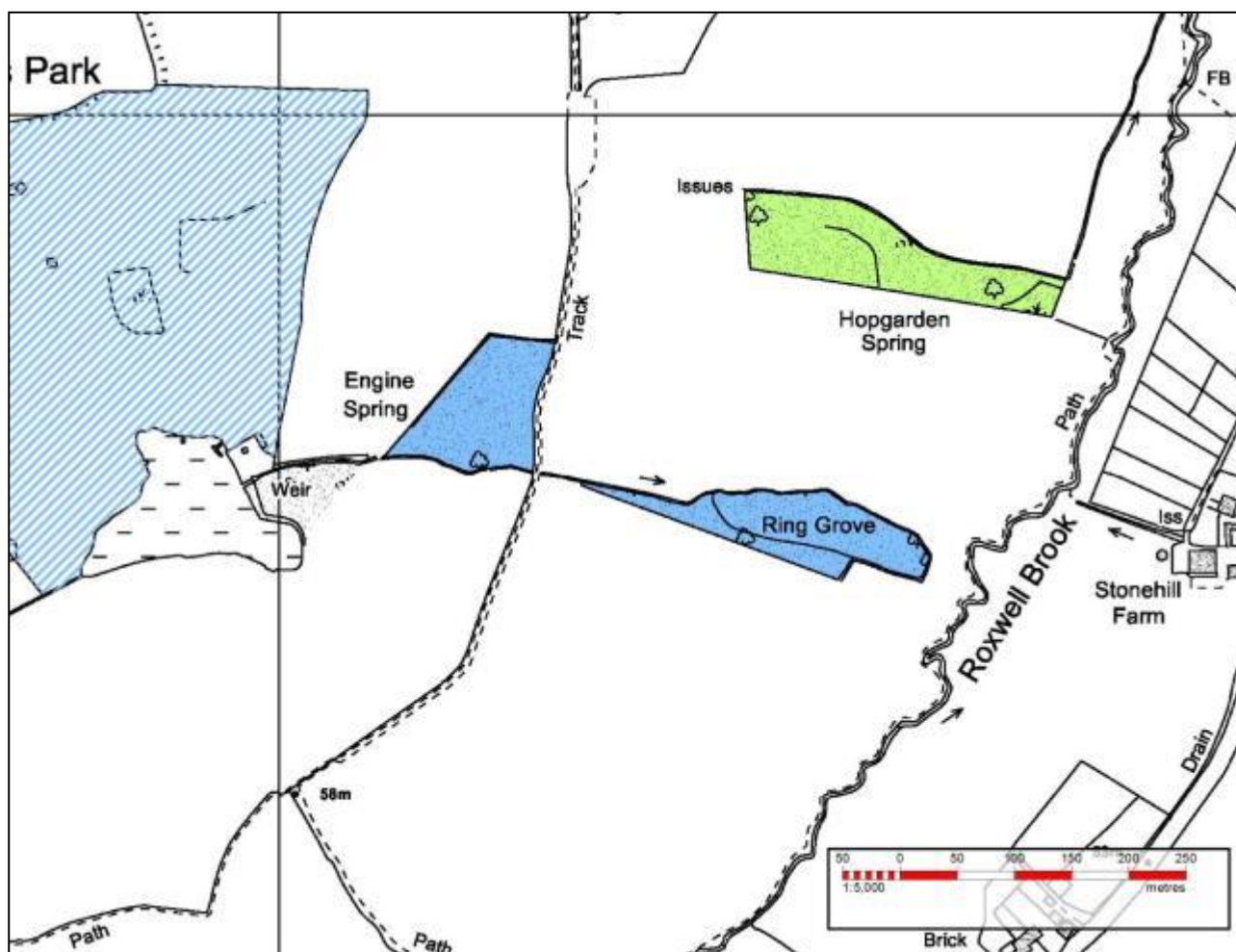
As with all old coppice woodlands, a resumption of coppicing is usually beneficial to maintain the high biodiversity of such sites. This may be challenging to reinstate given the likely deer browsing pressure and local markets for coppice wood products.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (small addition: Mapletree Lane section)

Ch9 Engine Spring/Ring Grove, Roxwell (2.25 ha) TL 63320768



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Historically, Engine Spring was located on the eastern edge of Skreens Park, whilst Ring Grove lay just outside the boundary. Although not classified as ancient woodland, these two irregularly shaped blocks exhibit characteristics similar to that seen in established older woods. These woods provide contrasting habitat in close proximity to one another. Engine Spring has tall Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice and Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) over wet Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*)-dominated flushes, though some habitat on the eastern side of the site has been cleared to provide storage for machinery. By contrast, Ring Grove is on well-draining soil, and is woodland of mature Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with scattered Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. The woodland becomes increasingly scrubby towards the north end and the canopy and shrub layer here includes Ash, Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is abundant in the ground flora, whilst Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) are also recorded from the site.

Ownership and Access

These woods are assumed to be in private ownership. Public right of way runs along the track dividing the two woods.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

HC3 Other Priority Habitat Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

If proven to be ancient woods, HC1 would apply.

Rationale

These woods have a good, diverse structure and flora, making for high quality woodland habitats. There is some evidence to suggest they are ancient in origin.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

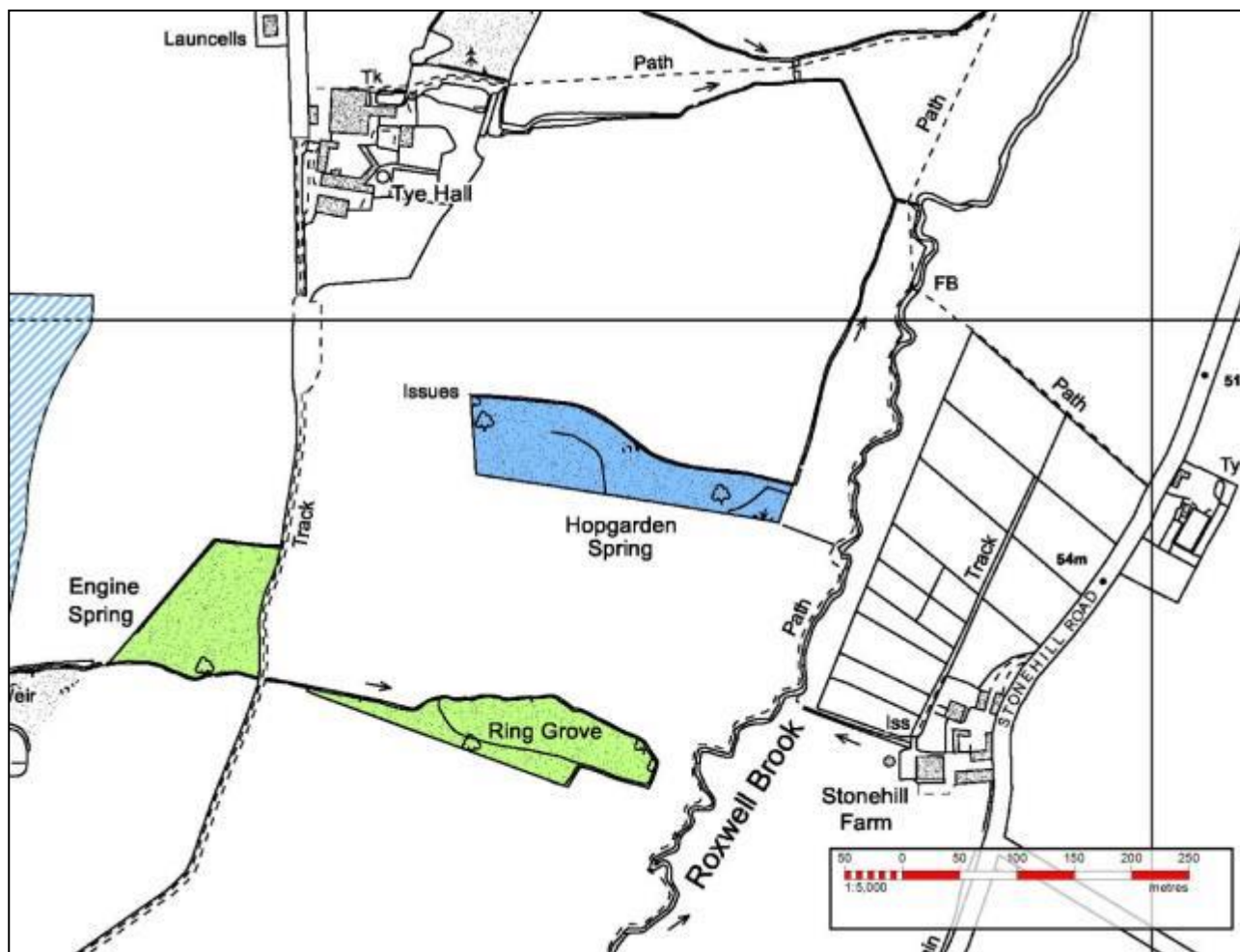
As with all old coppice woodlands, a resumption of coppicing is usually beneficial to maintain the high biodiversity of such sites. This may be challenging to reinstate given the likely deer browsing pressure and local markets for coppice wood products.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 2004

Reviewed: 2016

Ch10 Hopgarden Spring, Roxwell (1.44 ha) TL 63520787



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Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards form the main components of this wood. Coppiced Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) is also found at a sub-canopy level, whilst Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) are in the shrub layer. Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*) and Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) are recorded in the ground flora.

Ownership and Access

This wood is thought to be in private ownership. It can be viewed from a public footpath that runs close to the eastern tip.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

If proven to be ancient, HC1 would apply.

Rationale

This wood has a varied structure and composition. There is some evidence to suggest it might be ancient.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

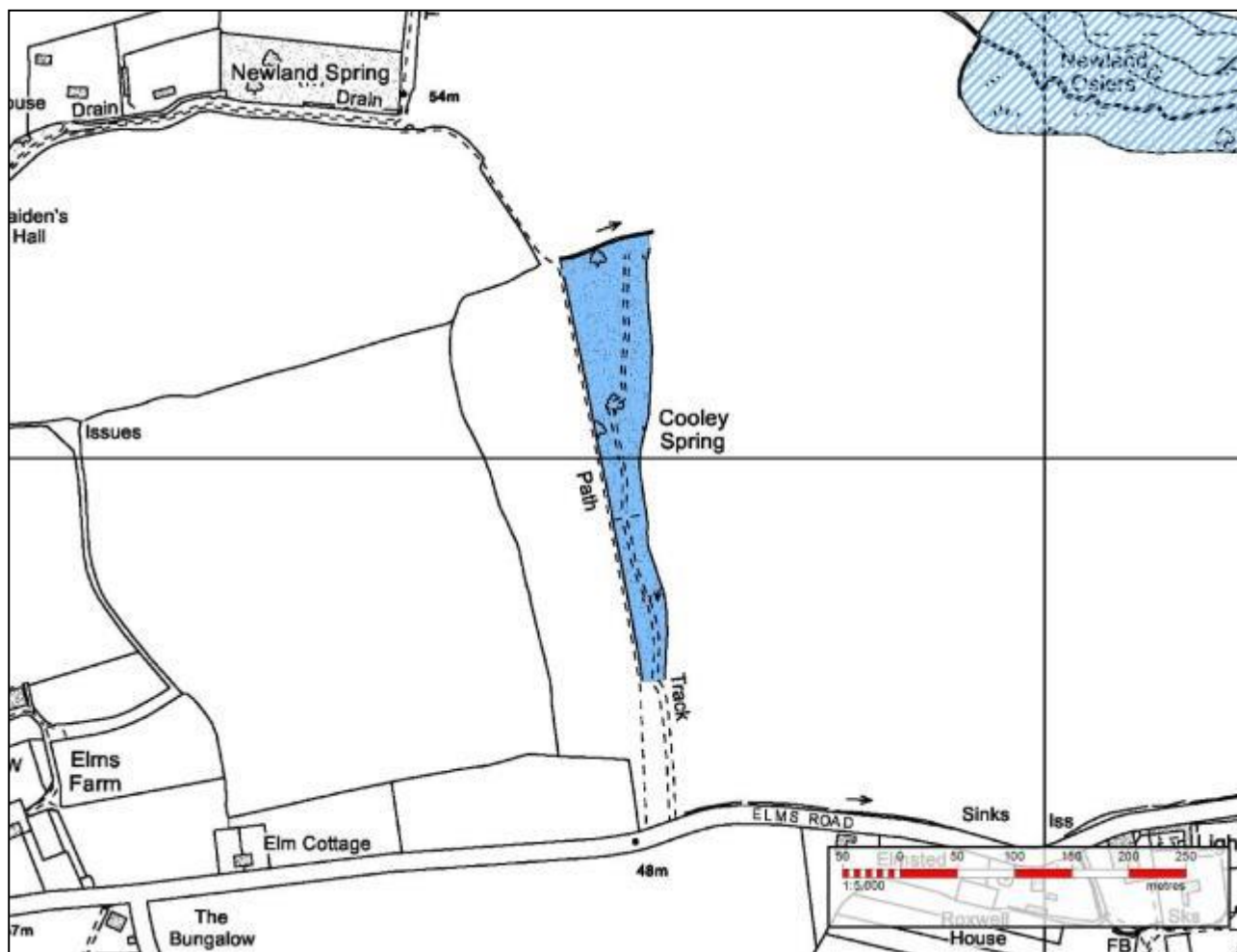
As with all old coppice woodlands, a resumption of coppicing is usually beneficial to maintain the high biodiversity of such sites. This may be challenging to reinstate given the likely deer browsing pressure and local markets for coppice wood products.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 2004

Reviewed: 2016

Ch11 Cooley Spring, Roxwell (1.79 ha) TL 63630903



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This is a very narrow strip of woodland surrounded by arable land on all sides. Tall Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards dominate this woodland. Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) are also found in the canopy. Spurge-laurel (*Daphne laureola*) is found in the shrub layer. Although not formally recorded as being ancient, the structure and flora (e.g. the recording of Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*)) indicate that this is at least a long-established wooded site.

Ownership and Access

This wood is thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. A right of way runs adjacent to the western boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

This site has a good woodland structure and floral composition and may prove to merit ancient woodland status.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

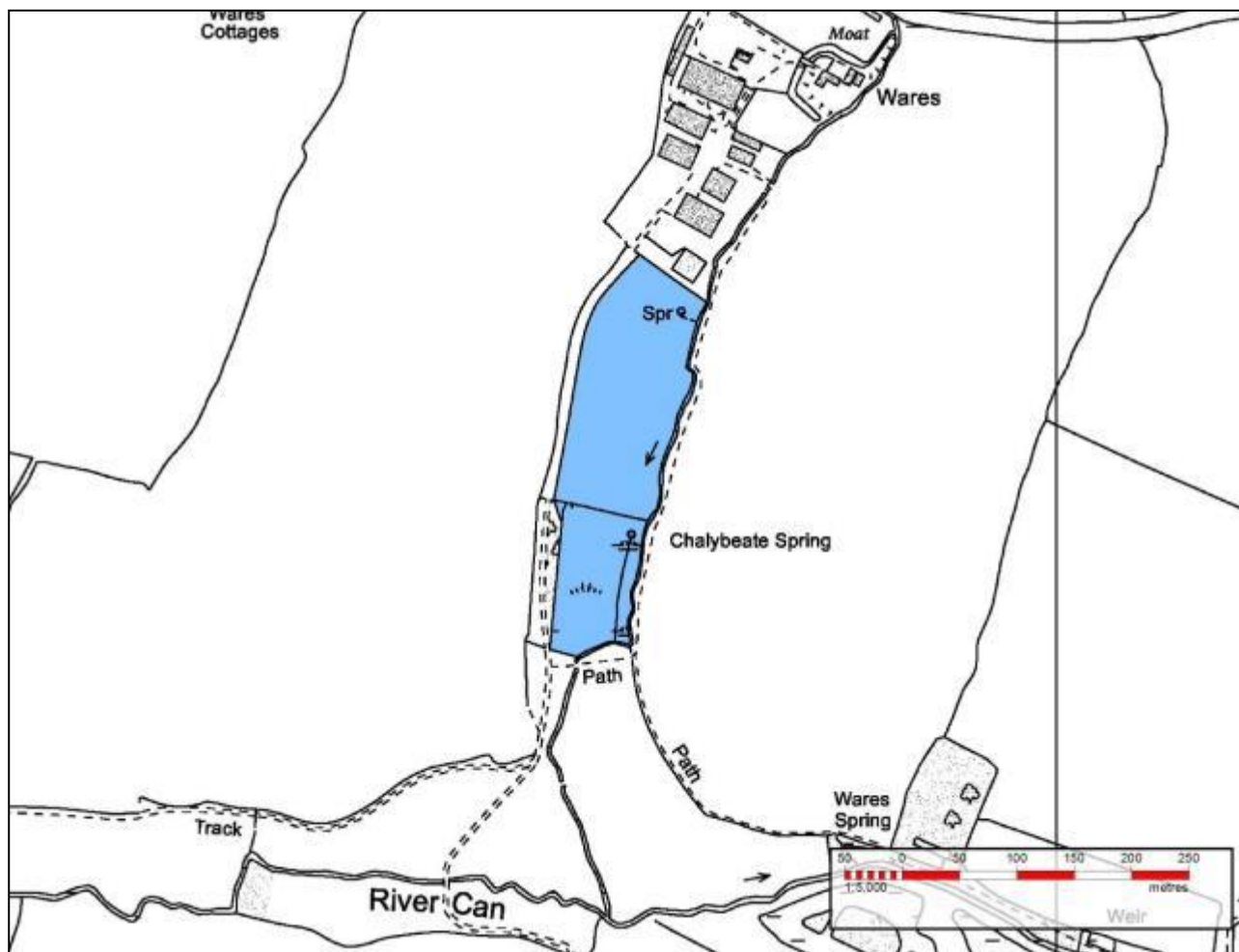
Planted Beech and invasive Sycamore will be casting a dense shade upon the ground layers. Resumption of coppicing Ash would be difficult in current climate of Ash die-back disease and likely deer browsing pressure.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch12 Chalybeate Spring Meadows, Good Easter (2.84 ha) TL 63611159



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This is an area of grass, swamp, scrub and fen vegetation. The central area of the site has swamp habitat characterised by stands of Sedge (*Carex* sp.) and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). The rich species assemblage includes Large Bitter-cress (*Cardamine amara*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*), Ragged-Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), sweet-grass (*Glyceria* sp.), Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*) and Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*). This vegetation may have affinities with the MG8 *Cynosurus cristatus* – *Caltha palustris* grassland, a “priority” grassland type for the East Anglian Plain Natural Area. Either side of the wet swamp habitat are areas of tall sward rough grassland. These drier grassland sections have less intrinsic value in themselves, though they provide good additional foraging habitat for invertebrates. They also serve a very important function as a ‘buffer’ habitat to the adjacent swamp. To the south of the open swamp and grassland is an area of willows (*Salix* sp.) over wet marshy ground and ruderal over drier areas.

Ownership and Access

This site is thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. A public right of way runs adjacent to the eastern boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Wet woodland
Lowland Fens

Hedgerows

Selection Criteria

HC3 Other Priority Habitat Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

HC14 Lowland Fen Vegetation

Rationale

This site has diverse habitat sites and a rich flora in the open swamp, which is a fragile and declining habitat type in Essex.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

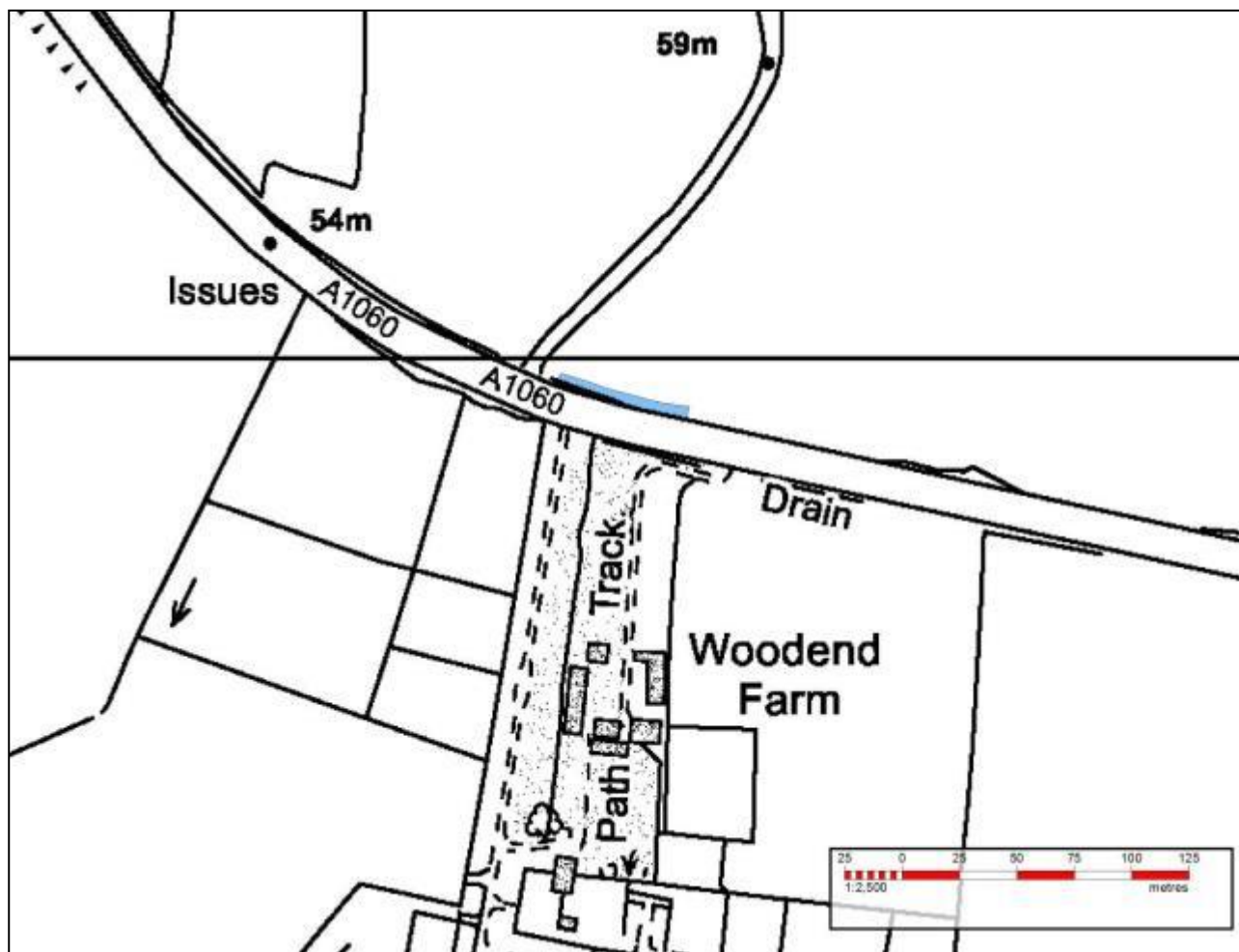
All wetland sites are vulnerable to changes in the groundwater regime, leading to successional changes. Grazing pressure has both advantages and disadvantages, but should be avoided in the wettest parts of the site.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch13 Road Verge 9, Roxwell (0.05 ha) TL 63650997



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This Essex County Council special roadside verge is designated due to a varied flora which includes abundant Common Restharrow (*Ononis repens*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) throughout. The verge also has Cowslip (*Primula vulgaris*) and Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*), whilst Sulphur Clover (*Trifolium ochroleucon*), a nationally scarce species, is found towards the western end of the site. It represents a remnant fragment of species-rich grasslands, which have now all but disappeared from Essex.

Ownership and Access

This verge is of unknown ownership. It can be viewed from the public highway although traffic dangers exist.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Perhaps a modified fragment of Lowland Meadow habitat, but this is uncertain.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Despite its small size, this verge provides relatively unimproved soil conditions that support species that throughout Essex have declined in distribution during recent decades.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

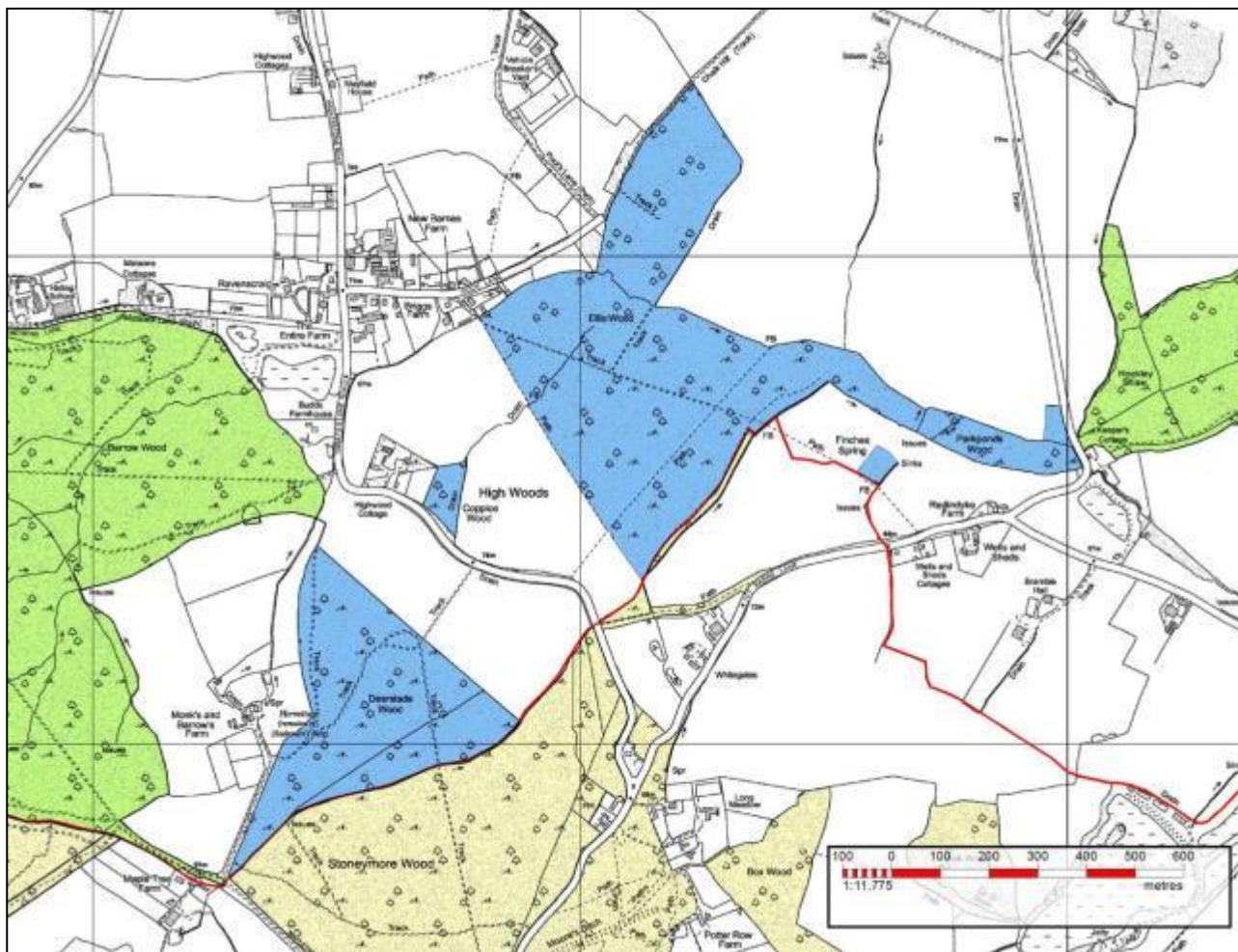
Inappropriate highway verge mowing and alterations to the highway.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch14 Writtle High Woods, Loves Green (49.64 ha) TL 64010257



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A substantial area from the central part of these woods has been grubbed out in the past. The remainder survives as Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards, Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Birch (*Betula* sp.). Other shrub species present include Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The ground flora varies: the damp areas have Remote sedge (*Carex remota*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), whilst other species, including Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and wood-rush (*Luzula* sp.), are confined to the drier areas.

Parkponds Wood differs from Ellis Wood in having more Oak standards and the coppiced Hornbeam and Birch are more widely spaced. The greater light penetration results in Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) dominating the ground flora. Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and Wood Small-reed (*Calamagrostis epigejos*) are found among a varied and interesting ground flora. A small roadside extension to Parkponds wood is recent in origin but has a good woodland structure and so provides a habitat extension to this otherwise ancient site.

Deerslade Wood contains Hornbeam and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice with Oak (*Quercus* spp.) standards with much Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) found at the southern end of the wood.

The south edge of Deerslade Wood forms the local authority boundary with Stoneymore Wood in Brentwood District. Of interest is the clearly defined ditch and earthbank that can be followed between the two. Here also to be found are several plants of Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*) an Essex Red Data List species now confined to only a few sites in the county.

Ownership and Access

In private ownership. A number of rights of way cross the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

There is good documentary evidence concerning the ancient status of this site, which is supported by the flora and composition. A small block of recent woodland provides a habitat extension.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

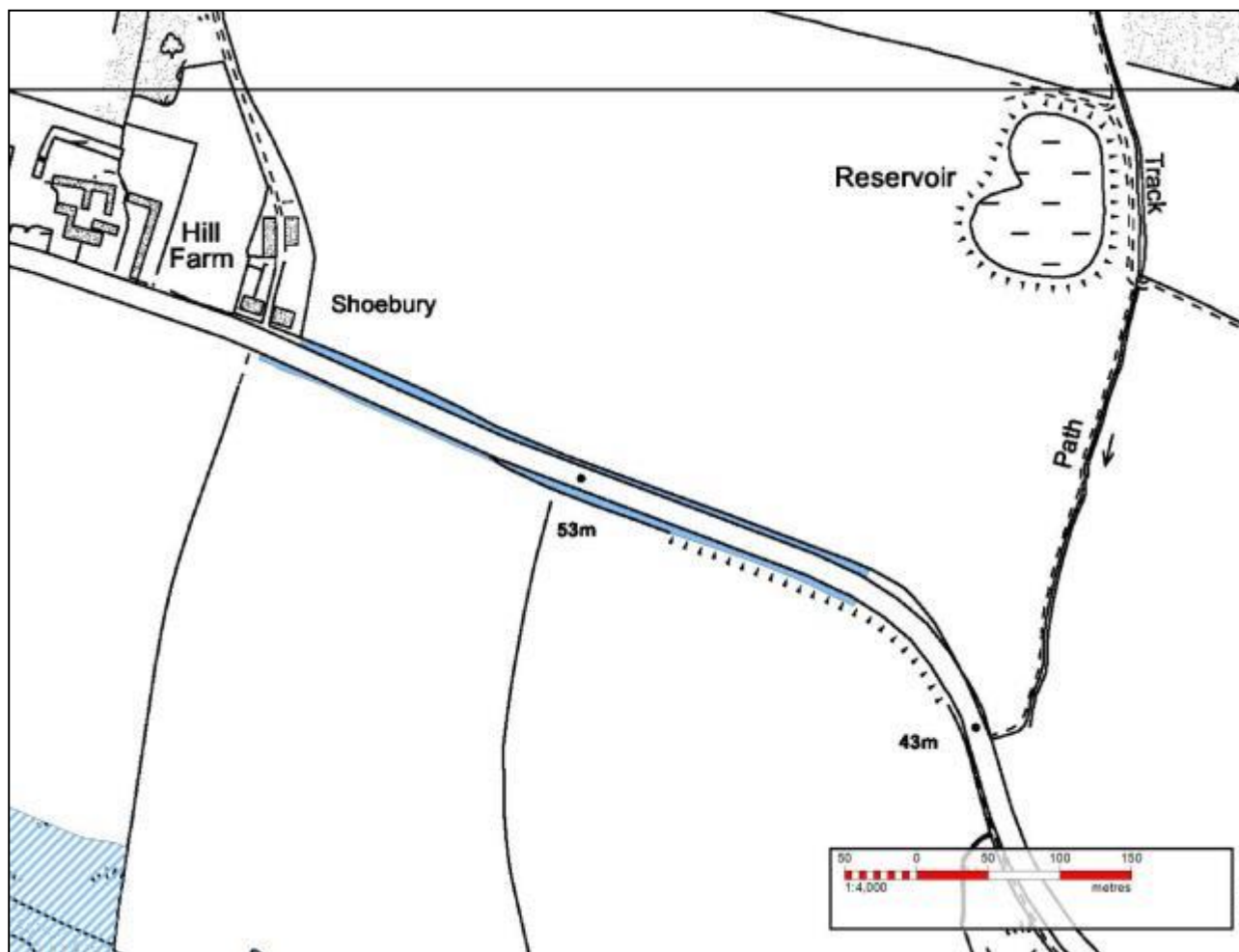
A resumption of coppicing would benefit the structural diversity of this large woodland site, although there would be issues with deer browsing the regeneration from cut stumps.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (small addition); 2016 (small addition)

Ch16 Boyton Cross Verges, Roxwell (0.75 ha) TL 64440973



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This site comprises grassland to the north and south of the A1060 Roxwell road. A species-rich habitat supports a flora characteristic of calcareous substrates. Included among these plants are Sulphur Clover (*Trifolium ochroleucon*) and Yellow Vetchling (*Lathyrus aphaca*), both nationally scarce plants. Yellow Vetchling is generally a coastal species and this inland road verge is possibly its only location in the Chelmsford City Administrative Area. Other species of interest found on these verges include, Common Broomrape (*Orobanche minor*) and Common Restharrow (*Ononis repens*), whilst Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*) is found on the sunny bank to the rear of the northern verge.

This site incorporates Essex County Council Special Roadside Verge 12, Roxwell, but a small extension to the southern verge has been incorporated into this Local Wildlife Site.

Ownership and Access

Ownership unknown. It can be viewed from the public highway, although traffic dangers exist.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

This site supports a rich and diverse flora of underlying chalky soil not commonly found in Chelmsford.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

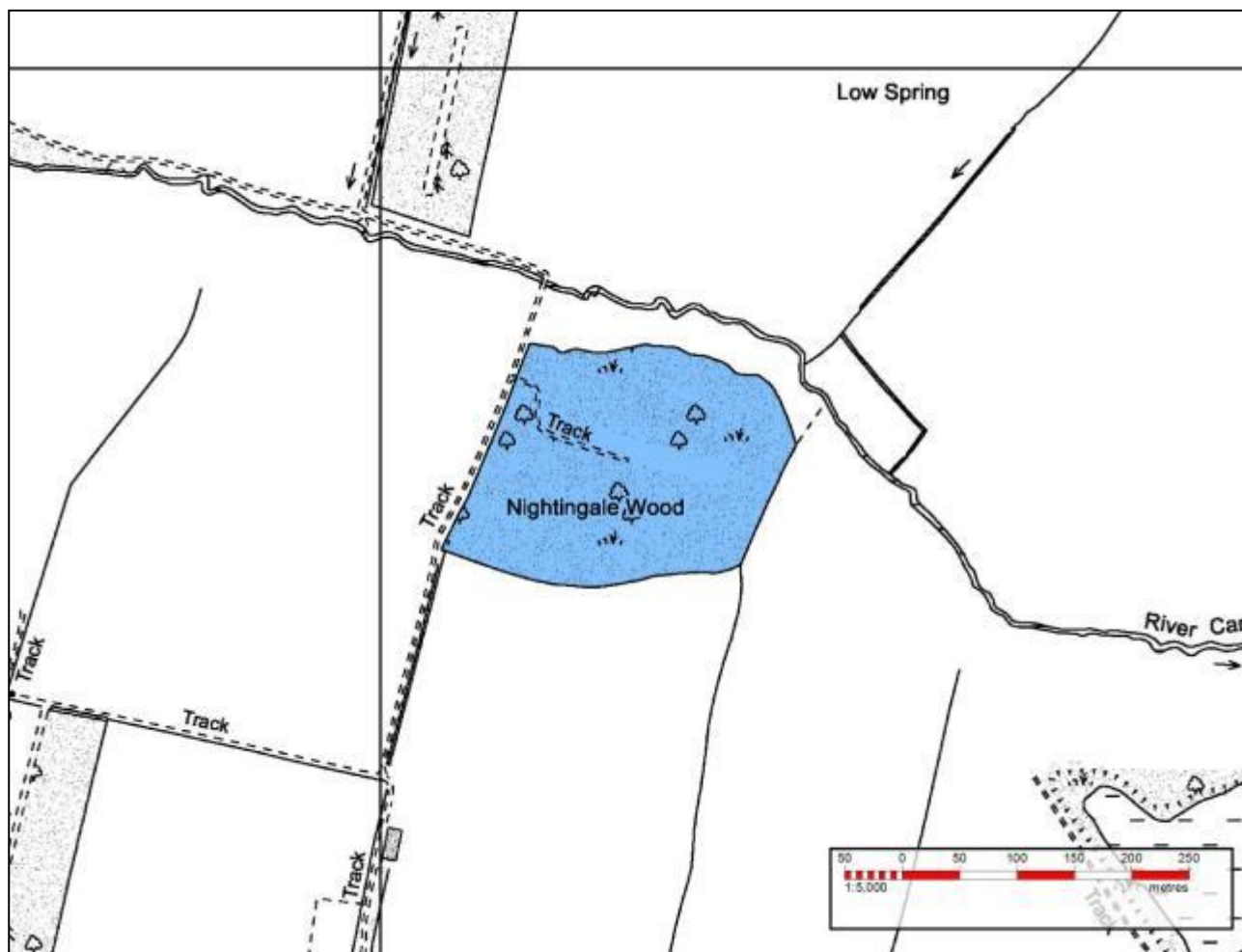
Inappropriate verge maintenance and highway alterations remain a threat, although Special Roadside Verge status should reduce negative cutting impacts.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (significantly shortened); 2016

Ch17 Nightingale Wood, Mashbury (4.86 ha) TL 65211065



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Nightingale Wood is an ancient woodland site but retaining little of its original canopy. Only the margins of the wood, with coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) stands, resemble the likely ancient structure. Much of the wood has been replanted/underplanted with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash, leaving just a few high canopy trees. Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) scrub dominates many areas. However, Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) are present in the ground flora.

Ownership and Access

This wood is thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. A right of way skirts the northern and eastern boundaries.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

Although the woodland structure does not resemble that of a typical ancient site, this site has been not been previously cleared to other land use and the ancient woodland indicators in the ground flora testify that the soils probably have not been significantly improved.

Condition Statement

Poor, improving?

Management Issues

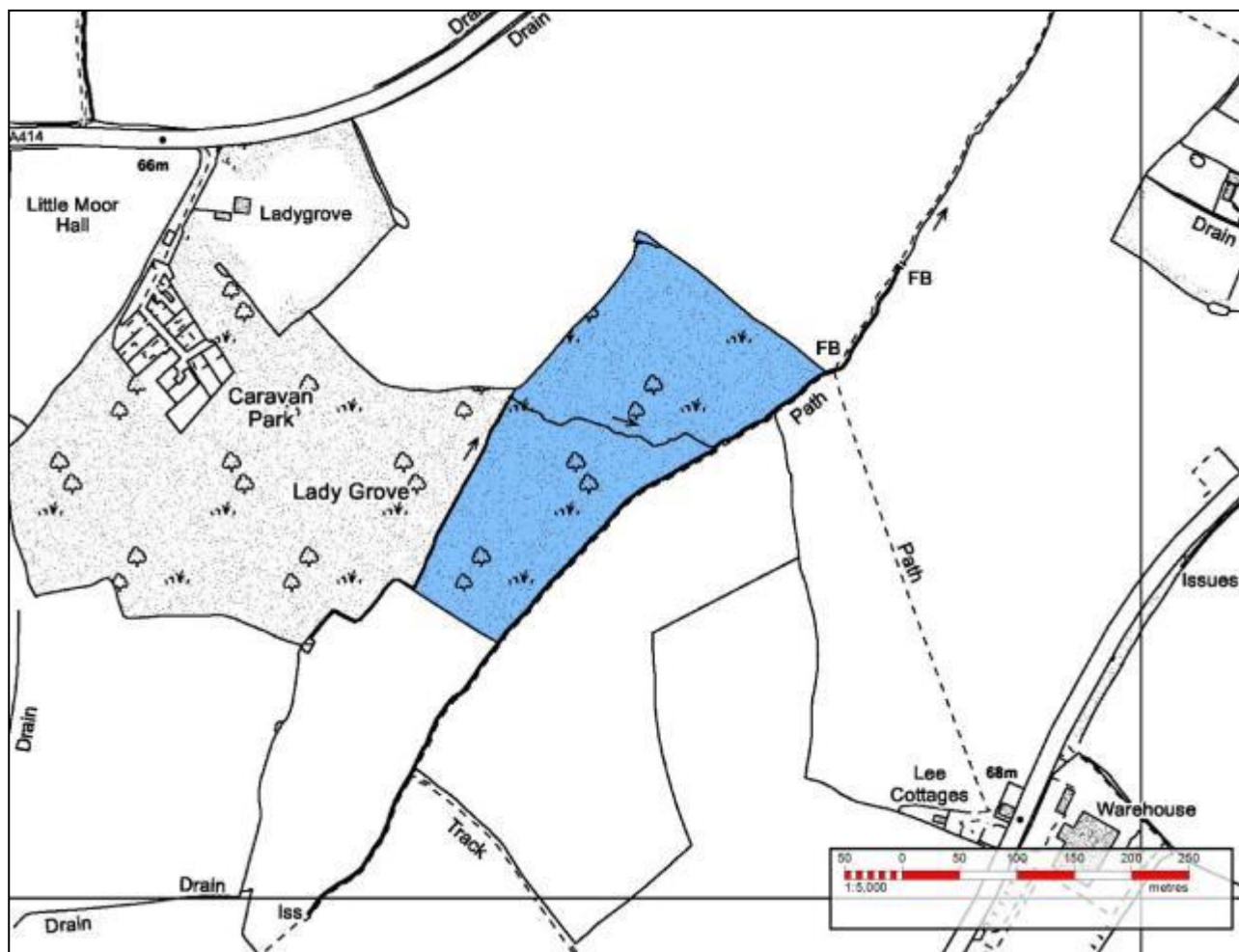
Reinstatement of a native, broad-leaved canopy and sub-canopy structure is desirable.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch18 Lady Grove, Writtle (5.19 ha) TL 65530540



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Lady Grove is a large area of woodland, however only the block of wood on the east side is included as a Wildlife Site. The ancient part, comprising this Local Wildlife Site, retains a good structure of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. A patchy shrub layer has occasional Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The ground flora includes several ancient woodland indicators such as Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) and Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*).

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership. A right of way runs adjacent to the south-east boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The coppiced structure and composition of this section of Lady Grove clearly distinguish it from the mainly standard trees and poorer ground flora of the non-ancient section to the west side. These

contrasting sections highlight the importance of retaining ancient woodland in the countryside around Chelmsford.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

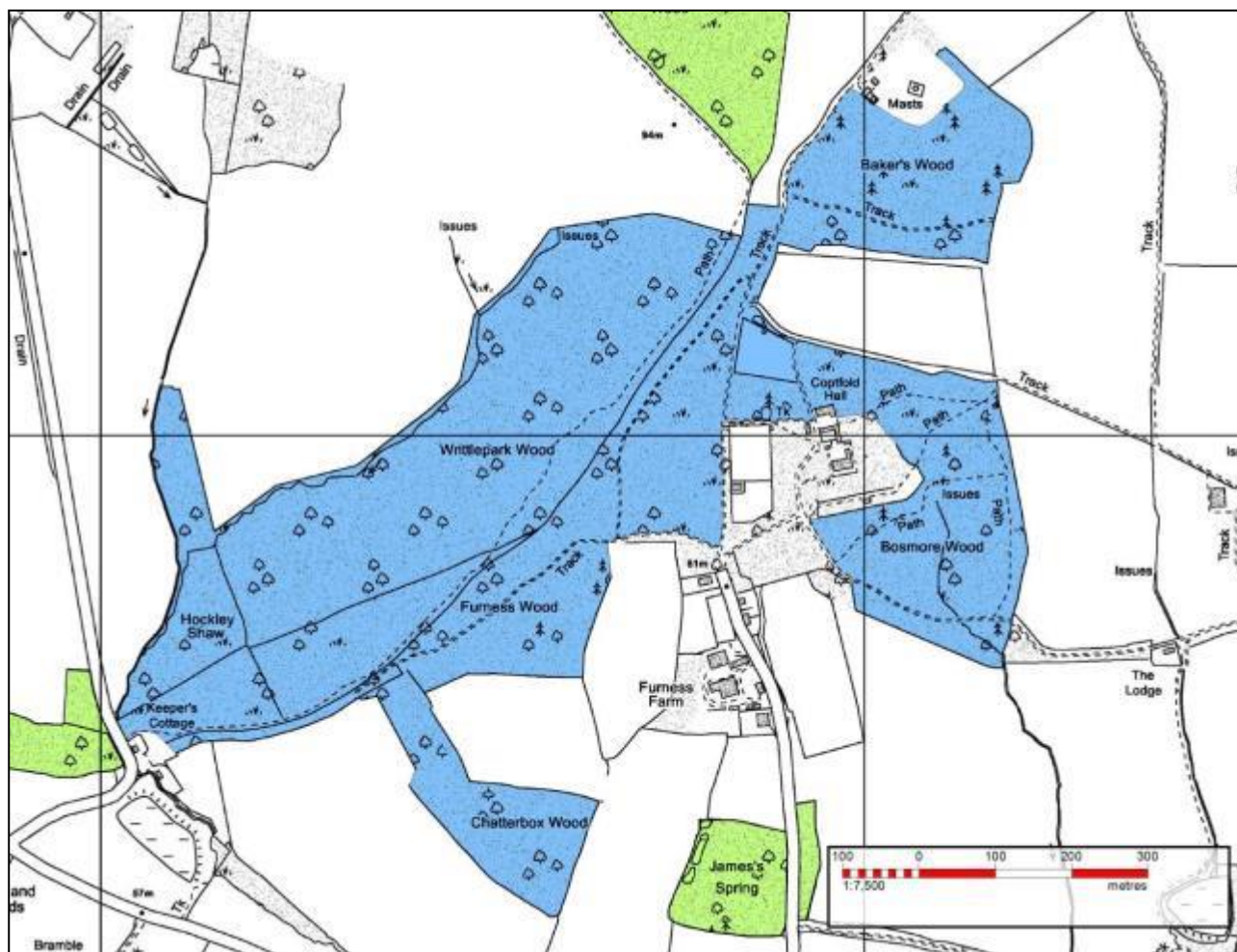
Overgrown Hornbeam coppice casts a dense shade that will be suppressing the shrub and ground layers and hence lowering overall biodiversity.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (western section removed); 2016

Ch19 Writtlepark Woods, Margaretting (48.91 ha) TL 65650294



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The Writtlepark complex consists of Writtlepark Wood, Bosmore Wood, Baker's Wood and Chatterbox Wood. These form part of the original Writtle Forest woods with Writtlepark Wood and Hockley Shaw lying within the former boundary of Writtle Park. The largest section, Writtlepark Wood, is dominated by coppiced Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards are found throughout. The wood slopes away north-west to a stream valley on the edge of the wood where Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) thrives. Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) carpets the slopes above the stream. Other species include Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*) and Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) whilst Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria alsine*) is recorded from rutted track margins. Replanting has occurred in Furness Wood where there is a much younger canopy composition that includes Sweet Chestnut, Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Pedunculate Oak. To the south Chatterbox Wood is primarily Hornbeam coppice, Oak and Sweet Chestnut, whilst the woods surrounding Coptford Hall display a varied canopy structure.

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership. A right of way runs through Writtlepark Wood.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

These woodlands form an integral part of the historic landscape of Writtle Forest. There is good documentary evidence to suggest an ancient status, which is also borne out by the structure and composition.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

Maintenance of a coppice cycle would greatly benefit the structural diversity of these large woods.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch20 Bushey Wood, Margaretting (3.04 ha) TL 65700146



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This wood, located on the boundary with Brentwood District, comprises mainly tall Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards with Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice being found towards the southern end of the wood. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) are found in a scattered shrub layer. The ground flora is predominantly Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) with Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), and Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) is recorded, as is the much smaller Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*).

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, but can be viewed from a close network of rights of way.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

This woodland presents a varied native species canopy, and shrub layer structure. Its composition supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

A resumption of coppicing would be beneficial, although this may create problems from Ash die-back disease and deer browsing.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch21 James's Spring, Margaretting (2.30 ha) TL 65840242



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Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards characterise this small fragment of ancient wood, which now sits in isolation from the larger blocks of woodland within the Writtle forest complex. Other recorded tree species include Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) dominates much of the woodland ground flora, which is impoverished under the dense Hornbeam canopy.

Ownership and Access

This wood is thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition support documentary evidence that this is an ancient site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

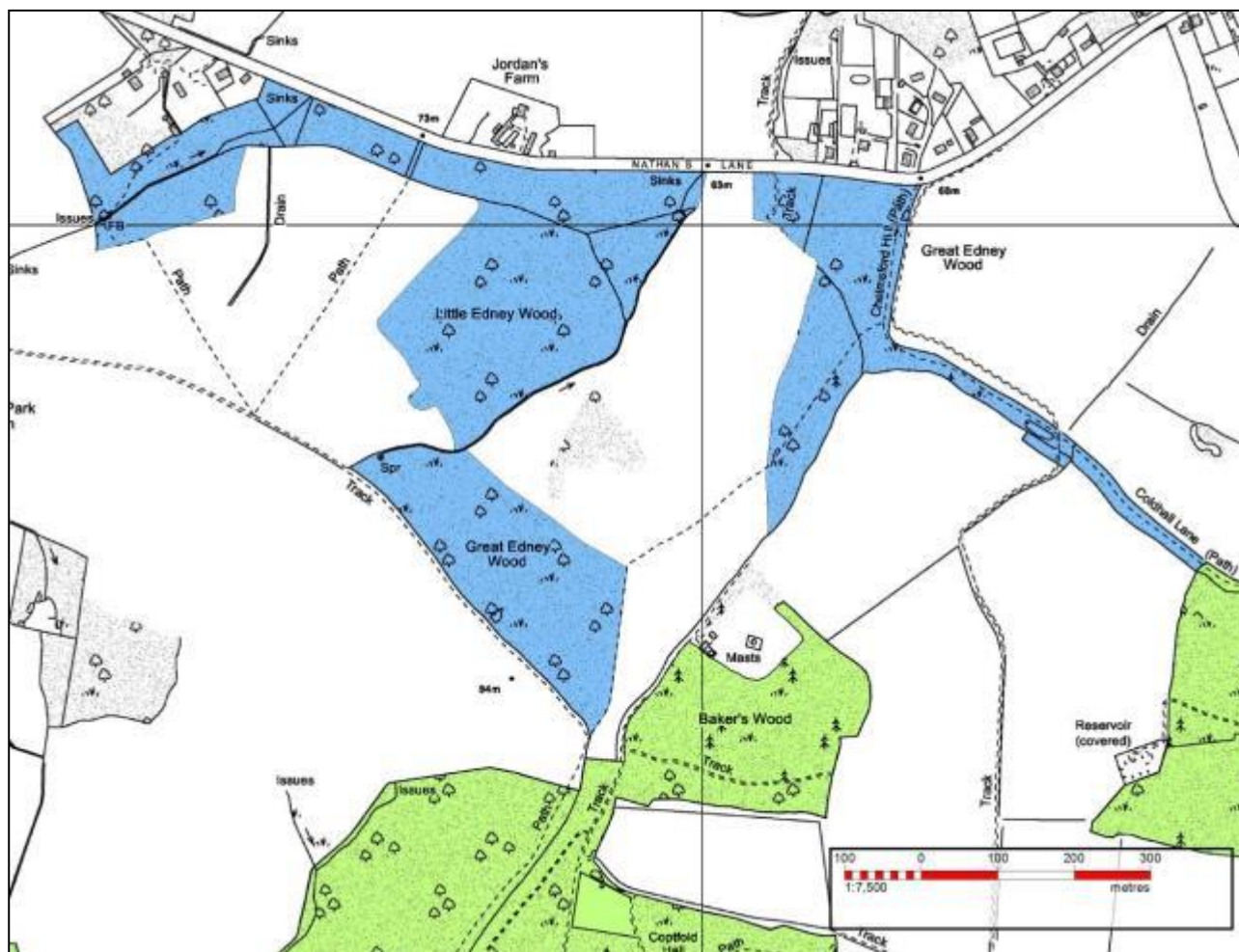
Dense shade from overgrown Hornbeam coppice is limiting the shrub and ground layers.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch22 Great/Little Edney Woods, Edney Common (25.36 ha) TL 65810385



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The greater proportion of these woods located to the north of Writtle Park have been cleared in the distant past. The remainder mostly survives as ancient woodland with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards amongst Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice, though a band of secondary woodland lacking the classic coppice structure and with non-native conifers, lies just south of Nathans Lane. Other tree and shrub species in this site include Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). Whilst Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) can found on the drier free draining soils, a great many other plants are recorded from throughout these woodland blocks. These include Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) and Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) among a rich and varied flora. Good ecological connectivity to Ch30 King Wood is provided via Cold Hall Lane.

Ownership and Access

In private ownership. A series of rights of way crosses the various sections of this site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

These woodlands form part of the historic landscape of Writtle Forest and are demonstrably ancient.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

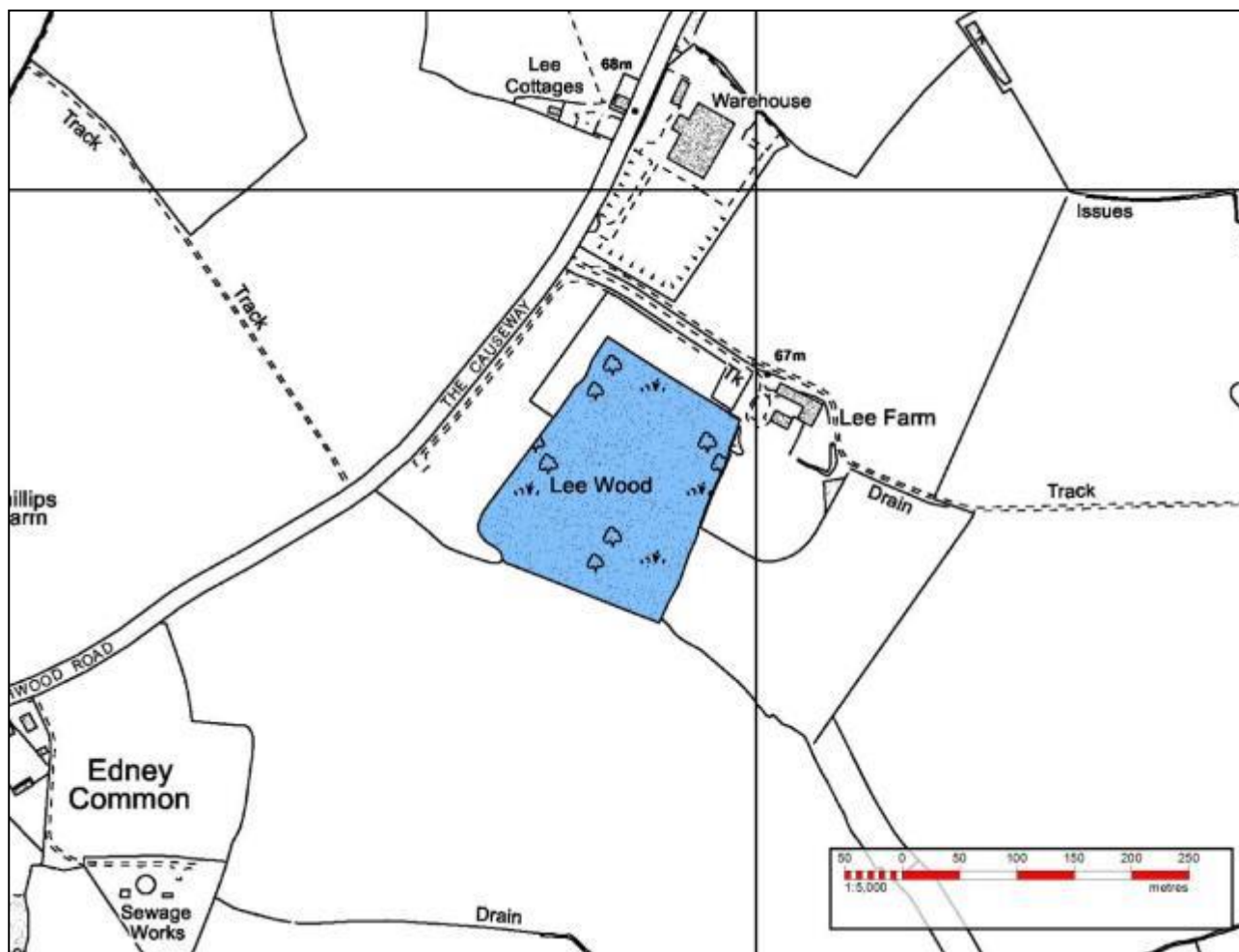
Resumption of cyclical coppicing would be beneficial.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (additions); 2016

Ch23 Lee Wood, Writtle (3.24 ha) TL 65870474



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This wood is characterised by Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and some Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) coppice dominating the outer areas of the wood, whilst Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) forms a central high canopy with lower growing Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), an ancient woodland indicator, is also present. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) are the main components of a scattered shrub layer and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) (another ancient woodland species) is also recorded. Pendulous Sedge is found in abundance particularly in the eastern half of the site. Species of interest from the ground flora include Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Hairy St John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*).

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

This woodland retains a diverse structure and a good suite of indicator species typifying ancient woodland habitat.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

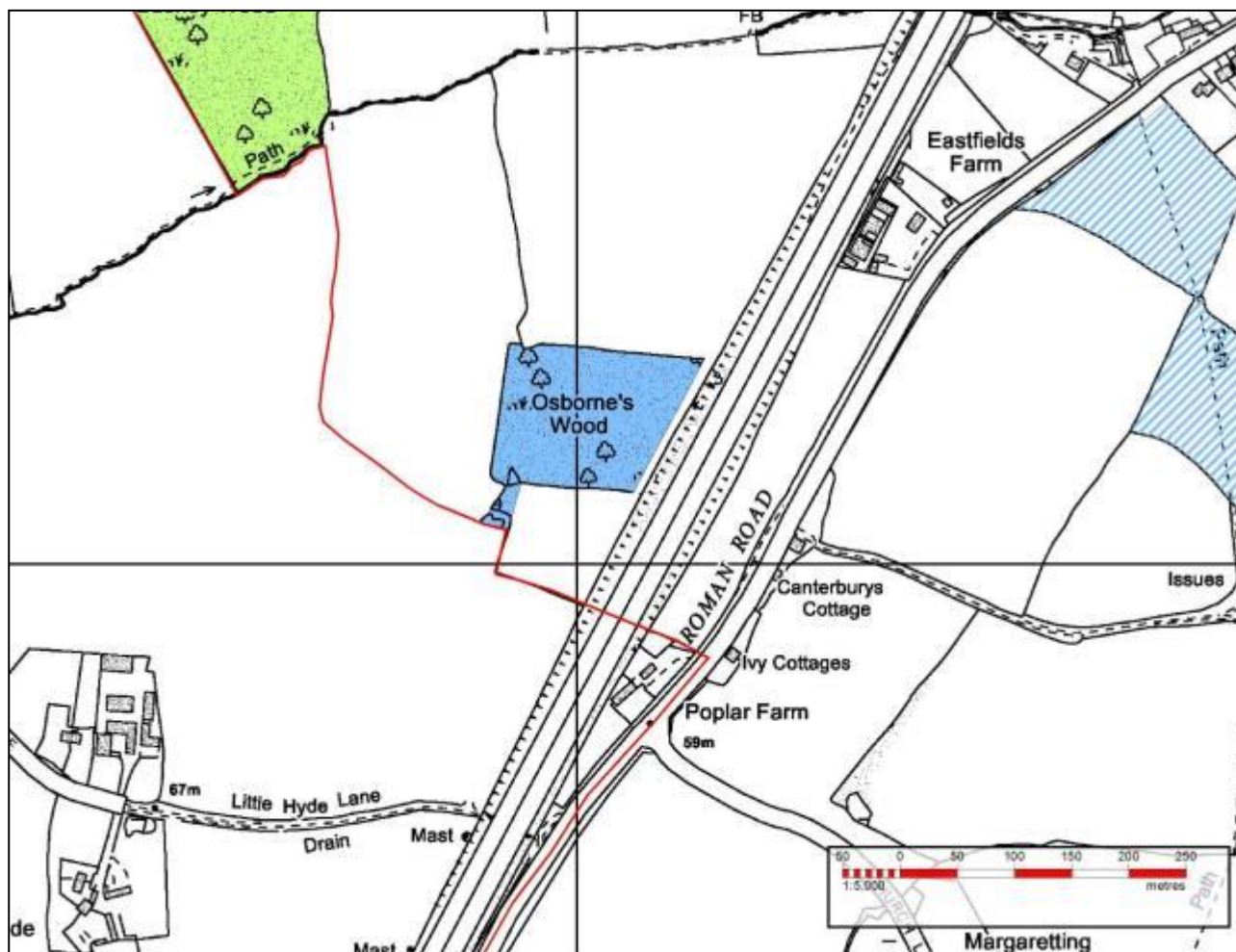
A resumption of coppicing would be beneficial.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch24 Osbourne's Wood, Margaretting (1.89 ha) TL 66000112



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Osborne's Wood is ancient woodland dominated by Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice, also containing Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) coppice, Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) standards. The ground flora is typified by a fine display of abundant Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), but also includes Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and the small shrub Spurge-laurel (*Daphne laureola*). The pond in the south west corner is shaded by Pedunculate Oak trees and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) scrub. Bluebells are also found close to the pond whose margins have much Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*). This small extension may be of recent origin but adds to the habitat diversity of the site.

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. A right of way touches the southern tip.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition with Hornbeam coppice and Bluebell in the ground flora is typical of many ancient woodlands in the area.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

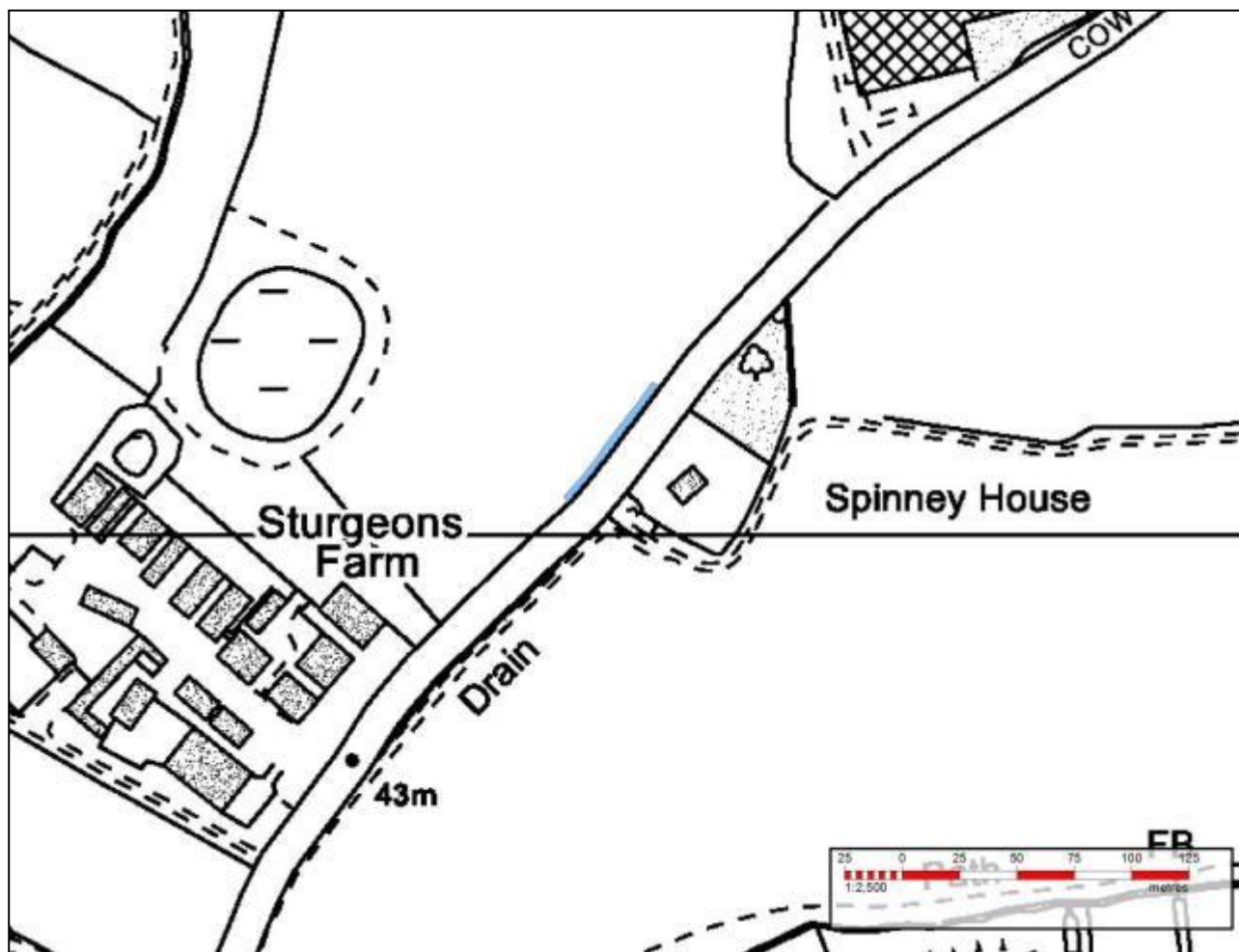
Overgrown Hornbeam coppice is likely to be suppressing the shrub and ground layers.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (small addition)

Ch26 Cow Watering Lane Verge, Writtle (0.05 ha) TL 66540703



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This small fenced site is being managed to encourage floristic diversity. The site exhibits a variety of herbs including Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra* agg.), but is particularly noted due to the presence of Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*), Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) and Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*).

Ownership and Access

Unknown ownership. The verge can be viewed from the public highway but traffic dangers exist.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Much of the old, unimproved grassland resource of the county now lies within small fragments of grassland surviving within road/lane corridors such as this site.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

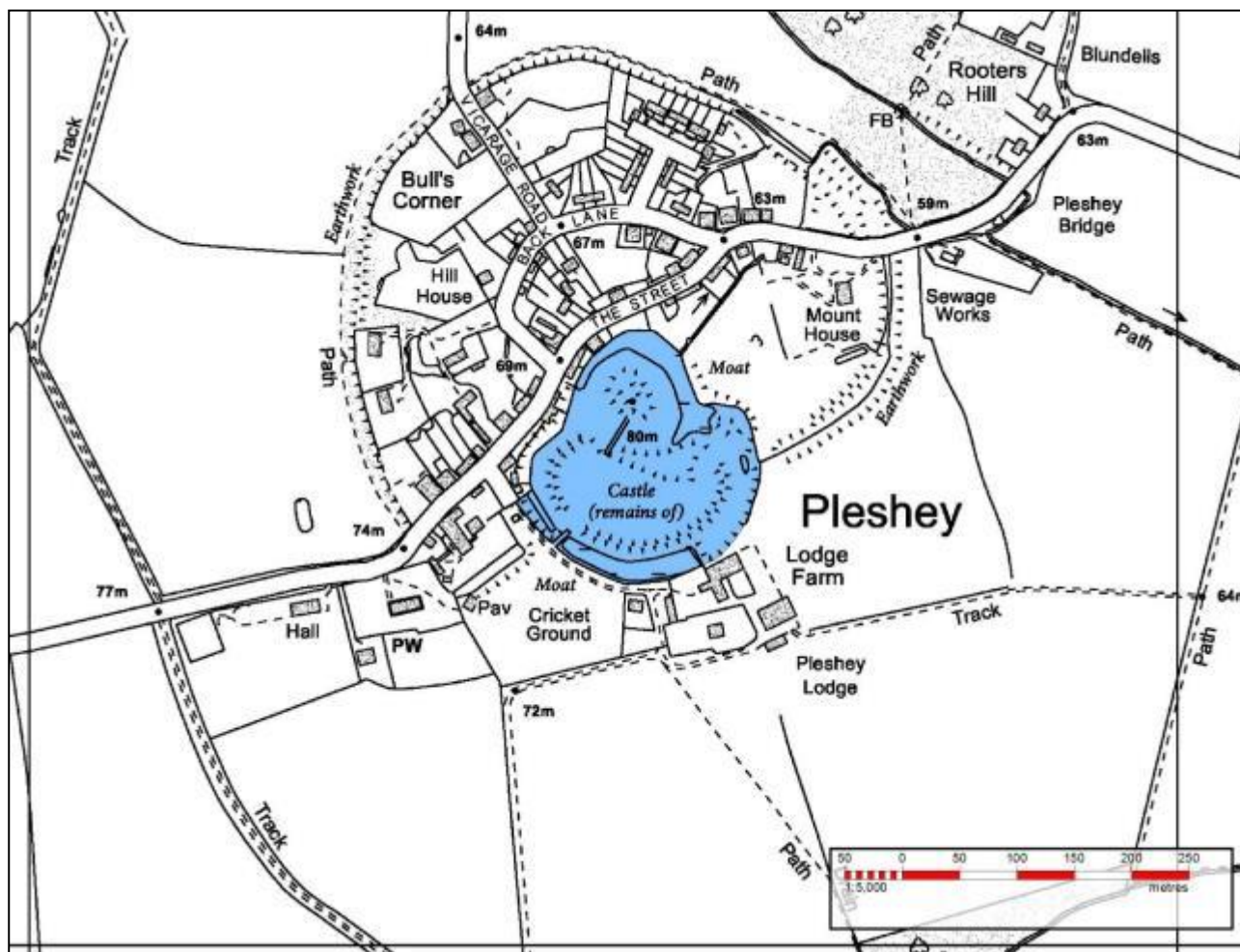
There is a need to maintain a stable cutting regime that is sympathetic to the requirements of the key species present.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch28 Pleshey Castle, Pleshey (3.15 ha) TL 66531441



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The ancient earthwork of Pleshey Castle mound is clearly an ancient habitat that will have escaped agricultural improvement. The artificial mound dates from the 11th Century and now supporting a mosaic of grassland and scrub, with the old moat adding aquatic habitats. The grassland species include Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), with False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) in rougher, unmanaged areas. Species of interest include Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Vervain (*Verbena officinalis*) (an uncommon Essex plant that is included within the Essex Red Data list of threatened plants) and Lesser Calamint (*Clinopodium calamintha*), a nationally scarce plant for which Essex has a large proportion of the sites.

Ownership and Access

The site is in private ownership. It is opened to the public for specific events each year.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC28 Small-component Mosaics

Rationale

This is clearly an ancient site, with habitats that will have evolved over nearly one thousand years. The mosaic of grass, scrub and aquatic habitats combine to provide a haven for wildlife in an otherwise heavily agricultural area.

Condition Statement

Stable

Management Issues

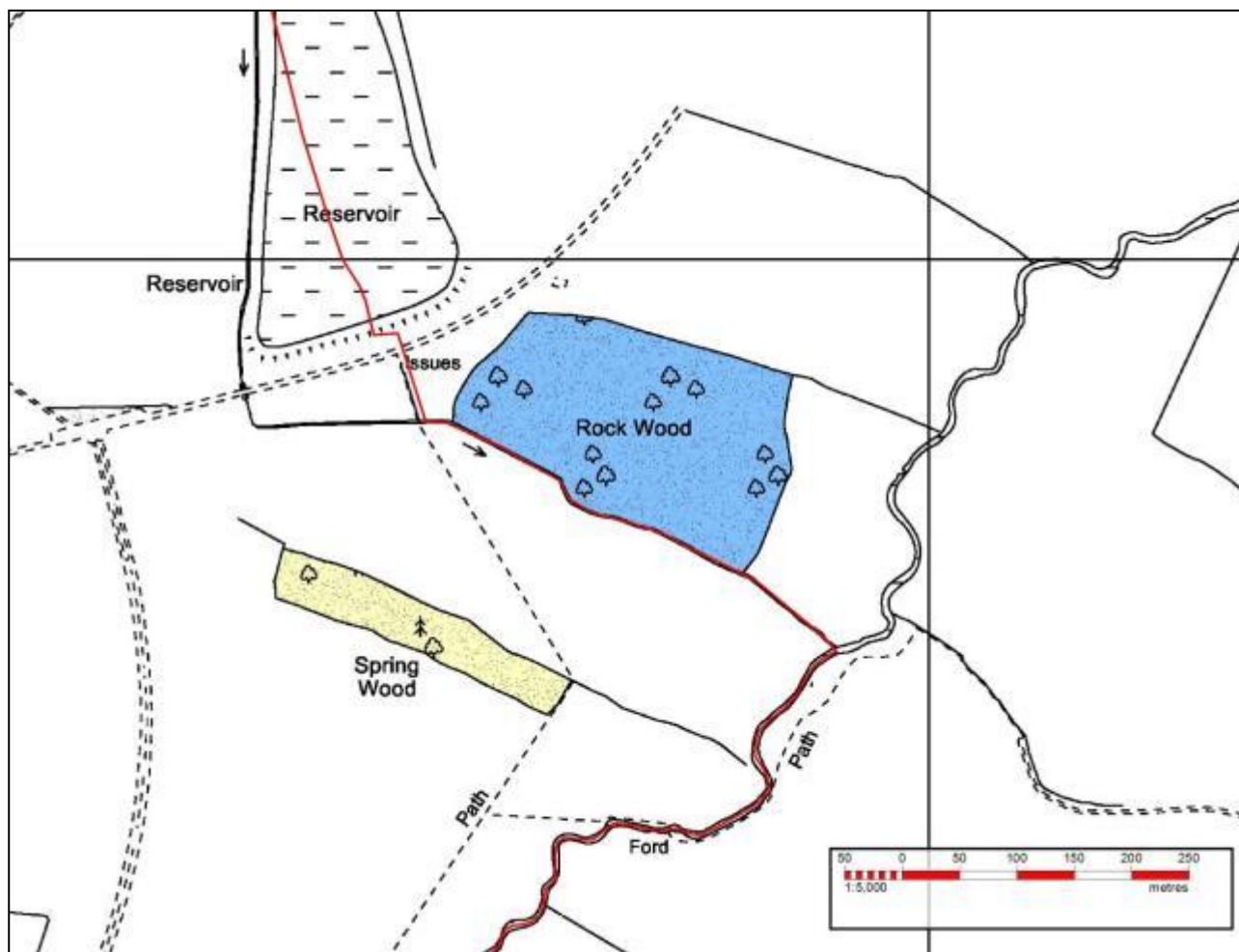
There is a need to strike a balance between scrub invasion, as a negative impact, and the positive benefits of a grassland/scrub mosaic structure. Some regular cutting of rough grassland areas may help conserve a more species-rich flora.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch29 Rook Wood, Margaretting (4.19 ha) TQ 66749985



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Rook Wood is dominated by Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice and standards along with interspersed Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*). Old standards remain to the west side, whilst to the east younger Birch (*Betula* sp.) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) grow. Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) forms a very sparse shrub layer as well as some rare Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*). Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is found in abundance beneath the mature trees, whilst other ancient woodland indicators such as Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) are rare.

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. A right of way runs along the southern boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

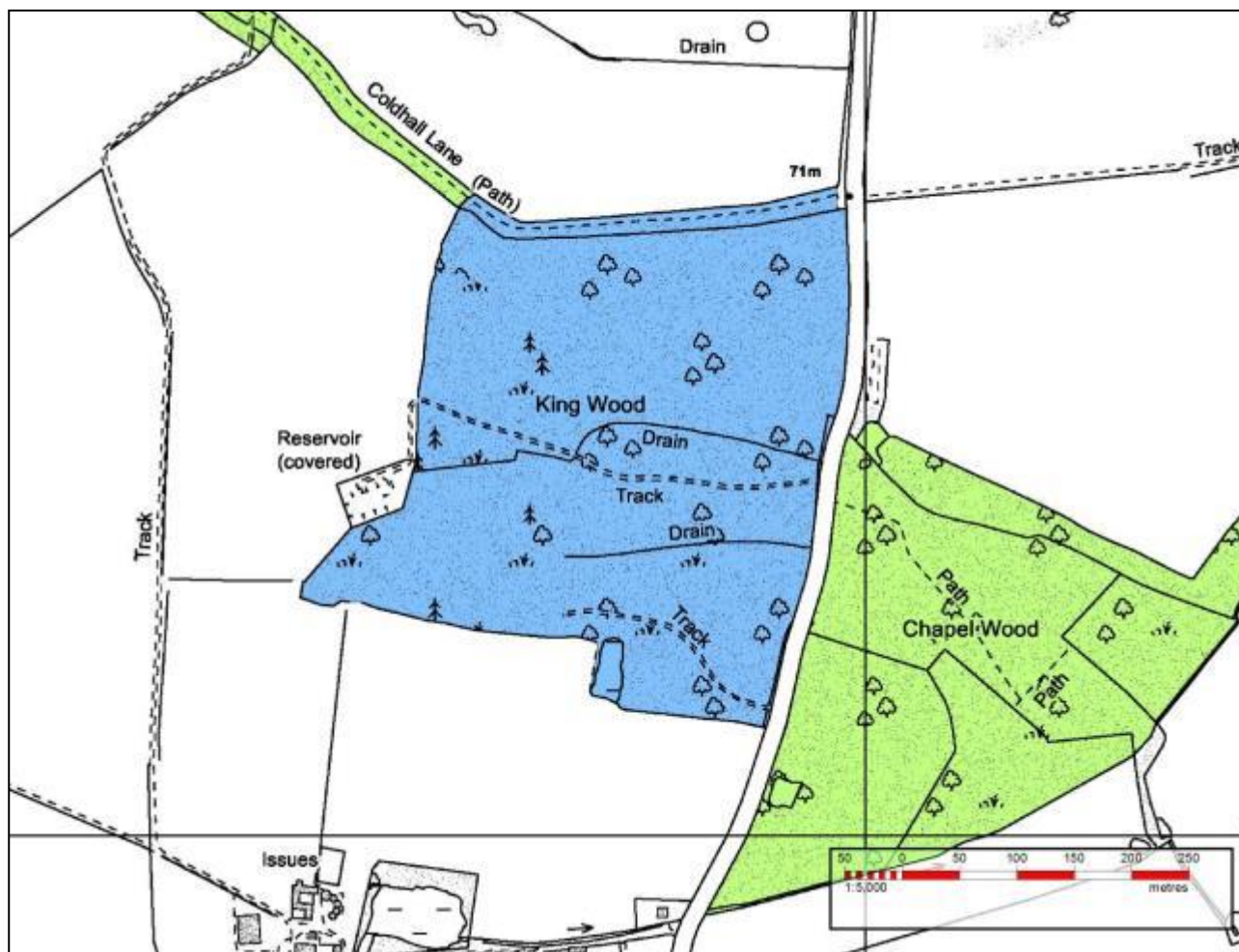
Overgrown Hornbeam coppice casts a dense shade that is likely to be suppressing biodiversity within this wood.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch30 King Wood, Margaretting (15.03 ha) TL 66780334



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To the west side of this ancient wood two areas were replanted after the damage done by the 1987 hurricane. A variety of tree species can be found, including Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*). A rich ground flora includes typical woodland plants including Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) and Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*). Damper areas support Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) and the rare Hairy Wood-rush (*Luzula pilosa*). However, by contrast, the dry, acidic soils of open glade and track areas within the wood support species such as Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) and Pill Sedge (*Carex pilulifera*), the latter being scarce in Essex and an unusual component of a woodland flora in Essex.

Coldhall Lane is included within the site as a continuation of the lane extending from Great Edney Wood to the west, providing an important wildlife corridor between these large, ancient woods.

Ownership and Access

In private ownership, with no direct public access. A right of way runs along Coldhall Lane.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Largely neglected coppice; some storm damage replanting.

Management Issues

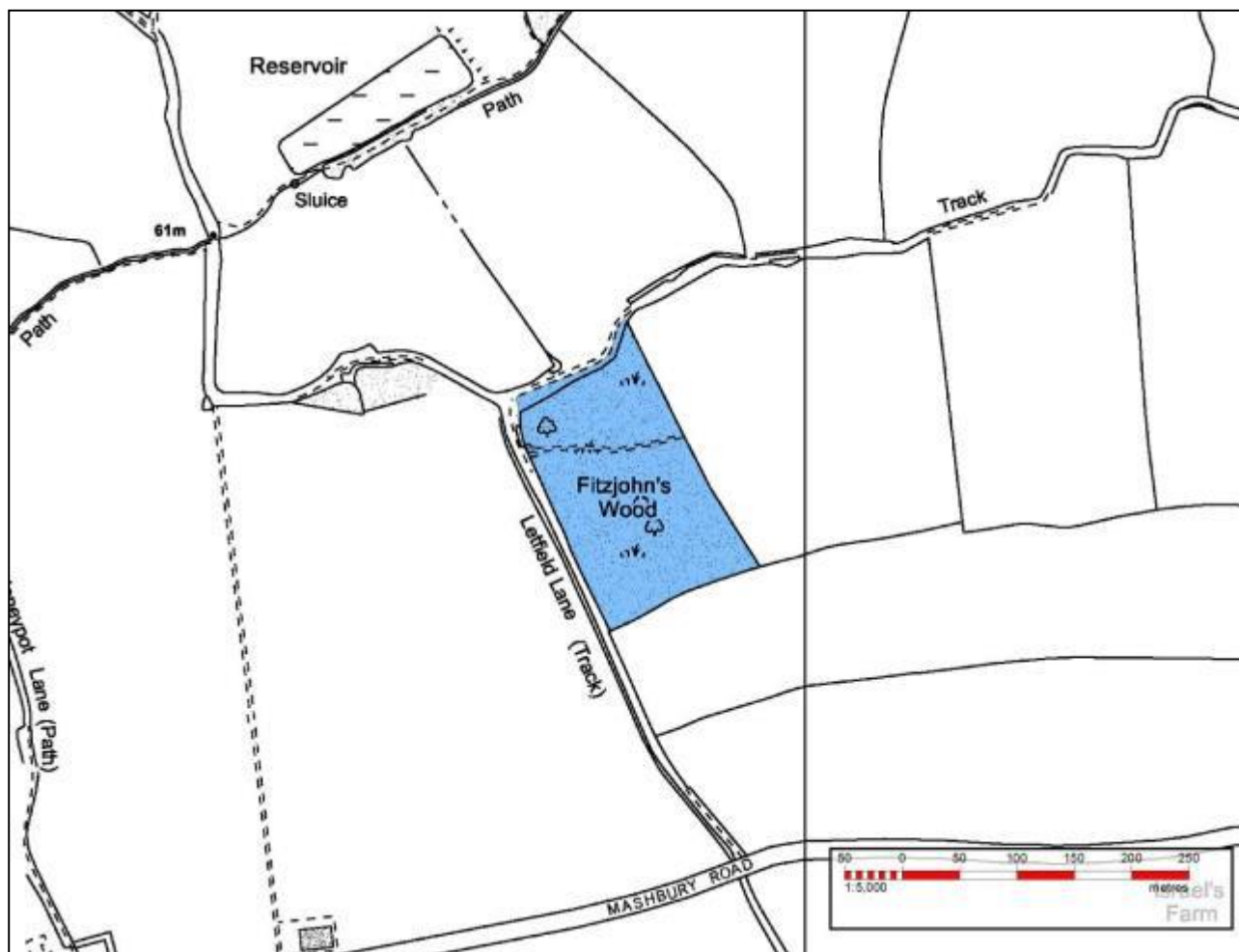
The overgrown coppice will be casting a deep shade over the shrub and ground layers. A resumption of this traditional woodland management would be desirable.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch31 Fitzjohn's Wood, Pleshey (2.89 ha) TL 66841349



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Whilst Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice dominates the south-west and north east corners of the wood, much of the remainder has been replanted with young trees, especially Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and some Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*). The rather poor ground flora includes much Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and frequent patches of Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*). Other recorded species of the ground flora include Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*).

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. Rights of way run along Leftfield Lane and across the northern boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Moderate.

Management Issues

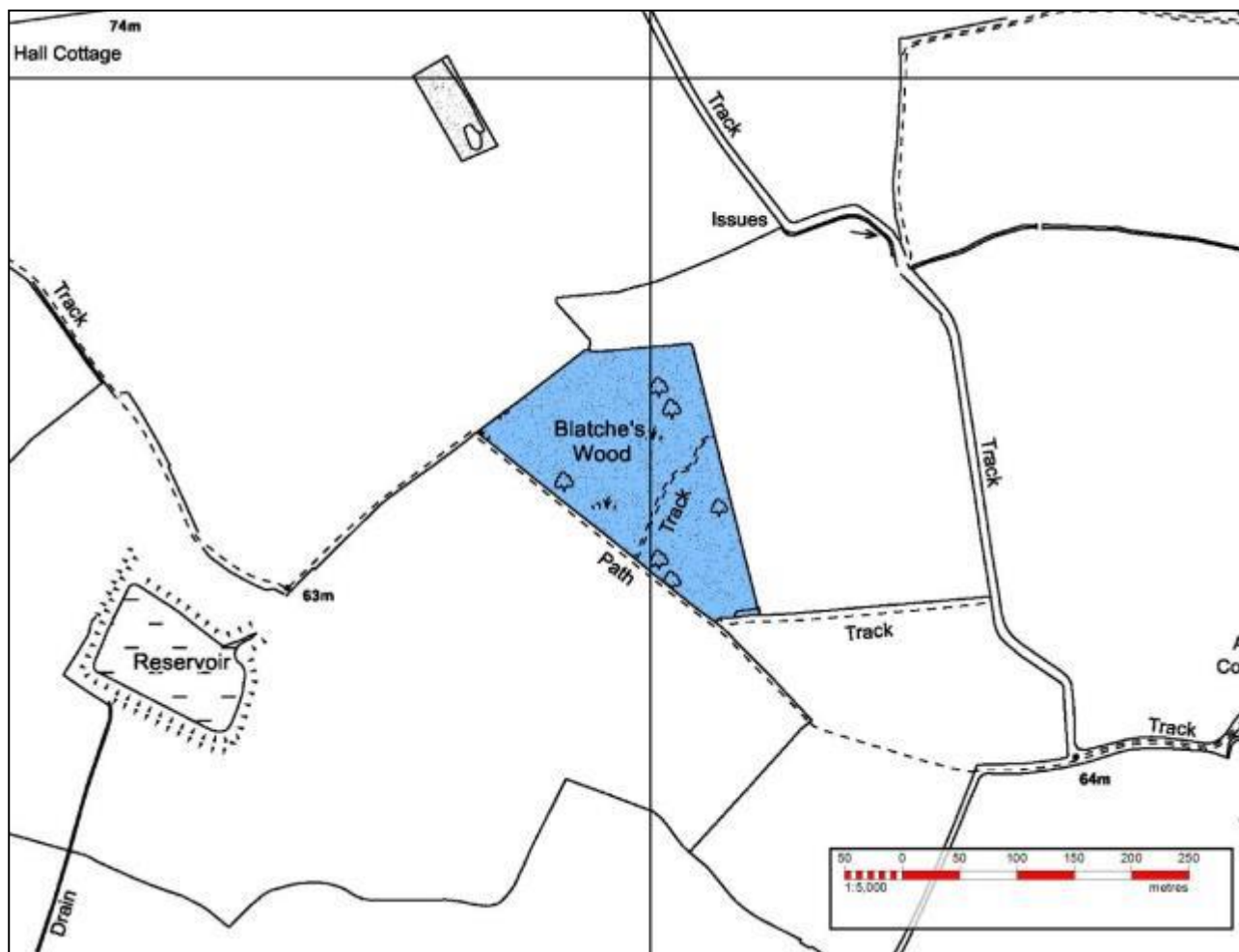
The planted broad-leaved trees may lead to an excessively dense canopy if not thinned or converted to a coppice structure.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch33 Blatche's Wood, Chignall Smealy (3.12 ha) TL 66981266



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This wood has a very varied canopy and sub-canopy structure, with Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice, Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Elm (*Ulmus* sp.), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) all to be found. The south end of the wood comprises mainly planted trees. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) are the main components of a patchy shrub layer that also includes Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*). Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) typify the species-poor ground flora, though Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) is also recorded.

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. A right of way runs along the south-western boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

If proven to be ancient, HC1 would apply.

Rationale

This site has a typical woodland structure and may be ancient in origin. Despite the poor ground flora, the coppiced structure suggests that it might be ancient or at least very long-established site.

Condition Statement

Largely neglected coppice.

Management Issues

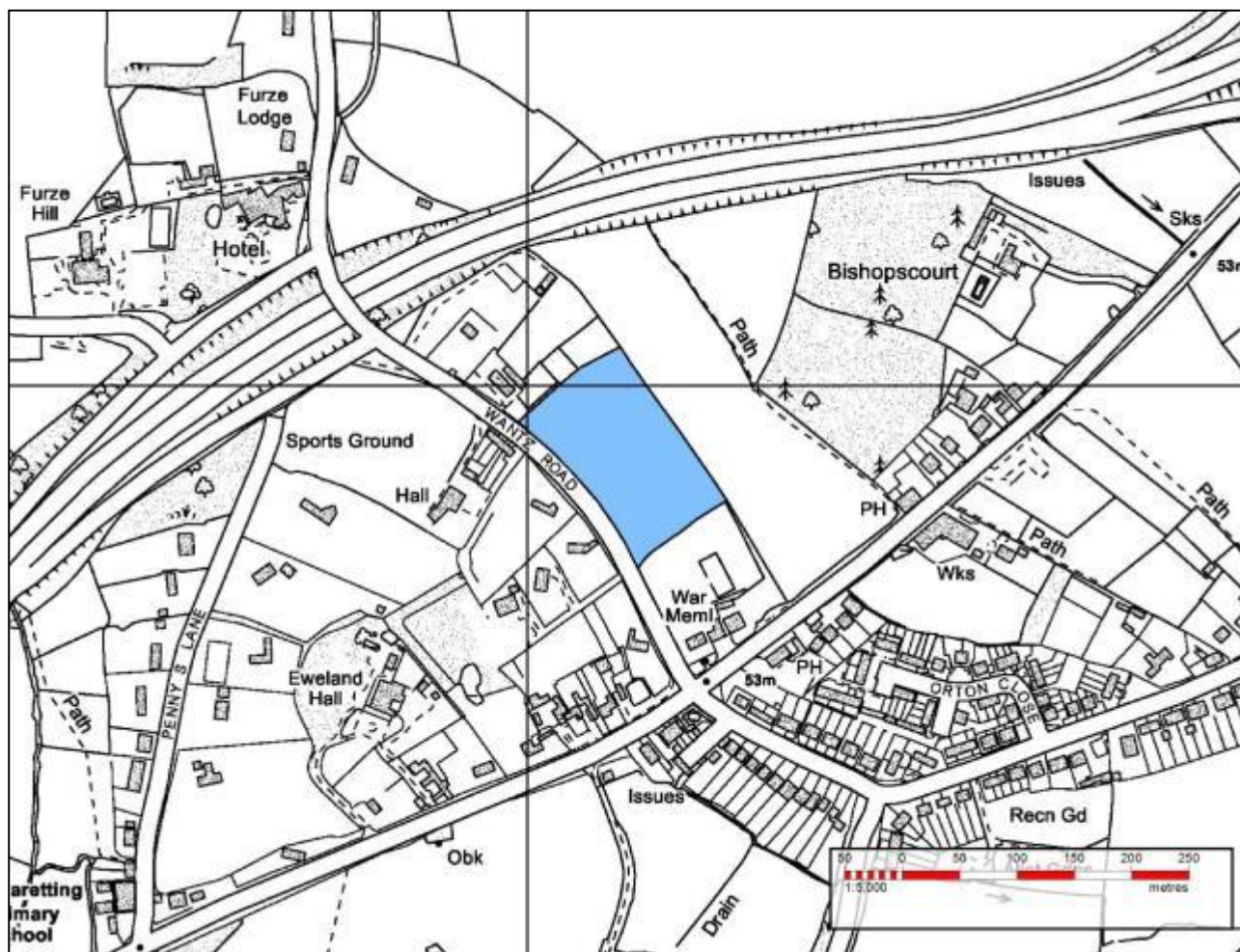
Dense shade from neglected coppice.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch34 Oak Stables Meadow, Margaretting (1.60 ha) TL 67080194



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This well-drained meadow contains a good mix of grass and herb species, including Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and Pignut (*Conopodium majus*). This latter plant is strongly associated with sites of long-continuity of vegetation cover, be it in a grassland or woodland location. A management regime of horse grazing and hay production over many years has helped in maintaining the species diversity.

Ownership and Access

In private ownership, with no direct public access. It can be viewed from the adjacent Wantz Road.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Hedgerows

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Species diverse grassland sites such as this have declined during recent decades and are consequently valuable assets to the LoWS network. The presence of Pignut is a good indication that this is an old, relatively unimproved grassland site.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

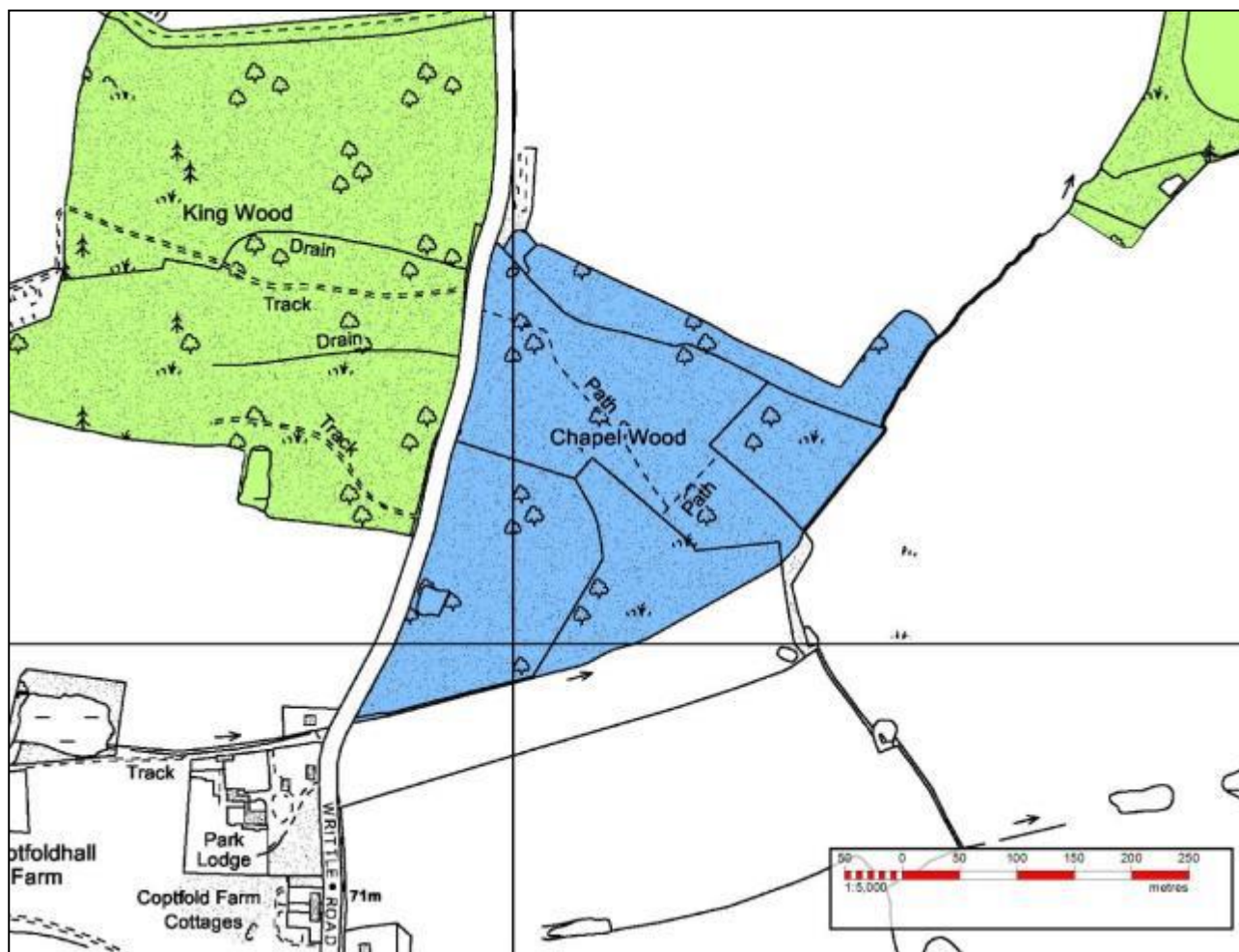
There is a need to balance grazing pressure and hat cropping in order to maintain the floristic interest of this site and its associated invertebrate fauna.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (reduced in size); 2016

Ch35 Chapel Wood, Margaretting (10.63 ha) TL 67080314



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This site comprises largely ancient wood, with two blocks of more recent woodland to the south-east. The dense canopy is dominated by Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with occasional Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. Other tree species present include Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). The ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*).

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. Viewable from Writtle Road, although traffic dangers exist.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

This is a large block of diverse woodland exhibiting a range of characteristic ancient woodland indicator species. The more recent areas blend well into this matrix of ancient wood, adding to the overall habitat extent.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

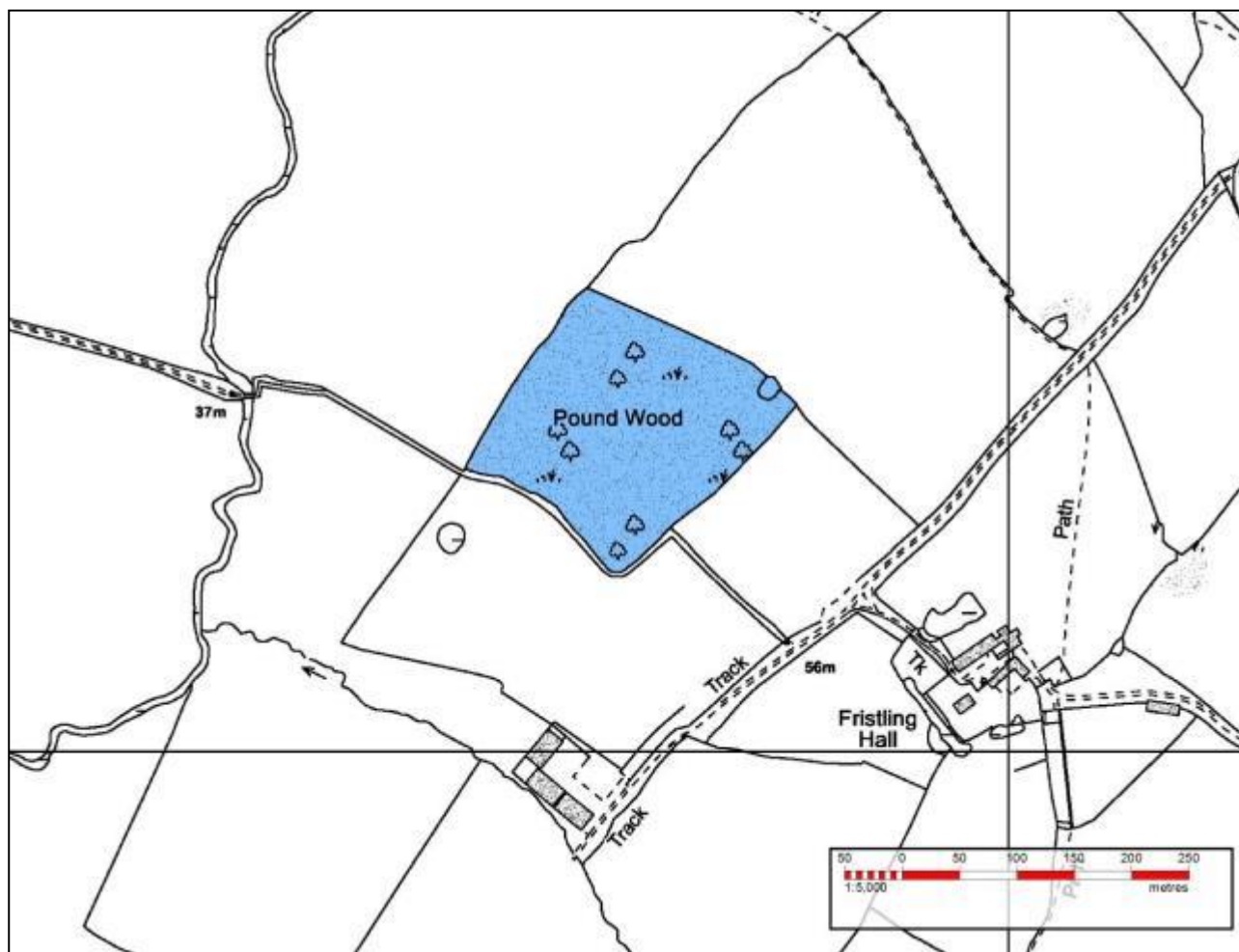
The neglected Hornbeam coppice will be suppressing the shrub and ground layers.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (additions); 2016

Ch36 Pound Wood, Margaretting (3.83 ha) TL 67660028



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This wood comprises Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with scattered standards of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) as high canopy trees. Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice is found locally in the southern corner of the woodland. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) are found as part of the shrub layer. The ground flora consists of scattered patches of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) scrub with abundant Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). Other species of interest in the ground flora include Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*).

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. A right of way runs along the southern boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood with characteristic ancient woodland indicator species supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

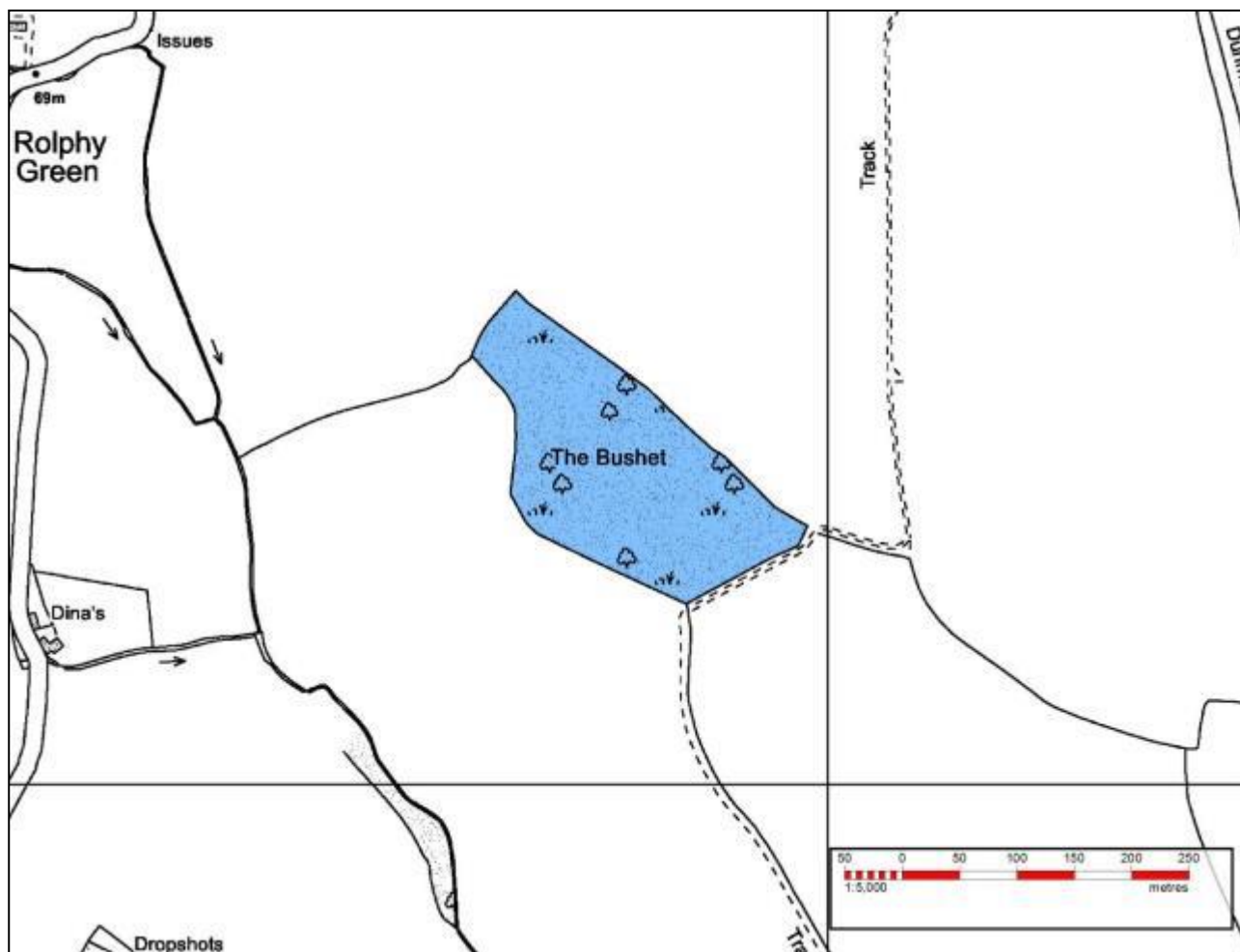
Dense shade being cast by overgrown coppice, which will be suppressing biodiversity.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch37 The Bushet, Pleshey (3.75 ha) TL 67821527



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This ancient woodland is characterised by Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice beneath taller Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) as coppice and standards. Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards are scattered throughout the wood. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) are found as shrub layer components, whilst Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) is recorded from the wood margin. The woodland ground flora is dominated by Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), though small patches of Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*) are found.

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

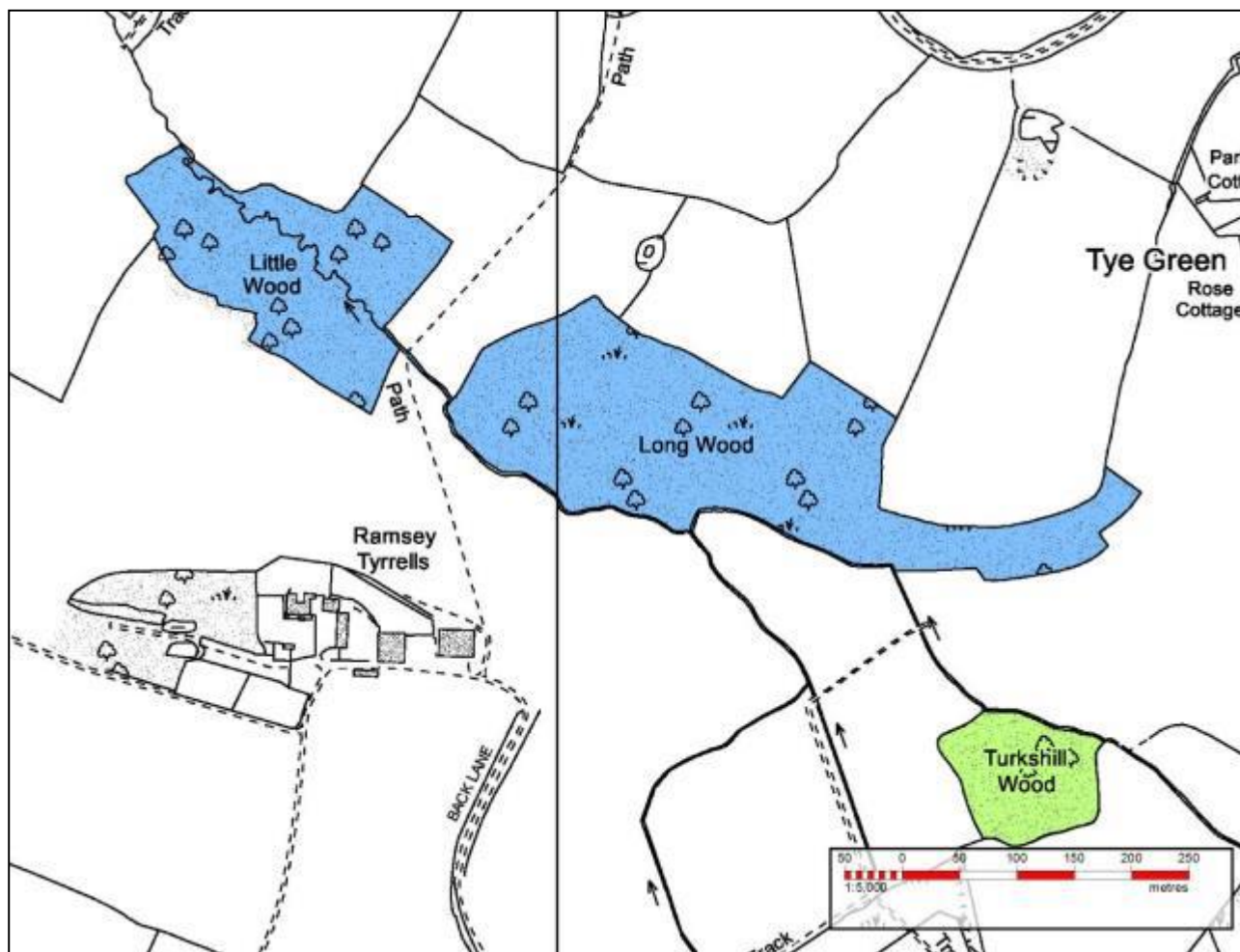
A resumption of coppicing would be desirable.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch38 Little and Long Woods, Stock (9.33 ha) TQ 68029961



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Little Wood comprises Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards, but also has Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and the strong ancient woodland indicator Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*). There has been felling of trees to the north of the stream that runs through the site. The ground flora has several ancient woodland indicators and includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), with Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and Three-veined Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*). The stream is lined by Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*).

To the east of Little Wood, Long wood is connected by a short section of hedgerow, included within the Local Wildlife Site as a short wildlife corridor. Unusually, Long Wood has been accessed by cattle grazing in the fields adjacent to the north. The woodland canopy exhibits mainly Hornbeam coppice, but tall coppiced Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is found close to the narrow limb in the eastern end of the site. The western end of the wood has a different character, with younger Hornbeam coppice, plus Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) as coppice and standards. There has also been some clearance of trees in a section on the north edge of this wood. The shrub layer is sparse but includes Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). Bluebell is abundant particularly in the western end of the site whilst Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) forms locally frequent patches. Other species recorded include Yellow Archangel and Moschatel.

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no direct public access. A public right of way runs between the two woodland blocks.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hedgerows

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC30 Wildlife Corridors

Rationale

The structure and composition of these woods support documentary evidence that they are ancient woodland sites. The short section of hedge should help woodland fauna move between the two blocks of woodland.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice; declining

Management Issues

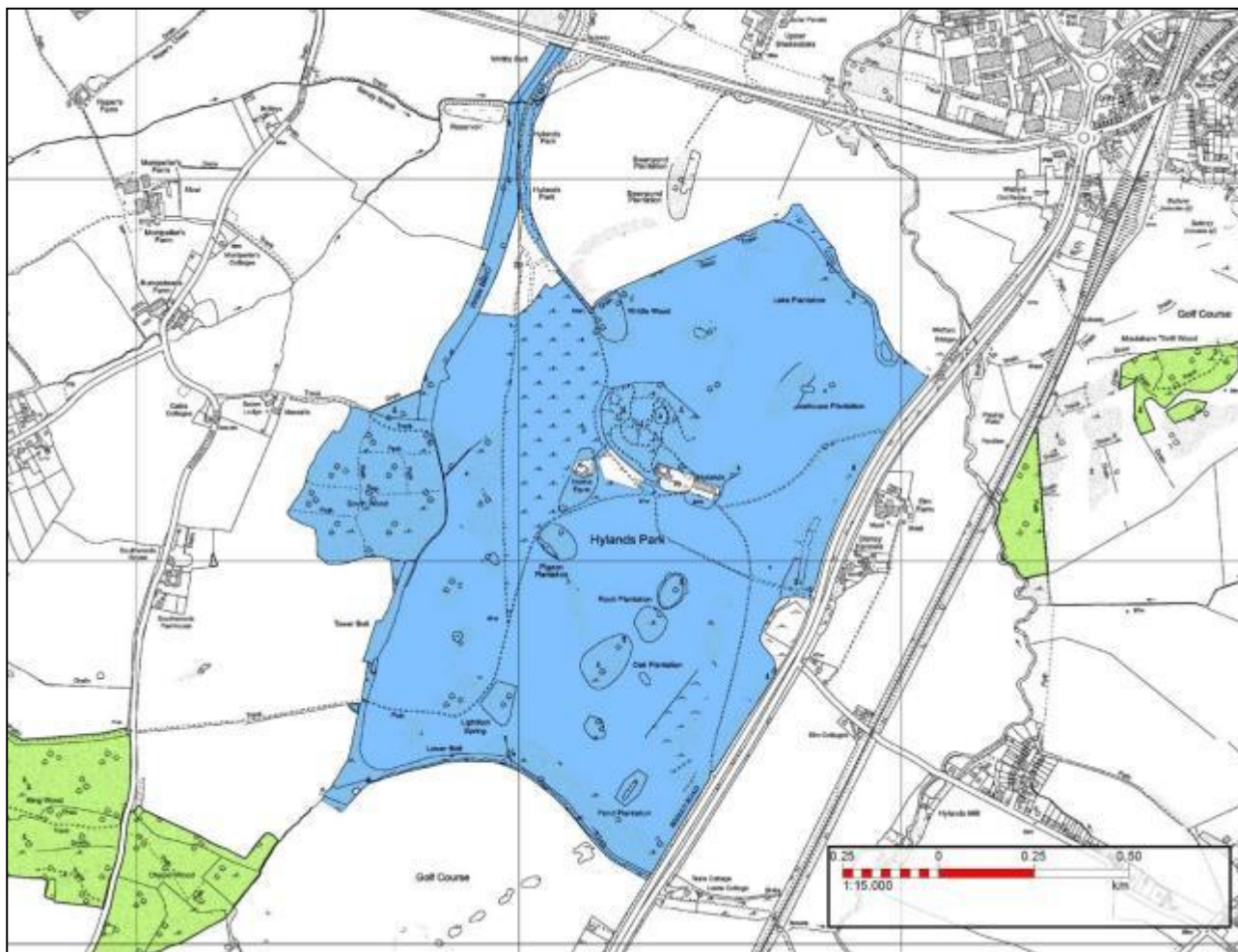
The cattle grazing of Long Wood has the potential to cause a good deal of damage to the structure and ground flora of this ancient coppice. It is unlikely to have evolved as a wood-pasture.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992 (as separate sites)

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (amalgamation and addition of linking hedge)

Ch39 Hylands Park, Chelmsford (167.91 ha) TL 68220412



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Hylands Park was created during the 18th and 19th centuries, from existing meadow, pasture and coppiced woodland. The prevailing fashion for a structured formal landscape would have been followed with the creation of ornamental gardens and the parkland landscape with lake and plantations. Today Hylands Park retains its former splendour of being an established mix of ancient woodland, grassland and plantation.

This is the largest continuous expanse of grassland within the Local Wildlife Site network. Whilst the grassland in the northern half of the park is regularly mown, that to the south is cut less frequently. It is here that the rich floral diversity can be most readily appreciated. The species-rich swards display an array of grasses including Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Fescues (*Festuca* spp.), Bent-grass (*Agrostis* spp.), Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*) and Quaking Grass (*Briza media*). The herb/fern flora is equally diverse and includes Betony (*Betonica officinalis*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Adder's-tongue Fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*).

South Wood forms part of the recreational area encompassed by the Park. It is an important block of ancient woodland within the parks broader historical context. A great variety of tree species are found, with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) being the most common. Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) is found in the

shrub layer. Ground flora species characteristic of ancient woodland include Early Purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*).

Hylands Park is also important in terms of its invertebrate populations. The varied habitat affords ideal conditions, and several notable species have been recorded. The Golden Hoverfly (*Callicera spinolae*) – Red Data Book 1 (RDB1), and the saproxylic hoverfly (*Psilota anthracina*) – RDB2 have been recorded. The Glow-worm (*Lampyrus noctiluca*), a species in decline in the Essex countryside, is still to be seen in the Park.

Two important protected species recorded from Hylands Park are Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*), found to inhabit most of the parks ponds, and the Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), which is thought to be sustaining a strong population due to the quality, diversity and extent of the habitat.

Ownership and Access

Virtually the whole site is owned by Chelmsford City Council and open to the public. Two very small parcels of land, in the south-western and north-western corners, are in private ownership.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Wood-pasture and Parkland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC4 Wood Pasture and Parkland

Rationale

This is one of the largest areas of parkland within the local authority area and retains species-rich grassland, ancient woodland and numerous large and veteran trees, all of high nature conservation value. Its role as a site in allowing the public to experience the diverse wildlife and varied habitats, with inherent health and education benefits should not be under-estimated.

Condition Statement

Good, stable.

Management Issues

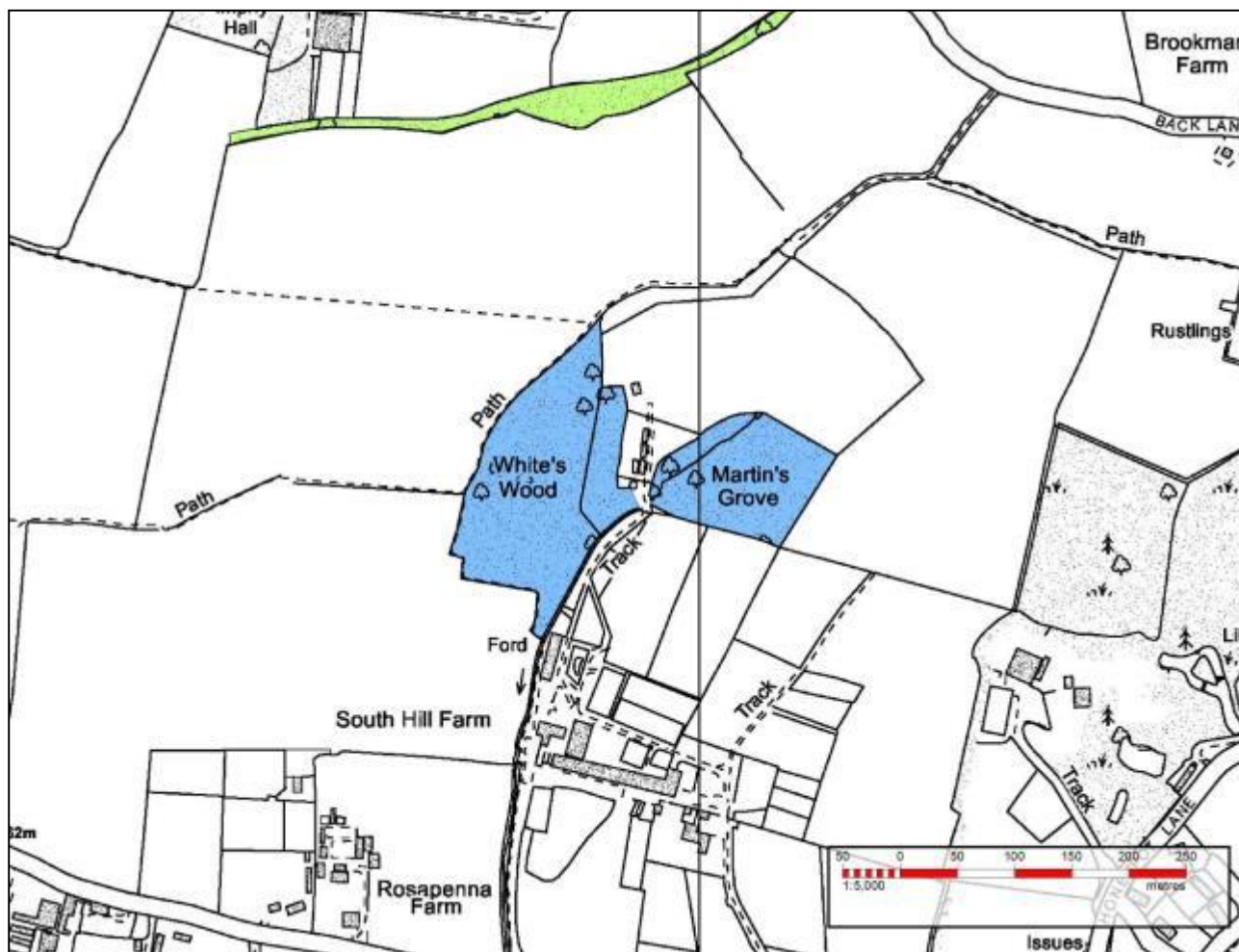
Large scale public events will have a localised negative impact on parts of the site, although these are carefully managed so as to minimise such impacts. There will be a long-term need to ensure the continuity of large, isolated trees in sunny locations in order to conserve the important invertebrate assemblages.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992 (as two smaller sites)

Reviewed: 2004 (sites amalgamated and much increased); 2016 (minor boundary revisions)

Ch40 White's Wood/Martins Grove, Stock (3.59 ha) TQ 67929853



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White's Wood is characterised by scattered Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice and standards. Beneath the canopy there is only very little shrub layer of Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and some of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg), the remainder is open bare ground. Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is recorded from the ground flora, but only occurs in sparse patches.

Martin's Grove consists mainly of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with few scattered standards of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*). Throughout the wood Elder forms a patchy shrub layer, though coppiced Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) is found close to the stream that runs close to the western edge of the wood. Bluebell is abundant close to the stream though only patchy throughout the remainder of the wood.

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no public access. White's Wood can be viewed from a public right of way that runs part way along the western boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition support documentary evidence that these woodlands are ancient.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

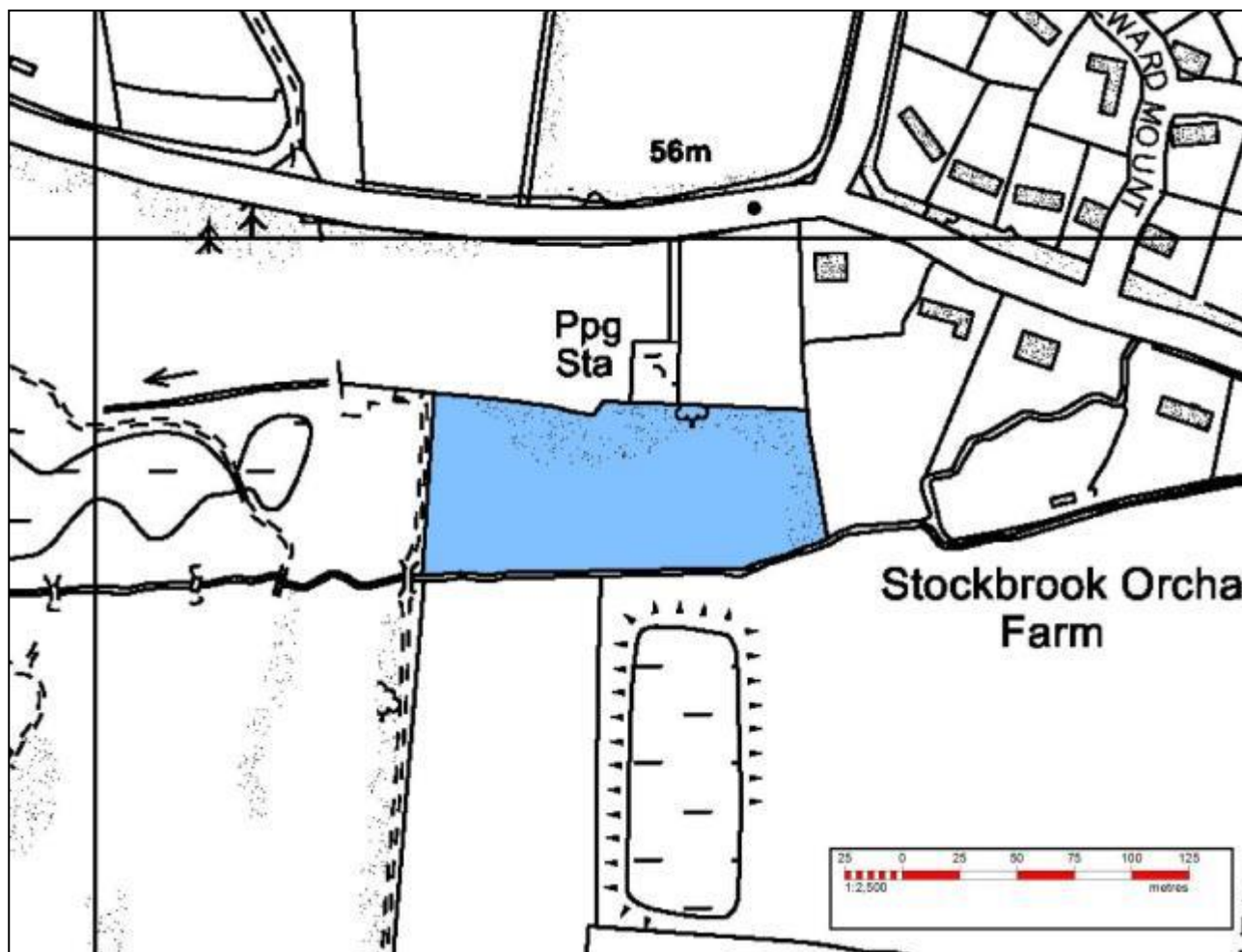
These woods are used for recreation with two wood cabins having been located on the west edge of Martins Grove. Therefore there is considerable pressure and this is perhaps reflected in the limited distribution and diversity of the ground flora.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (minor boundary revision); 2016 (minor revision).

Ch42 Stock Brook Meadow, Stock (1.21 ha) TQ 68229789



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This small damp meadow along the Stock Brook is a species-rich site displaying a variety of grasses and herbs. Grass species present include Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) and Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*). Plants of particular interest recorded include Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*) and Pepper-saxifrage (*Silene silaus*), both Essex Red Data List species usually restricted to older undisturbed damp grasslands, which have continued to decline in recent decades. Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) are other species of interest to be found.

Ownership and Access

Thought to be in private ownership, with no public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Old unimproved grasslands such as this are vital refuges for rare plants within Chelmsford. The suite of plants present is indicative of a site with a long continuity of grassland cover.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

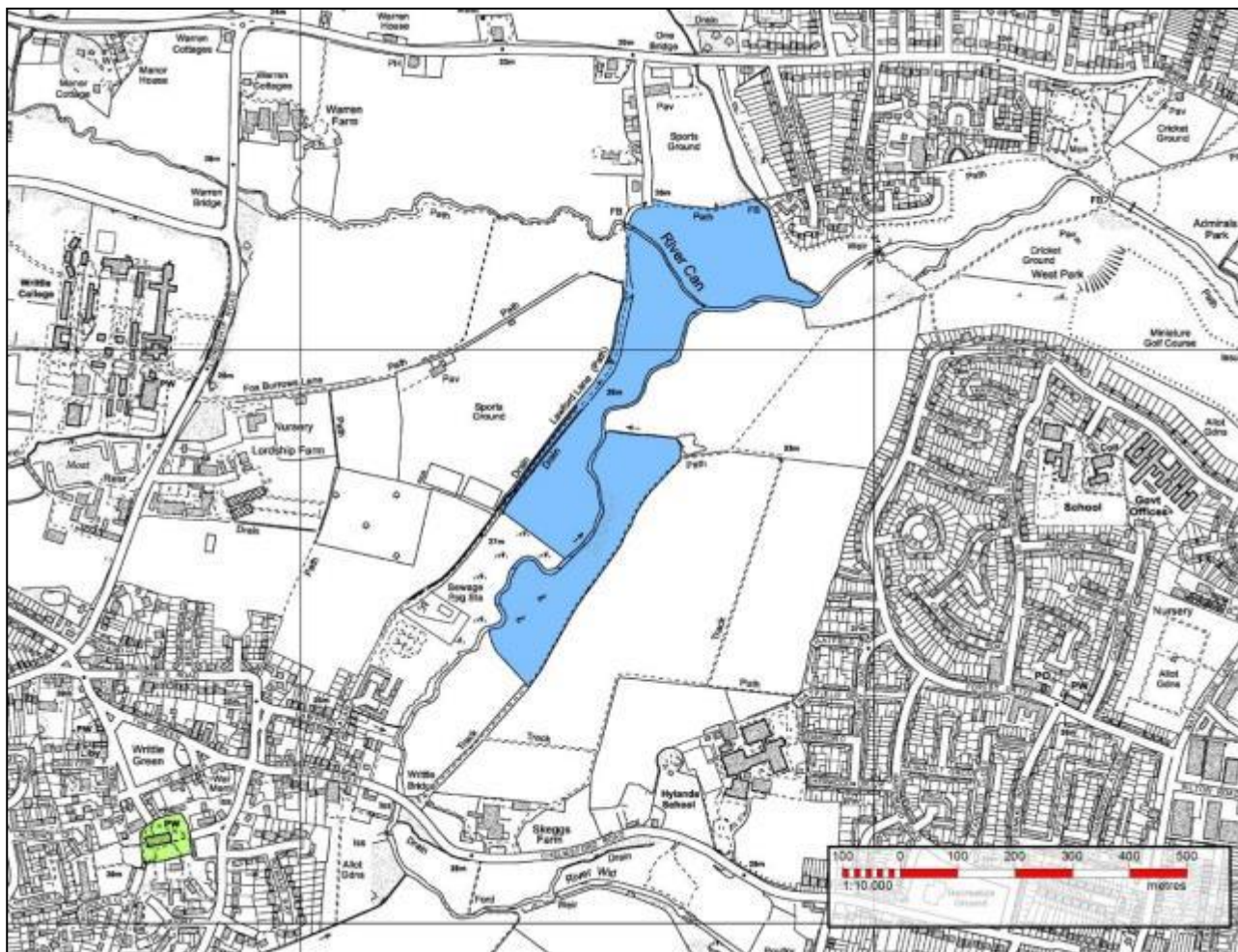
Maintenance of a stable, moderate management regime will be crucial to retaining the interest of this site.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (deletion of northern field); 2016

Ch43 Writtle Bridge Meadows, Writtle (14.48 ha) TL 68570689



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Located to the west of Chelmsford and adjacent to the River Wid at its confluence with the River Can, these meadows form a corridor of habitat on the outskirts of urban Chelmsford. The horse grazed meadow to the north of the River Can has the most varied sward composition and height, and exhibits the most floristically diverse assemblage for this corridor site. Grasses recorded include Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) and Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), whilst herbs present include Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra* agg), Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*) and Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*). The meadows east of Lawford Lane comprise a tall grass-dominated sward. Whilst False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) is abundant other species present include Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Meadow Barley and Crested Dog's-tail. The meadow east of the River Wid is in contrast a short grazed grassland.

Ownership and Access

It is thought that there is permissive access to the fields west of the River Wid whilst the remainder of the site is not accessible to the public. A public footpath follows the eastern edge of the meadow located east of the River Wid.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Hedgerows

The site has evolved from floodplain grazing marsh, although it now exhibits few of the characteristics associated with larger floodplain systems.

Selection Criteria

HC10 River Floodplain

HC31 Accessible Natural Greenspace

Rationale

These floodplain meadows provide accessible wildlife habitat between the built up areas of Chelmsford and Writtle. It is a remnant of the once extensive floodplain grasslands that would have flanked the rivers Can and Wid.

Condition Statement

Probably in long-term decline due to the absence of regular grazing pressure and seasonal flooding.

Management Issues

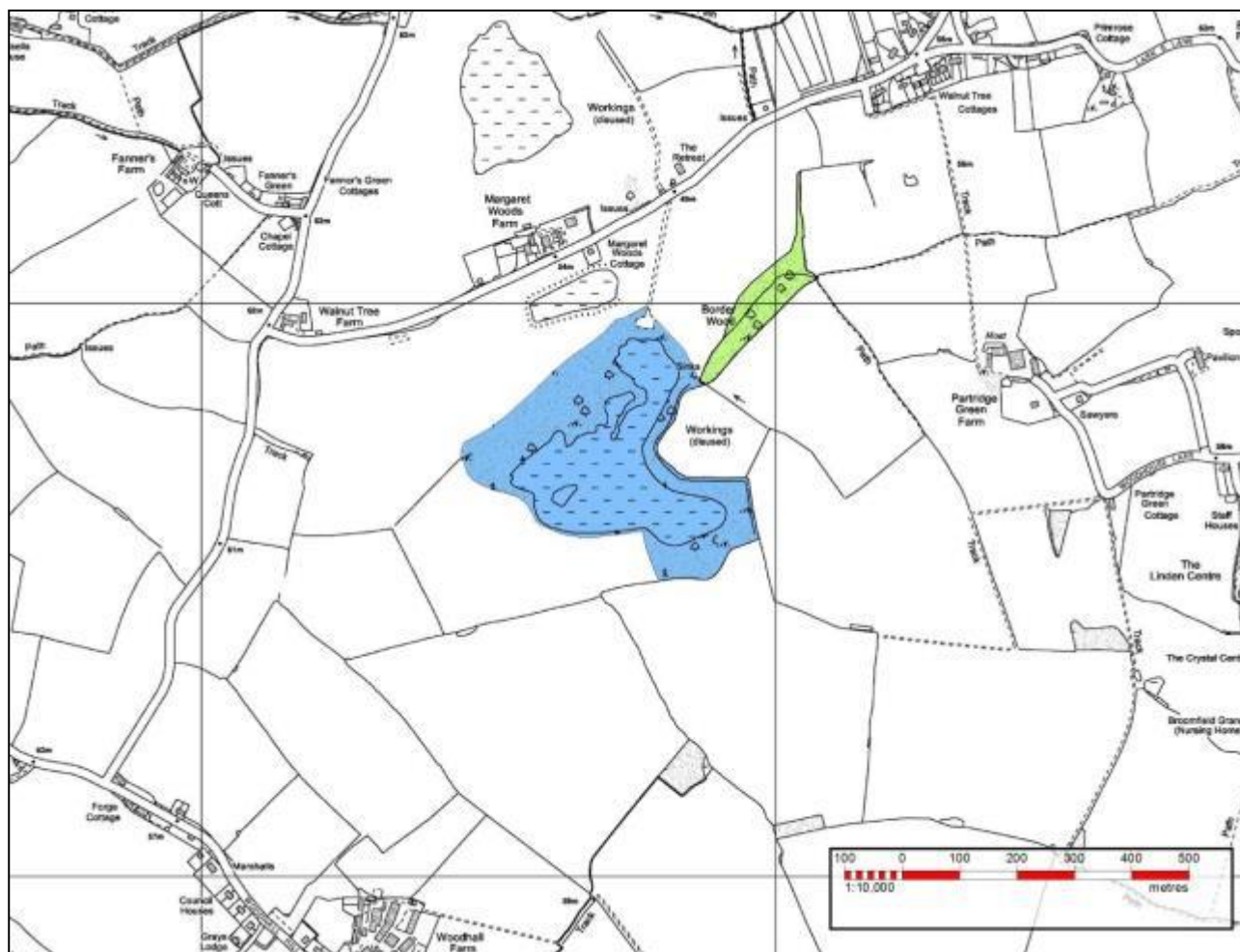
In the absence of sufficient management pressure, there will be a tendency for these grasslands to deteriorate into species-poor rough grassland. Ideally, a resumption of grazing would be implemented to maintain floristic diversity, but if this is deemed impractical, a mowing regime may be supplemented.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 992

Reviewed: 2004 (sections deleted); 2016 (minor boundary revisions)

Ch44 Border Wood Lake, Broomfield (12.45 ha) TL 68721173



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Formed as the result of quarry extraction, there now remains a lake and flooded willow (*Salix* spp.) woodland, with the site now used for recreational fishing. To the west of the lake the land gently slopes to the lakes margin, whilst on the eastern side the lake is bounded by steep slopes where young trees, scrub and low growing plants are now established. These differing gradients are good for wildlife, attracting flora and fauna suited to a particular niche in the ecosystem. In conjunction with the water body, the wet woodland provides habitat of, especially as sheltered/foraging habitat for birds.

Ownership and Access

This site is in private ownership, with access only permissible to fishing club members. It can be viewed from a public footpath that runs along the top of the steep bank that forms the eastern edge of the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

A form of Wet Woodland is present, in the willow scrub flanking the lake.

Selection Criterion

HC28 Small-component Mosaics

Rationale

The various component habitats of this mosaic and the variable topography of the site provides for a diverse mix of wildlife.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

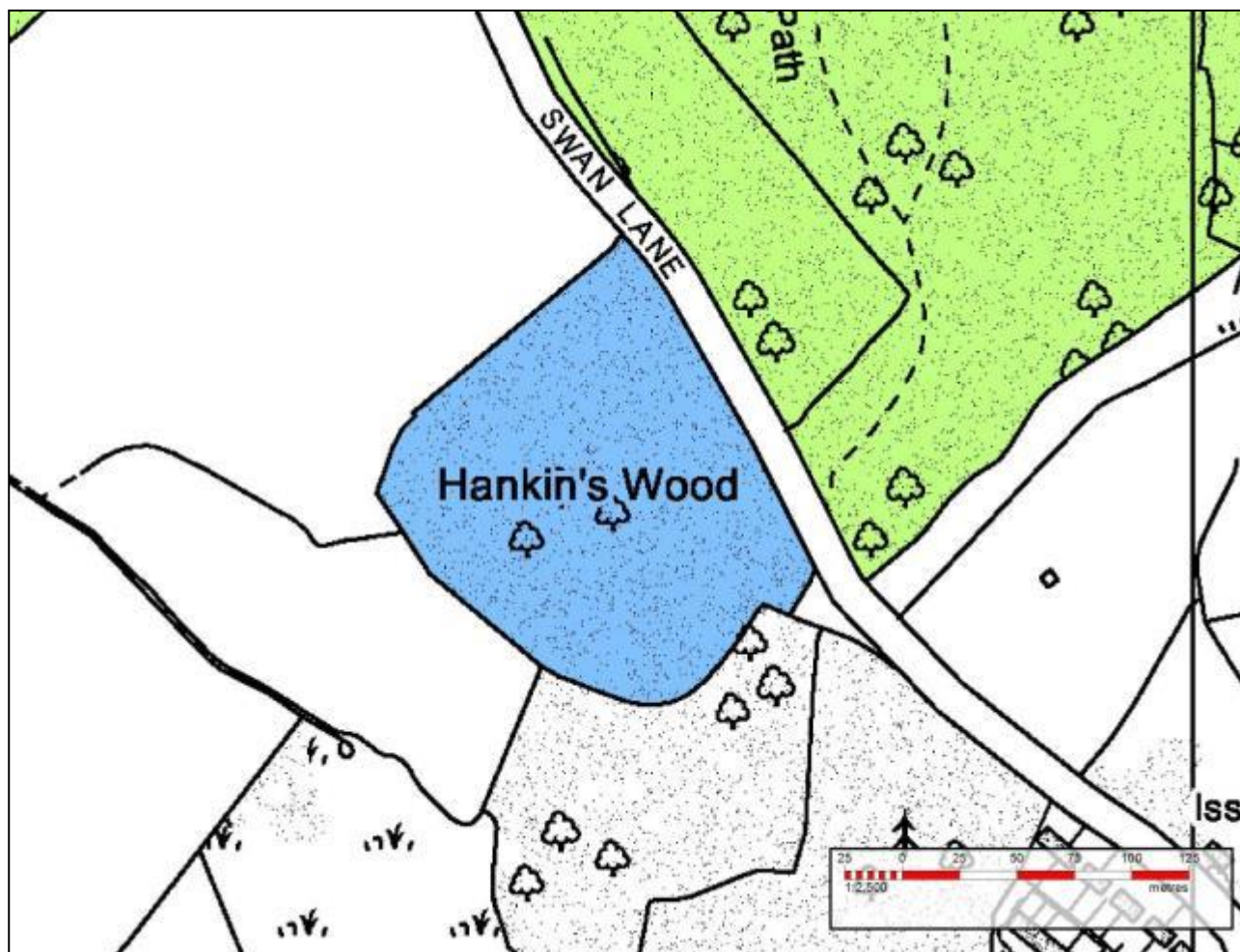
The development of the site as a fishing lake has been undertaken sensitively such that there are a limited number of platforms and the majority of the site remains relatively undisturbed. Continuation of sensitive management to maintain a balance whereby the recreational activities do not cause detrimental impact to the wildlife should be encouraged.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch45 Hankin's Wood, Stock (2.34 ha) TQ 68749929



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The composition of this wood is mainly Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards, with some Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). Other trees recorded from this wood include Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Much Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is found towards the north-eastern part of the wood, which otherwise has very little in the way of a shrub layer. Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) occurs in abundant patches, whereas Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) tends to dominate other areas.

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in the ownership of Chelmsford City Council.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

This is a typical Hornbeam coppice ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

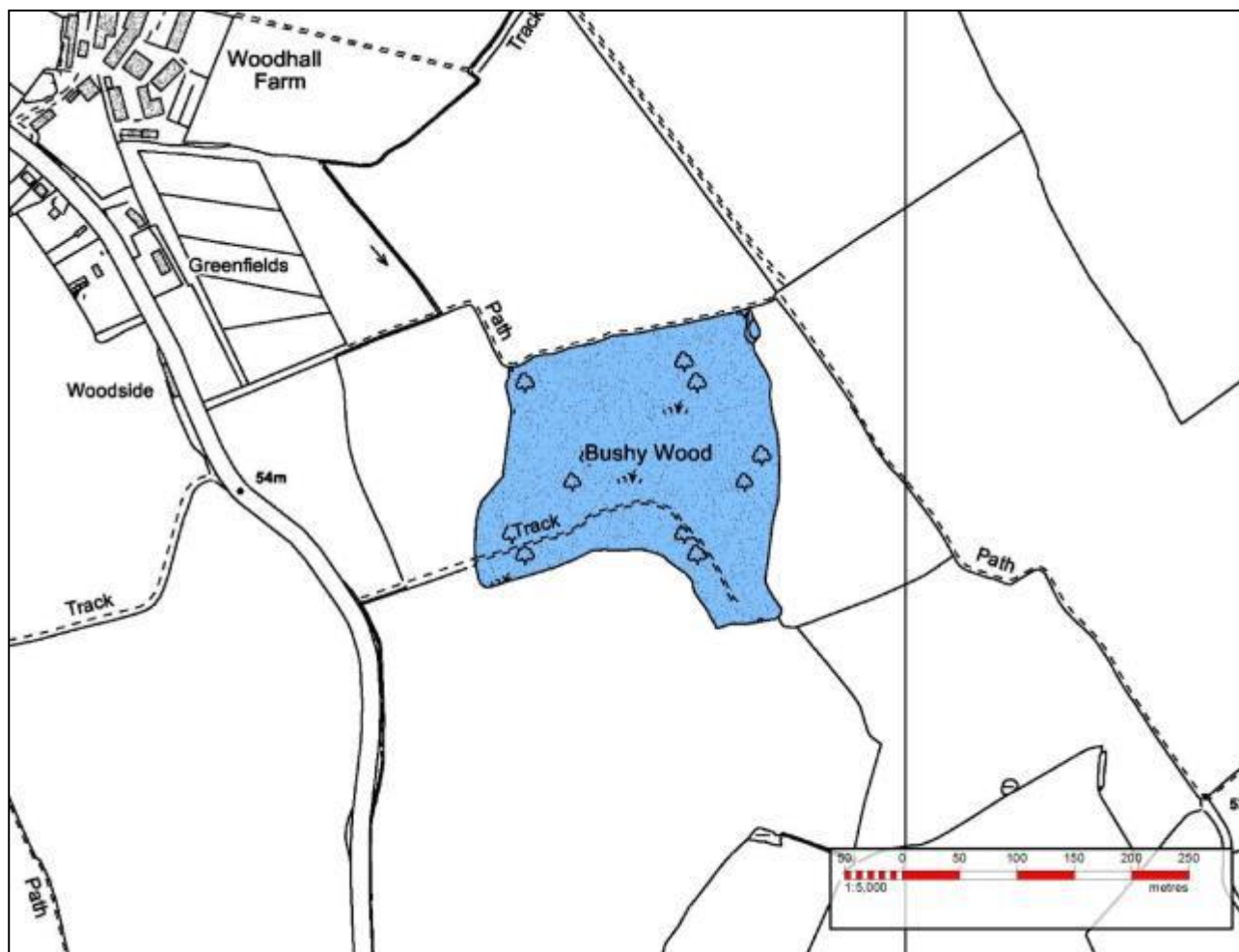
As with all old coppice woodlands, a resumption of coppicing is usually beneficial to encourage increased biodiversity.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch46 Bushy Wood, Chignall St James (5.10 ha) TL 68771054



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This ancient wood is not dissimilar in its present outline to how it was mapped in 1774 by Chapman and Andre. The composition is mainly Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice with occasional Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. An area in the north east of the wood has been felled leaving a few scattered coppice and standard trees. Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and the ancient woodland indicator Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) are found in the shrub canopy. The central area of the wood has a lower canopy and here Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg) forms dense scrub. Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*) are frequent in the ground flora. Species of interest recorded include Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), whilst Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*) is found along the north edge of the wood.

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in private ownership with no public access. The woodland can be viewed from a public footpath the runs alongside the northern edge.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

This woodland has a typical coppice and standard structure found in many woods throughout Chelmsford, with species indicative of its ancient status.

Condition Statement

Largely neglected coppice.

Management Issues

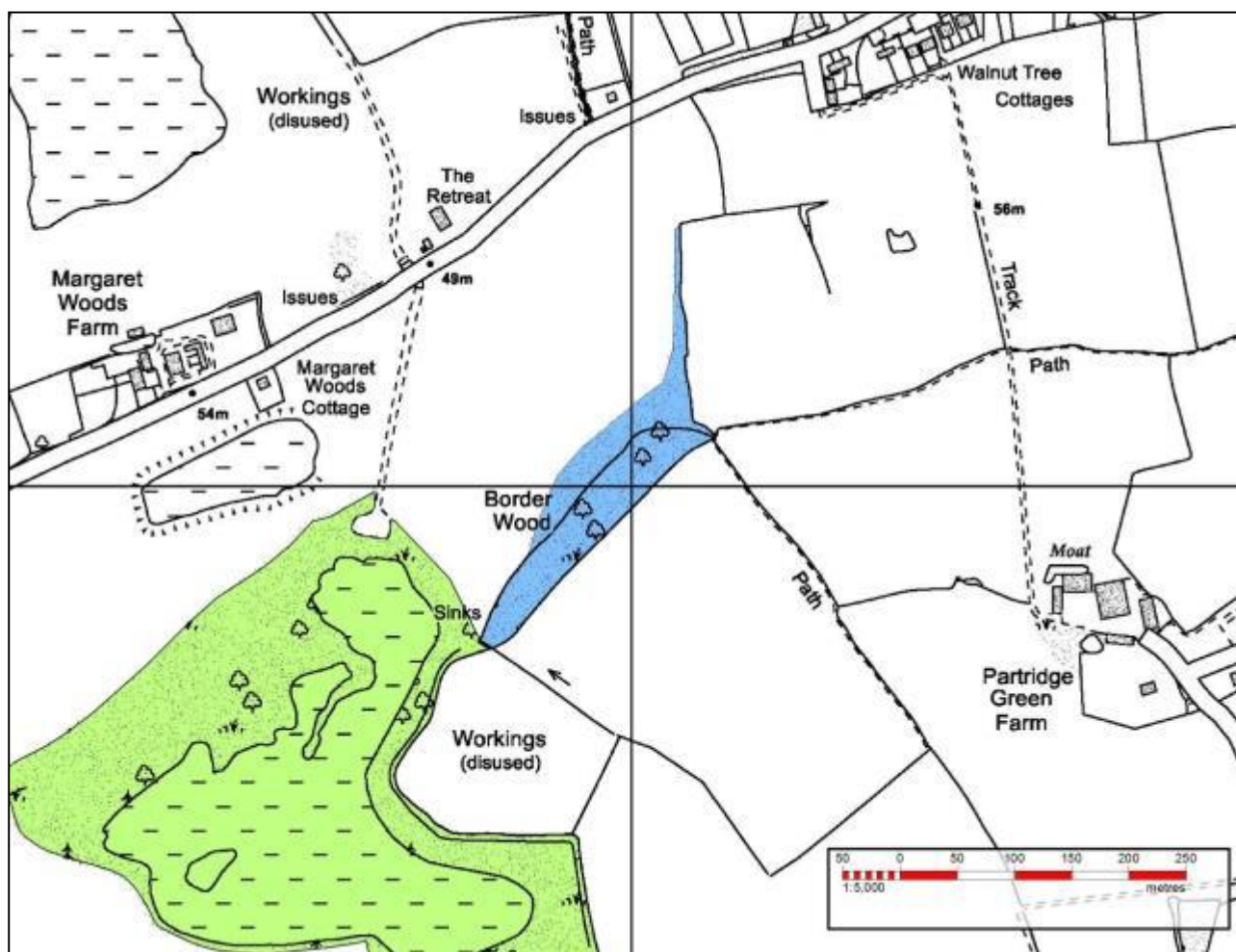
The woodland shows some evidence of recent management, although its purpose and rationale is not known.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch47 Border Wood, Broomfield (1.69 ha) TL 68981201



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Border wood is privately owned but managed by Essex County Council. It comprises two distinct sections: a strip of ancient woodland to the south-east and a band of more recent woodland to the north-west. The canopy of the ancient section is dominated by Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with scattered Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is also present. The shrub layer has a variety of species, including Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). A rich ground flora includes several ancient woodland indicators such as Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) and Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*).

An interesting feature is a wide, raised bank running along the north-west edge of the wood. An inner ditch and bank has old coppice along its line, while the two sides of the raised bank have Oak standards. The majority of the site to the north side of the internal ditch and bank is of secondary composition, comprising very young trees along with scrub over a very species limited ground flora. However, at the eastern end is the remains of another woodland named on 19th century maps as Broom Wood, most of which has been grubbed out. Here, there is a mature canopy of Pedunculate Oak, Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) and Hornbeam under which Wood Anemone, a plant strongly associated with ancient woodland, is found. The distribution of these plants is within the boundary of the former Broom Wood endorsing the fact that this small fragment is also ancient.

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in private ownership but managed by Essex County Council. It is open to public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

Parts of the site clearly have a structure and composition that indicate an ancient status. The more recent woodland stand provides a useful habitat extension to the ancient stands, within which the old woodland flora and fauna will spread

Condition Statement

Largely neglected, but stable.

Management Issues

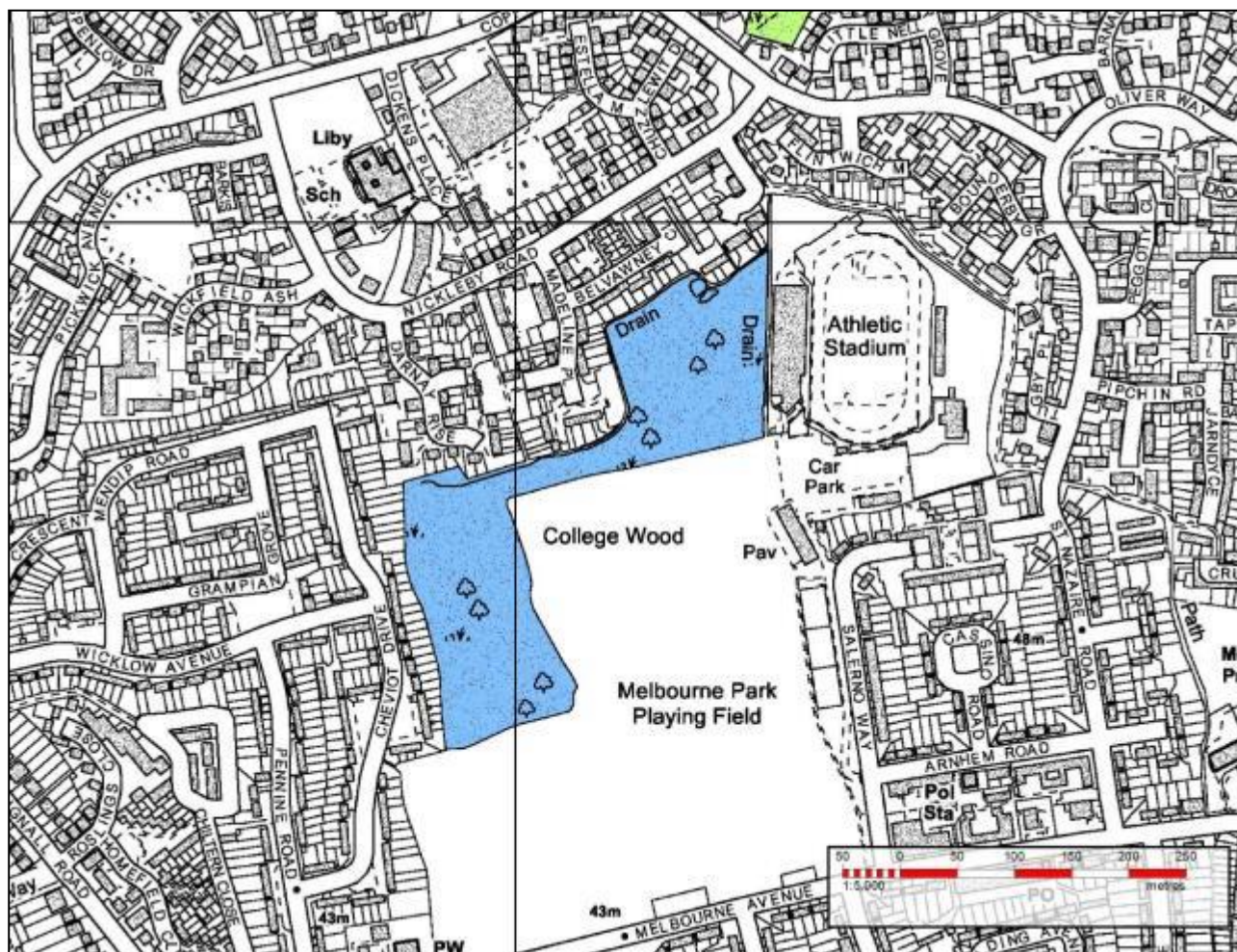
The more recent area of woodland should be managed to provide a varied structure with canopy, sub-canopy and scrub layers.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (northern extension added)

Ch48 College Wood, Chelmsford (4.49 ha) TL 69050876



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This ancient wood is located in the Melbourne area of Chelmsford. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice along with Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) are the main canopy and sub-canopy components. Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) are two indicators of its ancient status. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) are species found in a well-developed shrub canopy. The ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*).

Ownership and Access

College Wood is owned and managed by Chelmsford City Council and is accessible to the public.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC31 Accessible Natural Greenspace

Rationale

The structure and composition of the wood points to an ancient origin for this site. In addition, it is an important site as an area of accessible natural greenspace for the urban population of Chelmsford.

Condition Statement

Declining; overgrown neglected coppice under regular visitor pressure.

Management Issues

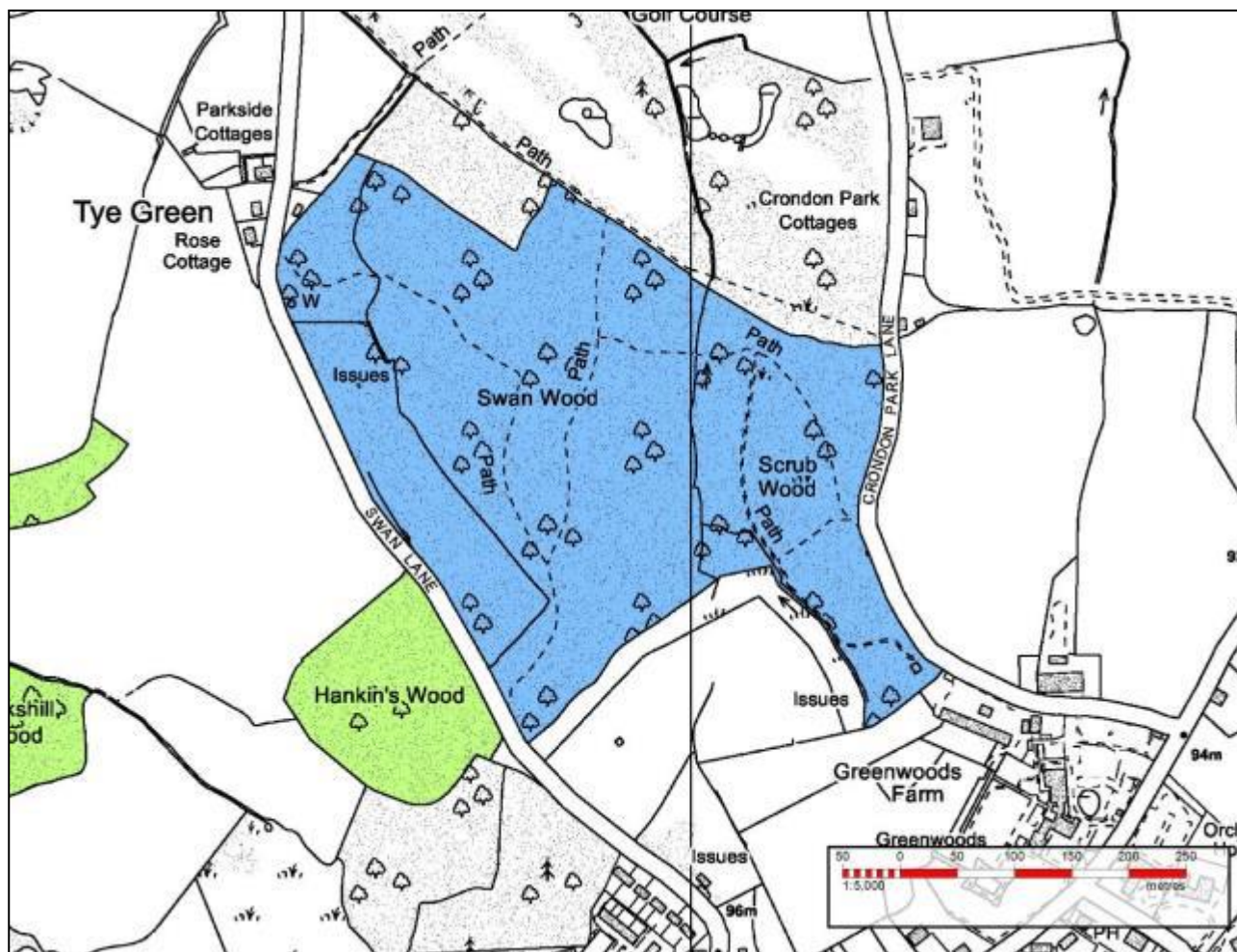
Surrounded by housing and playing fields, it is subject to greater pressures than woodland in a rural situation. There needs to be a balance struck between encouraging recreational access and conserving the important flora and fauna of the site.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch49 Swan Wood, Stock (16.3 ha) TQ 68909954



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This site comprises the ancient Swan Wood and a block of secondary woodland located adjacent to Swan Lane and named as Cygnet Wood. Swan Wood displays a wide variety of stand types due to the undulating topography and consequent changes in soil drainage and types. The resultant drier upper slopes have a mix of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), whilst Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) occurs in the damp valley zones. Other trees present include Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), a strong indicator of ancient woodland. A very rich ground flora is found, with species of interest including Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*) and Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*). Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) an Essex Red Data List (ERDL) species is found in the wetter valley area and Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), another ERDL plant, is also present.

By contrast Cygnet Wood is recent planted woodland and exhibits a wide variety of native tree and shrub species including Pedunculate Oak, Ash, Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Hornbeam, Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Aspen (*Populus tremula*).

Both the ancient and recent woodland components of this site are home to the Dormouse, a European Protected Species and a species of very restricted distribution in Chelmsford.

Ownership and Access

Swan and Cygnet Woods are owned by The Woodland Trust and are both accessible to the public.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

SC7 Dormouse

Rationale

Swan Wood bears all the hallmarks of an ancient woodland site. Cygnet Wood not only provides additional valuable habitat, but extends the habitat favourable to Dormice.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

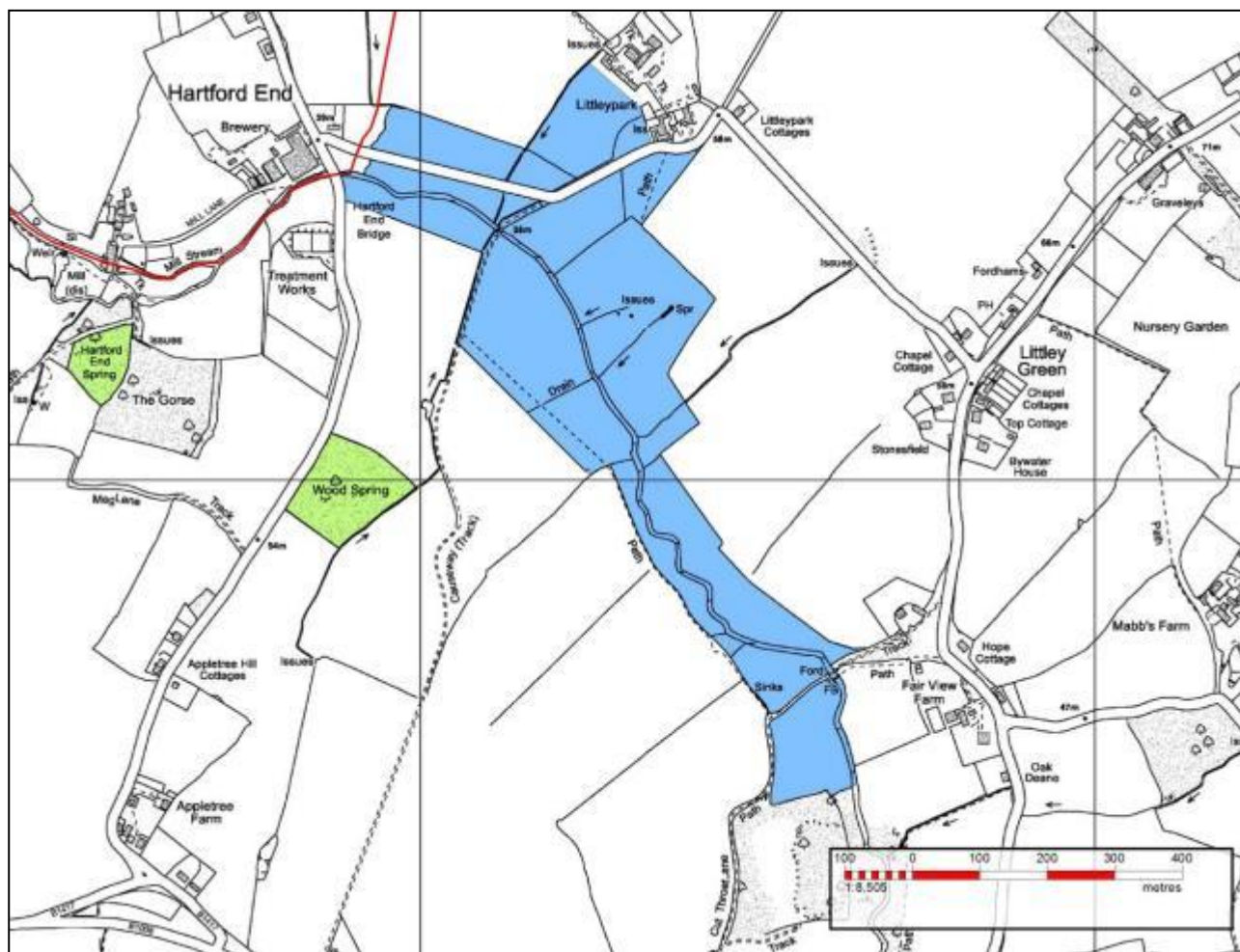
Management of the site should be sensitive to the ecological requirements of Dormice. The maintenance of a stable coppice cycle would be desirable.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (addition of adjacent plantation)

Ch51 Little Park Meadows, Little Green (23.16 ha) TL 69271717



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This site comprises a series of interlinking cattle and sheep grazed meadows either side of the river Chelmer. Whilst most of the site lies on flood plain level, the ground rises towards the north with well-draining upper slopes. The large meadows to the north comprise a mix of grass species including Quaking Grass (*Briza media*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*). Complementing the grass mix, Sulphur Clover (*Trifolium ochroleucon*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Cowslip (*Primula veris*) have been recorded amongst the herb flora.

Ownership and Access

The meadows of this site are in private ownership. Access is limited to the public footpaths that occur within the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Part of the site has affinities with the Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh HPIE. The drier, upper slopes may be associated with Lowland Meadow

Selection Criteria

HC10 River Floodplain

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

This site comprises a small remnant of a scarce and declining grassland type in Essex.

Condition Statement

Though areas of tall sward grassland are present, much of the grassland is either grazed by cattle and sheep, maintaining it in good condition.

Management Issues

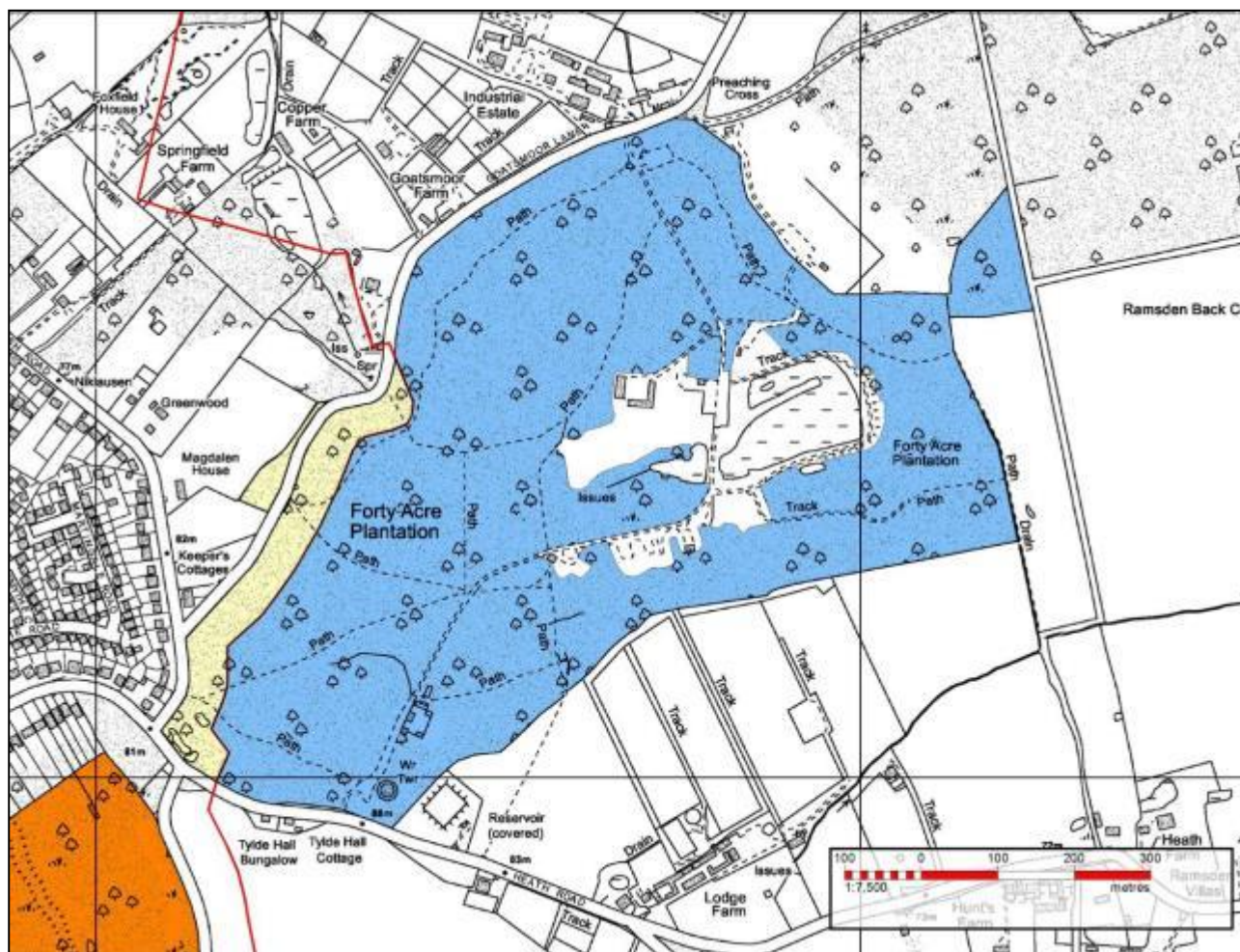
Maintenance of a stable management regime that avoids excessive grazing pressure and yet is sufficient to maintain floristic diversity will be key to the conservation of this site.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (addition at north end and deletion of southern end)

Ch52 Forty Acre Plantation, Ramsden Heath (45.21ha) TQ 69649640



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Straddling the Chelmsford City/Brentwood Borough boundary, the majority of Forty Acre plantation comprises Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice interspersed with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards and Birch (*Betula* sp.). Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice is found on the boundary bank of this wood. The densely shading canopy limits the ground flora beneath. However, Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) are found in abundance. A great many other herb species are to be found in the diverse site. Some of the more interesting species present include Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*).

To the east of Forty Acre Plantation is a small section of woodland that has developed over an area of former brick pit workings. It has many Pedunculate Oak standards throughout and has some tall Hornbeam standards in the south east corner. The central area is dominated by Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). Bluebell is abundant towards the east side of this woodland block, whilst Wood Anemone is also frequent. Other species of interest present include Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Moschatel and the evergreen shrub Butcher's-broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*).

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in private ownership and not accessible to the general public. Access is only permissible to fishing club members. It can be viewed from adjacent public highways and from rights of way that pass the northern and eastern boundaries.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

Forty Acre Plantation is a large and important block of ancient woodland retaining a diverse species rich flora. The recent woodland extension on its eastern edge provides additional woodland habitat and has already assumed the structure and composition of mature broad-leaved woodland.

Condition Statement

Largely neglected, but with localised heavy disturbance around the fishing lake. Some evidence of recent coppice management.

Management Issues

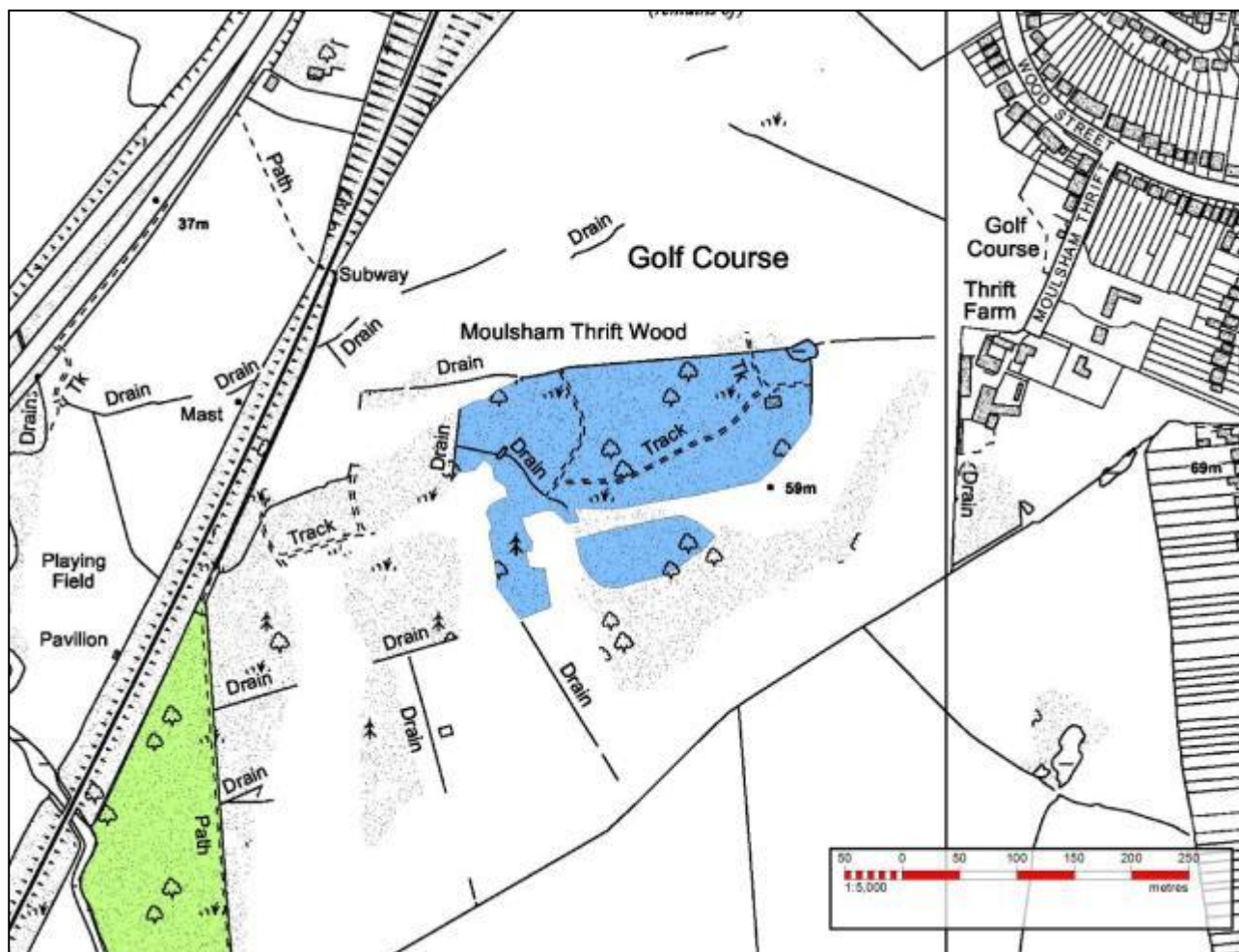
The centre of this wood is currently excluded from the site on account of it being cleared for the fishing lake and ancillary buildings. These areas are suffering from severe disturbance. A regular, conservation-based coppicing programme would enhance the structural diversity of the site.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (deletion of interior developments/lakes); 2016 (boundary revisions, plus addition)

Ch53 Moulsham Thrift Wood, Chelmsford (4.19 ha) TL 69720447



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Located in Moulsham Park golf course, this ancient wood comprises a mix of predominantly deciduous standards forming a somewhat open canopy, below which a grassy flora includes Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). Ancient woodland plants include Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*) and Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*). In more open areas, Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) flourish. The presence of Slender St. John's-wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*) in open, sandy areas is of interest, as a scarce plant in Essex.

Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) are frequent components of the canopy with Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) in the shrub layer. Some overgrown Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice survives at the eastern end of the wood, whilst Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is indicative of its ancient status.

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in the private ownership of Chelmsford Golf Club and is not accessible to the public.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and remnant flora indicates, along with documentary evidence, that this is an ancient woodland site.

Condition Statement

Poor; stable to slow decline?

Management Issues

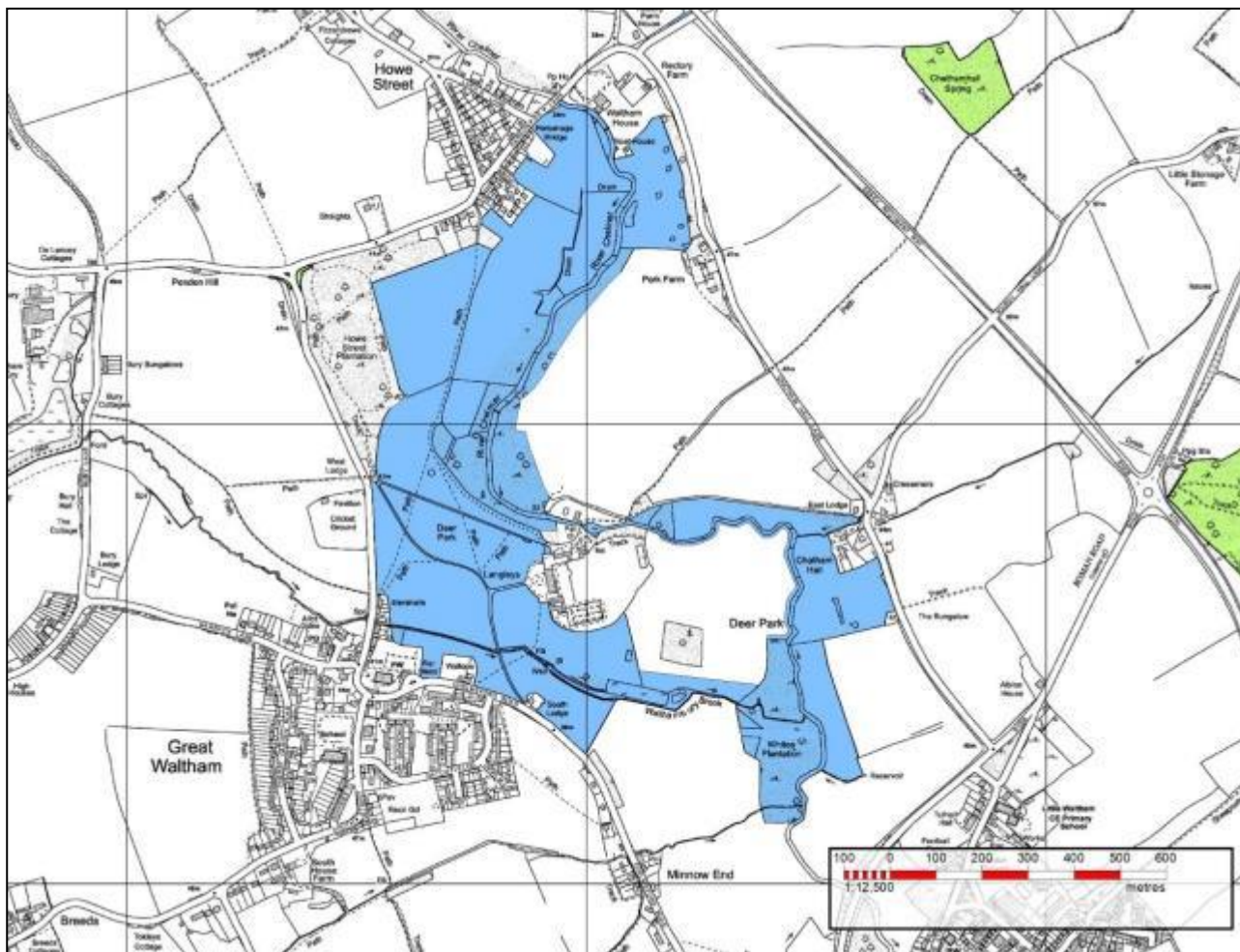
The site has suffered in the past when parts were cleared for golf course creation. The remainder is not managed for nature conservation.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (reduced to ancient woodland extent); 2016 (boundary corrections)

Ch54 Langleys Deer Park, Great Waltham (62.58ha) TL 69971389



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Langleys Park is depicted on the Chapman and Andre map of 1777 and, despite having lost some pasture to arable cultivation, it still retains its essential composition as large expanses of open grassland, scattered trees and plantation along the route of the River Chelmer. As such, this large area of non-arable landscape assumes both ecological and historical importance. Some of the grasslands are used for grazing animals, while the river corridor area provides suitable land for tree cultivation. The parkland trees include Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Common Lime (*Tilia x europaea*).

A wide variety of grasses are to be found throughout the extensive grazed meadows. These include Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Bent-grasses (*Agrostis* spp.), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Meadow-grasses (*Poa* spp.). Whilst the herb flora is not especially diverse, Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) is found, particularly along the track verges. Other species recorded include Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), Parsley-piert (*Aphanes arvensis* agg.) and Procumbent Pearlwort (*Sagina procumbens*) all of which occupy areas of dry and very short turf. By contrast the corridor habitat adjacent to the river is marshy and supports extensive stands of sedge bed habitat including Greater Pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*). Numerous other species of wet marshy ground are present include Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatic*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Purple-loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*).

Ownership and Access

Langleys Deer Park is in private ownership and access is only via public footpaths that run through estate land.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (in a rather modified form)

Wood-pasture and Parkland

Hedgerows

Selection Criteria

HC4 Wood Pasture and Parkland

HC10 River Floodplain

Rationale

Parklands afford unique opportunities for wildlife with their scattered standard trees and extensive grasslands. Documentary evidence shows that this is an ancient landscape that is likely to be rich in all forms of wildlife, including invertebrates. Other habitats, such as the river corridor and stands of woodland, add to the overall habitat diversity.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

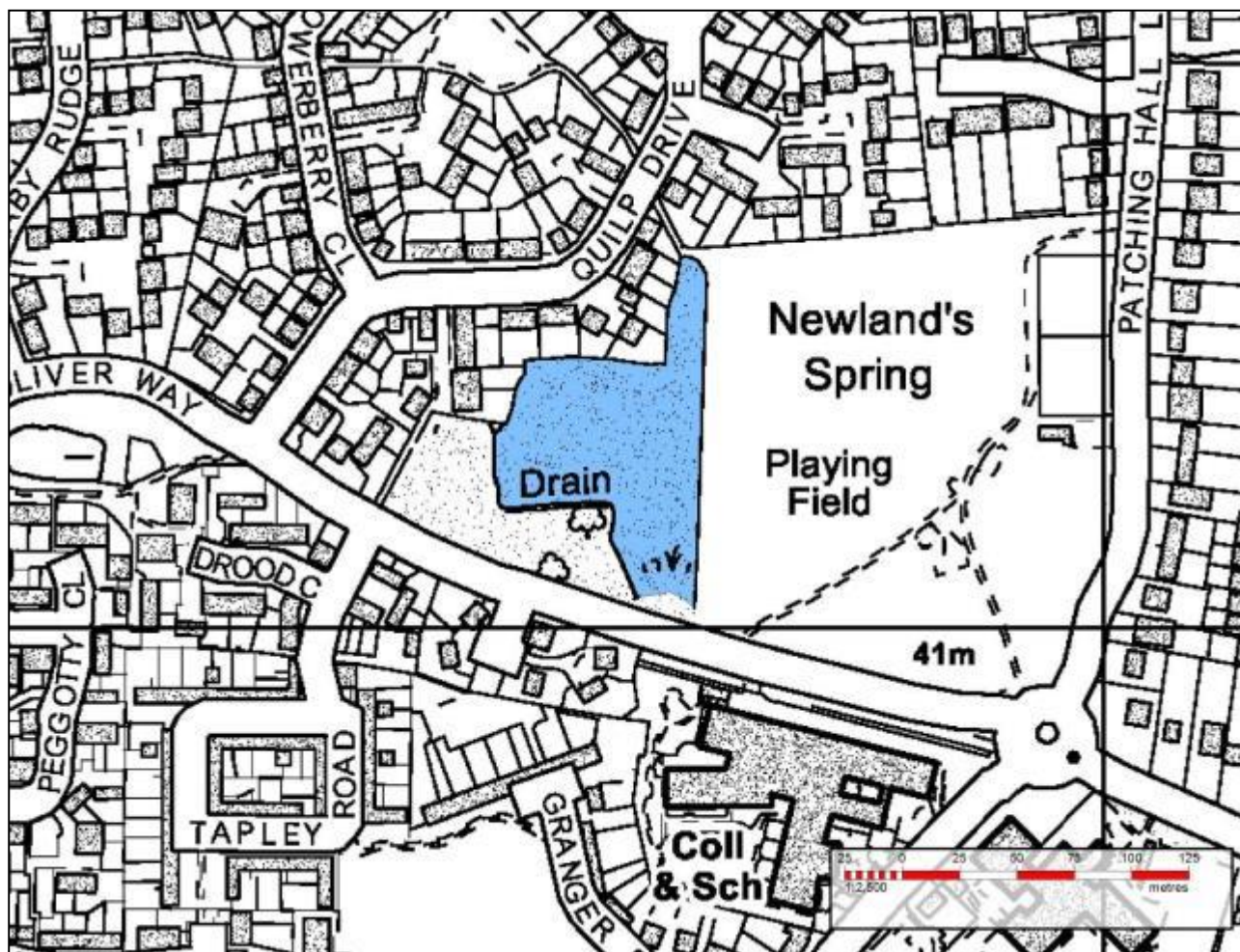
The grasslands are grazed by cattle, which is beneficial to this habitat type.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (boundary revisions); 2016 (significant addition and deletion)

Ch55 Newland's Spring, Chelmsford (0.74 ha) TL 69780908



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Newland's Spring is a small fragment of woodland situated in the urban environs of Chelmsford. Coppiced Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) with Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) are the most frequent elements of the canopy and sub-canopy. As well as Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), there is Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) also to be found in the canopy. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) characterise the shrub layer. Species of interest in the ground flora include Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) and Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*).

Ownership and Access

Newlands Spring is owned and managed by Chelmsford City Council and is accessible to the public.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood support documentary evidence that it is an ancient site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice under visitor pressure.

Management Issues

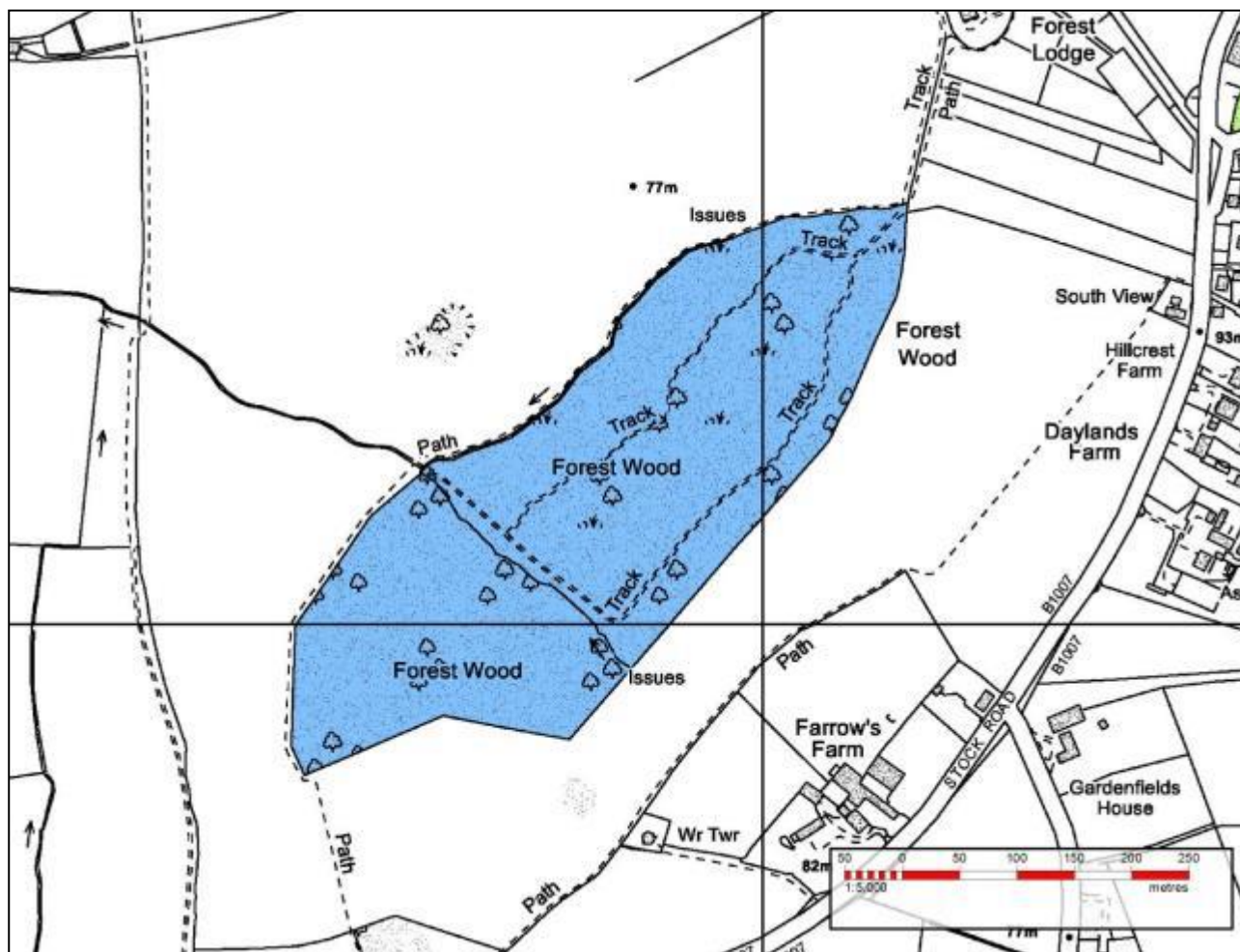
The woodland is close to habitation and therefore prone to non-native plants establishing themselves. Here the non-native 'garden' Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon* subsp. *argenteum*) has colonised part of the wood. Trampling pressure and the gradual decline of overgrown coppice stools are also issues.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch56 Forest Wood, Stock (12.48 ha) TL 69850011



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This wood with its varied topography has a diverse range of conditions ranging from dry free-draining slopes to wet streamside habitat. It is dominated by mature coppice-with-standards, comprising Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is abundant in the ground flora, whilst other ancient woodland indicators recorded include Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*) and Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*). The wet stream valley area is characterised by species such as Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Wavy Bitter-cress (*Cardamine flexuosa*)

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in private ownership. It can be viewed from a footpath that runs alongside the north-western boundary of the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

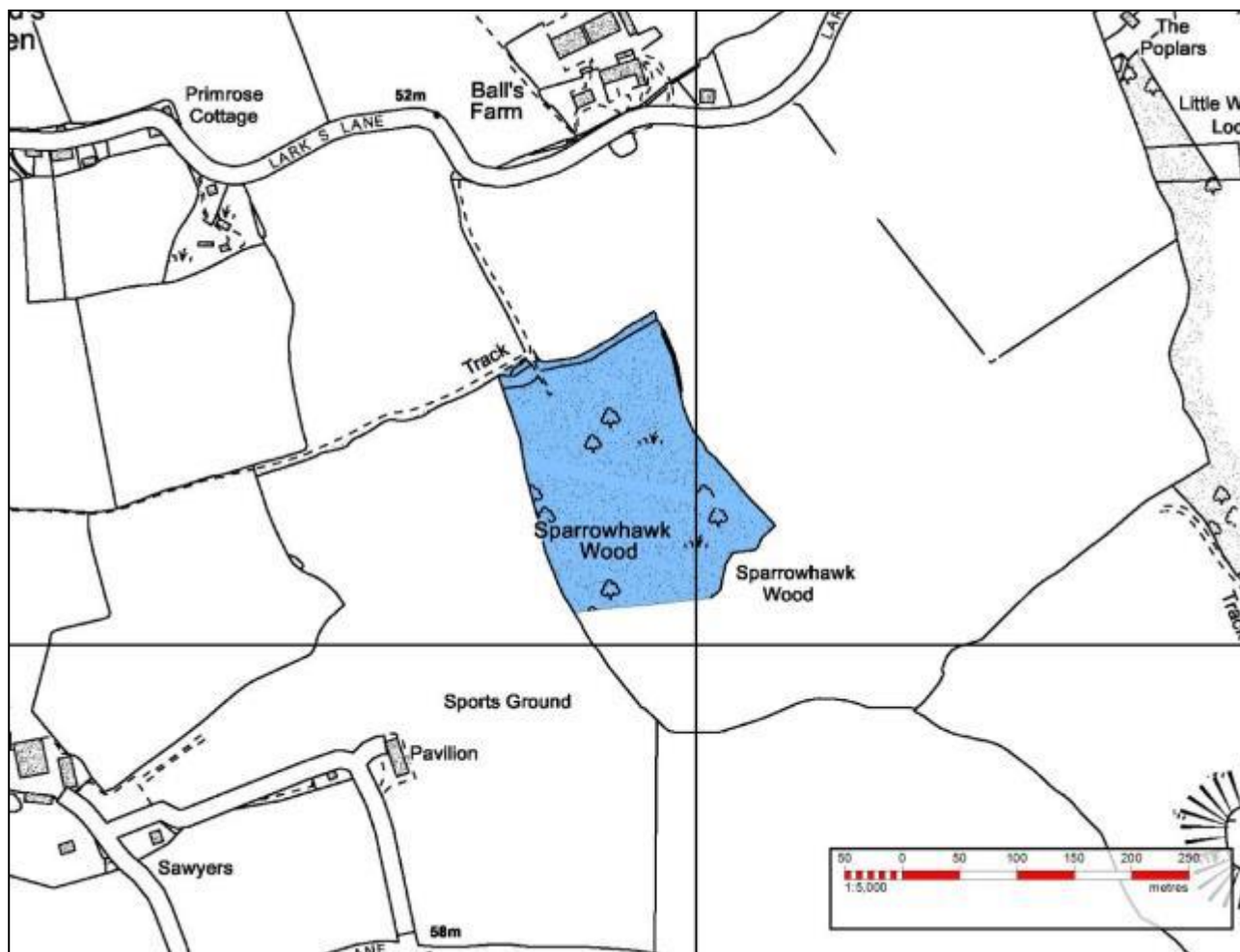
The resumption of a stable coppice cycle would benefit the wildlife of this wood.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch57 Sparrowhawk Wood, Broomfield (3.70 ha) TL 69931214



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A portion of this woodland was grubbed as can be seen from comparison with 19th century Ordnance Survey maps when this wood extended further to the south. The lack of any ditch or bank along the southern edge provides the evidence on the ground. Coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) characterise this ancient wood, with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*). The shrub layer is generally variable throughout the wood and includes Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The ground flora exhibits good species diversity, including ancient woodland indicators such as Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*).

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in private ownership. It can be viewed from a public footpath that runs alongside the northern and eastern boundaries of the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this site is typical of many ancient woods in Essex.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice

Management Issues

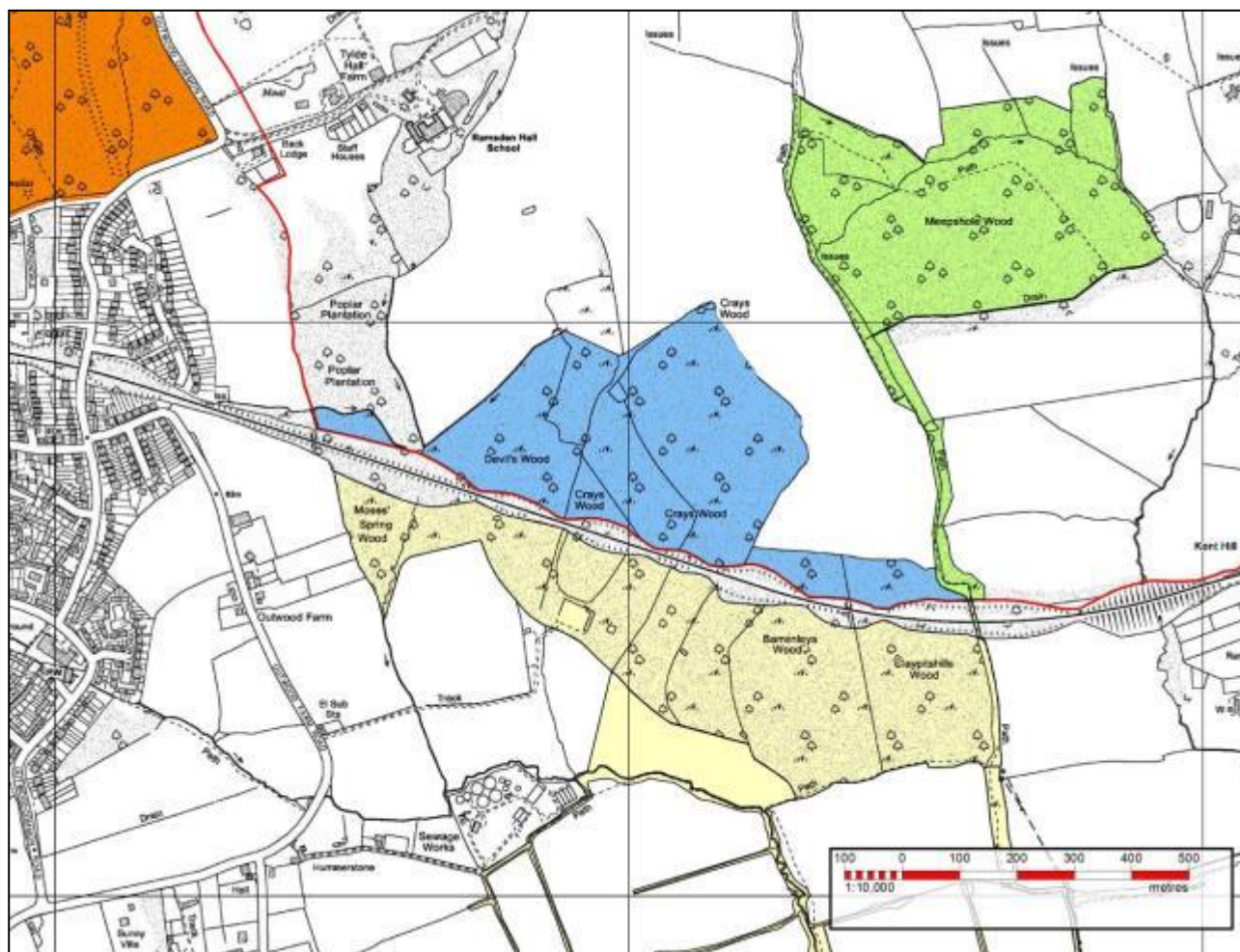
A resumption of a stable coppice cycle would be beneficial.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (boundary revised); 2016

Ch58 Devils/Crays Wood, Ramsden Heath (20.57 ha) TQ 70049477



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This largely ancient woodland site is located on the southern boundary of Chelmsford, with corresponding sections of woodland within Basildon District. The main block of Devils and Crays wood mainly comprises coppice-with-standards of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), whilst Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and invasive Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) also are present. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) are the characteristic species of the shrub layer, but Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) is also found, although rare. Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) are both found in abundance in the ground flora, whilst other ancient woodland indicators recorded include Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Woodsedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*) and Three-veined Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*).

The small detached section of woodland to the west of the main site is the northerly fragment of Moses' Spring Wood. Sweet Chestnut and Hornbeam coppice and standards dominate this section. Many fallen trees on the ground are probably remaining from the aftermath of the storms of 1987. There is very little in the way of a shrub layer, though the ground flora has abundant Wood Anemone and Bluebell. A small section of wood between Barrenleys and Crays Woods is recent in origin but it has evolved to form an integral part of the site.

Ownership and Access

These woods are thought to be in private ownership. There is no public access; the narrow eastern end of the site can be viewed from a footpath just north of where it crosses the railway line.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this woodland complex is strongly indicative of its ancient status. With Ch64 Meepshole Wood to the east, it forms an extensive connected tract of wildlife habitat.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

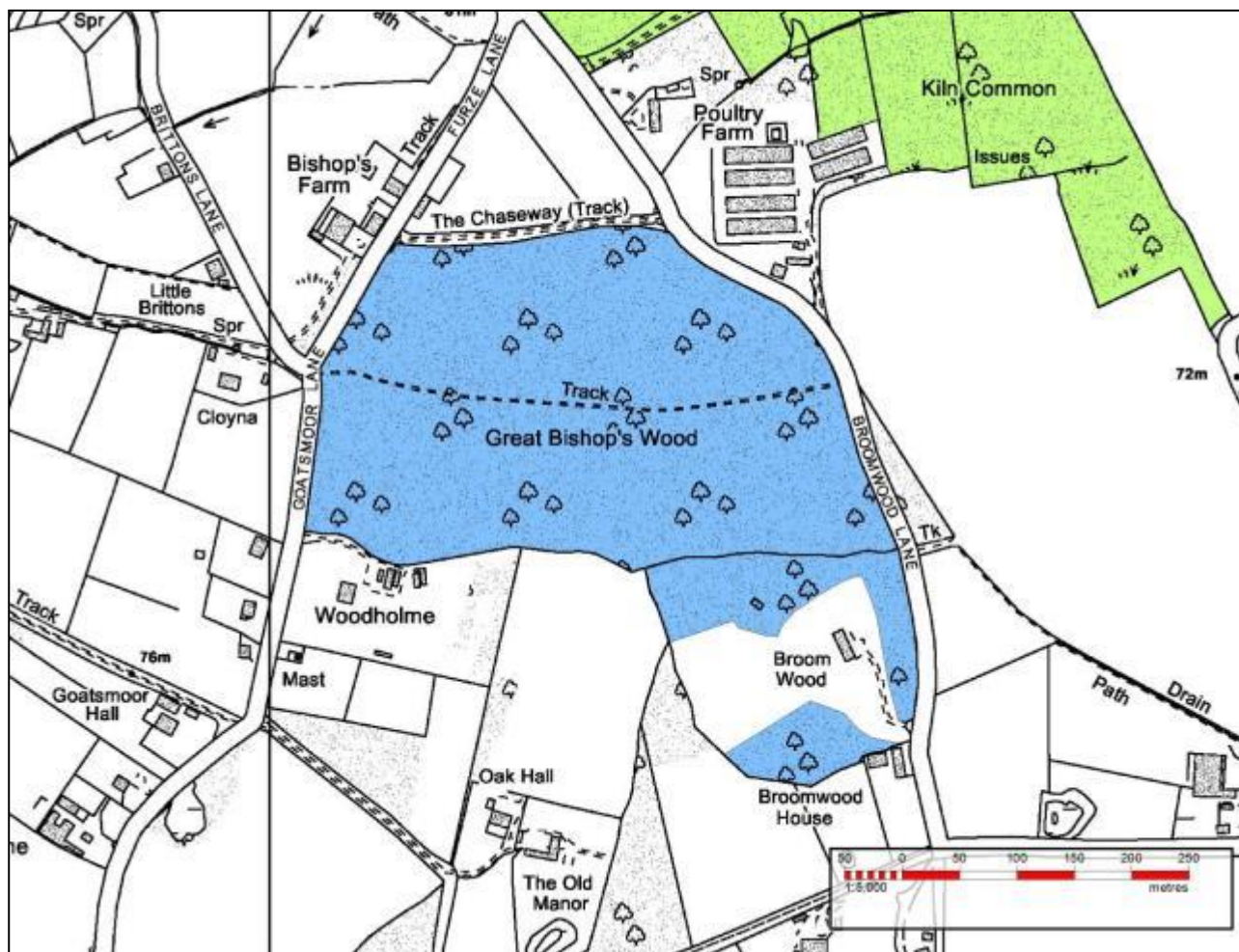
A resumption of coppicing and control of invasive Sycamore would be desirable.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (small addition)

Ch59 Great Bishop's/Broom Woods, Ramsden Heath (14.01 ha) TQ 70309753



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Part of Broom Wood has been lost to a clearing with a residential property. A wooded portion still occupies the southern peripheral margin to this plot. Great Bishop's, the main block of this site, comprises mature Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice, Birch (*Betula* sp.) as standards and coppice, Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. Young Sweet Chestnut is found towards the western half of the site.

The woodland floor has much leaf litter, possibly suppressing any extensive growth of herb flora. However, there are localised patches of Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*).

Ownership and Access

The woods are thought to be in private ownership with no public access. They can be viewed from Goatsmoor and Broomwood Lanes and 'The Chaseway' track adjacent to the northern edge of Great Bishop's Wood.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and presence of ancient woodland indicator species especially the Wood Anemone highlight this as a long standing site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

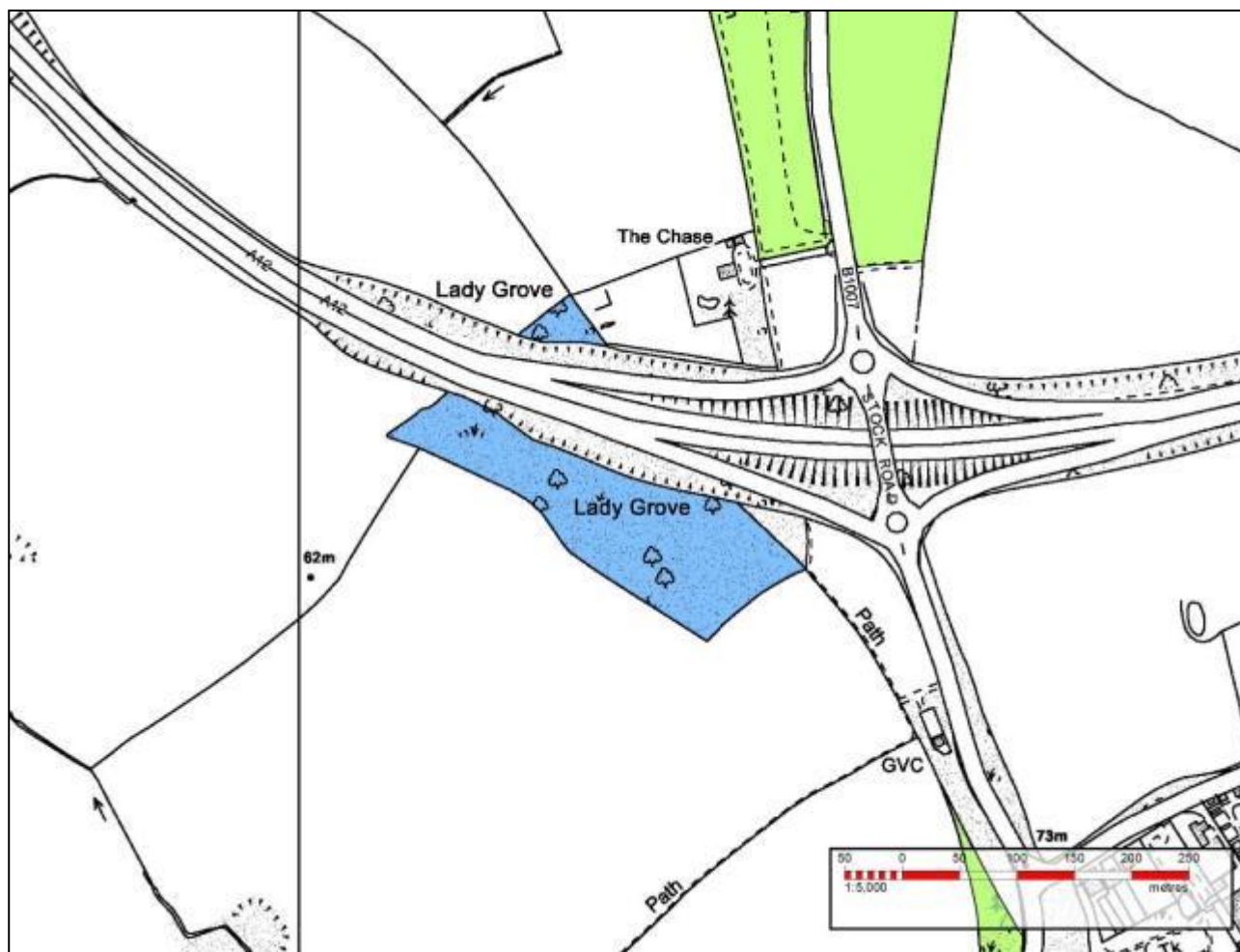
A resumption of coppicing would be desirable.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch60 Lady Grove, Galleywood (2.82 ha) TL 70270152



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Construction of the A12 Chelmsford bypass resulted in the loss of some of this wood, such that now to the north side of the road a tiny fragment of the ancient wood survives. However, on the south side retains a good structure with almost pure Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice. Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) also occur. There has been some disturbance at the eastern end with the construction of a BMX bike trail. The ground flora includes much Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), with the western end of the wood having a profusion of Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*).

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in private ownership with no public access. The site can be viewed from a public footpath that runs alongside the eastern end of the wood.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this site highlight this as ancient woodland.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

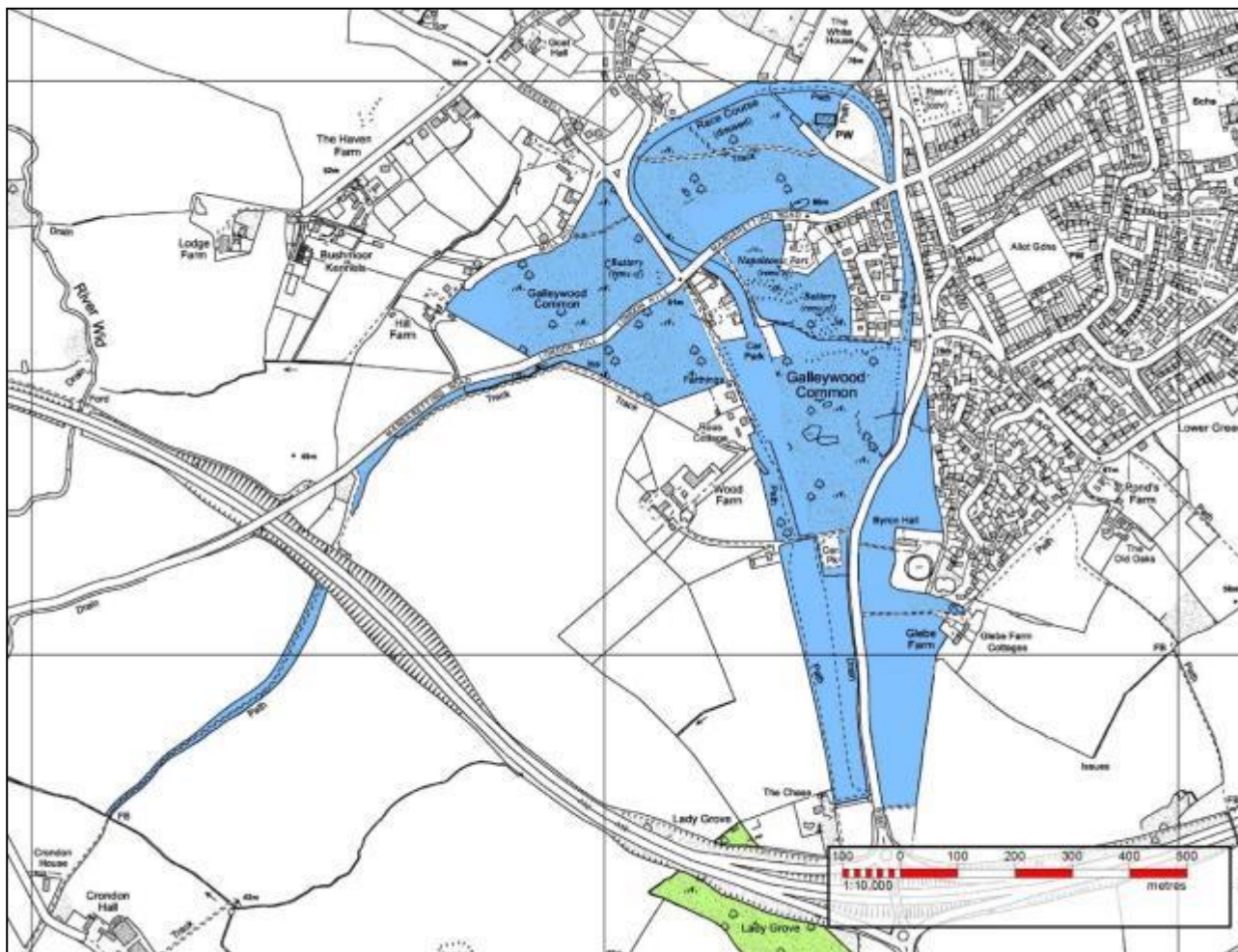
The construction of the bike trail has prevented much ground flora from now growing due to the disturbance and severe pressure caused by the activity.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch61 Galleywood Common, Galleywood (43.79 ha) TL 70250246



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This site primarily includes the majority of Galleywood Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR), but also includes additional habitat. Galleywood Common is a complex of habitats ranging from woodland to grassland, lowland heath and bog habitats. A large area of open grassland lies to the south and is dominated by Bent-grasses (*Agrostis* sp.) and Fescues (*Festuca* sp.). Amongst the herb ground flora is Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Tormential (*Potentilla erecta*). Galleywood Common is very important for its localised areas of dry heathland habitat interspersed with acid grassland. Such areas of lowland heath are now rare in Essex, and Galleywood along with the Danbury ridge are the two important sites for this habitat in Chelmsford. Here, it is characterised by Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*).

Much of the woodland is dominated by Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Birch (*Betula pendula*). A very small area of lowland raised bog habitat is situated in the wood to the north-west of the site. Four Essex Red Data Listed (ERDL) species Lesser Skullcap (*Scutellaria minor*), Wood Horsetail (*Equisetum sylvaticum*), Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*) and Narrow Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris carthusiana*) are found in this area alone. Other ERDL species recorded from ponds on the site include Marsh Speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*) and Water-purslane (*Lythrum portula*).

The site also includes the churchyard of St Michael and All Angels and a strip of woodland to the south of the A12, both of which are located outside the LNR boundary.

Ownership and Access

The areas of the site corresponding to Galleywood Common LNR are owned by Chelmsford City Council and accessible to the public. The woodland section to the south of the A12 is in private ownership, but is accessible to view from a public footpath that runs through it. The churchyard of St Michael and All Angels is governed under the Diocese of Chelmsford and is accessible to the public. Other small parcels of land are also in private ownership.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Dry Acid Grassland

Lowland Raised Bog

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

HC13 Heathland and Acid Grassland

Rationale

This site incorporates a wide range of habitat types and supports a great diversity of flora and fauna that include many rare and declining species. It is an old grassland site, albeit one that has seen a marked change in management practices over the years.

Condition Statement

Stable; possible very slow decline under nutrient enrichment

Management Issues

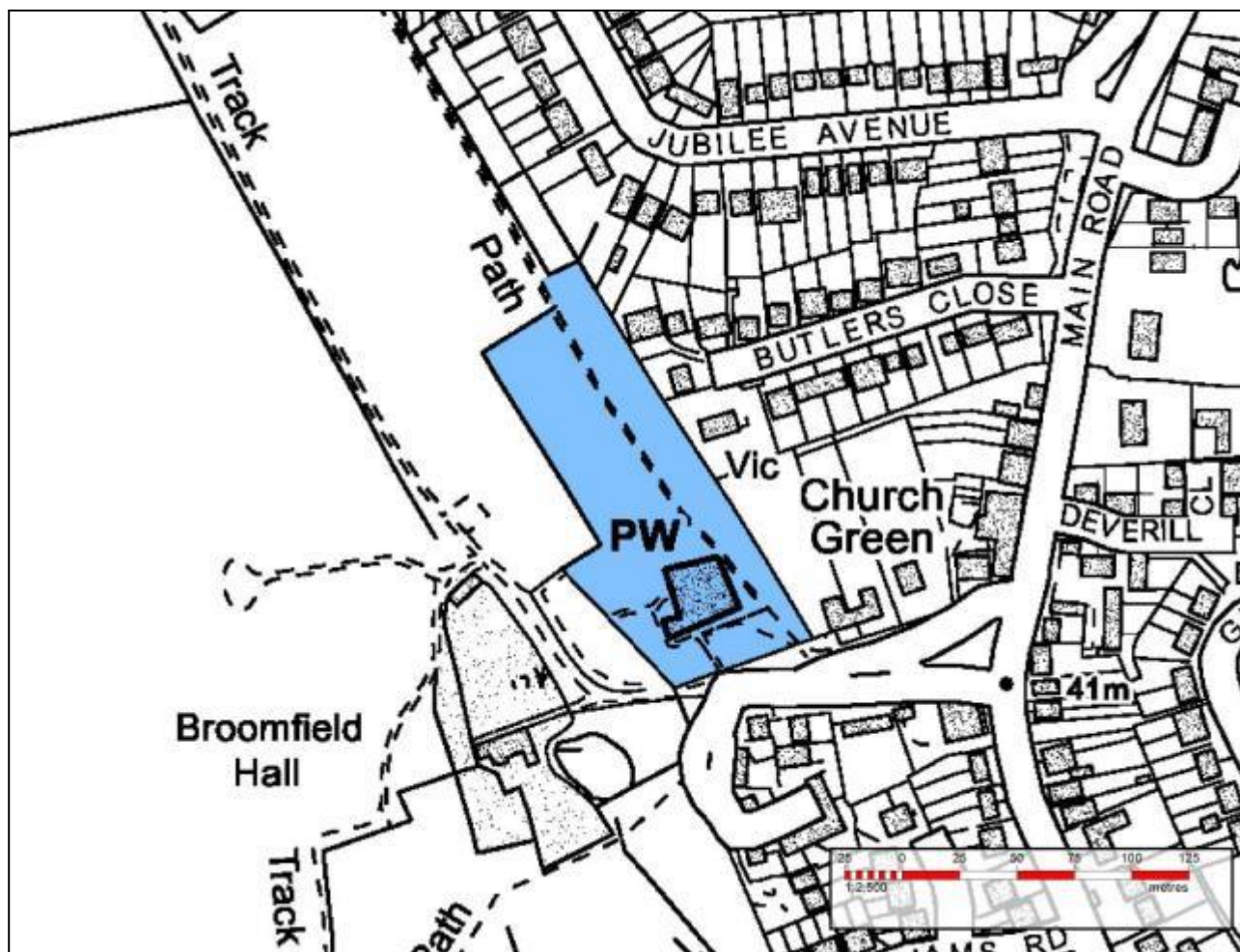
A project of heathland restoration has been undertaken. Soil eutrophication as a result of leaving any grass cutting to lie on the ground will be having a detrimental effect on the grass sward. The small bog area is suffering from scrub encroachment.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

2004 (minor boundary revisions); 2016 (race course sections added and other minor amendments).

Ch62 St Mary's Church, Broomfield (1.11 ha) TL 70491051



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The most interesting area of this churchyard is to be found in the locality of some of the older graves, both in front of the church and near the lych-gate. The nationally scarce Lesser Calamint (*Clinopodium calamintha*) grows abundantly at the base of the church wall whilst Black Spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*) and Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*), both Essex Red Data List (ERDL) ferns have colonised the wall. Nearby grassland includes two more ERDL plants, the rare Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*) and Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*). The grassland of the churchyard also supports areas with Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*). Twelve species of fungi have been recorded from this churchyard, including six from the Genus *Hygrocybe* (waxcaps).

Ownership and Access

The churchyard is governed by the Diocese of Chelmsford and open to access by the public.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Churchyards such as this are refuges for some of Chelmsford's and indeed the counties rare plants, being refuges for old grassland.

Condition Statement

Moderate; stable to declining?

Management Issues

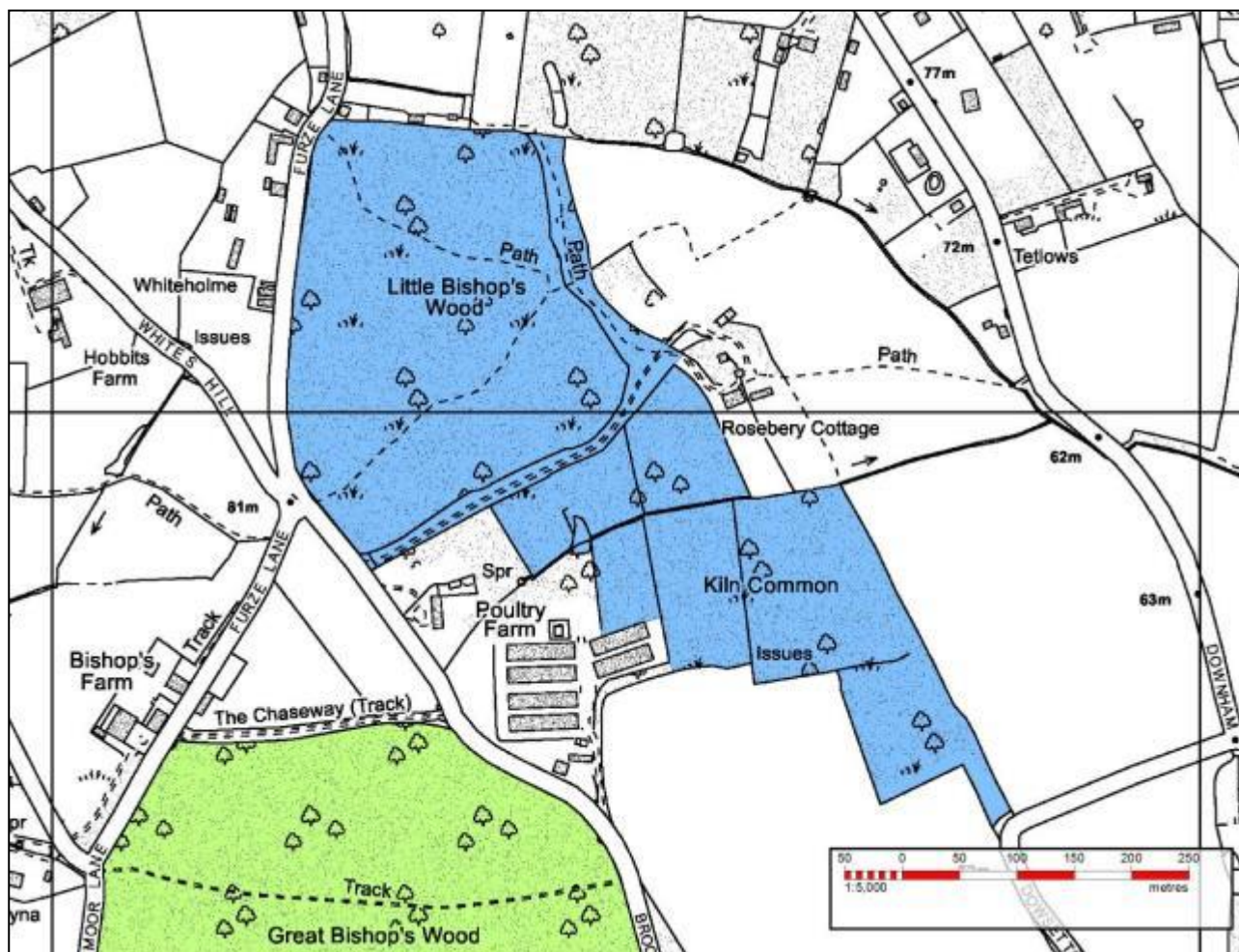
The ferns growing on the walls can be susceptible to 'clean up' operations that inadvertently remove these and other important herb species from this habitat. As with many churchyards, there are likely to be conflicts between desires to maintain a neat yard, versus leaving areas cut less often for the benefit of wildlife.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 2004

Reviewed: 2016 (minor addition)

Ch63 Little Bishop's/Kiln Common, Stock (15.36 ha) TQ 70459798



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Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice dominates most of Little Bishop's Wood, with Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) forming other stands. A mixed ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*) and Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*).

Kiln Common is a contiguous piece of secondary woodland to the south of Little Bishop's Wood. In contrast to the Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) of the ancient block, Kiln Common is characterised by a mixed canopy including Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Silver Birch, with occasional Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). The ground flora is reasonably rich, including Bluebell and Pignut.

The green lane that separates the two woods provides additional woodland habitat.

Ownership and Access

These woodlands are thought to be in private ownership with public access only along the marked track and pathway rights of way through the wood.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

Whilst only Little Bishop's Wood is ancient, with a typical structure and composition, Kiln Common is acquiring many of the same woodland attributes and provides a value habitat extension, with a developing complex woodland structure.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

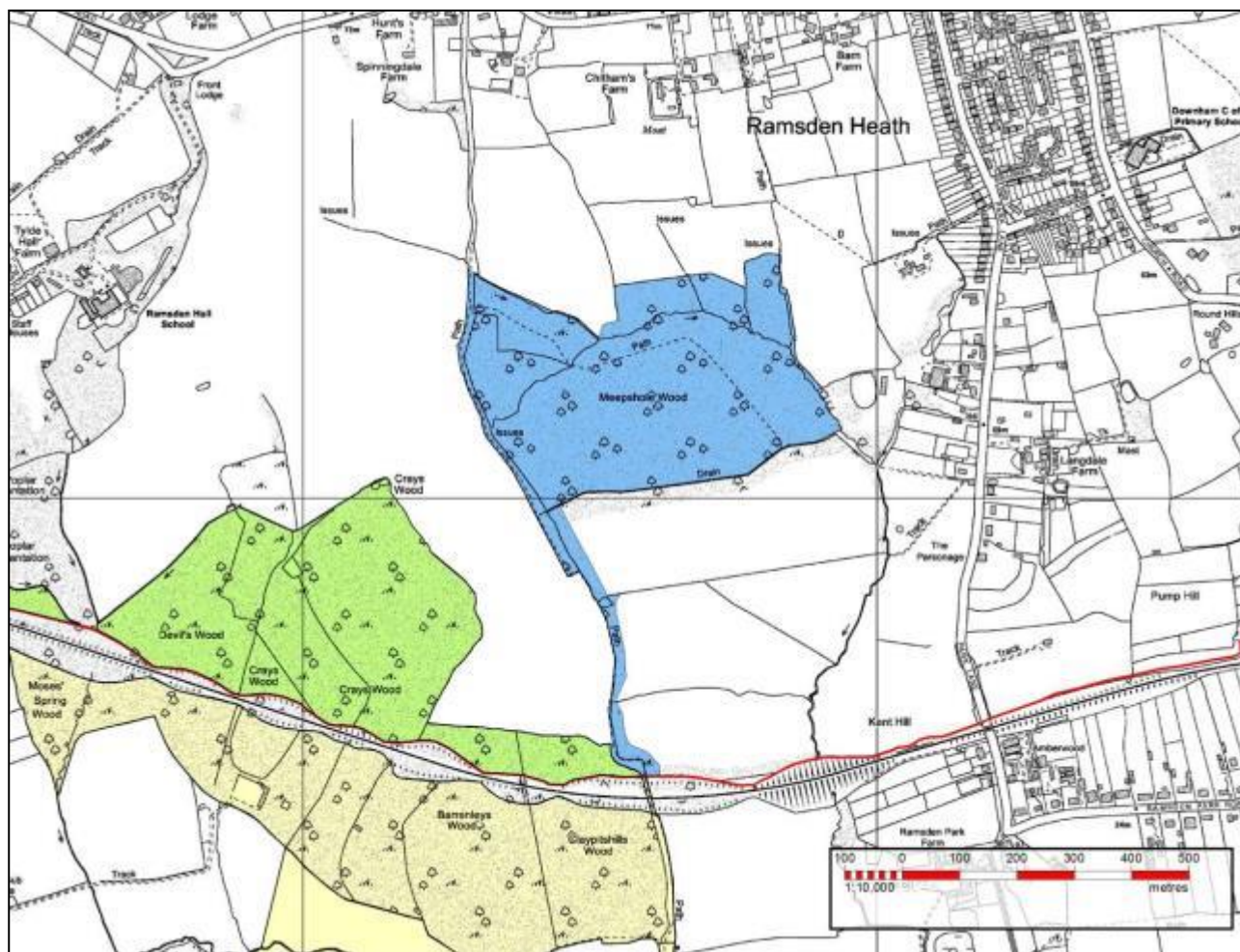
A resumption of coppicing within the Sweet Chestnut stands would greatly increase structural diversity.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992 (as two sites)

Reviewed: 2004 (minor boundary revisions); 2016 (lane added)

Ch64 Meepshole Wood, Ramsden Heath (21.21 ha) TQ 70589516



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Meepshole Wood is a large wood comprising ancient and secondary components. The ancient section has Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) as dominant coppice stands, with Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards interspersed throughout. A distinctive feature of this wood is the presence of Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*), occurring in greater quantity than is usually found in the woods of eastern England. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) are all found in a scattered shrub layer. The ground flora includes a considerable number of herbs associated with ancient woodland. These include Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) and Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*). In addition, Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) are grasses recorded that also have affinity with ancient woods.

Located in the north-western corner of the site is the secondary woodland component which on 19th century Ordnance Survey maps was shown to have been cleared. This is borne out by a contrasting composition where tall Pedunculate Oak standards dominate, though none is of any great age and there is the general lack of a coppiced structure. However, there is still to be found in this area a rich ground flora that included Bluebell, Wood Anemone, Yellow Archangel, Primrose, Wood Sorrel and Moschatel.

The woodland strip corridor to the south of Meepshole wood exhibits a variety of tree and shrub species and provides a link to Ch58 Devils/Crays Wood with Moses' Spring Wood North.

Ownership and Access

This site is thought to be in private ownership with no public access. The site can be viewed from the public right of way that follows the track alongside the western edge of the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

HC30 Wildlife Corridors

Rationale

This site has very good structure and diversity of species and has an especially rich assemblage of plants associated with ancient woodland soils. In addition the corridor woodland provides valuable connective habitat to Ch58 resulting in an extensive ecological unit of considerable importance within Chelmsford.

Condition Statement

Largely neglected coppice.

Management Issues

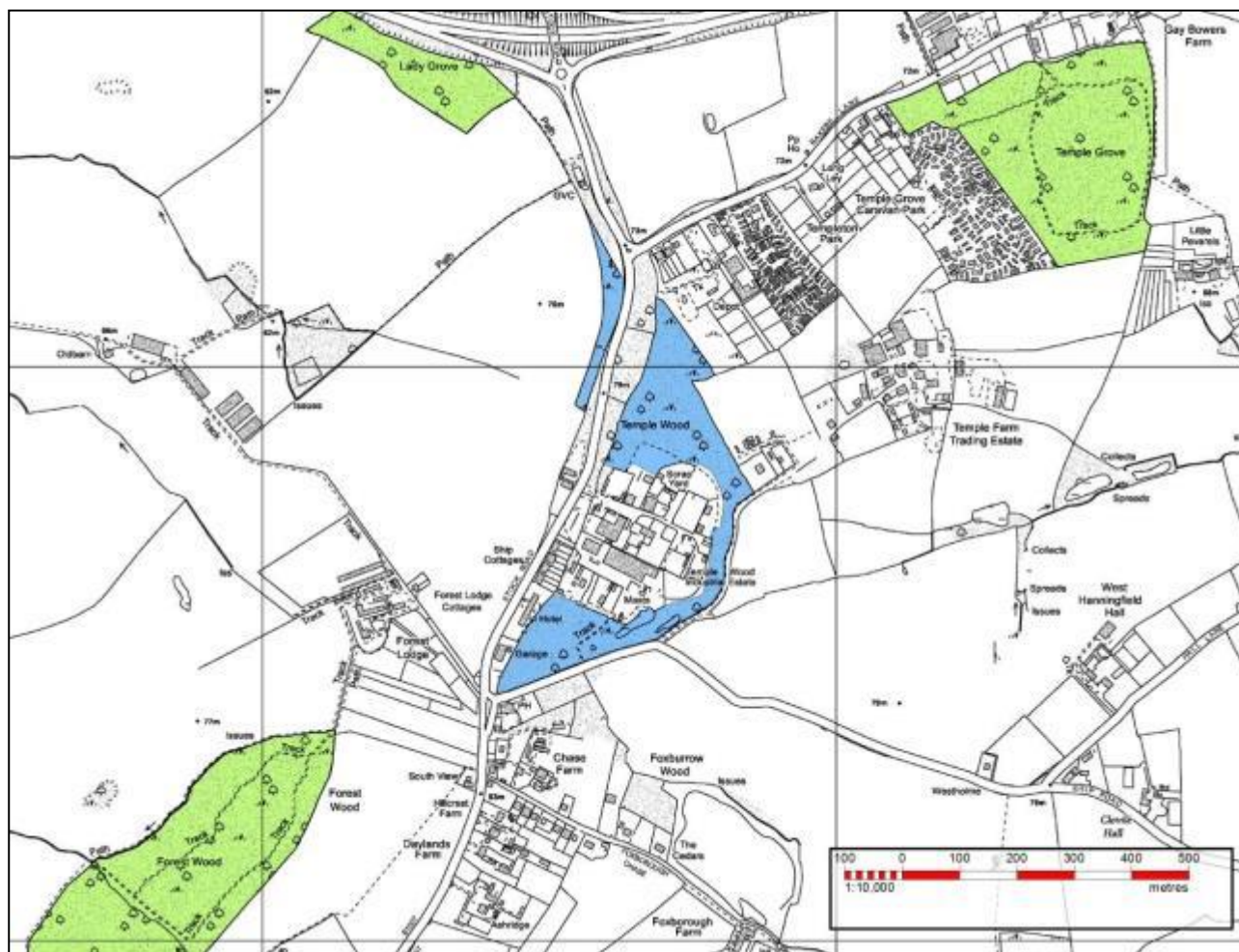
A resumption of coppicing would create greater structural diversity, which would benefit the woodland's wildlife.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (addition of southern woodland strip)

Ch65 Temple Wood, Galleywood (7.84 ha) TL 70650078



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Located on the east side of the Stock Road, Temple Wood surrounds an industrial estate on three sides. Gradual grubbing out of the wood by expansion of this industrial area makes accurate mapping of this boundary difficult. Neglected Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) dominate, with Birch (*Betula pendula*) as coppice and standards also present. Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards are found throughout the site. There is a generally sparse ground flora with Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) occurring mainly in the northern part of the wood. In addition, Bracken (*Pteridium aquifolium*) forms extensive stands.

In contrast to this, the fragment of wood on the west side of the road is almost pure Sweet Chestnut coppice with occasional Pedunculate Oak standards. Bluebell is prominent as a ground flora species along with Wood Anemone under the canopy with Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*) found at the north end of this block. The status of this strip of woodland (ancient or recent in origin) is uncertain.

Ownership and Access

The component parts of the site are thought to be in private ownership with no public access. The southern edge of Temple Wood can be viewed from Ship Road, whilst the block to the west of the B1007 can be viewed from the roadside paths.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Rationale

The main body of Temple Wood is clearly ancient. The status of the western strip is uncertain, but regardless of this, it has a woodland flora and fauna that adds to the overall value of the main site. It has acquired several ancient woodland plants.

Condition Statement

Poor, declining.

Management Issues

Parts of the wood close to the industrial estate are generally in poor condition due to being scrubby and with a poor ground flora, as well as being used as a dumping ground. The gradual erosion of the core of the wood through expansion of the industrial area is causing a decline in the quality of this site.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

2004 (loss of interior to commercial development); 2016 (minor boundary revisions)

Ch66 Chathamhall Spring, Howe Street (2.81 ha) TL 70811474



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As an ancient wood, Chathamhall Spring only retains the former character with scattered Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with some tall coppiced Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) in the north-eastern corner. These mature trees tend to be confined to the edges of the wood. Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) and Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) are of interest in the shrub layer. The central area is predominantly Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice with Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) being very competitive here. Other herbs typically found in ancient woods present include Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*).

Ownership and Access

Chathamhall Spring is in private ownership and has no public access. It can be viewed from the public footpath that runs alongside the south eastern edge of the wood.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

This wood retains the characteristics of an ancient woodland stand.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

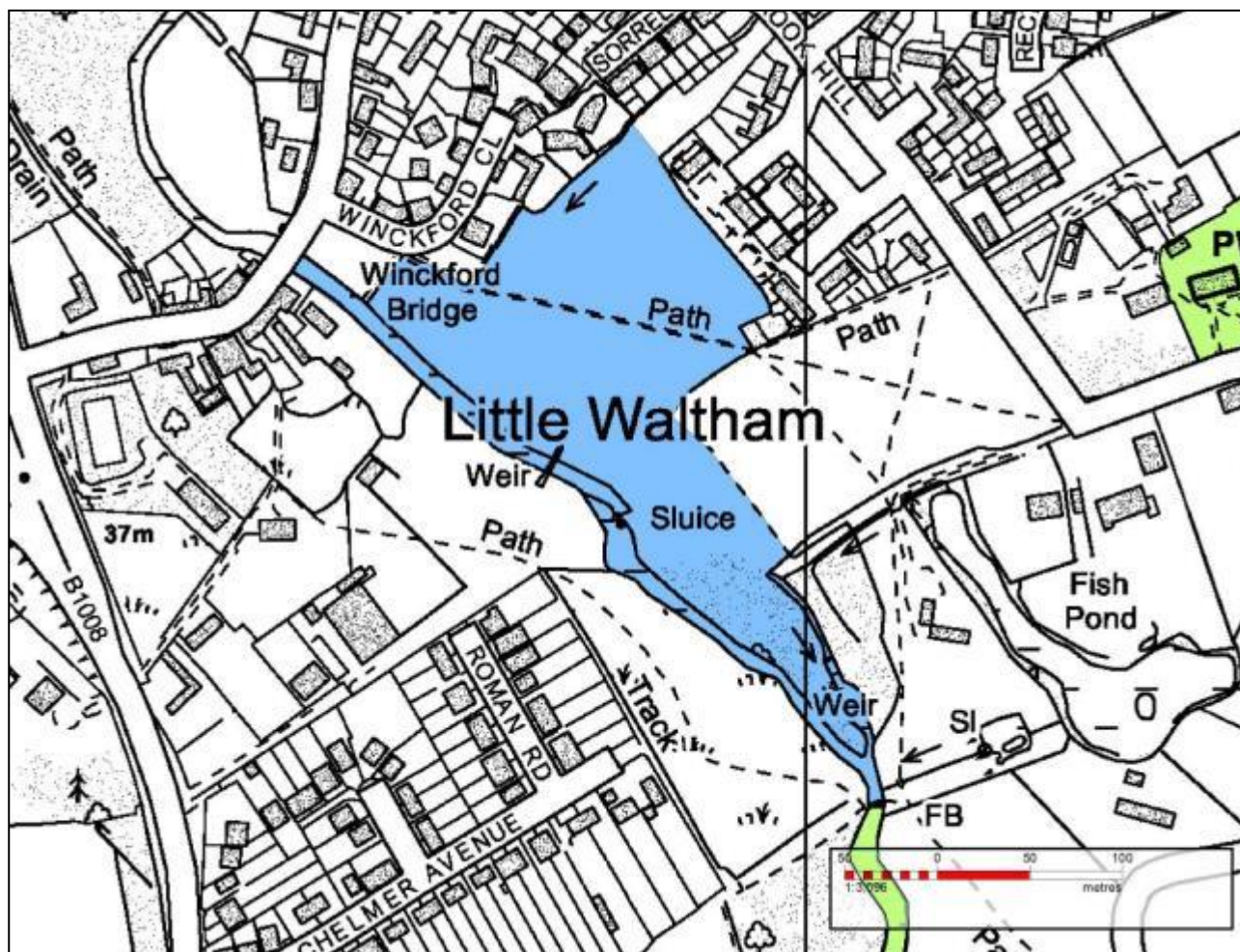
Habitat diversification through coppicing would be desirable.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch67 Village Meadow, Little Waltham (3.45 ha) TL 70901263



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The meadow displays a wide variety of grass species indicative of older, less disturbed grassland, including Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Fescue (*Festuca* spp.) and Bent-grass (*Agrostis* sp.). Several herb species of interest have been recorded from this site including Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*) an Essex Red Data List species plant confined to unimproved grassland habitats.

This site lies at the northern end of a chain of important wildlife sites that run down the Chelmer valley into the city itself.

Ownership and Access

The meadows are largely in private ownership and do not have any public access other than a public footpath that runs across the north of the site. A very small strip of land on the northern boundary is owned by Chelmsford City Council.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

The site is a small remnant of (Coastal and) Floodplain Grazing Marsh.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Old grassland habitat is now becoming rarer within Chelmsford and areas such as this provide valuable wildlife habitat. The site is also linked to Ch76 Broomfield – Little Waltham Chelmer Mosaic, providing an extensive wildlife corridor.

Condition Statement

Declining under lack of appropriate management?

Management Issues

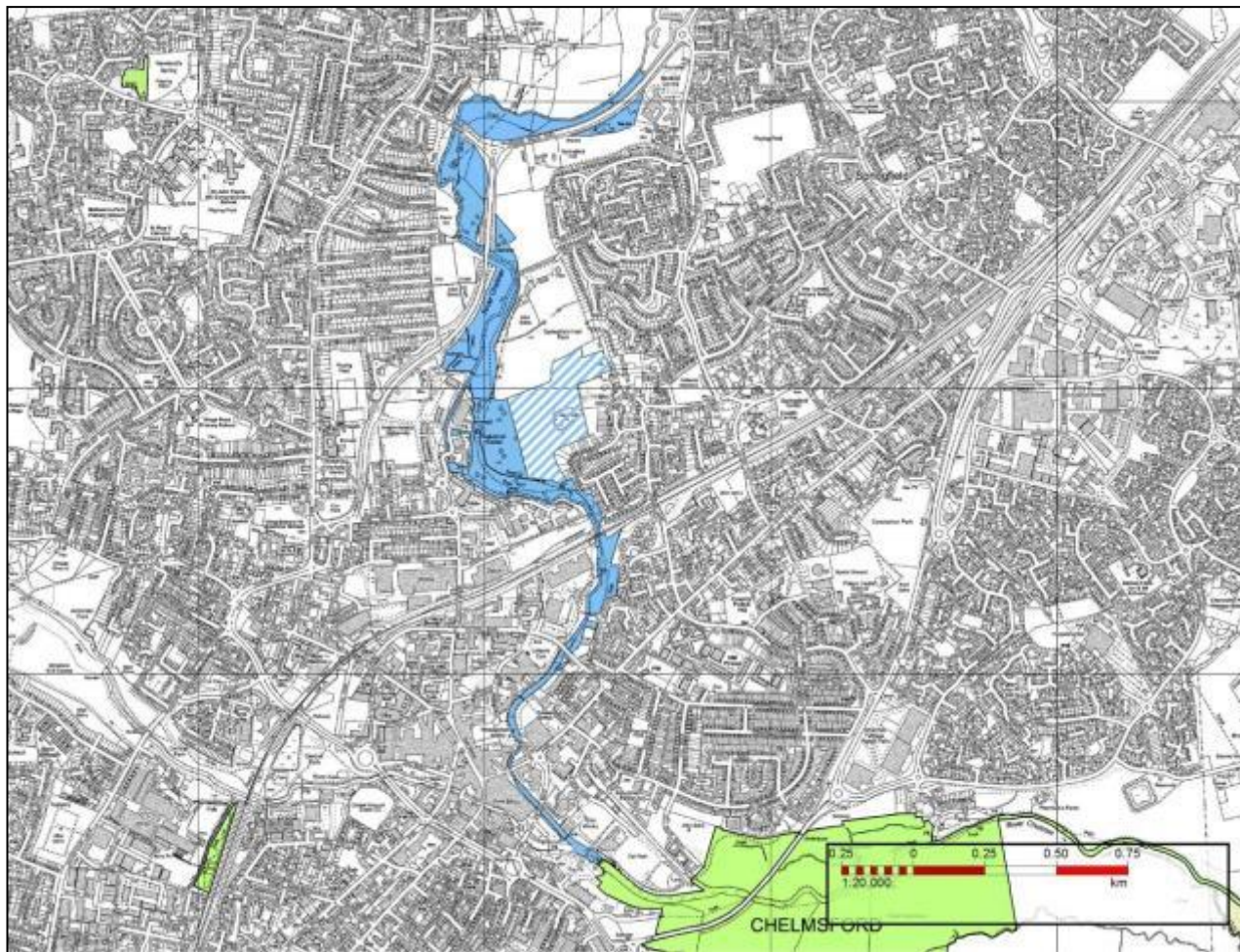
Traditional grazing may now be difficult to implement successfully here.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (deletions)

Ch68 Chelmer Valley Riverside, Chelmsford (28.50 ha) TL 71100813



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This mosaic of riverside habitats forms a corridor, which penetrates into the centre of Chelmsford city centre. It has broadly similar boundaries to the Chelmer Valley Riverside Local Nature Reserve which was declared in 2005. The various habitats include grassland and scrub, found to the north, contrasting with the wooded plantations further south, where trees such as Willows (*Salix* sp.), Grey Poplar (*Populus canescens*), Lombardy Poplar (*Populus nigra* var. *italica*) and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) are found. Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) dominates much of the ground flora beneath. Towards the south, is a larger area of open parkland habitat with wide spacing between the trees. A grassland and ruderal flora is found throughout this area. Rough grassland species include False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), which dominates, Smooth Meadow-grass (*Poa pratensis*), Creeping Bent-grass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*). Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) are also recorded from areas of the grassland.

The slow-flowing river supports a considerable amount of emergent vegetation, dominated by branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*). Arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*), Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) and of particular note aquatics, River Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*) and Shining Pondweed (*Potamogeton lucens*) both Essex Red Data List species, are to be found throughout this section of the Chelmer. Water Voles have been recorded along this stretch of the river and Otters may use it to pass along the Chelmer to the quieter headwaters to the north.

As well as fulfilling an important role as a wildlife corridor, the site also draws local residents to use it as a route when going about their business, and as such has an important function as accessible greenspace within the urban development.

Ownership and Access

This site incorporates much of the publicly accessible Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve (LNR) owned and managed by Chelmsford City Council. It also includes additional accessible river habitat to the south of the LNR. Other areas of the site to the west of the Chelmer River (north of the Anglia Ruskin University site) and meadows north of Valley Bridge/Chelmer Valley Road A1016 are in private ownership and not accessible to the public.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Hedgerows

Selection Criteria

HC28 Small-component Mosaics

HC30 Wildlife Corridors

HC31 Accessible Natural Greenspace

Rationale

This extremely important corridor site provides Chelmsford with fine riverine habitat supporting a wide variety of flora and fauna. It provides an invaluable opportunity for the residents and workers of Chelmsford to experience riverine wildlife at close hand.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

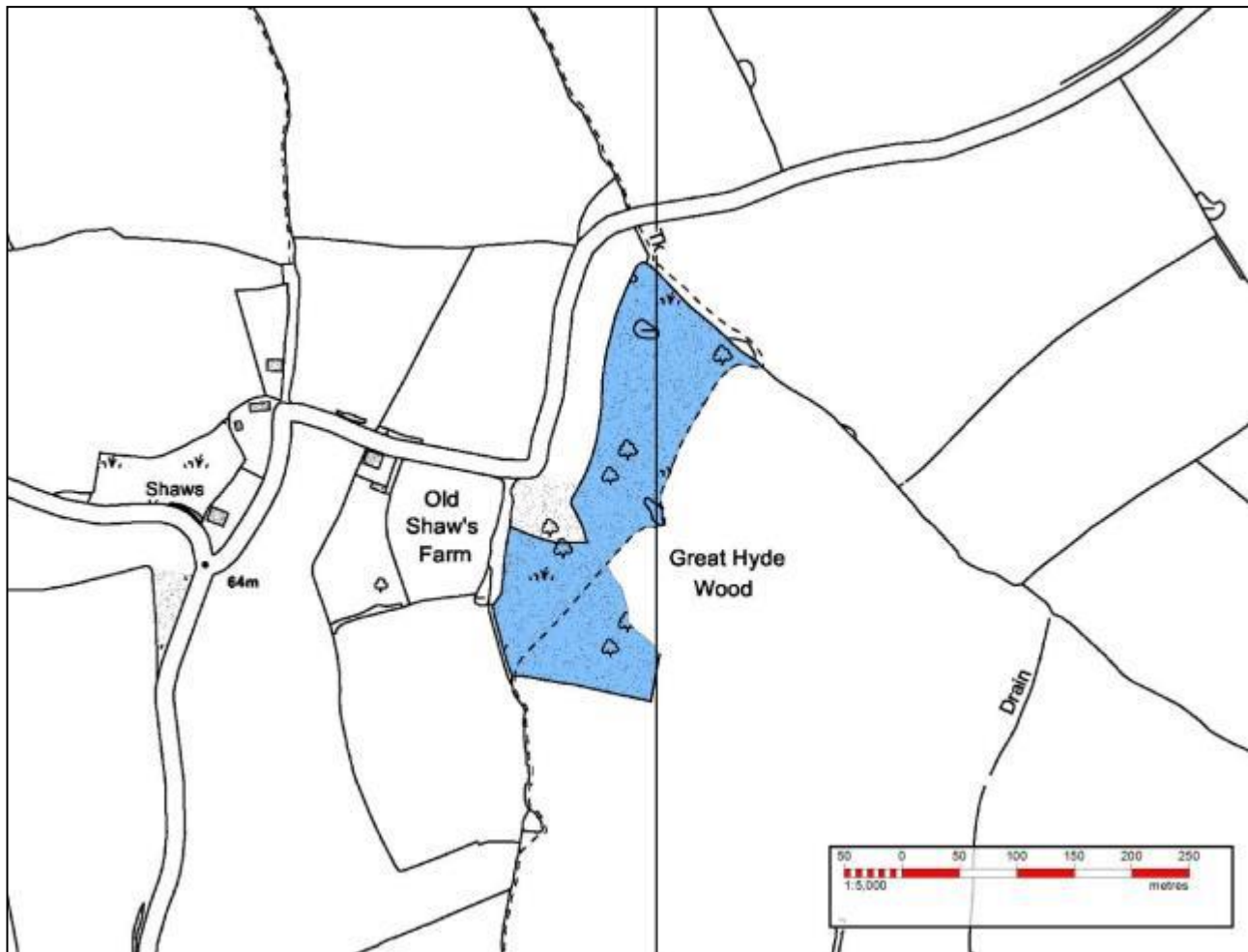
Likely to be suffering from pollution from adjacent developments and also direct rubbish dumping. The conflict with alleviating flood risk is also antagonistic.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (significant revisions); 2016 (further revisions)

Ch69 Great Hyde Wood, Little Leighs (3.34 ha) TL 70961650



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The east side of this ancient woodland is mainly dominated by densely shading Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with scattered standards of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) over relatively bare ground. By contrast, the west side of the wood has a more diverse structure and has a distinct scrubby shrub layer beneath the canopy. Here, Hornbeam coppice is found with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Pedunculate Oak and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice. Aspen (*Populus tremula*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) are also found towards the southern end of the woodland. The shrub layer has Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) as the main species. The ground flora includes Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*).

Ownership and Access

This woodland is in private ownership with no public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood support the documentary evidence that this is an ancient wood.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

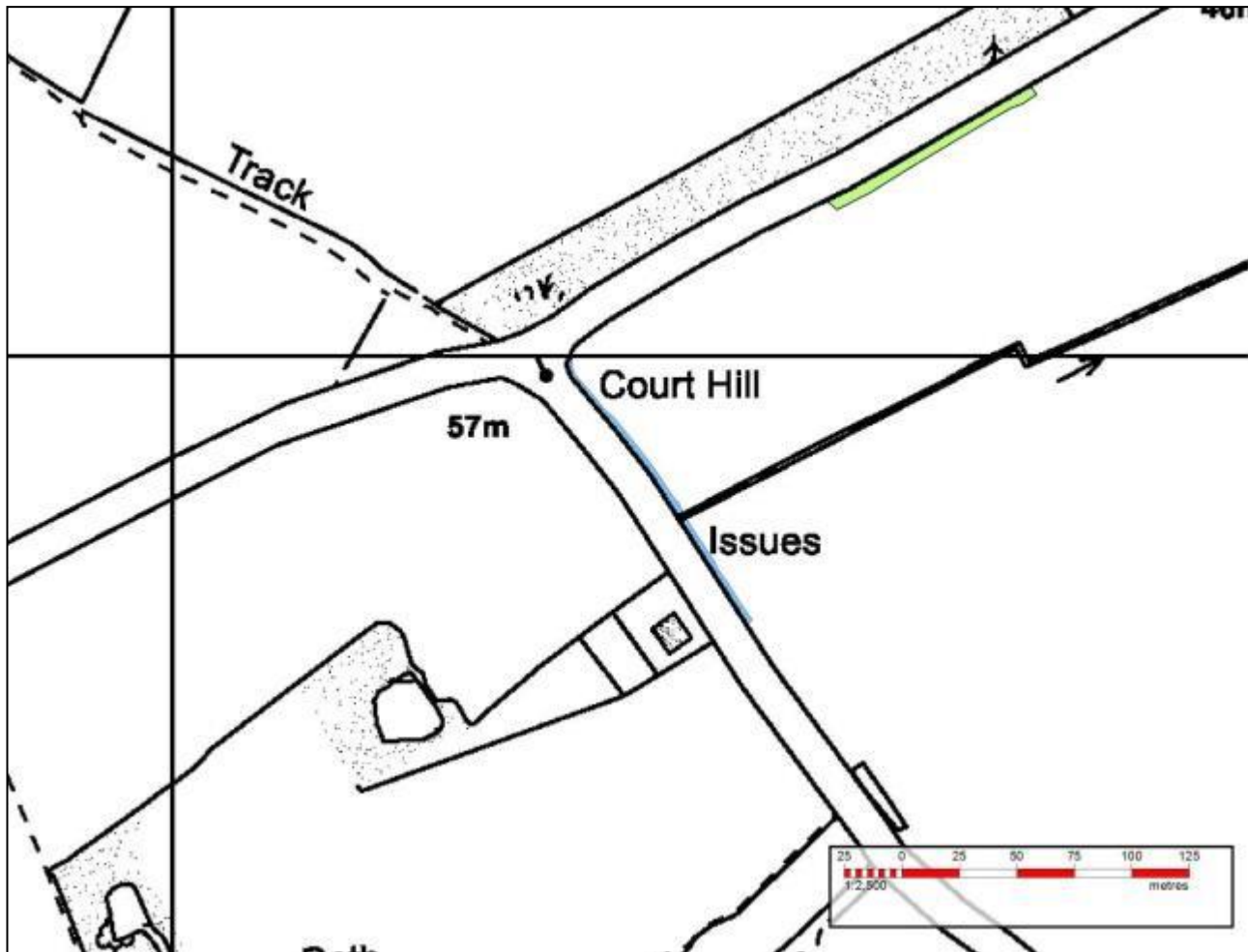
A resumption of coppicing may not be economically viable in a small wood, in which case “storing” old coppice stools to create single-stemmed standards may be beneficial to stop stool collapse and increase light levels reaching the ground layer.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (boundary revision); 2016

Ch70 Court Hill Road Verge, Little Leighs (0.04 ha) TL 71201794



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This stretch of road verge grassland corresponds to the Essex Protected Road Verge 10, Court Hill and exhibits a variety of herb species including Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra* agg). However, it is primarily designated due to the presence of the, Betony (*Betonica officinalis*), an Essex Red Data List species that has seen a marked decline throughout Essex in recent decades. Another species of interest present is Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*).

Ownership and Access

This roadside verge is managed by Essex County Highways and is accessible to view, albeit with inherent traffic risks.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Roadside verges that remain free of any chemical applications are important refuges for many plant species that have disappeared from meadows within the wider countryside, through agricultural improvement or conversion to arable cultivation.

Condition Statement

Stable.

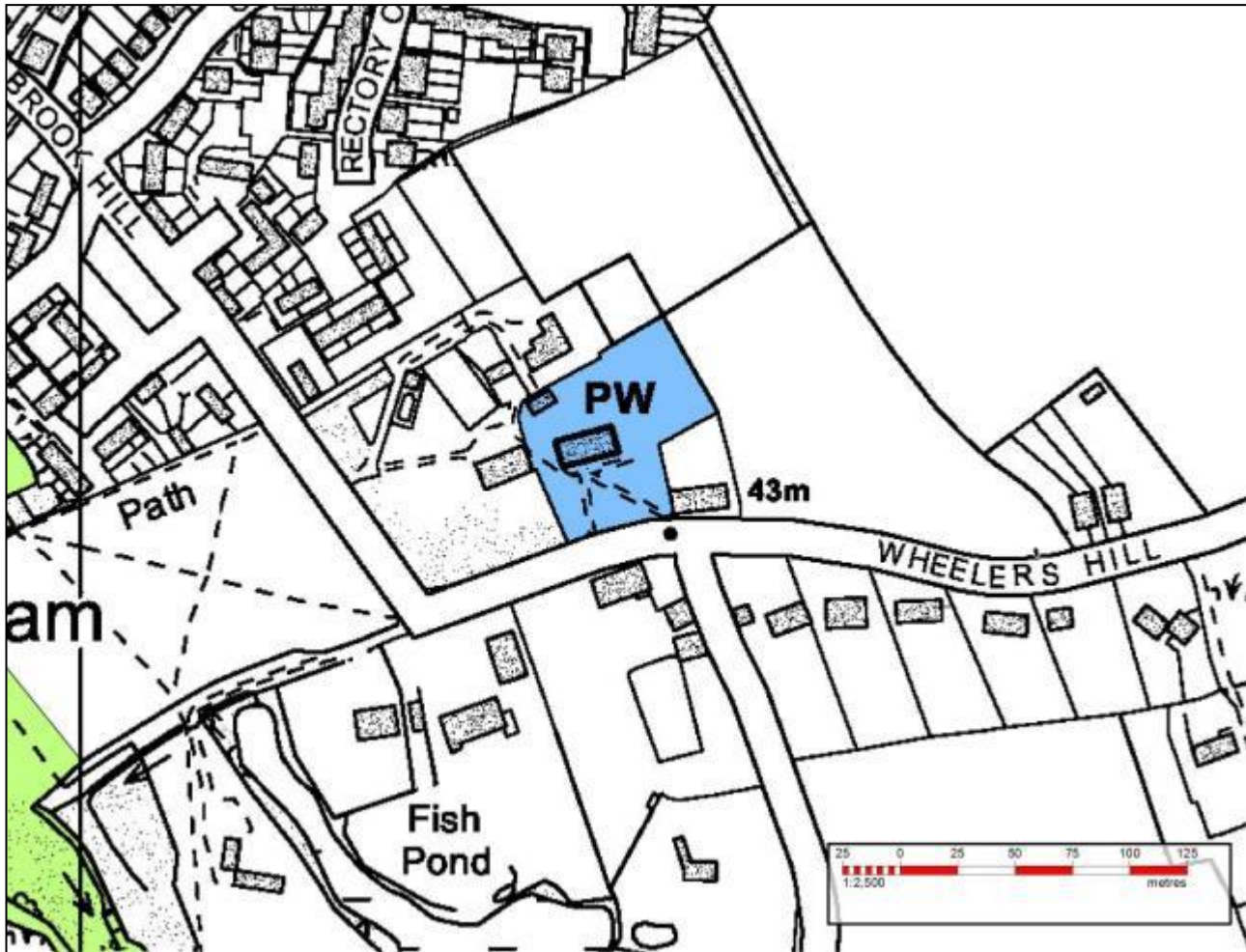
Management Issues

The desire to manage road verges to preserve line-of-sight views for motorists does not always match conservation grassland management. Nutrient enrichment is likely to be a long-term problem, leading to loss of floristic diversity.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016



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This is a small but very species-rich churchyard. Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra* agg.), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*) and Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*) are some of the many plants to be found. Of particular importance is the presence of Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*), Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) both Essex Red Data List species. Also recorded from this site is Lesser Calamint (*Clinopodium calamintha*) a nationally scarce species.

Ownership and Access

As a public place under the control of the local Diocese, this site is open to the general public.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

The sward may have affinities with the Lowland Meadows Habitat, although this would need to be established through further survey work.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Churchyards such as this site support very rich and diverse plant assemblages that include many of the rare species now confined to old unimproved grassland.

Condition Statement

Moderate; stable.

Management Issues

As with any churchyard, there are likely to be conflicts of interest between maintaining neat and tidy graves versus nature conservation desires to leave areas of longer sward.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 2004

Reviewed: 2016

Ch72 Blythhedges Woods, West Hanningfield (12.68 ha) TQ 71399912



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Blythhedges Wood is actively managed woodland with felled and replanted sections of woodland. Whilst Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) as coppice or standards and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards are characteristic of the woodland, a variety of other trees are present, including Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and the strong ancient indicator Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*). Open areas within the wood are typically colonised by Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), but herbs present and typical of ancient woods include abundant Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) along with Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and Three-veined Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*).

Blythhedges Spring Wood comprises both ancient and recent secondary woodland. The ancient section is dominated by coppiced Hornbeam with Pedunculate Oak and some young Silver Birch. The ground flora has abundant Bluebell, but also recorded are Wood Anemone, Yellow Archangel, Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and the evergreen shrub Butcher's-broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*). The non-ancient sections which include the north part of the wood is characterised by the presence of tall Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) standards with young trees including Hornbeam beneath. Most noticeable beneath the secondary wood is the poorer ground flora lacking the ancient wood indicators, although developing a typical woodland flora.

The hedgerow running between the two woods is included within the LoWS in recognition of its function as a corridor that will assist the movement of woodland animals between the two woods.

Lying close to known Dormouse habitat, these woods may well hold populations of this scarce European Protected Species.

Ownership and Access

The woodlands and hedgerow are in private ownership with no public access. The southern edge of Blythhedges Wood can be viewed from Ch168 Seamans Lane.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

HC30 Wildlife Corridors

Rationale

These two woods are clearly ancient. They are enhanced by the connectivity provided by the connecting hedgerow and in addition connection in the wider landscape via Seamans Lane track.

Condition Statement

Some active management for timber within Blythhedges Wood. Other areas currently appear neglected.

Management Issues

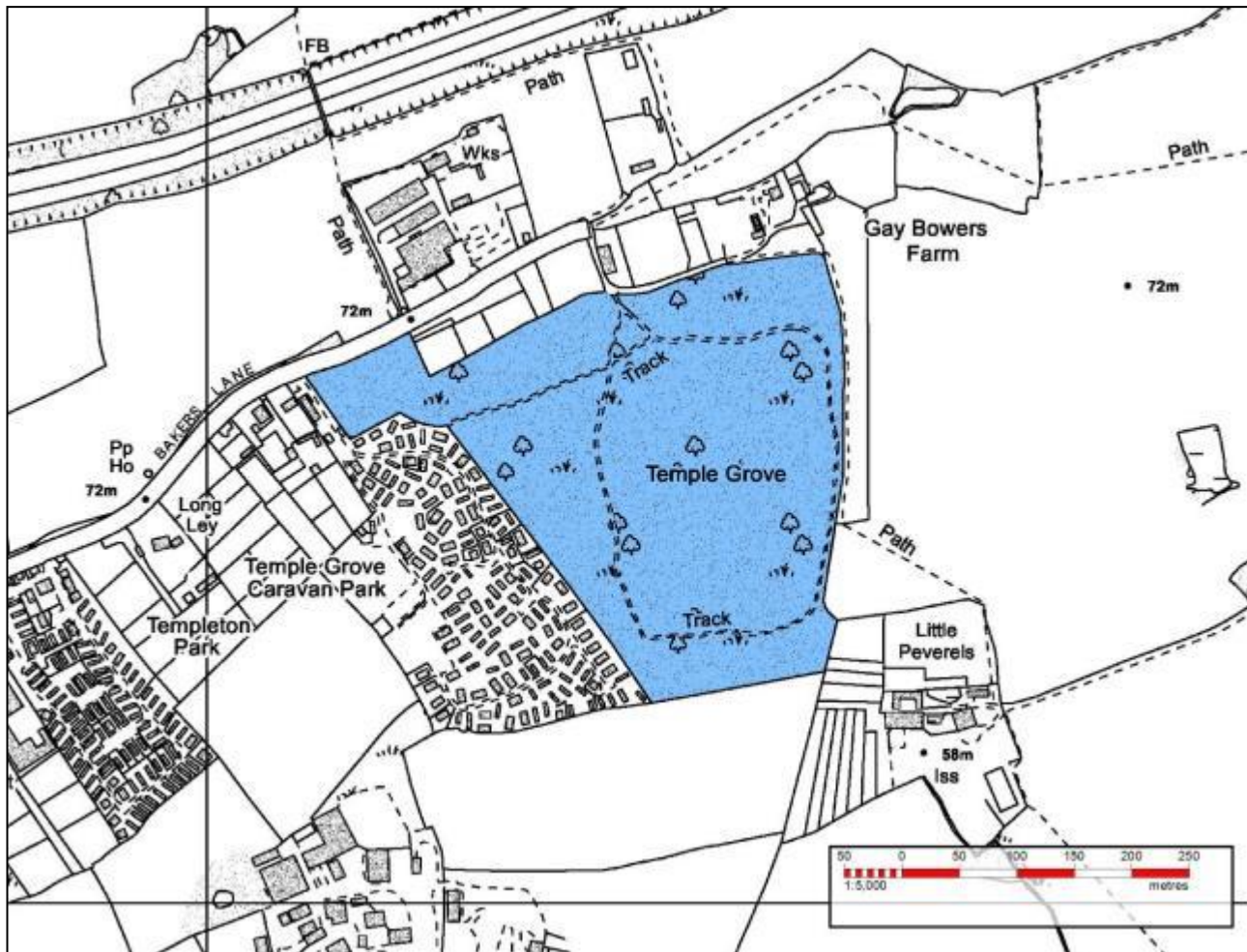
A resumption of coppicing would benefit structural diversity. A survey to determine whether or not Dormice are present would be interesting.

Review Schedule

Sites Selected 1992 (as two separate sites)

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (sites amalgamated and linking hedge added)

Ch73 Temple Grove, Galleywood (10.36 ha) TL 71390138



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In the latter part of the 20th century, part of this woodland on the west side was gradually cleared and finally lost to development as a caravan park. The remaining Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) woodland is now used for recreational outdoor activities including archery. The wood primarily comprises Hornbeam and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice. Other tree species present include Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). Species characteristic of ancient woodland include Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) and Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*).

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in private ownership and not accessible to the general public. There is a public footpath that runs part way along the eastern edge of the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

This woodland retains characteristic ancient woodland structure and associated flora.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

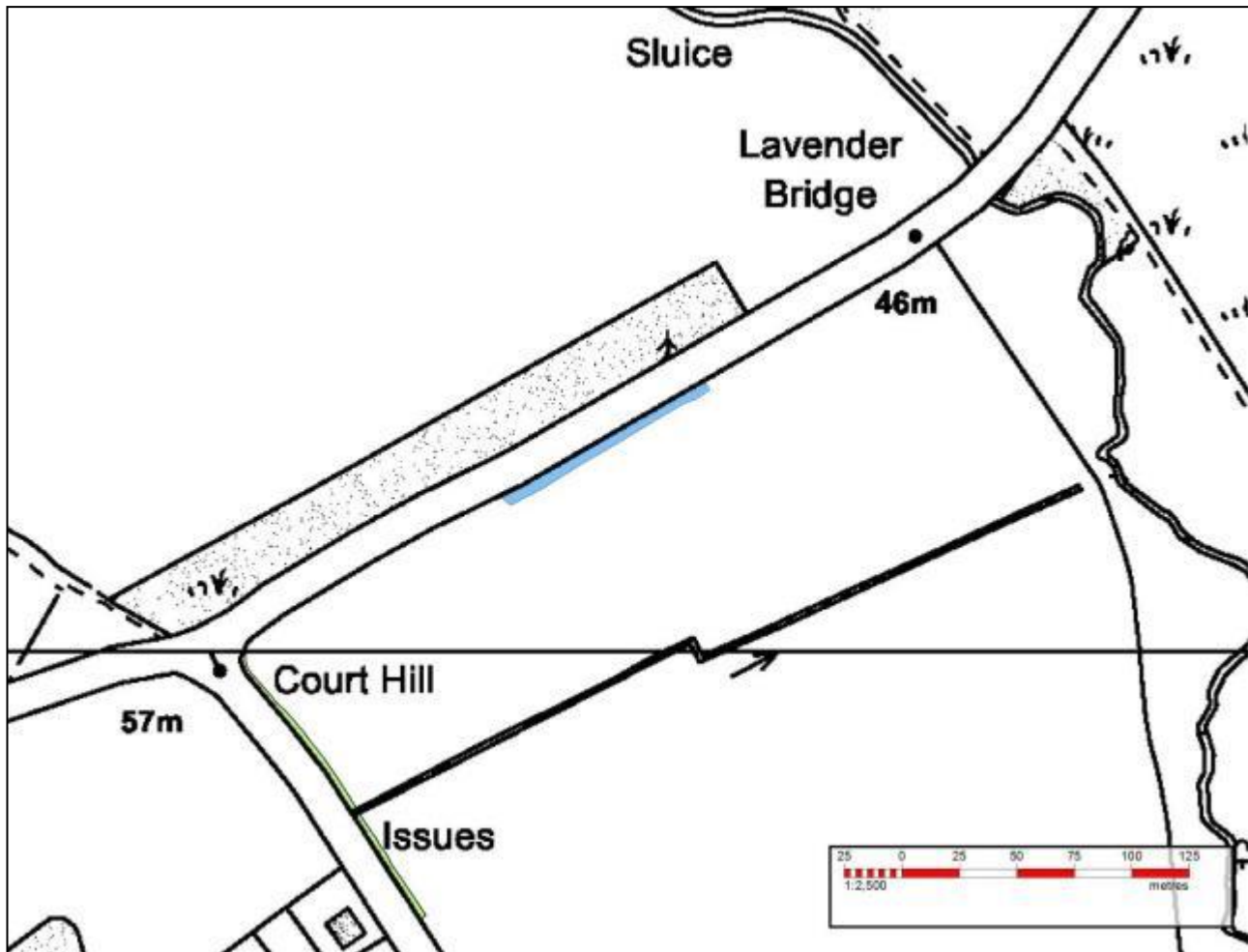
The woods use as a recreational site, such as field archery, is not necessarily inconsistent with nature conservation objectives, although this would depend upon the level of trampling pressure on the ground layer.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch74 Lavenders Bridge Verge, Little Leighs (0.05 ha) TL 71321809



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The majority of this road verge has been designated as an Essex Special Roadside Verge and is important due to the presence of Betony (*Betonica officinalis*), an Essex Red Data List species that is confined to relatively few sites in the county. Much Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) is found at the rear of the verge, whilst other species recorded include Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra* agg.), Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*) and Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*). The site further extends west to include a small additional area of grassland where Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*) is present.

Ownership and Access

As a road verge, this site is viewable from the adjacent highway, although there are inherent risks associated with traffic using the road.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

This verge provides a refuge for the declining species Betony.

Condition Statement

Declining?

Management Issues

Road verge habitats can rarely be managed purely for their nature conservation interest, when road safety and line-of-sight considerations have to take priority.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch75 Blythhedges Meadow, West Hanningfield (1.33 ha) TQ 71339951



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This narrow rectangular meadow displays a good mix of grass species, which include Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) and Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), the latter suggestive of relatively heavy, damp soils. The drier area of the meadow has allowed Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Buttercups (*Ranunculus* spp.) to thrive with lesser amounts of Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*) and Tormantil (*Potentilla erecta*). The wetter area along the southern boundary hedge line supports Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Betony (*Betonica officinalis*) an Essex Red Data List plant.

Ownership and Access

The meadow is thought to be in private ownership. It can be viewed from the public footpath that runs through the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Meadows such as this provide Chelmsford City with important grassland habitat that in recent decades has severely declined in quality and extent. The suite of plants present are indicative of little if any agricultural improvement in recent years.

Condition Statement

Good.

Management Issues

Maintenance of a low nutrient input management regime will be needed to maintain the interest of this site.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch76 Chelmer Mosaic, Broomfield (16.70 ha) TL 71341137



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This site includes two Essex Wildlife Trust reserves, Newland Grove and Little Waltham Meadows, plus areas of associated grassland and riverine habitats. Newland Grove is a mosaic of woodland, scrub and grassy glades. Tall Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) dominates the high canopy, whilst Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) is abundant in the shrub layer canopy. The flora includes Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), Twayblade (*Listera ovata*) and Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*).

In contrast, to the north of Newland Grove is an area of wet Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) woodland, identified on the OS base map as 'Quigmire', although formerly an Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserve called "Alder Carr". Wet Alder woodland is recognised as a scarce and fragile habitat, and consequently is a Habitat of Principal Importance in England. Here, Alder as coppice and standards grows in the wet conditions, while Hybrid Black Poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) is generally confined to the drier areas. The ground cover includes Pond-sedges (*Carex* spp.), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) and Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*). Another block of wet Alder woodland is located towards the northern end of the site, on the east bank of the river Chelmer.

Between Newland Grove and Quigmire is an area of lightly disturbed but flower-rich grassland, which adds to the habitat diversity of the site and provides good foraging habitat for invertebrates. Within some of the other pastures adjacent to the Chelmer, a newly created backwater channel should increase the diversity of wetland habitats present by diverting peak water flow from the main river channel.

The river throughout this area supports an interesting variety of aquatic and emergent plants. Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), River Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*) and Arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*) are present. To the north of the meadows, on the river's east bank are some native Black or Water Poplars (*Populus nigra* var. *betulifolia*) - a rarity within Chelmsford Borough. This native species of tree is dioecious, the male and female catkins growing on separate trees. In order to regenerate, the trees need to be in close proximity and the seeds need damp mud to germinate. The decline in wetter landscapes has been to the detriment of this species.

Ownership and Access

Little Waltham Meadows nature reserve is owned and managed by Essex Wildlife Trust. The Trust leases Newland Grove from a private landowner. Both are accessible to the public to a greater or lesser extent. The remaining parts of the site are in private ownership with no public access beyond any vantage points from the nature reserves themselves.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
Hedgerows

Selection Criteria

HC3 Other Priority Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites
HC10 River Floodplain
HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands
HC19 Extended Riverine Habitat

Rationale

This site is part of a chain of important wildlife sites, linked by the River Chelmer. The spring-fed wet Alder wood represents a scarce, localised habitat that is susceptible to changes in groundwater hydrology. The old floodplain grasslands and cattle pastures on higher ground provide a large extent of contiguous grassland habitat.

Condition Statement

Good, improving.

Management Issues

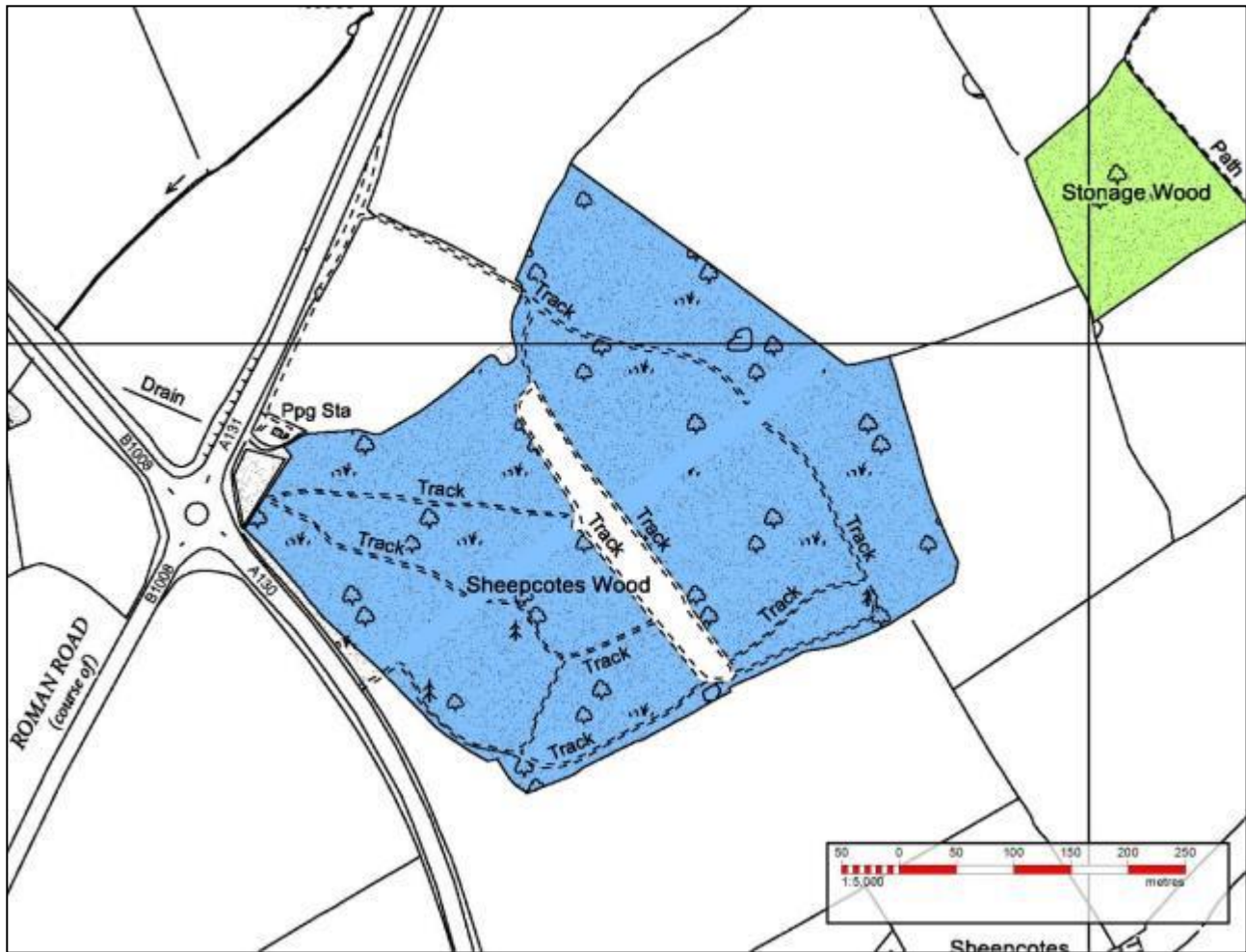
Maintenance of a spring-fed water supply for the wet woodlands will be crucial to their survival although this is at the mercy of climate patterns rather than land managers. Rather, efforts should be made to retain the water within these woodlands. The new backwater channel should give a greater ability to control the wetting of the old floodplain grasslands, thereby retaining their unique character.

Review Schedule

1992 (as three separate sites)

2004 (amalgamation of sites plus significant additions and deletions); 2016 (minor boundary revisions)

Ch77 Sheepcotes Wood, Little Waltham (17.24 ha) TL 71581386



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Sheepcotes Wood is an ancient coppice wood containing a great variety of native and introduced trees. A wide grassy ride separates the wood into two halves. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), a strong indicator of ancient woodland, are among the native tree species to be found. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) are the main species that form the shrub layer, though Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) (another ancient woodland indicator) are also present. The ground flora is dominated by Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) though other species recorded include Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*).

Ownership and Access

The woodland is in private ownership with no public access.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criterion

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Rationale

The structure and composition of this wood support documentary evidence that it is an ancient site.

Condition Statement

Neglected coppice.

Management Issues

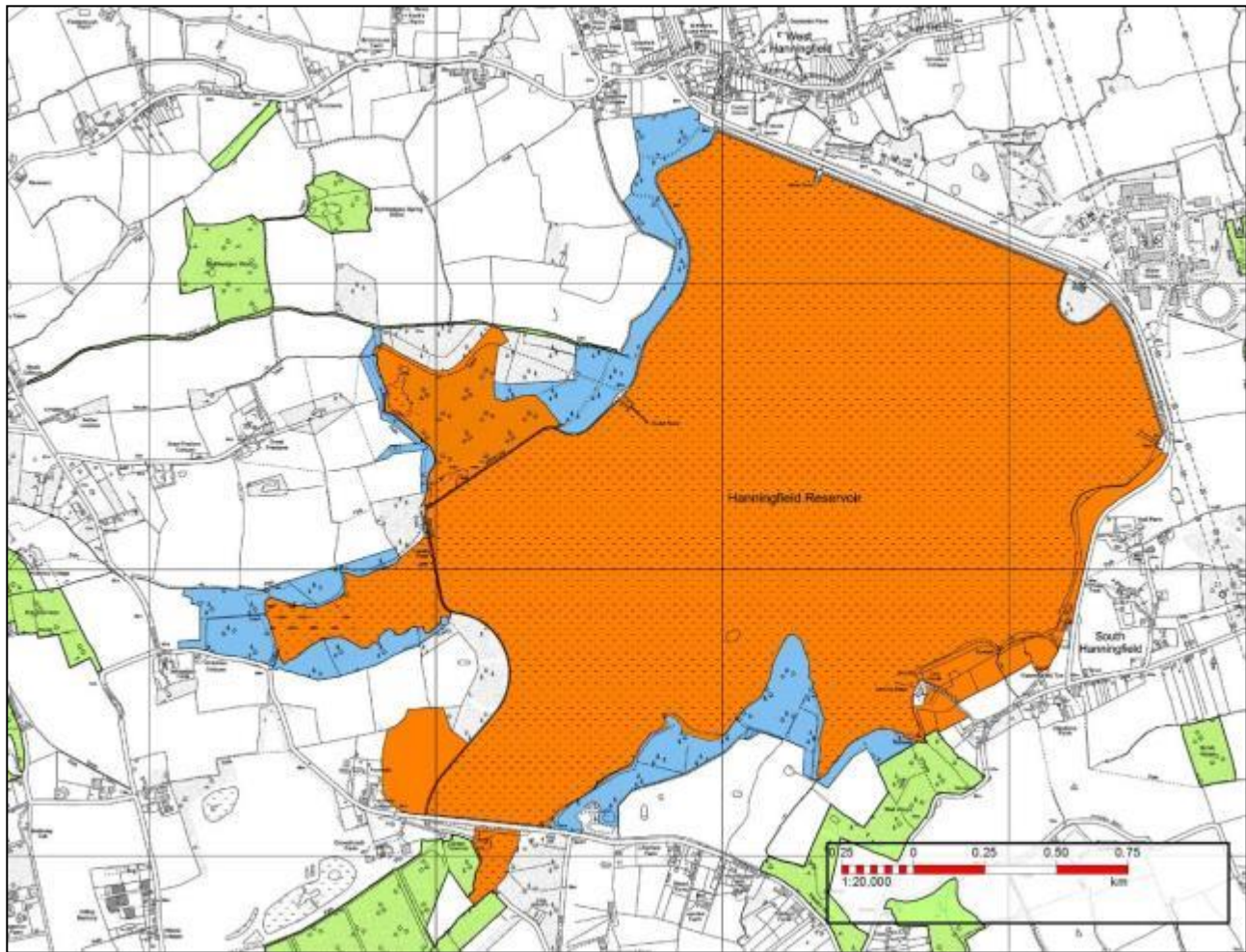
A resumption of coppicing would increase the structural diversity of this site, with benefits to the flora and fauna.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch78 Hanningfield Mosaic, West Hanningfield (50.53 ha) TQ 72419810



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This complex of woodlands comprise plantations of both broad-leaved and some coniferous species. Recent survey has revealed the presence of the Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), a European Protected Species, and it is for the conservation of this species that this site is primarily identified. The Dormouse may be favourably responding to initiatives to plant other native species, in particular Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and has been recorded from a number of locations through this woodland. The adjacent Seamans Lane LoWS (Ch168) is also important Dormouse habitat.

The southernmost section of this site is managed as part of an Essex Wildlife Trust reserve and this is being restored to a broadleaved canopy by removal of conifers. This is a popular visitor attraction and supports a high level of education work and public engagement with woodland ecology. It also forms a valuable habitat extension to the ancient Well/Hawk's Woods LoWS (Ch95).

Ownership and Access

Owned by Essex & Suffolk Water, with part of the site leased to Essex Wildlife Trust. Access is restricted to the southern part of the LoWS, within the wildlife trust nature reserve.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (in part)

Wet woodland (in part)

Selection Criteria

HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

HC3 Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites

SC7 Dormouse

Rationale

The Dormouse remains a scarce Essex mammal, with all sites likely to be of county importance for the conservation of this species. The section within the Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserve is a “honeypot” site for local residents, with high visitor numbers and events that engage the public with woodland ecology.

Condition Statement

Improving, following removal of much of the dense conifer plantation.

Management Issues

Essex & Suffolk Water is working to improve the woodland within the LoWS and the adjacent blocks of dense conifers, favouring a predominance of broad-leaved species. There is a need to manage the heavy visitor pressure within the nature reserve, whilst promoting its appeal as a woodland attraction. All work should bear in mind the potential presence of Dormice.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992 (small part)

Reviewed: 2004 (significant additions); 2016 (other significant revisions).



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This small area of unimproved churchyard grassland supports a varied and interesting flora including Betony (*Betonica officinalis*), Large Thyme (*Thymus pulegioides*), Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) (all three being Essex Red Data List species) Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*) and Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*). Seventeen species of fungi have been recorded from this churchyard, including *Hygrocybe calyptriformis*, a Red Data Book (RDB2) species amongst an unusually diverse assemblage of waxcap fungi.

Ownership and Access

The churchyard is governed under the Diocese of Chelmsford and is accessible to the public.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

This churchyard site is important not only for its scarce plants but also the assemblage of fungi. Many churches provide the last refuges of species-rich, relatively unimproved grassland in the county, following agricultural intensification in the wider countryside.

Condition Statement

Good, stable.

Management Issues

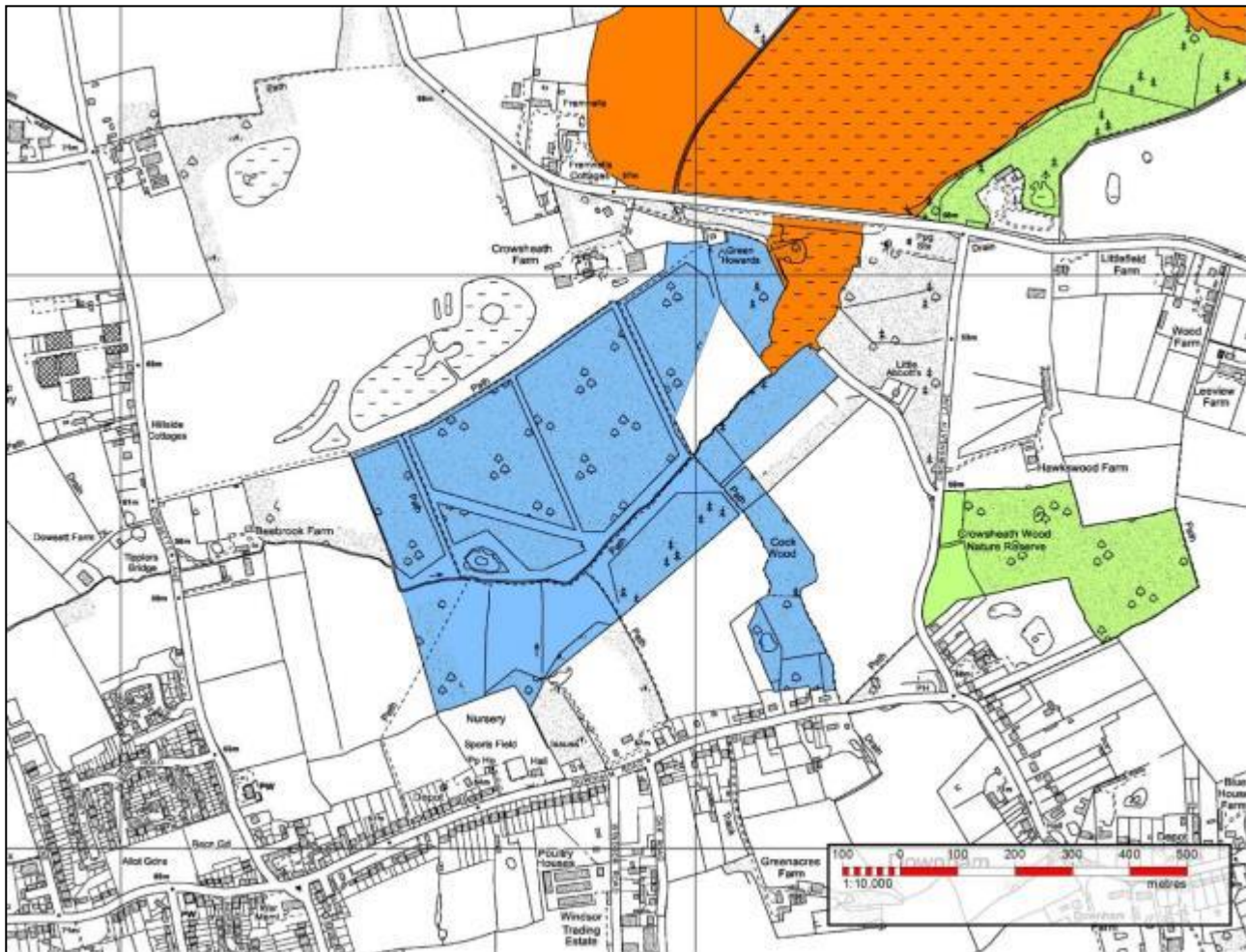
As with most churchyards, there is likely to be an ongoing conflict of interests between desires to maintain neat and tidy grave areas versus the nature conservation value of allowing areas to grow uncut during the summer.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 2004

Reviewed: 2016

Ch82 Crowsheath Complex, Downham (36.73 ha) TQ 71829663



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The bulk of this site comprises land owned by Essex & Suffolk Water, managed as Crowsheath Community Woodland. The site also includes land in private ownership, such as Cock Wood, which add to the ecological value of the site. The Community woodland consists of a mosaic of planted woodland, grassland and open water habitat. The plantations are mainly Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) with some Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). These are separated by many wide, grassy rides. There is a larger expanse of grassland in the south-west corner of the site. Many grass and herb species have been seeded and the resulting diversity is also reflected in a good invertebrate population. The diverse flora includes Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Salad Burnet (*Sanguisorba minor* agg.) and Salsify (*Tragopogon porrifolius*). The pond, with stands of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*) and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) attracts many Dragonflies and Damselflies and also supports Great Crested Newts.

Cock Wood is located to the south of the Community Woodland and is a small ancient woodland formerly identified as a separate Local Wildlife site (Ch85). Cock Wood comprises almost pure Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice) with scattered Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. A few Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) trees do occur in the middle of the wood with other tree species confined to the wood margins. Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) are most common in the herb flora, with Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) also present.

Ownership and Access

The majority of the site, comprising Crowsheath Community Woodland, is owned by Essex & Suffolk Water, with public access encouraged throughout a network of paths. The remaining parts are in private ownership. A public right of way crosses Cock Wood.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC28 Small-component Mosaics

HC31 Accessible Natural Greenspace

Rationale

The structure and composition of Cock Wood supports documentary evidence that this is an ancient woodland site. The creation of a large area of new woodland adjacent to this ancient site should allow for an enriched woodland habitat to be created. The mosaic of grassy rides, meadows and woodland complement the habitats in the adjacent Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserve to the north and provide a place for informal recreation and environmental learning.

Condition Statement

Good, improving

Management Issues

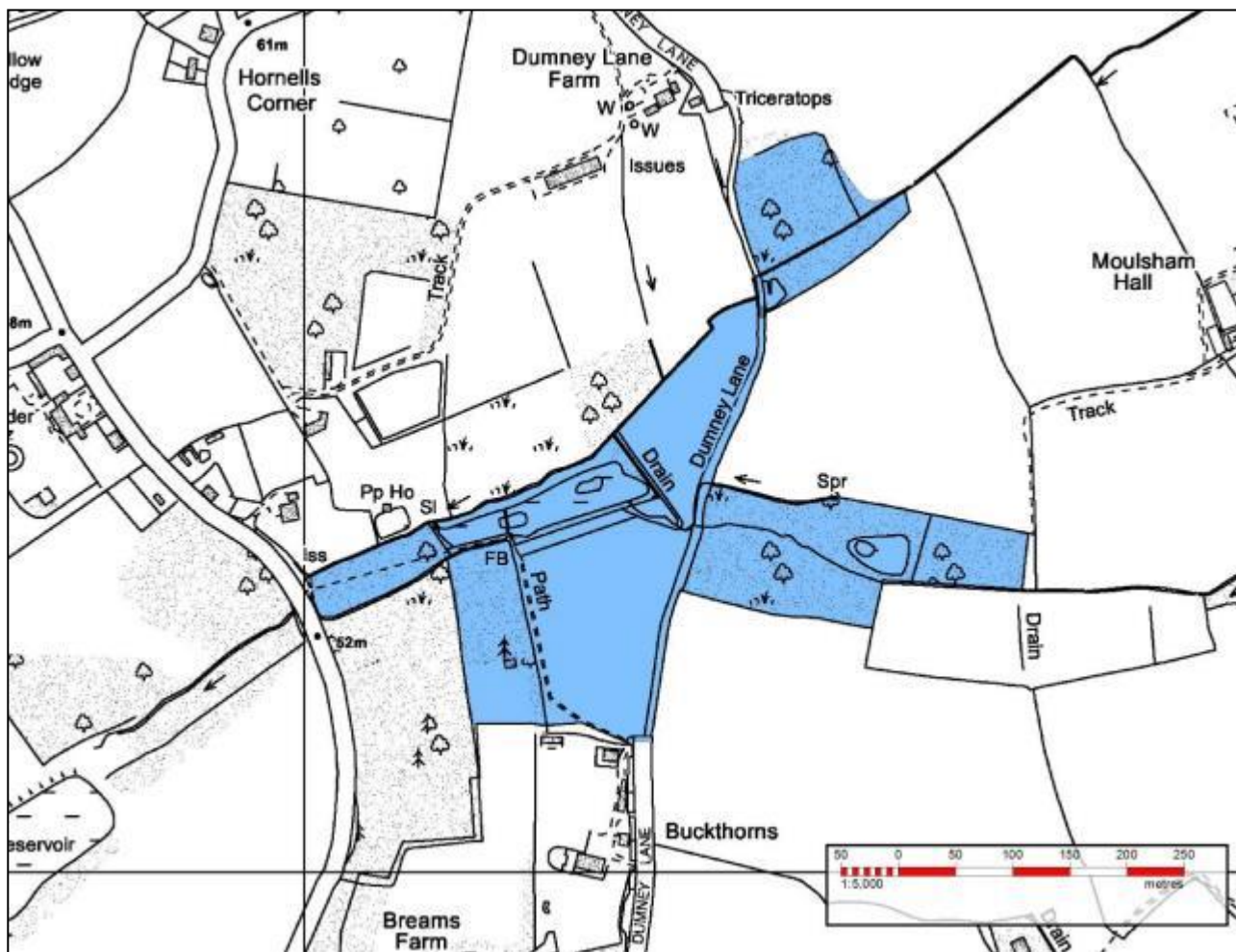
As the plantations mature, some thinning will be desirable in order to create greater structural diversity in the stands.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992 (only Cock Wood and small area close to Fremnells lagoon, as separate sites)

Reviewed: 2004 (greatly enlarged); 2016 (sites amalgamated)

Ch84 Phyllis Currie/Dumney Lane Woods, Great Leighs (9.68 ha) TL 72321831



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This core of this site comprises part of the Essex Wildlife Trust Phyllis Currie Reserve (a species-poor conifer plantation is excluded from this LoWS), plus adjacent woodland and green lane habitats to the east of the reserve. The nature reserve is a mosaic of meadow, scrub, semi-natural woodland and lake habitats. The area west of the lake comprises predominantly broadleaf species such as Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and willow (*Salix* sp.). The lake created in the stream valley in the 1960s exhibits well-developed marginal vegetation, which includes Lesser Pond-sedge (*Carex acutiformis*) and Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*). Coot (*Fulica atra*) and other waterfowl inhabit the lake and the Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) is a frequent visitor. In amongst this diverse habitat are species including Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*). The main grassland is notable for the presence of Green-winged Orchid (*Anacamptis morio*).

The Dumney Lane Woods provide valuable additional habitat to the east of the Phyllis Currie Reserve. The tree species present include Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), Field Maple and willow. Amongst the shrub layer canopy is Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) and the low growing shrub Spurge-Laurel (*Daphne laureola*). Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) is present in both woods, whilst other species from these woods include Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Cowslip (*Primula veris*).

Ownership and Access

Phyllis Currie Reserve is owned and managed by Essex Wildlife Trust and open to public access. The Dumney Lane woods are in private ownership and consequently have no public access. The western ends of these woods can be viewed from the public footpath along Dumney Lane.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Meadow areas may have some affinity with the Lowland Meadows habitat type, although this would require further survey work.

Selection Criteria

HC28 Small-component Mosaics

SC1 Vascular Plants

Rationale

The main value of this site is as a complex of different habitat types, being managed for the benefit of wildlife. The population of Green-winged Orchids is notable in its own right.

Condition Statement

Good, stable.

Management Issues

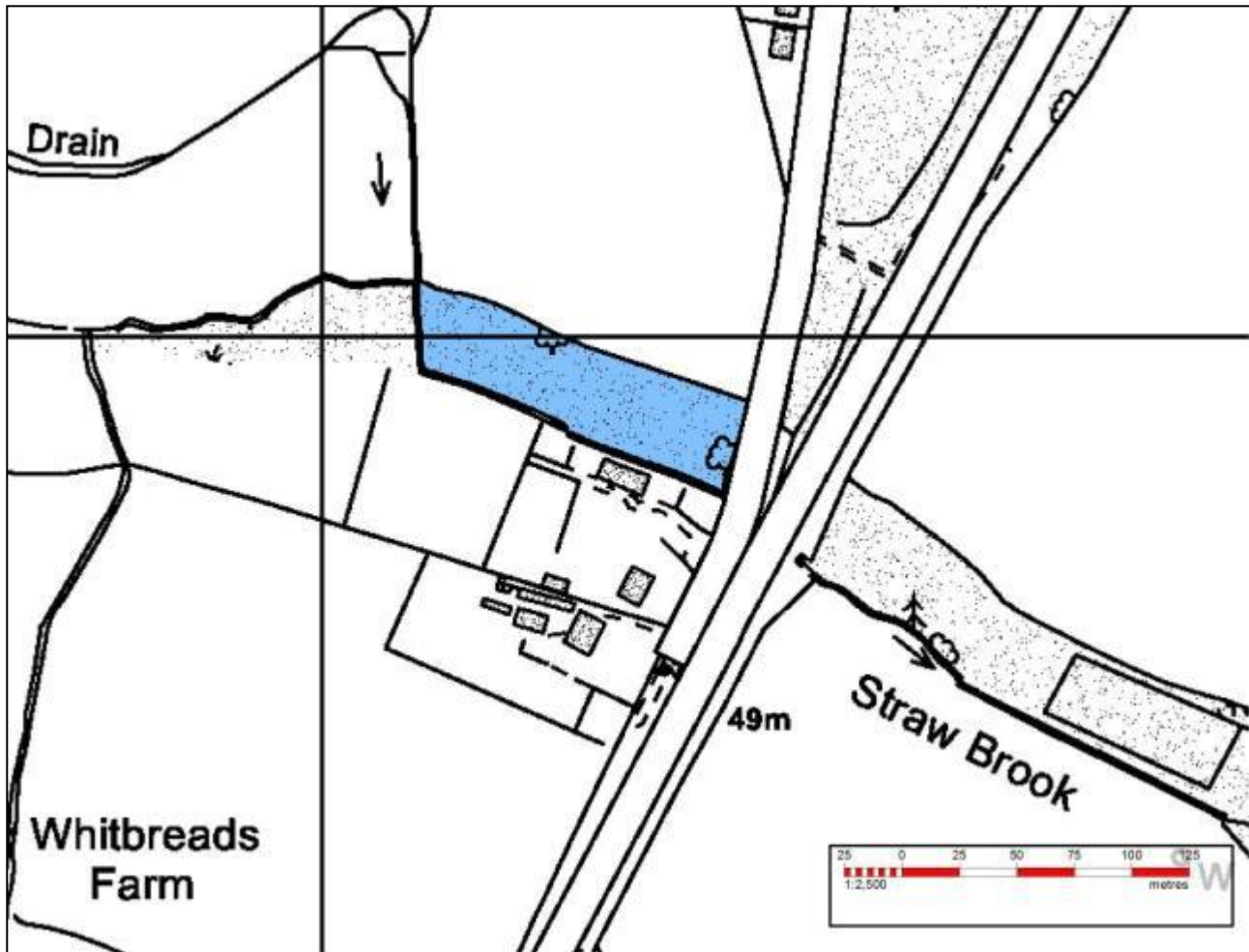
Management should aim to maintain the *status quo* in the face of natural succession.

Review Schedule

1992 (as two sites)

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (sites amalgamated and some deletion)

Ch86 Straw Brook Plantation, Little Leighs (0.56 ha) TL 72111597



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This site consists of an area of Cricket-bat Willow (*Salix alba* var. *caerulea*) plantation to the west side of a small cul-de-sac road close to the A131 south of Great Leighs. The planted trees are well spaced and consequently allow stands of Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and, to a lesser extent, Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) to have established beneath. The open structure of this habitat allows, in addition, a tall herb flora with Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*). The wet substrate also supports lower growing plants such as Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*) and Blue Water-speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*).

Ownership and Access

The site is in private ownership and has no public access. The eastern end of the site can be viewed from by the roadside of The Crescent.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

The ground vegetation has affinities with Lowland Fen habitats.

Selection Criterion

HC14 Lowland Fen Vegetation

Rationale

Wet fen vegetation is under threat from drainage schemes and loss to dense willow plantation. Any such surviving fragment is of interest within the county.

Condition Statement

Good, stable.

Management Issues

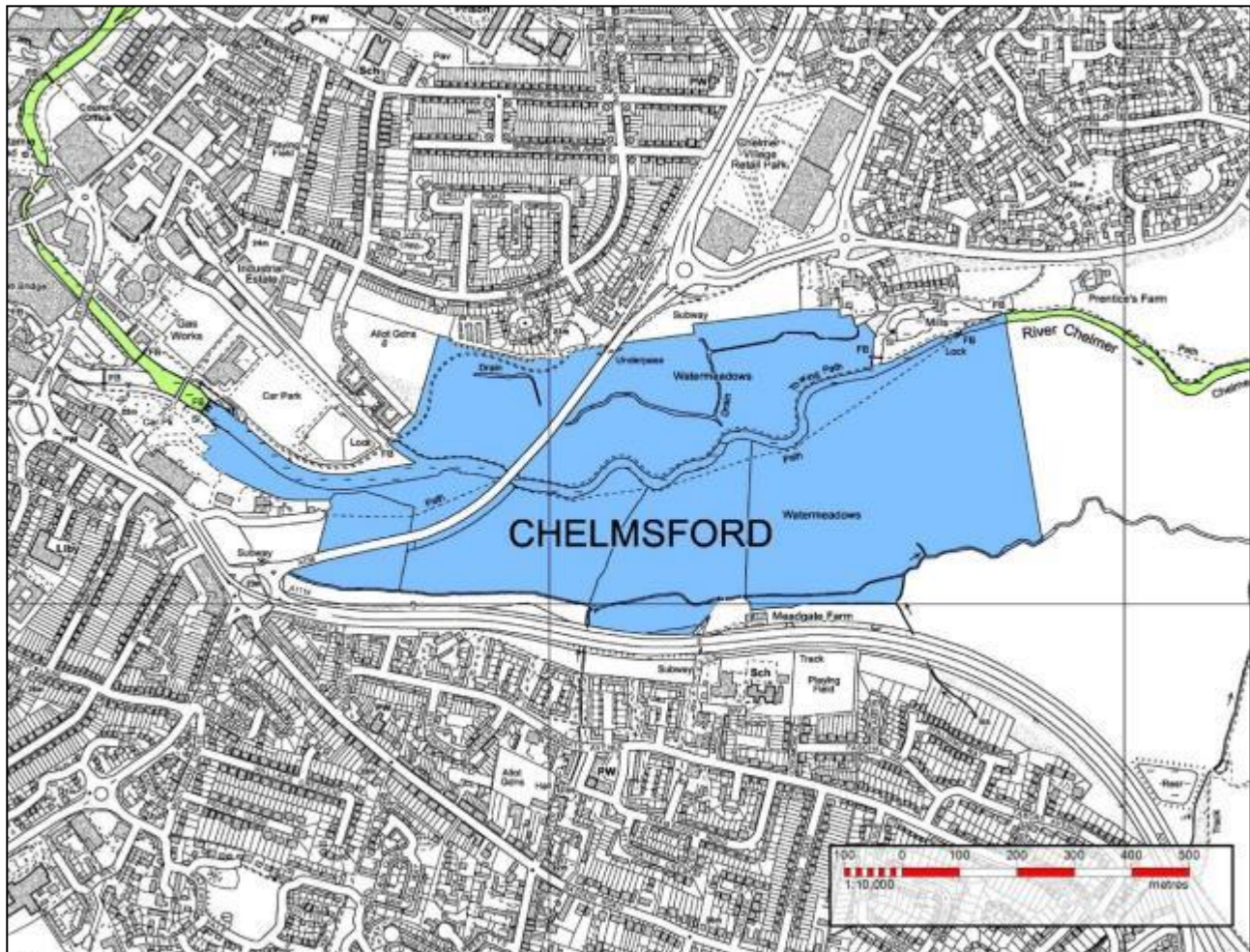
Periodic cropping of the willow plantation will cause localised heavy disturbance but the vegetation should recover following this activity. The maintenance of a relatively open tree canopy has been instrumental in conserving the underlying ground cover.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016 (deletion of eastern section)

Ch87 Chelmsford Water Meadows, Chelmsford (52.69ha) TL 72230623



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Located to the east of Chelmsford city centre, either side of the River Chelmer, is an extensive area of grassland, and an important example of flood plain habitat within Essex. The fields to the south of the river are dry grassland dominated by a tall sward comprising False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Other grasses recorded include Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*). By contrast, the meadows to the north of the river have areas of wet marshy grass where plants such as Blue Water-speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*) and Pink Water-speedwell (*V. catenata*) can be found growing together on the margins of waterlogged areas.

In addition, the stretch of the River Chelmer here exhibits fine stands of Branched Bur-Reed (*Sparganium erectum*) and Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*). A variety of other interesting marginal species are to be found including Blue Water-speedwell, Flowering-rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*). Sweet-flag (*Acorus calamus*) is well established along the Chelmer in this locality.

This site is one of a chain of important wildlife habitats along the Chelmer, from Great Waltham in the north to Paper Mill Lock on the border with Maldon District.

Ownership and Access

The site is thought to be in multiple ownership, including parts owned by Chelmsford City Council. It is crossed by numerous public rights of way.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh

Selection Criterion

HC10 River Floodplain

Rationale

This site is valuable as one of the most extensive areas of floodplain habitat in Chelmsford.

Condition Statement

Moderate; stable

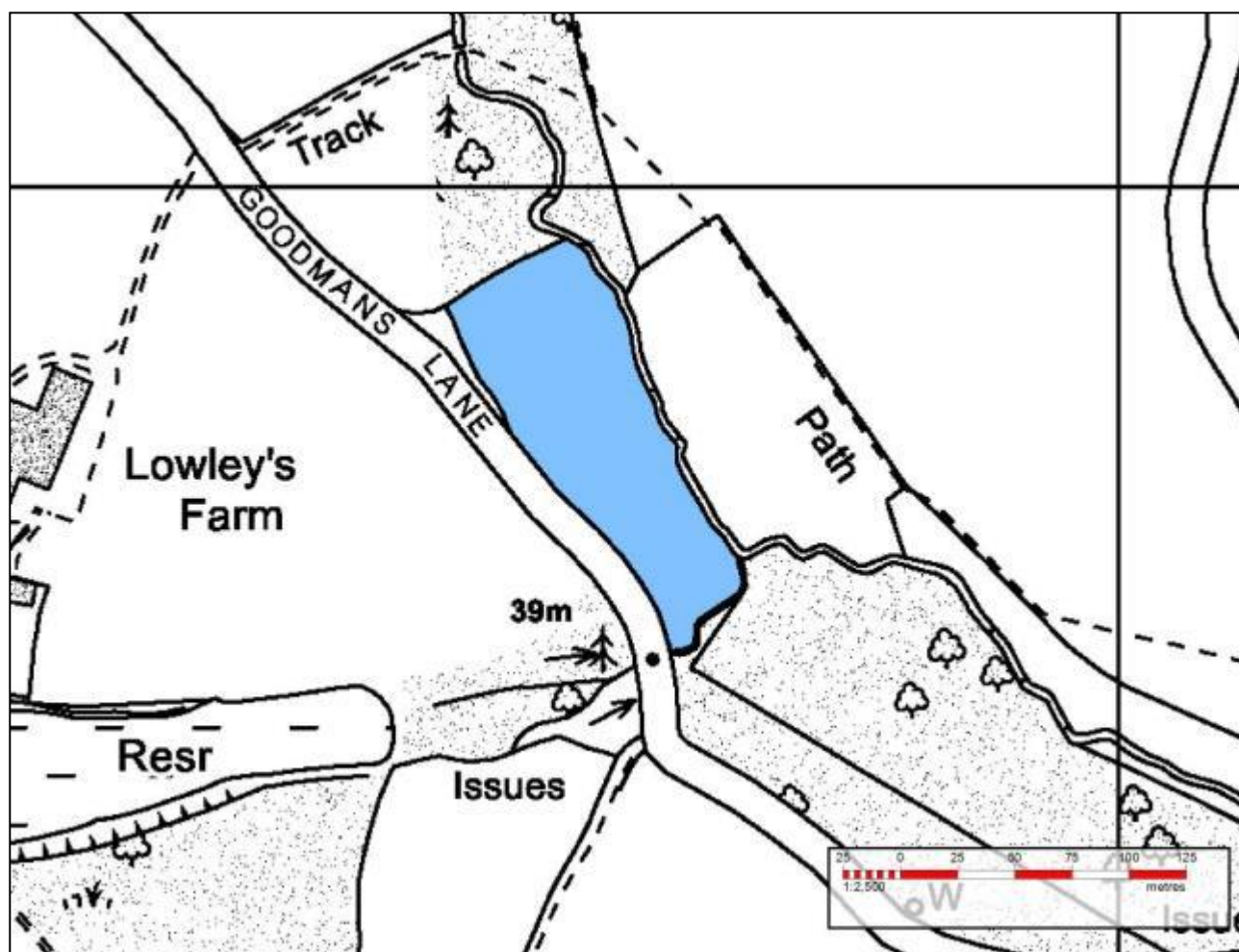
Management Issues

Pressures to apply fertilisers and selective weedkillers to “improve” the grazing pasture should be resisted.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004 (minor revisions); 2016 (minor revisions)



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This site is a small area of horse grazed grassland on the west bank of the River Ter. It contains a good mix of grass species including Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*). The drier grassland supports Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*), whilst the wetter areas are good for Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Pignut (*Conopodium majus*).

Ownership and Access

This site is in private ownership and does not have any public access. It can be viewed from Goodman's Lane, south of the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Hedgerows.

This field is perhaps a small surviving remnant of a once more extensive floodplain grassland system.

Selection Criterion

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

Old, relatively unimproved grasslands are a rare habitat in Essex, following decades of agricultural improvement. Also surviving examples are in need of conservation.

Condition Statement

Moderate; stable.

Management Issues

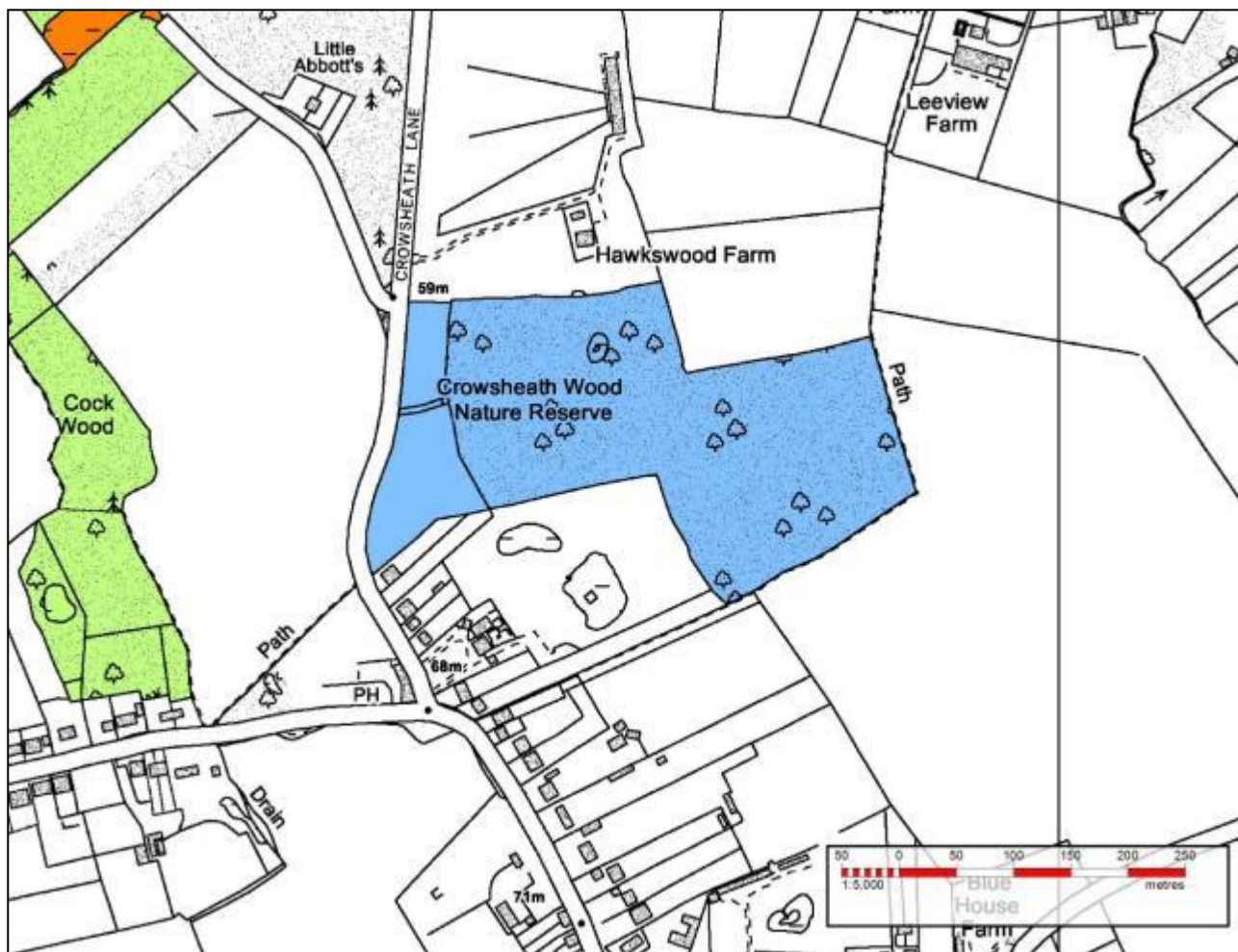
Maintenance of a low nutrient input management regime is desirable.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992

Reviewed: 2004; 2016

Ch90 Crowsheath Wood and Meadow, Downham (8.06 ha) TQ 72639651



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Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice characterises much of the canopy structure of the woodland. Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards, coppiced Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) are also found. Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), a strong indicator of ancient woodland, is also recorded. Species of interest in the ground flora include Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Ragged-Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*). A rare fungus, *Russula rubroalba* has also been recorded in the wood. This woodland attracts many bird species among which are Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*) and Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*).

The adjacent horse-grazed pastures are floristically diverse, although they do not support any especially rare species. The sward comprises a mix of Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), Creeping Bent-grass (*A. stolonifera*), Timothy-grass (*Phleum pratense*) and Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*). The most abundant herbs are White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Autumn Hawkbit (*Scorzoneroideis autumnalis*), Lesser Hawkbit (*Leontodon saxatilis*), Common Centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*) and Common Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). This flower-rich sward makes it an attractive foraging ground for a wide variety of invertebrates.

Ownership and Access

Crowsheath Wood and Meadow are owned and managed by Essex Wildlife Trust, but public access is restricted to the woodland.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Selection Criteria

HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands

Rationale

The woodland has the structure and typical of ancient woodland and also has a rich ground flora. The adjacent meadow provides good invertebrate habitat.

Condition Statement

Good

Management Issues

There is a need to constantly monitor and balance the grazing pressure within the grassland.

Review Schedule

Site Selected: 1992 (wood only)

Reviewed: 2004; 2016