

BG002

Chelmsford Local Wildlife Sites Review 2024



Client

Chelmsford City Council

Author(s)

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Essex County Council

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Client		Chelmsford City Council	
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Appendices

- 1. LoWS selection criteria 2016**
- 2. Chelmsford LoWS register updates**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) includes at Paragraph 185 reference to the need for development plans to identify locally designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity as part of measures to safeguard wildlife-rich habitats and wider local ecological networks. It goes on to say that plans should also promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of such ecological networks.
- 1.2. Within Essex, sites identified as having nature conservation value at a county level are known as Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS). Although not receiving any statutory protection, it is expected that LoWS will be protected from significant harm within the planning system. Many LoWS are designated on the basis of the Priority Habitats that they contain, and so additional weight should be given to the need for their protection as a key contribution to the maintenance of biodiversity in England.
- 1.3. With the advent of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, as a requirement of the Environment Act 2021, LoWS and the ecological networks of which they are a part serve a more proactive and positive role within the conservation of biodiversity. Such locally designated sites of nature conservation value are considered to be Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) and form part of the core of the Nature Recovery Network, providing the focus for action to restore, enhance and recreate natural habitats throughout the landscape and available to all local communities. This should include measures to:
 - Improve the quality of LoWS, by improving their management, for nature conservation outcomes
 - Increase the area of existing LoWS, by creating new habitats to buffer them and improve their resilience
 - Better connect LoWS in the landscape, to facilitate the movement of species and so improve their ability to respond to environmental change (including climate change)
 - Create new high-quality habitats in the right locations so that they rapidly achieve the condition needed to be designated as LoWS
- 1.4. Since their original identification in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Essex LoWS have typically been selected as part of borough, district or unitary authority 'reviews' commissioned by the relevant local authority. Since 2010, Essex LoWS Selection Criteria have been published to guide the designation of LoWS, the most recent version having been prepared in 2016. In line with national guidance on Local Sites, areas which have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for the same features, have not been included in this Local Wildlife Sites register.
- 1.5. The LoWS network is an inclusive one, meaning that any site that objectively satisfies one or more of the published selection criteria should be considered as a LoWS and afforded appropriate consideration, whether or not formal designation has been completed.
- 1.6. This report has been prepared by Place Services on behalf of Chelmsford City Council as part of their work to prepare a new development plan. It details the methodology followed during a partial review of the LoWS within Chelmsford carried out during 2024, which updates the evidence base required to support Local Plan Review and future development management decisions. Information about sites not covered by this review can be found in the Local Wildlife Site Review 2016, prepared by EECOS and available within the evidence base on the Local Plan webpages¹.

¹ <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/adopted-local-plan/evidence-base-for-the-local-plan/>

- 1.7. Identification of land as a Local Wildlife Site within this report does not confer any right of public access to the Site, above and beyond any Public Rights of Way that may exist. The vast majority of the Sites are in private ownership, and this should be respected at all times. Guidance on accessibility is provided within each Site description.
- 1.8. Whilst reasonable effort has been made to ensure accurate mapping of the site boundaries, the accompanying Local Wildlife Site maps should be considered as being illustrative only and, if necessary, they should be interpreted on site by a suitably qualified ecologist with reference to the LoWS Selection Criteria.

2. Methodology

- 2.1. Local Wildlife Sites (previously referred to as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) were first identified in Chelmsford in 1992 by Essex Wildlife Trust, as part of a county-wide process. Subsequently, these sites were reviewed by Essex Ecology Services in 2004 and 2015.
- 2.2. This review has considered those designated Local Wildlife Sites assessed to have an ecological connection to sites identified within the Preferred Options Local Plan for development, either for housing or employment purposes. Each Site was visited by a suitably qualified ecologist and information was collected on the habitats present, and their condition. The sites were then assessed against the current Essex Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria (see Appendix 1 for a summary of selection criteria).
- 2.3. Any existing Site considered to not meet any of the published criteria for which they were selected, with reference to the previous site descriptions, are recommended for deletion from the LoWS register. Boundaries have been remapped where parts of Sites no longer meet criteria, or where additional qualifying habitat has been identified. Site descriptions have been reviewed and adjusted as necessary to reflect any changes within the Sites and to provide as full a description of the habitats present as possible. Candidate sites considered to meet one or more criteria are proposed for inclusion in the register.
- 2.4. As part of the assessment of the review Sites, their condition was estimated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment methodologies relevant to the habitats present, as far as was practically possible. Condition assessment methodologies for rivers and bodies of water involve in depth methodologies that could not be completed within the scope of this review. The results of the condition assessment are presented as one of 'good', 'moderate' or 'poor'. An additional descriptor relating to any observable trend in condition has been added, subject to the surveyor's professional judgement: 'stable', 'improving', or 'declining'.
- 2.5. The Site descriptions also highlight any management issues that were identified during the site visits, either as a result of current inappropriate management methods, lack of management, or through the use of the Sites for activities other than delivering nature conservation outcomes.
- 2.6. Nine sites identified during the 2015 review as Potential Local Wildlife Sites (PLoWS) were also visited and assessed to determine whether they now met any LoWS site selection criteria, or if they should remain as PLoWS, or if they were no longer likely to achieve LoWS status and should be deleted.
- 2.7. For consistency and clarity, all site codes have been retained from the previous LoWS register, which means that any new sites have a previously unused code, and there are gaps in the numbering where sites have been deleted or merged.
- 2.8. The review has been considered and ratified by the Essex Local Sites Partnership at a meeting on 29th November 2024, to be consistent with the methodology set out in the Essex Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria document.

3. Results

Summary

3.1. As a result of this review, the following changes are proposed:

- One new LoWS of 0.3 hectares to be added
- One PLoWS of 5.6 hectares to be selected as a LoWS
- One PLoWS of 0.9 hectares to be added to an existing LoWS
- 14 LoWS to be increased by a total of 74.4 hectares
- Two LoWS to be reduced by a total of 3.9 hectares
- One LoWS of 0.1 hectares has been added to another existing LoWS (meaning its code is no longer in use)
- One LoWS of 18.1 hectares to be demoted to PLoWS
- Six PLoWS to be deleted
- One PLoWS to be retained

3.2. Overall, there are now 171 Sites with a total area of 1713.4 hectares, the same number of sites and a net increase of 57.9 hectares since the last review in 2015. The percentage of Chelmsford covered by LoWS designation is now 5%.

3.3. Full details of the reviewed LoWS are included in Appendix 2.

Changes to existing Local Wildlife Sites

3.4. The following table of previously designated LoWS includes a brief summary of the proposed changes, if any, applied as a result of the current assessment.

Table 1. Changes to existing LoWS at this review

Site code	Site Name	Change	Change in area (ha)
Ch2	Bushy Hays and Ashwood Springs	Review site ChPLoWS1 reinstated into Ch2	+0.9
Ch16	Boyton Cross Special Roadside Verge (SRV)	Matched to SRV boundaries and name changed from Boyton Cross Verges	+0.3
Ch17	Nightingale Wood	Track and waste storage area removed	-0.4
Ch68	Chelmer Valley Riverside	Re-mapped to add additional river corridor semi-natural vegetation; better matched to Local Nature Reserve (LNR) boundary where appropriate; fully canalised town centre section removed	+5.1
Ch87	Chelmsford Water Meadows	Re-mapped to add additional river corridor semi-natural vegetation	+2.1
Ch109	River Chelmer	Remapped to include bankside vegetation	+11.3
Ch113	Boreham Road Gravel Pits	Additional semi-natural and post-industrial habitat added along river corridor	+49.3
Ch114	Old Hare Wood Complex	Adjacent secondary woodland added, green lane connection to Hale Wood reinstated	+1.9
Ch115	Waterhall Meadows	Re-mapped to include Sandon Brook and its bankside vegetation	+0.4
Ch118	Hall Wood	Remapped for greater accuracy	+0.9
Ch123	The Chapel	Very small area of surfaced drive and path removed	0.0
Ch125	Boreham Meads	Remapped to remove bankside habitat now in Ch109; and to include adjacent SRV	-3.5
Ch129	Rectory Wood	Additional woodland habitat to north and Colam Lane verges added	+0.4

Site code	Site Name	Change	Change in area (ha)
Ch130	Hollybred Wood	Re-mapped for accuracy	+0.1
Ch132	Little Gibcracks	No change	0.0
Ch165	Marconi Ponds Nature Reserve	No change	0.0
Ch177	Long Spring Wood	No change	0.0
Ch178	Danbury Park	Re-mapped for accuracy	+1.8
Ch179	Riffhams Lane Wood	Additional old woodland habitat at south end included	+0.4

Deleted Sites

3.5. The following LoWS are recommended for deletion as part of this review.

Table 2. LoWS to be deleted at this review

Site code	Site Name	Reason for deletion
Ch104	Sandon Pit	Demoted to PLoWS due to operational changes
Ch127	Colam Lane Verges	Added to adjacent LoWS Ch129 Rectory Wood

3.6. Neither of these sites is actually lost from the network. Colam Lane Verges has been incorporated into the adjacent LoWS, as they are part of the same ecological unit and any boundary between them is entirely arbitrary. Sandon Pit has been demoted to PLoWS status pending ongoing habitat changes associated with its operational status (see below).

New Local Wildlife Sites

3.7. The following new sites were identified during this review as meeting one or more of the current selection criteria and are proposed for inclusion in the LoWS network.

Table 3. LoWS to be added at this review

Site code	Site name	Area (ha)	Summary description
Ch15	Newland Osiers	5.6	ChPLoWS4 reinstated to previous LoWS code
Ch187	Essex Regiment Way Special Roadside Verge	0.3	Species-rich grassland habitat

3.8. Newland Osiers was previously a LoWS but was demoted in 2015 when the natural habitats were perceived to have declined in quality and as a response to active disturbance of the lake with machinery at the time of the review. With that disturbance now over, the overall mosaic of habitats has been assessed as meeting the necessary site selection criterion.

3.9. The Special Roadside Verge on Essex Regiment Way was designated as a SRV at about the time of the last review in 2015. Although relatively new, the grassland habitat of the verge is species-rich and so represents an increasingly scarce ecological resource in the Essex countryside.

Potential LoWS

3.10. PLoWS are sites that cannot be shown to meet any of the site selection criteria, but that may either be close to that threshold and capable of meeting it in the near future or are lacking in the necessary survey data to evidence selection. Thus, the main routes to full LoWS status are either additional survey work

aimed at demonstrating their value, or management actions that result in an enhancement of the site to the point that one or more criterion is met. Following this partial review, there are now two PLoWS.

Table 4. Potential LoWS

Site code	Site name	Area (ha)	Notes
ChPLOWs9	Channels	76.2	Ongoing development site
ChPLOWs16	Sandon Pit	40.5	Operational site, lacking ecological stability

- 3.11. Both of these sites have previously been designated LoWS and both represent substantial areas of land that could still make a significant contribution to biodiversity. Channels was demoted to PLoWS at the last review in 2015 following the commencement of development in the area.
- 3.12. Sandon Pit is a long-standing aggregates and waste site that remains operational and so is subject to ongoing change. The features for which it was originally designated were two large, deep pits surrounded by open mosaic habitat. The southern pit has been completely filled with inert waste and is now largely bare ground. The northern pit is currently being infilled. There are various areas of compensatory habitat around the former pits, but none of it has yet reached a state of ecological stability that allows it to be accurately assessed for LoWS status. Restoration plans include habitat aimed at supporting invertebrate and Great Crested Newt populations, but no data is yet available to judge the success of these measures.
- 3.13. Once operations have ceased and the resulting habitats have demonstrated some level of stability, it is likely that at least part of the site can be reinstated as a LoWS.
- 3.14. Channels is a former golf course that was designated for the population of Great Crested Newts supported by its ponds and associated habitats. The golf course and some of the surrounding area, consisting of aggregate extraction sites, is now in the process of development, largely for residential purposes. The green infrastructure incorporated in the development plans includes some compensatory habitat for Great Crested Newts. There is also potential for there to be a strategically important network of habitats across the wider site once development is complete.
- 3.15. The following sites were PLoWS but have been assessed at this review as no longer showing the likelihood of reaching the necessary level of value without a fundamental change in their management and/or condition.

Table 5. Potential LoWS to be deleted at this review

Site code	Site name	Notes
ChPLOWs2	Road Verge 2, Roxwell	No significant species or communities present
ChPLOWs3	Skreens Park, Roxwell	No substantial value in the site's grassland habitat
ChPLOWs7	Wellhope Meadow, Ford End	Habitat adversely affected by willow planting and game rearing activity
ChPLOWs11	Airfield Apron, Boreham	Site is now an active aggregates site, and all original habitat has been lost
ChPLOWs12	Sandon Riverside, Chelmsford	No habitat of substantial value identified
ChPLOWs13	New Lodge, Little Baddow	Land incorporated into garden management

4. Local Geological Sites

- 4.1. Geo Essex has kindly provided details of the sites of geological interest in Chelmsford that have already been assessed as meeting the relevant selection criteria and have been ratified as Local Geological Sites (LoGS).
- 4.2. There are twelve LoGS already designated, two of which coincide with LoWS. These sites, included in Table 6 below with a brief description of their value, should be referenced along with LoWS as 'locally designated sites' within the emerging Chelmsford Local Plan.

Table 6. Chelmsford Local Geological Sites

Place	Site name	Grid reference	Brief description of site
Great Baddow	ChG1 Beehive Lane Sarsen Stone	TL71940554	A sarsen stone 90cm x 70cm x 60cm (3' x 2'4" x 2') in size sits in the car park of the Beehive Public House in Beehive Lane. It was obtained from the old 'Beehive' gravel quarry before 1906.
Danbury	ChG2 Buell Spring	TL78390451	Buell Spring on Danbury Hill is a good example of a natural spring. The spring has been used as a water supply in the past and now issues from a cast iron pipe. The spring is on land owned by the National Trust and adjacent to the extensive disused gravel pits on Danbury Common. Access is available at all times.
Little Waltham	ChG3 Channels Puddingstone	TL72381118	By the entrance to the former Channels Golf Club in Belsteads Farm Lane is a large boulder of Hertfordshire puddingstone on a mound of grass by the roadside. It is one of the largest puddingstone boulders in Essex, measuring 2.1 metres long by 1.2 metres high by 0.4 metres in thickness.
Danbury	ChG4 Danbury Common Gravel Pits	TL784047	In woodland in the northern part of Danbury Common are extensive disused gravel pits which formerly worked the Danbury Gravel, a thick layer of orange-brown sandy gravel that caps Danbury Hill.
Bicknacre	ChG5 Fultons Farmhouse Boulder	TL788006	On private land, next to the garage of Fultons Farmhouse, is a splendid boulder of basalt 90 centimetres (3 feet) long. Large erratic boulders of basalt are very rare in Essex.
Highwood	ChG6 Parson's Spring Gravel Pits	TL62390284	The woodland of Parsons Spring contains a number of disused gravel pits. The origin of this gravel, known as Stanmore Gravel (formerly called 'pebble gravel'), is unclear. It dates from the early part of the Ice Age and may have been deposited by northward-flowing tributaries of the pre-diversion Thames, or it may be of marine origin.
Runwell	ChG7 Running Well	TQ75119657	An ancient spring that gave its name to the village of Runwell. Also known as Our Lady's Well.
Boreham	ChG8 Russell Green Gravel Pit	TL746125	A former gravel quarry providing exposures of Kesgrave Sands and Gravels (laid down by a former route of the Thames) dating from the early Ice Age. There is currently a fine vertical cliff of gravel on the west side of the lake, visible from the road. The site is privately owned with no public access.

Sandon	ChG9 Sandon Pit	TL747043	The disused Sandon gravel pit has good exposures in Kesgrave Sands and Gravels (Thames gravel). Much of the pit has not been restored and the quarry slopes and edges are much as they were when quarrying ceased. This makes the site of interest for geology as well as wildlife. Sandon Pit is also a Local Wildlife Site.
Danbury	ChG10 Scrubs Wood Nature Reserve	TL789058	This site may have been a former gravel pit as the steep banks have plenty of gravel visible. The Danbury Gravel clearly dates from the Ice Age but its precise origin is still not clear, despite various investigations over the last 150 years.
South Woodham Ferrers	ChG11 South Woodham Ferrers Foreshore	TQ804956	The foreshore at South Woodham Ferrer is an exceptionally important site with many fine sections of recent alluvial deposits, resting on London Clay, beautifully exposed and constantly being eroded.
Stock	ChG12 Stock Road Gravel Pits	TQ69659962	These pits are an important geological site because it was one of the very few places where the 'Bagshot Pebble Bed' was formerly exposed.

- 4.3. A further three sites have been identified as Potential LoGS (PLoGS) on the basis that they meet the necessary selection criteria but have not yet been ratified by a Local Sites Partnership. These sites are listed in Table 7.

Table 7. Potential LoGS

Location	Site name	Grid reference	
Little Waltham	ChPG13 Cliff of Glacial Till	TL72161102	In the southern part of the Phase 6 housing development area at Channels there is a vertical cliff of glacial till that remarkably has survived since quarrying ceased here several decades ago. Till is the deposit left by the glacier that covered Mid Essex 450,000 years ago, during the coldest part of the Ice Age. It forms the deposit on which much of the fertile soil of the area is formed. This cliff forms the only accessible and visible exposure of glacial till in the whole of Essex.
Chelmsford	ChPG14 Chelmsford Museum Puddingstone	TL70250555	Boulder of puddingstone 70cm x 60cm x 30cm by the entrance to Chelmsford City Museum in Oaklands Park.
Bicknacre	ChPG15 The Channels Mammoth	TL71721087	The sculpture encapsulates the essence of the Ice Age deposits exploited by the gravel pits around which the Channels development is sited

Appendix 1 LoWS selection criteria (from ELSP, 2016)

Habitat Criteria:

Habitat Criterion 1 (HC1) – Ancient Woodland Sites

“All sites considered to be ancient woodland shall be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 2 (HC2) – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

“All significant areas of non-ancient Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 3 (HC3) – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites

“Any area of Lowland Beech and Yew woodland (e.g. NVC type W15) or Wet Woodland, as defined in the Habitats of Principal Importance in England descriptions, will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 4 (HC4) – Wood-pasture and Parkland

“Any remnant area of mature parkland and/or wood-pasture, preferably with veteran trees and/or a semi-natural ground flora will be eligible for selection, together with any more recent parkland sites that support inherent ecological interest and whose ecological value is not compromised by amenity use or other primary functions”.

Habitat Criterion 5 (HC5) – Woody Scrub

“Stands of woody scrub that support exceptional diversity, uncommon shrub assemblages, and/or which provide a valuable component of a site’s ecological value will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 6 (HC6) – Veteran Trees

“Veteran trees known or suspected to be of specific nature conservation interest, for example supporting significant invertebrate assemblages, and/or epiphytic bryophytes and lichens, will be eligible for selection, even in the absence of other associated semi-natural habitat. The tree or tree group should encompass a sufficient area with appropriate habitat conditions for the associated species interest to be maintained”.

Habitat Criterion 7 (HC7) – Old Orchards

“All traditional orchards will be eligible for selection, particularly those that have retained mature fruit trees.”

Habitat Criterion 8 (HC8) – Hedgerows and Green Lanes

“Hedgerows and green lanes shall be eligible for selection if they are assessed as having significant ecological value in terms of:

- *their intrinsic flora and fauna*
- *a defined ecological function in the landscape”*

Habitat Criterion 9 (HC9) – Lowland Meadows

“All old, largely unimproved grasslands identifiable as falling within the definition of the NVC MG5 Lowland Meadow vegetation type will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 10 (HC10) – River Floodplain

“Significant areas of river floodplain grassland should be considered for selection, especially those areas still subject to seasonal inundation. The role of such grasslands as wildlife corridors should also be considered”.

Habitat Criterion 11 (HC11) – Other Neutral Grasslands

“Unimproved or semi-improved¹² pastures or meadows that do not clearly fit criterion HC9 shall be eligible for selection if they support features that indicate long continuity as grassland or support notable populations of invertebrates. Special consideration should be given to sites listed in the Grassland Inventory for Essex and to sites supporting plants listed in Appendix⁴”.

Habitat Criterion 12 (HC12) – Lowland Calcareous Grassland

“All areas of grassland supporting assemblages of typical chalk grassland species included in Appendix 5 should be considered for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 13 (HC13) – Heathland and Acid Grassland

“Any site supporting characteristic heathland or acid grassland vegetation, including deteriorated sites with the potential for restoration shall be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 14 (HC14) – Lowland Fen Vegetation

“Significant areas of lowland fen vegetation¹⁴, or such habitat known to support notable species, will be eligible for selection. Usually such sites will include the associated water body or source of groundwater, if applicable.”

Habitat Criterion 15 (HC15) – Reedbeds

*“All significant stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) will be eligible for selection.”*

Habitat Criterion 16 (HC16) – Lakes and Reservoirs

“Lake and reservoir LoWS identified on the basis of Mosaic Habitat or Species Criteria should be of sufficient size and habitat quality to maintain the seasonal or resident population of that species. Where a seasonal species utilises several water bodies during the course of its stay, all such bodies should be selected”.

Habitat Criterion 17 (HC17) – Ponds

“Pond LoWS identified on the basis of Species Criteria should be of sufficient size and habitat quality to maintain the population of that species at a sustainable level.”

Habitat Criterion 18 (HC18) – Rivers

“Where a section of river, stream, canal or borrow dyke is designated via Species Selection Criteria, a minimum 500 metre section of that water course shall be designated (250 metres upstream and downstream of a positive sample site or 250 metres upstream and downstream of the end points of a cluster of records from the same population). The Site shall be deemed to extend at least 2 metres away from the top of the bank into the adjacent habitat.”

Habitat Criterion 19 (HC19) – Extended Riverine Habitat

“Where two designated sections of watercourse are separated by no more than 1000 metres of undesignated water, the intervening section may be included within one large site, if it is deemed that the central section has the potential to be restored to good condition or realistically colonised by the species concerned”.

Habitat Criterion 20 (HC20) – Complex Riverine Habitats

“Sections of river that support a suite of natural features, leading to a complex riverine habitat structure will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 21 (HC21) – Coastal Grazing Marsh

“All areas of coastal grazing marsh shall be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 22 (HC22) – Tidal Transition Zones

“All sites exhibiting an unrestricted upper saltmarsh to grassland transition will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 23 (HC23) – Saltmarsh and Mudflats

“All areas of saltmarsh and other intertidal habitats outside of SSSIs will be considered for selection. Newly created habitats within managed retreat zones can be considered once they have acquired a typical flora and use by other coastal wildlife is demonstrated”.

Habitat Criterion 24 (HC24) – Saline Lagoons and Borrow Dyke Habitats

“Sections of borrow dyke and tidal or semi-tidal brackish or saline lagoons known to support a flora and fauna characteristic of saline lagoon conditions will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 25 (HC25) – Sand Dune and Shingle Beach Vegetation

“All areas of sand dune and shingle habitat exhibiting a characteristic land form and flora will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 26 (HC26) – Maritime Cliffs and Slopes

“Maritime Cliffs and Slopes identified on account of one or more significant species or groups of species should be of sufficient extent, either in isolation or as a clearly recognisable chain of inter-related sites, should be of sufficient extent to include habitat capable of supporting sustainable populations of the species concerned.”

Habitat Criterion 27 (HC27) – Post-industrial Sites

“Brownfield/post-industrial sites or derelict buildings/structures of high nature conservation value will be eligible for selection if they are known to support notable species or where it can be demonstrated they provide the habitat qualities necessary to support such species. The site may include sections of land that might not otherwise qualify for selection, if they provide one or more of the ecological requirements of the notable species”.

Habitat Criterion 28 (HC28) – Small-Component Mosaics

“A site comprising two or more sub-habitats, each of which just fails to be selected as a Site within its own main habitat criterion group or on species grounds, will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 29 (HC29) – Habitat Extension Mosaics

“Where a site that would not on its own qualify for consideration as a LoWS provides a significant and clearly identifiable extension to the habitat of an adjacent LoWS, then the habitat extension area should be added to the LoWS”.

Habitat Criterion 30 (HC30) – Wildlife Corridors

“Where two or more LoWS are physically linked by additional habitat of a type that would allow the dispersal and interchange of species within each site, then these corridors should be included within the LoWS.”

Habitat Criterion 31 (HC31) – Accessible Natural Greenspace 57

“A site that comes close to qualifying under other selection criteria can be eligible for selection based upon its amenity, cultural and/or education value close to a centre of population.”

Species Criteria:

Species Criterion 1 (SC1) – Vascular Plants

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ vascular plants will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 2 (SC2) – Bryophytes

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ bryophytes will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 3 (SC3) – Lichens

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ lichens will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 4 (SC4) – Fungi

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ fungi will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 5 (SC5) – Notable Bird Species

“Discrete habitat areas known to support significant populations of notable bird species, whether breeding or over-wintering, will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 6 (SC6) – Exceptional Populations of Common Bird Species

“Discrete habitat areas that regularly support exceptional breeding, feeding, roosting/resting or over-wintering populations of relatively commonplace species will be considered for selection”.

Species Criterion 7 (SC7) – Dormouse

“All sites confirmed as supporting populations of Dormouse will be eligible for selection. Sites should include all adjoining areas of suitable Dormouse habitat and important movement corridors (HC30)”.

Species Criterion 8 (SC8) – Barbastelle (and other Annex II) bats

“All sites containing a maternity roost of Barbastelle bats (or other Annex II bat species should they be recorded in Essex in the future) will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 9 (SC9) – Other Bat Breeding Colonies

“All sites, except dwelling houses, regularly supporting breeding colonies of four or more bat species, or an exceptional breeding roost or colony of one or more species, will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 10 (SC10) – Bat Hibernation Sites

“All sites, except dwelling houses, supporting exceptional numbers of hibernating bats of one or more species will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 11 (SC11) – Protection of Otter Holts

“A confirmed, natural or artificial, well established and regularly used otter holt, including an appropriate buffer zone of up to 250 metres up and down stream, will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 12 (SC12) – Breeding Water Vole Colonies

“Any watercourse or wetland system supporting a viable breeding population of Water Vole will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 13 (SC13) - Hotspots for Amphibian Diversity

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support significant populations of three or more species of breeding amphibian will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 14 (SC14) - Palmate Newts

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support a breeding population of Palmate Newt will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 15 (SC15) - Great Crested Newts

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support an exceptional breeding population of Great Crested Newts will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 16 (SC16) - Hotspots for Reptile Diversity

“Any site supporting significant populations of three or more reptile species will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 17 (SC17) – White-clawed Crayfish

“All populations of White-clawed crayfish will be eligible for selection. Any designated Site should include suitable buffering both upstream and downstream”.

Species Criterion 18 (SC18) – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

“All significant populations of terrestrial and freshwater aquatic invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criteria 19 (SC19) – Important invertebrate assemblages




“Significant populations of notable invertebrate species, and/or important invertebrate assemblages (i.e. unusual or uncommon assemblages, or exceptional diversity) will be eligible for selection. In deciding the significance of a species, reference should be made to any available Essex Red Data List, national Red Data Book or “Review”.

Species Criteria 20 (SC20) – Notable ‘flagship’ macro-invertebrates

“Exceptional populations or high species diversity of non-notable macro-invertebrates (e.g. dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies) will be eligible for selection”.

Appendix 2 – Local Wildlife Sites Register Update

Map key for site descriptions

-  LoWS being described
-  Potential LoWS
-  Adjacent or nearby LoWS

Site reference: Ch2

Site name: Bushy Hays and Ashwood Springs, Roxwell

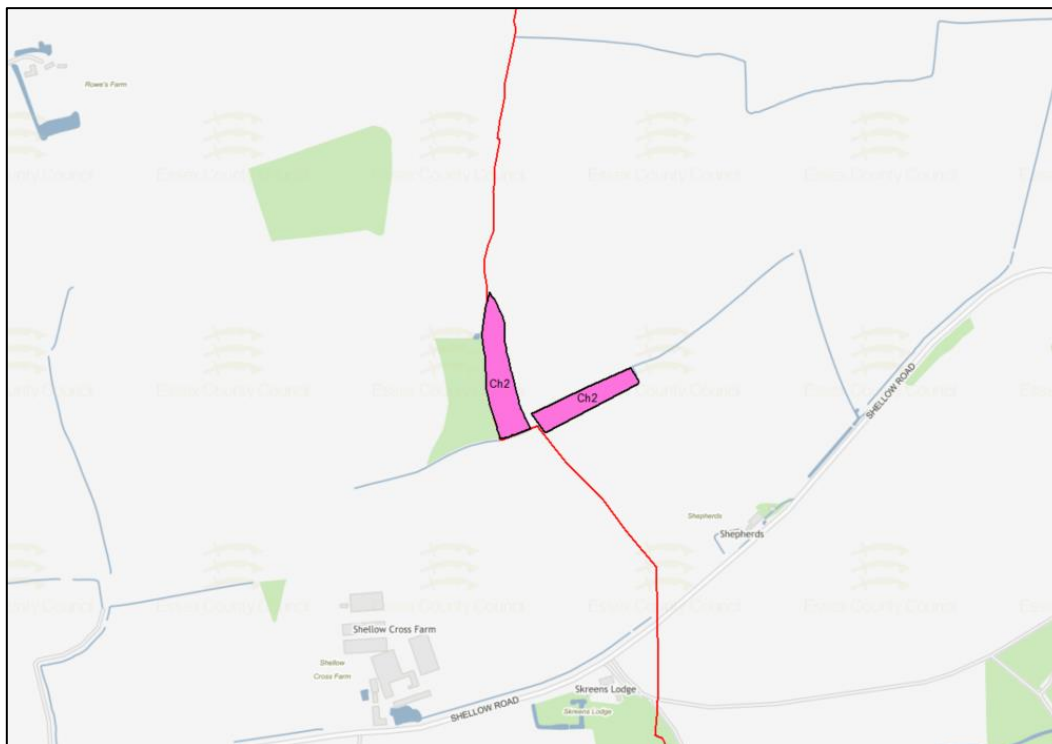
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL617084

Site area: 0.9ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

These two small fragments of habitat, one of which extends over the border into Epping Forest District, have been identified as Ancient Woodland and have had varying names over the years.

The woods are made up of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) with Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*).

The ground flora in Bushy Hays Spring includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*) and the locally uncommon Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*).

Ashwood Spring has lost most of its canopy through a combination of felling and Ash Dieback, and so is more scrubby in character, with a limited ground flora.

Site Selection Rationale

HC1 – Both woods are included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The woods are in private ownership with no public access but can be viewed from Shellow Road to the south.

Condition Statement

Bushy Hays: Moderate, stable
Ashwood Spring: Poor, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of any management for nature conservation outcomes and the woods are surrounded by land in arable cultivation, meaning that they are likely to be nutrient enriched.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change), 2015 (Ashwood Spring removed and designated ChPLoWS1), 2024 (Ashwood Spring reinstated)

Site reference: Ch15

Site name: Newland Osiers, Roxwell

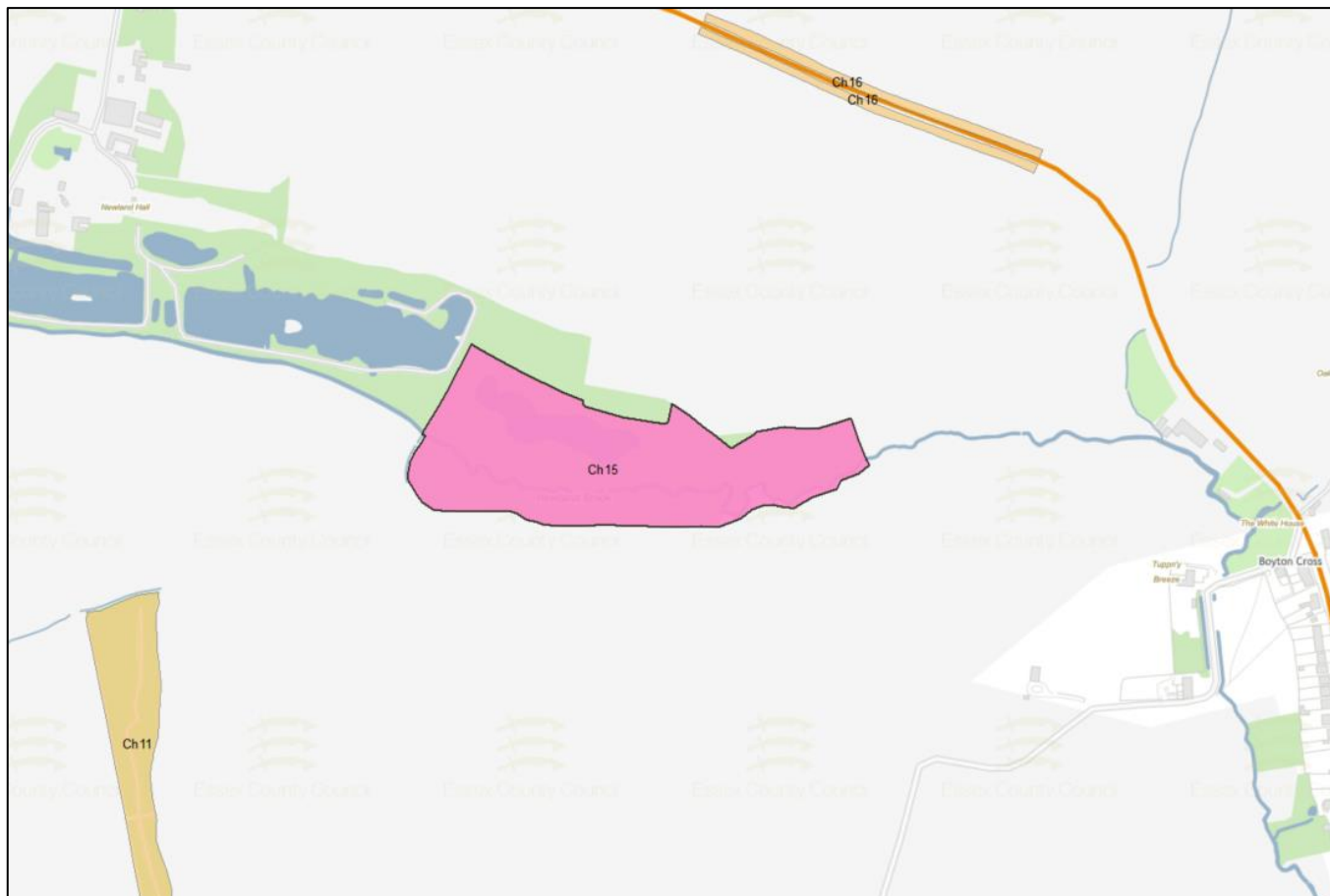
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL641093

Site area: 5.6ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC28 – Small-component Mosaics

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site includes a mosaic of wetland habitats centred on an artificial lake and Newland Brook, featuring marginal vegetation, lowland fen and woodland.

The lake is bordered by willows, interspersed with stands of marginal and emergent vegetation including Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), pond-sedge (*Carex* sp.), Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), Gipsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*) with small quantities of Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*). The surface of the lake is covered with duckweed (*Lemna* sp.).

The lake is bordered by young, scrubby woodland comprising Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) and small amounts of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). The ground flora includes Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Hairy-brome (*Bromopsis ramosus*), Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*) and Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*). Within the woodland, Newland Brook is heavily shaded, but it supports small amounts of Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) and pond-sedge.

Site Selection Rationale

HC28 – Although none of the habitats present in extensive enough or of sufficient quality to justify designation, the combination of open water, lowland fen vegetation and woodland generates substantive value for biodiversity.

Priority Habitats

None

Ownership and Access

The lake is privately owned as part of the Newland Hall Estate and is used as a fishing lake. Public rights of way run beyond the northern boundary and cross it in two locations in the eastern half.

Condition Statement

Woodland: Moderate, stable

Lake: Poor, stable

Management Issues

Sitting in an agricultural landscape, the lake is nutrient enriched, as demonstrated by the dominance of duckweed, and this is exacerbated by its use as a fishery. The site is not managed for nature conservation outcomes.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change), 2015 (demoted to ChPLoWS4), 2024 (reinstated as LoWS with revised boundary)

Site reference: Ch16

Site name: Boyton Cross Special Roadside Verge,
Roxwell

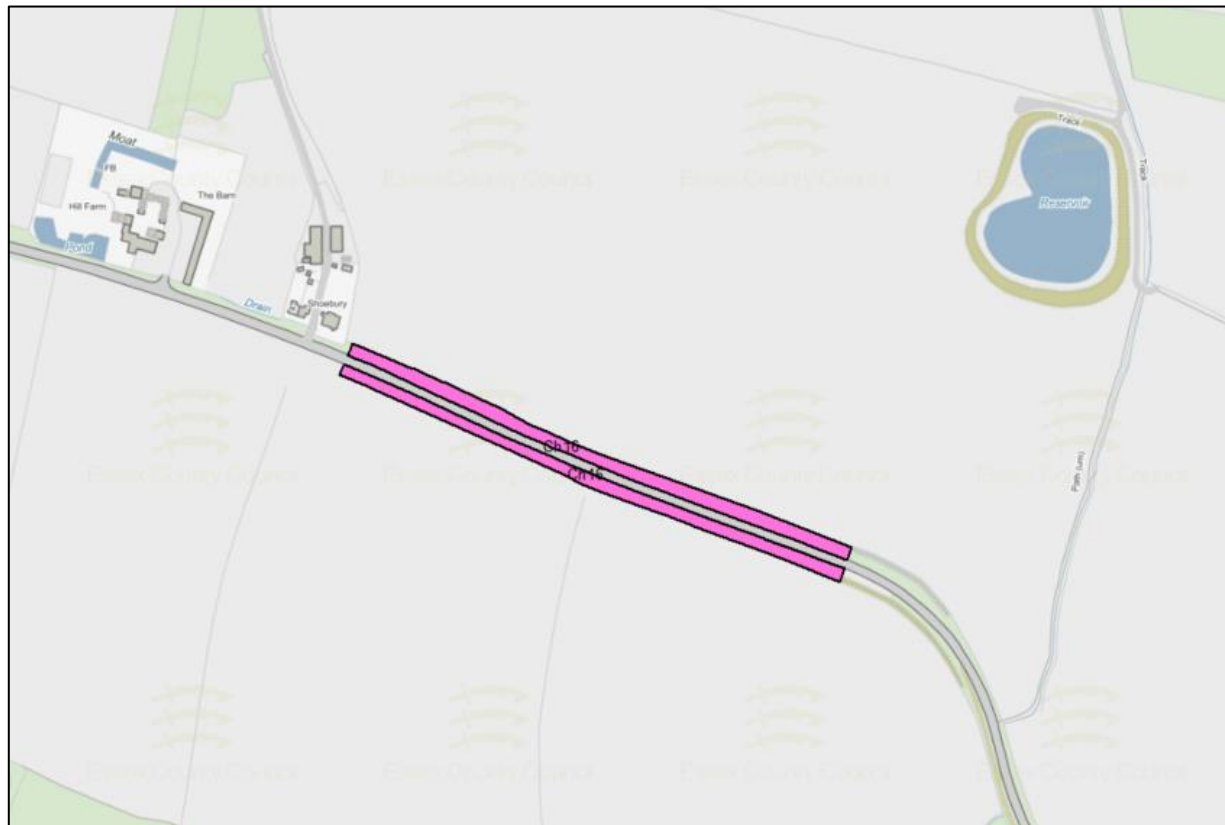
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL644097

Site area: 0.4ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC9 Lowland Meadows

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is designated as a Special Roadside Verge (CHL12) for its calcareous Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat and because of its large populations of the Nationally Vulnerable species Yellow Vetchling (*Lathyrus aphaca*) and Sulphur Clover (*Trifolium ochroleucon*). It encompasses nearly 400m of habitat on both the north and south verges of the A1060 Roxwell Road, to the west of Boyton Cross.

Yellow Vetchling densely covers the northern verge, with a small amount on the southern verge, while Sulphur Clover is abundant along much of the southern verge. The grassland community includes Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) with Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), Common Restharrow (*Ononis repens*) Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Wild Garlic (*Allium vineale*), Hedge Bedstraw (*Galium album*), and Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*). Common Broomrape (*Ononis repens*) is also understood to be present.

Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) grow in a damp ditch at the rear of the verge.

Site Selection Rationale

HC9 – The habitat represents a calcareous version of the MG5 lowland hay meadow community and so qualifies as Lowland Meadow Priority habitat.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Meadow

Ownership and Access

The verges are owned and managed by ECC and can be viewed from the public highway.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

As can be expected along a road verge there were a number of car parts and litter discarded, as well as the carcass of a Muntjac Deer. Such debris can suppress the grassland beneath and create gaps in the sward allowing growth of negative indicators.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (reduced), 2015 (no change), 2024 (increased to match SRV boundary)

Site reference: Ch17

Site name: Nightingale Wood, Roxwell

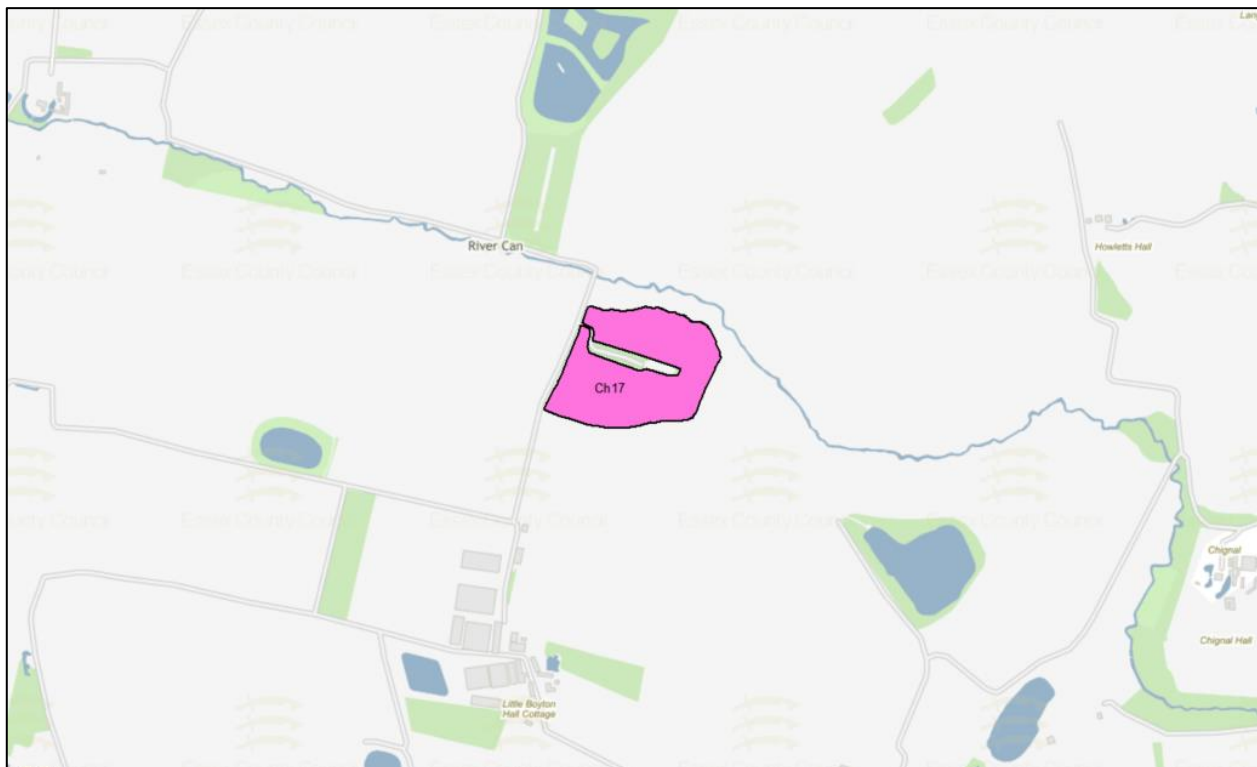
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL652106

Site area: 4.9ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

Nightingale Wood is an Ancient Woodland on the southern slope of the River Can valley. Its character and condition have been impacted by its recent management and use. A central access track, waste storage area and planted conifers are excluded from the LoWS.

The canopy consists mostly of coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), with a few larger Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) around the edges. The understorey includes Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), with Huntingdon Elm (*Ulmus glabra x minor*) along the eastern edge. Large parts of the wood have been replanted with Pedunculate Oak, Ash and some Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*). The south eastern block is more open and scrubby with little canopy.

The ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Bearded Couch (*Elymus caninus*), Hairy-brome (*Bromopsis ramosus*), False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC1 – the site is included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The wood is in private ownership with no public access, but it can be viewed from a public right of way running beyond the eastern and northern boundaries.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

The invasive non-native species Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) is present within the woodland and the prominence of Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) suggests nutrient enrichment.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change), 2015 (no change), 2024 (access track, conifers and waste storage area removed)

Site reference: Ch68

Site name: Chelmer Valley Riverside, Chelmsford

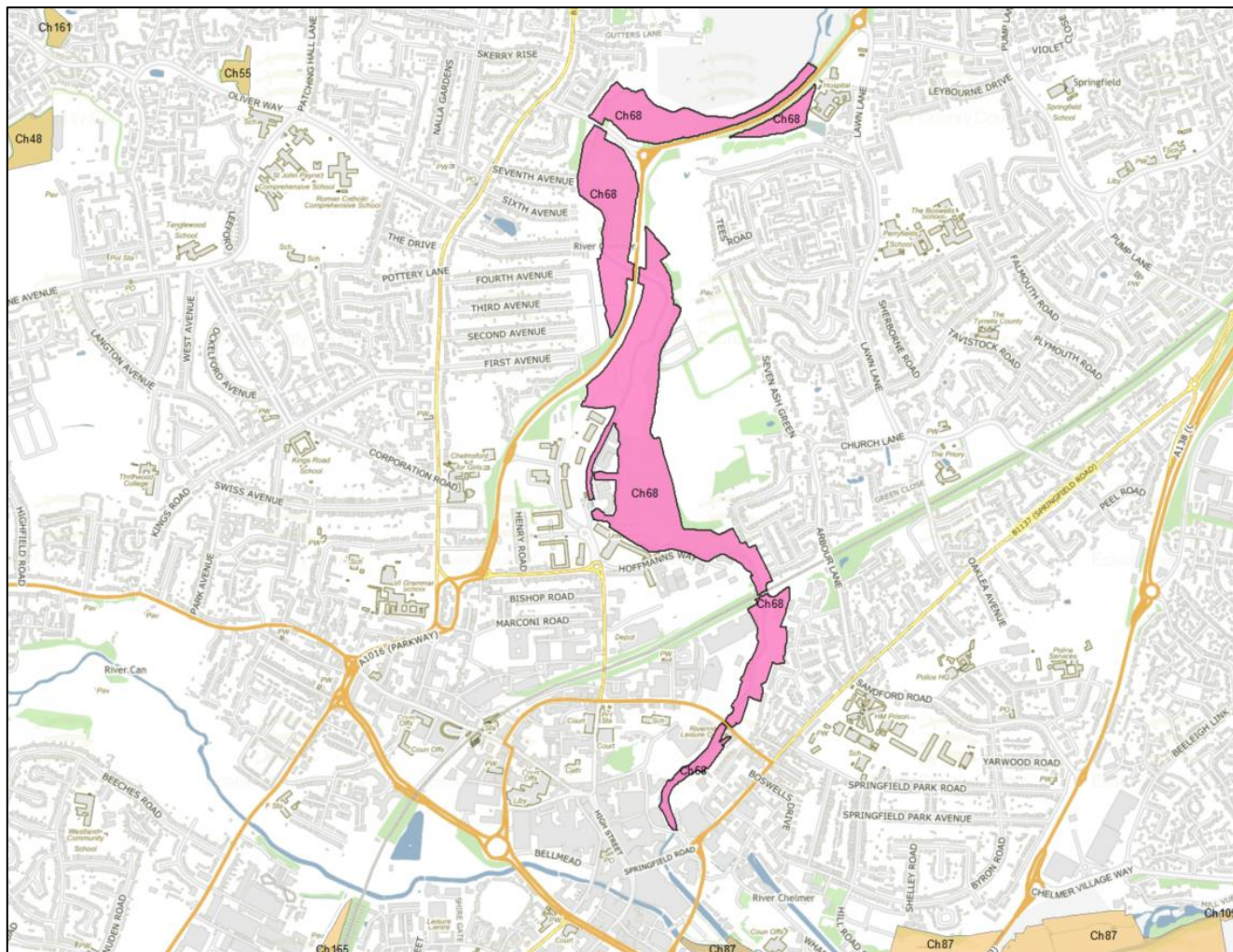
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL 710081

Site area: 33.3ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC28 Small-component Mosaics
- HC31 Accessible Natural Greenspace

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site includes a mosaic of habitats along the River Chelmer, northward from the centre of Chelmsford to Broomfield, predominantly woodland, fen, parkland and some grassland. The site includes the Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve.

Aquatic, emergent and marginal vegetation along the river includes Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*), Arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*), Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*), Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Fool's Water-cress (*Helosciadium nodiflorum*), Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), Greater Pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) and Spiked Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*). River Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*) and Shining Pondweed (*Potamogeton lucens*), both Essex Red Data List species, have also been recorded.

The majority of the site is to a greater or lesser extent wooded. South of the railway line, this comprises fairly open canopy including Grey Poplar (*Populus*), Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), White Willow (*Salix alba*), London Plane (*Platanus x hispanicus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The understorey includes Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) with Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) widespread alongside Cow Parsley and occasional Pendulous Sedge in the ground flora. Away from the river, in drier conditions, there are some large Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and lime (*Tilia* sp.) with Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Bramble interspersed with amenity grass. To the east of the river there is a spring line that creates damp conditions in places, including a low-lying flush with good populations of Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria alsine*) and Marsh Willowherb (*Epilobium palustre*) with Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*), Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). Elsewhere, damp conditions support pond-sedges (*Carex* sp.), Hemp Agrimony, Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Great Willowherb and Purple Loosestrife.

To the north of the railway are Wet Mead and Great Mead, where the woodland is dominated by Ash in the canopy and Hazel in the understorey, alongside Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and occasional Sycamore (*Acer campestre*). Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Aspen (*Populus tremula*) and Hybrid Black Poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) occur in scattered groups. Common Nettle is dominant, but with a few species more typical of secondary woodland, including Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*) and Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*). Open areas support rough grassland that includes Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Common Couch (*Elytrigia repens*) and cat's-tail (*Phleum* sp.).

Amongst mature hedgerows and patches of scrub, former grassland blocks to the west/south of the river on either side of the A1016 have recently been planted with willows and poplar.

Warren Mead and Stable Field, to the east of the river and south of Valley Bridge, are predominantly wooded with mature willows and poplars, with a varied understorey of more recent origin, including Hazel, Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Hawthorn, Field Maple, Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) and Spindle (*Euonymus europaea*). Remaining open grassland consists of Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), cat's-tail and Cock's-foot. Although patchy, the grassland is moderately diverse and may be largely unimproved, with species including Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), Betony (*Betonica officinalis*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), Smooth Tare (*Ervum tetraspermum*), Common Cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), Common Centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*) and Michaelmas-daisy (*Symphyotrichum* sp.).

At the northern end of the site is an area of floodplain grassland that has been largely unmanaged and has recently been planted with willows. Amongst some established, scattered patches of scrub remain some open, rank grassland, invading scrub and tall ruderal species such as Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) and thistles (*Cirsium* sp.). Although dry for most of the year, there are some low-ways and pools with more open grassland supporting species such as Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Creeping Bent, Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*), Hedge Bedstraw (*Galium album*), Oxeye Daisy, Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) and Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC11 – The open grassland of Stable Field is old and diverse, but not a good match for the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) hay meadow community that would qualify it as Priority Habitat

HC28 – Although there are small pockets of higher quality semi-natural habitat, much of the site would not meet the requirements of any particular habitat criterion. However, the combination of woodland, grassland, scrub and wetland communities is of clear biodiversity value.

HC31 – Most of the site is accessible via footpaths and provides an important natural resource for local communities.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The majority of the site comprises the Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve which is owned and managed by Chelmsford City Council, with other areas owned by Essex County Council. A network of paths and bridges cross most parts of the site.

Condition Statement

Woodland: Poor, stable
Grassland (Stable Field): Moderate, declining
Grassland (Great Mead): Moderate, stable
Grassland (northern parcel): poor, declining

Management Issues

The site is regularly used by residents for commuting and leisure purposes with litter present in multiple areas, and there is erosion on sections of the riverbank as a result. The non-native invasive species, Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is present on the banks of the River Chelmer throughout the area. Some of the grassland parcels do not appear to be managed, which is resulting in scrub encroachment. Recent planting of willows and poplars on flood plain grassland is a negative impact in habitat terms.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (boundary revised), 2015 (boundary revised), 2024 (minor addition of semi-natural habitat)

Site reference: Ch87

Site name: Chelmsford Water Meadows, Great Baddow

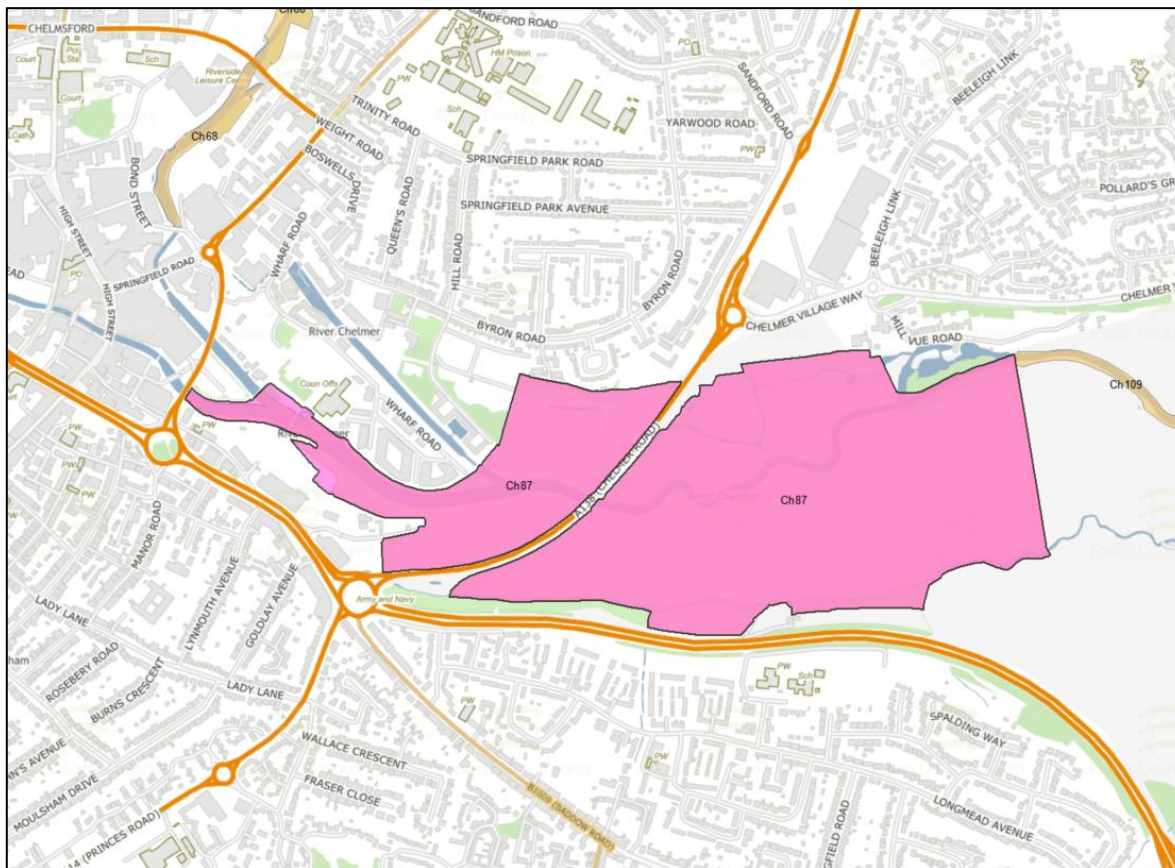
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL 722062

Site area: 54.4ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC10 River Floodplain

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is mainly comprised of a section of the River Chelmer, forming part of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation, to the east of Chelmsford City Centre with its associated flood plain, which largely remains as grassland with some scrub. At the western end is a short stretch of the River Can where it joins the Chelmer on the edge of the city centre.

Fields to the south of the River Chelmer support grassland dominated by False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylus glomerata*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), and Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) with Common Couch (*Elytrigia repens*) Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), and Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*). Diversity is limited, but Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) are all prominent.

To the north of the River Chelmer, the grassland is unmanaged and dominated by tall ruderal species such as Hemlock, Hogweed, thistles (*Cirsium* spp.), Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), comfrey (*Symphytum* sp.), Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) and Greater Burdock (*Arctium lappa*) with an abundance of Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*). More open areas support Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Cock's-foot, False Oat-grass, Common Couch, Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Meadow Barley and Creeping Bent, with Hoary Ragwort (*Jacobaea erucifolia*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*), Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*), Wood Dock (*Rumex sanguineus*) and Clustered Dock (*Rumex conglomeratus*). Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) is restricted to one significant patch.

There are several ditches crossing this grassland with additional species such as Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), Soft-rush (*Juncus effusus*), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*) and Blue Water-speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*). Pink Water-speedwell (*Veronica catenata*) has also been recorded here.

Marginal species along the River Chelmer include Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), Greater Pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Fool's Water-cress (*Helosciadium nodiflorum*), Water Mint, False Fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae*) and Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*). Aquatic species include White Water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*), water starwort (*Callitriche* sp.), Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*) and duckweeds (*Lemna* spp.).

The floodplain is bordered and crossed by hedgerows and scrub including Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC10 – This is a large area of functionally unchanged floodplain habitat, which is still inundated at times, although it does not meet the description of Priority Habitat

Priority Habitats

None

Ownership and Access

The site is under multiple, private ownership, but it is crossed by several public rights of way.

Condition Statement

North: Poor, stable
South: Moderate, stable

Management Issues

Areas of grassland located to the north of the site shows no sign of management at the time of the site visit and an abundance of Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) was present amongst other negative indicators. Nutrient enrichment along the riverbanks and elsewhere is evident from the abundance of Common Nettle. The non-native invasive species Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was identified along the riverbank and Greek Dock (*Rumex cristatus*) is present north of the River Chelmer.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (minor revisions), 2015 (minor revisions), 2024 (minor addition of semi-natural habitat)

Site reference: Ch109

Site name: River Chelmer, Little Baddow

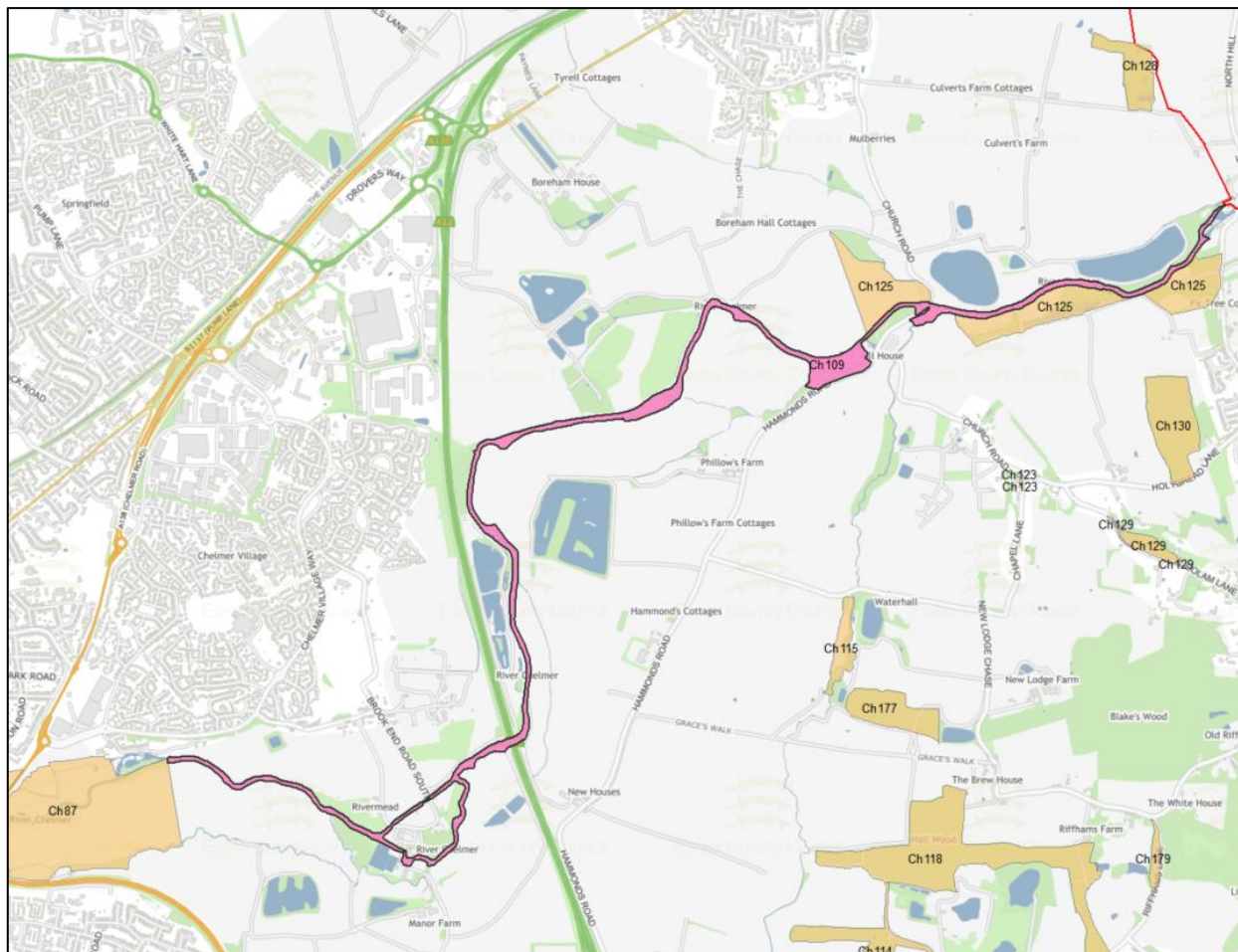
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL750077

Site area: 24.2ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC30 Wildlife Corridors

Boundary Map



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Site Description

The site comprises the River Chelmer between Chelmer Village and the administrative boundary at Paper Mill Lock (part of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation), with marginal and other associated vegetation on both banks, forming a significant habitat connection through the landscape. The status of the river as a navigation means that the water level is fairly consistent, which enhances its value for biodiversity.

The diverse aquatic, emergent and marginal communities include Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*), Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), River Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Narrow-leaved Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*), White Water-Lily (*Nymphaea alba*), Arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*), Greater Pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*), Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), Purple-loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*) and Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*). Sweet-flag (*Acorus calamus*) and the Essex Red List species Water Dock (*Rumex hydrolapathum*) have also been recorded.

Bankside trees and shrubs include various willows (*Salix* spp.) and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC30 – While the river does not meet the criteria for Priority Habitat status, and its role as a navigation prevents other riverine criteria from being applied, it has a clear connectivity function, linking to other LoWS – Ch87 Chelmer Watermeadows to the west and Maldon LoWS Ma1 River Chelmer in the east – and has clear biodiversity value in its own right.

Priority Habitats

None

Ownership and Access

The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation is managed by Essex Waterways Ltd. Public rights of way follow the river and cross it at various locations.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

The site is heavily used by members of the public for leisure purposes including kayaking, dog walking, paddleboarding, and for the use of pleasure boats which in turn has resulted in the damage and erosion of the banks. Indian Balsam is present along the banks, although not in significant quantities.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004, 2015 (minor boundary revisions), 2024 (remapped to included bankside vegetation)

Site reference: Ch113

Site name: Boreham Road Gravel Pit, Boreham

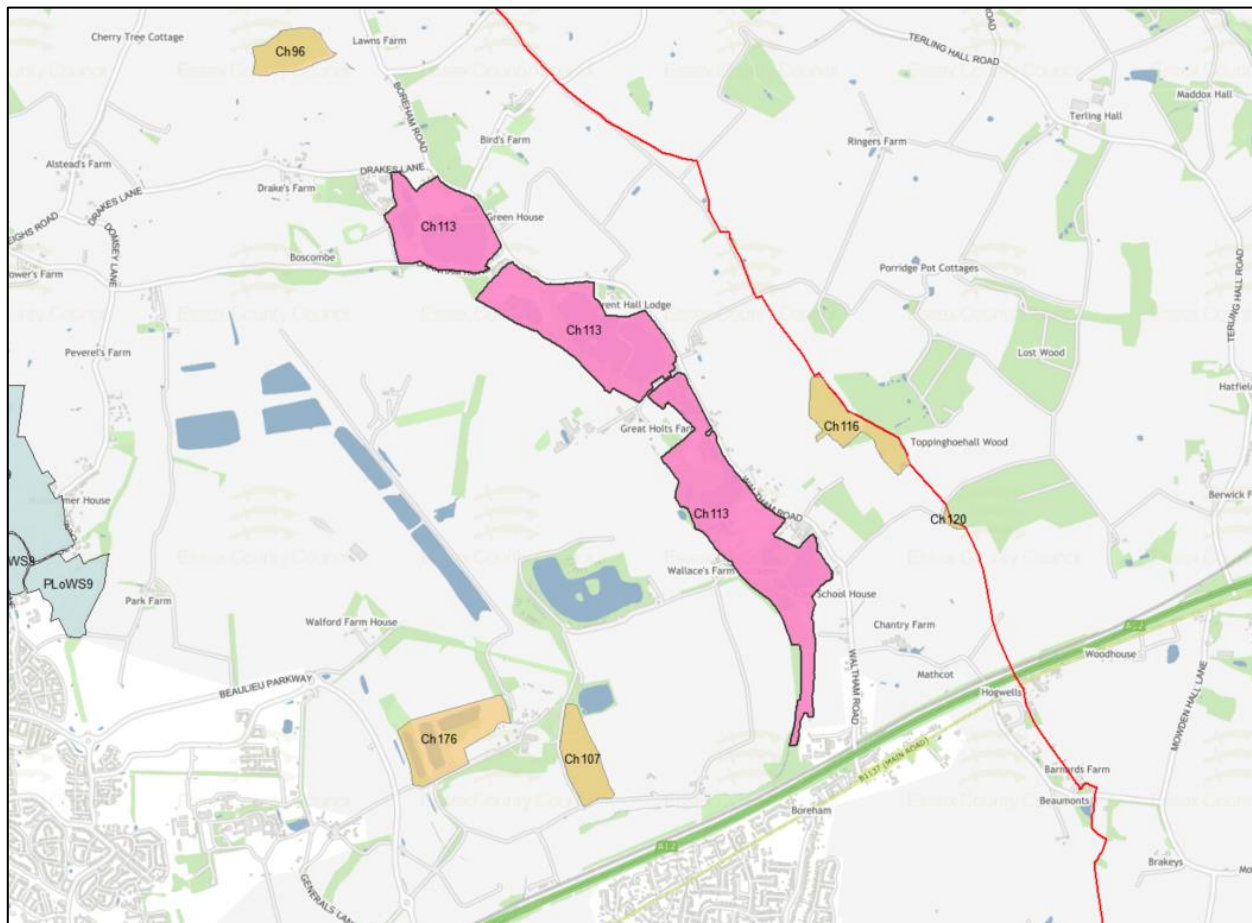
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL750121

Site area: 72.4ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites
- HC14 Lowland Fen
- HC28 Small-component Mosaics

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is based on a broad corridor of semi-natural habitat and former aggregate extraction sites along Sandon Brook, to the northeast of Chelmsford City. The mosaic of habitats is varied and includes some older landscape features, but the majority is more recent. The site delivers important connectivity in a predominantly agricultural part of the district.

At the northern end is Russell Green Gravel Pit, a large body of open water with two smaller ponds, surrounded by sparsely swarded acidic grassland and scrub. The pit has supported several noteworthy breeding bird species including Oystercatcher, Lapwing and Common Tern. Areas with a sparse sward support species including Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) with Blue Fleabane, Lesser Hawkbit (*Leontodon saxatilis*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Bristly Haircap Moss (*Polytrichum piliferum*), Thyme-leaved Speedwell (*Arenaria serpyllifolia*), Autumn Hawkbit (*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*), Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus glaber*), Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), Hairy St John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), Common Centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), and the nationally Near Threatened Common Cudweed (*Filago germanica*). Small areas of lichen heath, featuring *Cladonia* lichens are present and damper areas support

False Fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) and Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*). The pool margins support Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Gipsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*) and small stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). Older hedgerows, predating extraction, include mature Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), and there is Sallow (*Salix cinerea*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and rose (*Rosa* agg.) amongst areas of planted trees.

The main part of the site is a complex of aggregate extractions site featuring a mosaic of open water, secondary woodland, scrub, grassland and open vegetation communities, often with a variable topography of hollows and banks. The woodland is generally scrubby and largely made up of Pedunculate Oak and Hawthorn, with willows around the edges of lakes and in lower-lying locations. More established grassland is generally dominated by coarser species, but where the sward is more open, species such as Red Fescue, Agrimony, Perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) are present. More recently worked areas support open, sandy grassland with a high proportion of bryophytes alongside species such as Common Centaury and Autumn Hawkbit, but increasingly dense stands of tall ruderal species such as willowherbs (*Epilobium* spp.), Common Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) and thistles (*Cirsium* spp.). The fishing lakes themselves support some stands of marginal vegetation, with species such as Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Narrow-leaved Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), and Gipsywort. Some more mature Pedunculate Oak, Ash, willows and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) are found in their margins.

To the south of the fishing lakes, the flood plain of the brook supports a significant area of wet woodland and lowland fen habitats. The woodland is predominantly made up of Ash and willows, but also includes Aspen (*Populus tremula*) with Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Hawthorn, Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and mature Pedunculate Oak (including old coppice stools), particularly along the stream corridor itself. The lowland fen includes stands of Greater Pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*), Great Willowherb and Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) with Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), Marsh Bedstraw, Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), Soft-rush (*Juncus effusus*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), Gipsywort, Hop (*Humulus lupulus*), Fools Watercress (*Helosciadium nodiflorum*) and in shadier areas Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) and Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*). To the east, this grades into marshy grassland consisting of Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Creeping Bent with Water Mint, Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*), False Fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae*), Fleabane, Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*), Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*), Smooth Tare (*Ervum tetraspermum*) and Perforate St John's-wort. Southern Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*) has been recorded here. Towards the eastern edge of the site, the grassland is drier, with Common Bent, Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*), Field Forget-me-not (*Myosotis arvensis*), and Cut-leaved Crane's-bill (*Geranium dissectum*).

At the southern end is Porter's Grove, a very old or possibly Ancient strip of streamside woodland almost entirely composed of coppiced Hornbeam, with just occasional Hazel and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) in the understorey. Along the stream banks are Pedunculate Oak and Hawthorn, while along the western edge are Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Field Maple, Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The ground flora is typically sparse for a Hornbeam wood, with restricted patches of Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) and Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) with scattered Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) and Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*). Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) is also understood to be present.

Site Selection Rationale

HC2 – Porters Grove may well be Ancient, but no conclusive evidence for this is available and it is not included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

HC14 – The stream corridor community towards the south of the site is a clear match to the Lowland Fen Priority Habitat.

HC27 – The majority of the site consists of old aggregate workings and it demonstrates all of the features needed to qualify as open mosaic Priority Habitat.

HC28 – The site includes a range of habitats that might not qualify in their own right, but combine to provide a mosaic of significant importance.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Fen
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

Ownership and Access

The site is in various private ownerships with no public access. Public rights of way cross the southern end of the site in two places.

Condition Statement

Porter's Grove: Moderate, stable
Lowland Fen: Good, declining
Open Mosaic: Moderate, declining

Management Issues

No part of the site is managed solely for nature conservation outcomes, and so the condition of the habitats present will depend on the owners' land use decisions. Open vegetation and grassland is susceptible to successional pressures, leading to the dominance of coarse grass species, tall ruderals and scrub. The invasive, non-native Goat's-rue (*Galega officinalis*) is present in some open mosaic areas and is likely to spread, excluding lower growing species of more biodiversity value.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992 (small part only)

Site Reviewed: 2004 (other parts added as Ch111), 2015 (a reduced Ch111 and Ch113 amalgamated), 2024 (significant addition of habitat)

Site reference: Ch114

Site name: Old Hare Wood Complex, Danbury

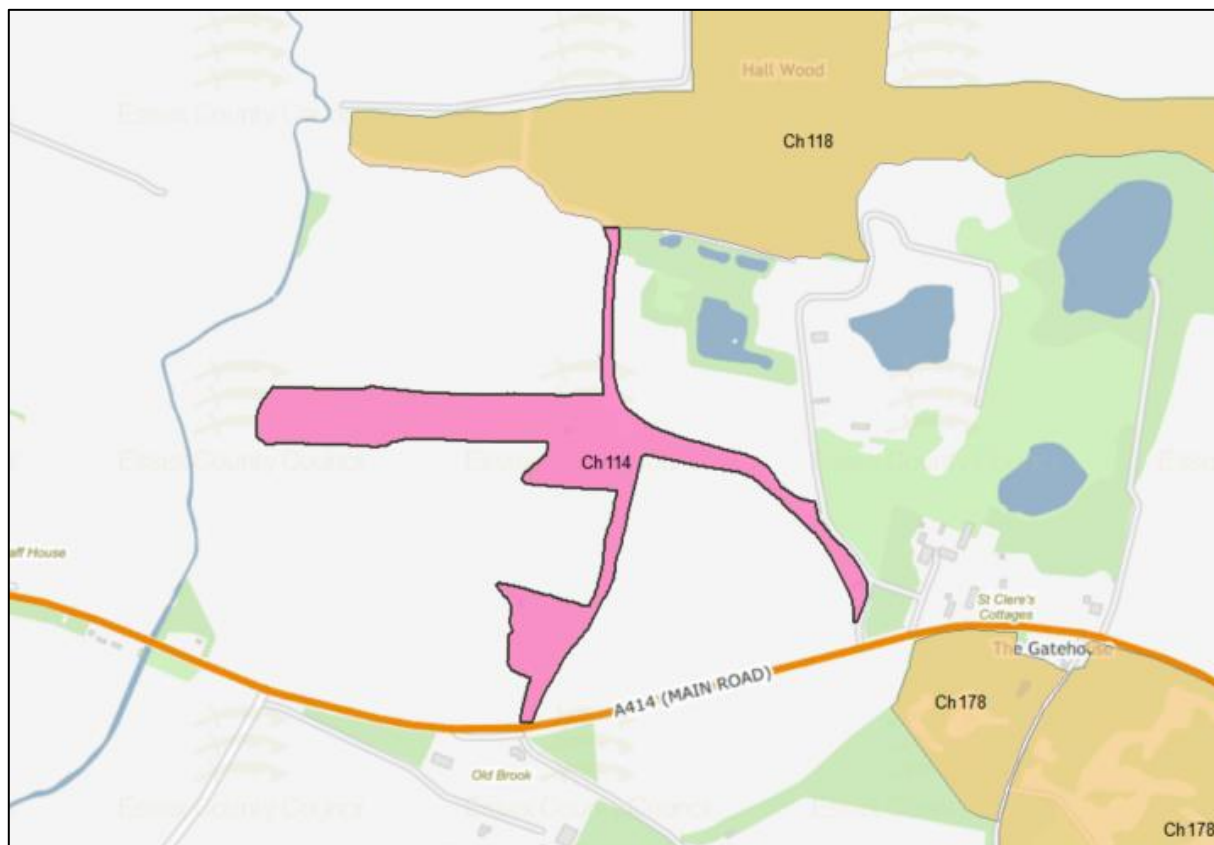
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL759056

Site area: 6.1ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites
- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-Ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is made up of the Ancient Old Hare Wood together with adjacent linear woodlands that once formed the boundaries of parkland associated with St Clare's Hall, and an old lane connecting it to Hall Wood to the north.

Old Hare Wood is largely made up of coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) with occasional standard Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*). The understorey is sparse, with Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) the most common component, alongside Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*). The ground flora is patchy, but varied including Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamiasstrum galeobdolon*), Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Bearded Couch (*Elymus caninus*), Hairy-brome (*Bromopsis racemosus*), False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Lords-and-Ladies (*Arum maculatum*) and Wood Dock (*Rumex sanguineus*). At the western end, where dying Ash have created a more open canopy in places, there are dense patches of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).

At the eastern end is a deep pond that may have resulted from localised gravel extraction. It is covered with duckweed (*Lemna* sp.) with no emergent or aquatic vegetation. At the western end is a shallow, seasonal

pond that supports Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*) and Sallow (*Salix cinerea*).

The southern limb of woodland is mostly made up of Pedunculate Oak and Hornbeam, with Holly, elm (*Ulmus* sp.) and Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*). The ground flora is dominated by Dog's Mercury, False Brome and Bramble with Pignut, Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and a small amount of Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*).

The eastern woodland strip is formed of Pedunculate Oak and Ash with a varied understorey of elm, Hawthorn, Spindle, Hornbeam, Field Maple, Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) and Elder. The ground flora includes Bluebell, Dog's Mercury, Wood Melick, Moschatel, False Brome, Bearded Couch and Three-nerved Sandwort with Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and Upright Hedge-parsley (*Torilis japonica*).

The lane is an old landscape feature and includes veterans amongst the Pedunculate Oak, Hornbeam, Ash and Field Maple trees in the northern part. Its ground flora includes Giant Fescue (*Festuca gigantea*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*) and Wavy Hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) with Dogs Mercury, False Brome, Greater Stitchwort and Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*).

The site also includes two blocks of more recently planted woodland that are maturing structurally to compliment the adjoining older woodland. They consist mostly of Pedunculate Oak and Ash, with Hawthorn and Elder and share many of the ground flora species with the older woodland.

Site Selection Rationale

HC1 – Old Hare Wood is included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory

HC2 – The other woodland habitat is not as old but has appropriate structure and composition to be considered Priority Habitat.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is understood to be in private ownership with no public access but it is crossed by a public right of way

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

Old Hare Wood includes a number of non-native poplars (*Populus* sp.) and shows signs of nutrient enrichment. There is evidence of past Pheasant rearing activity.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992 (part)

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change; 2015 (extended to east and south); 2024 (lane and secondary woodland added).

Site reference: Ch115

Site name: Waterhall Meadows, Little Baddow

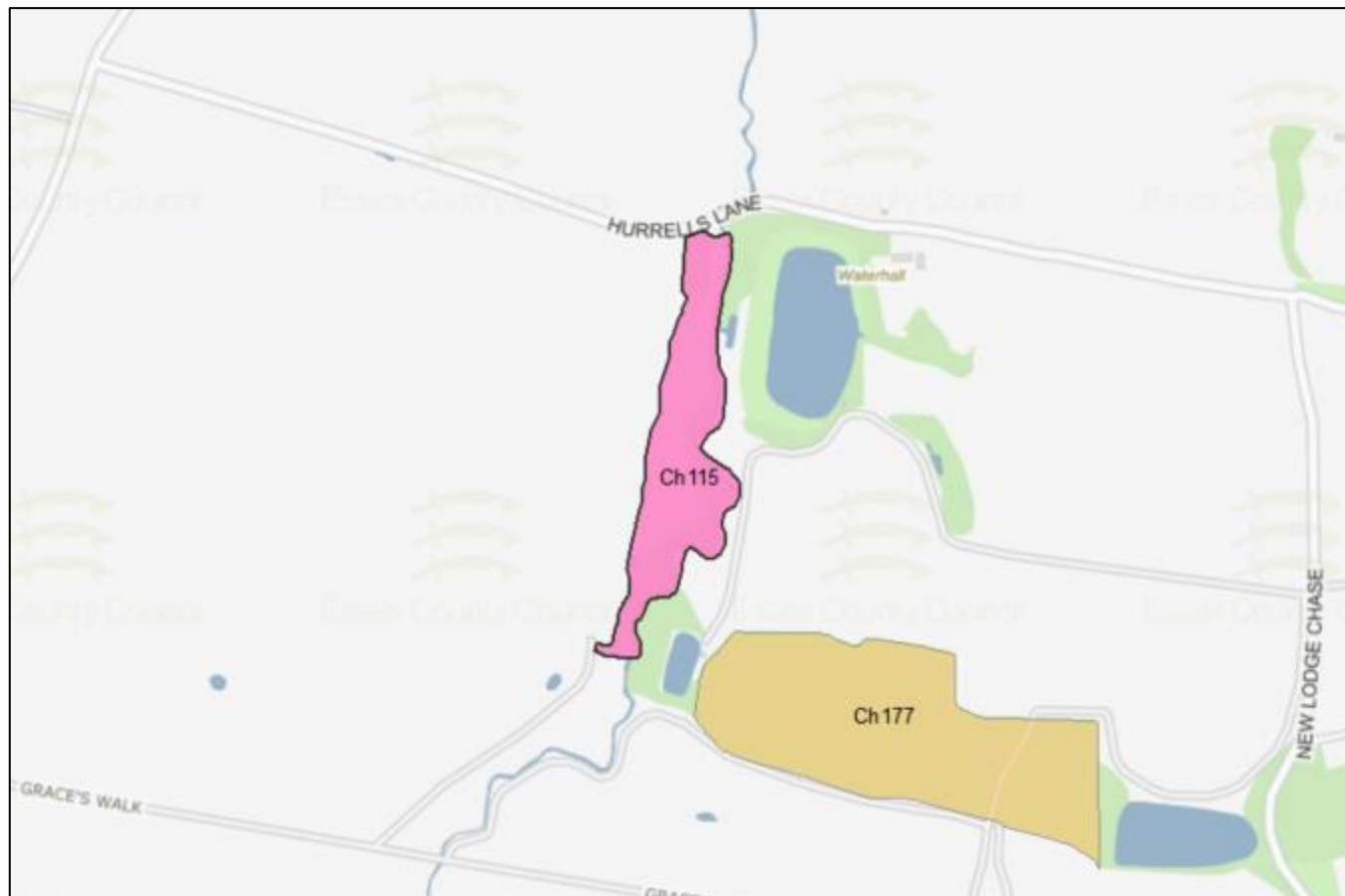
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL758070

Site area: 2.7ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC9 – Lowland Meadows

Boundary Map



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Site Description

Situated on the west bank of the Sandon Brook, this site comprises an Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserve consisting of an old flood meadow, a small spinney and an area of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) thicket together with the adjacent section of Sandon Brook and its bankside vegetation.

The grassland sward is diverse and includes Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) with Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*). In the damper areas are Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) and Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*). The Essex Red List species Pepper-saxifrage (*Silene silaus*) is scattered within the grassland and two further Essex Red List plants Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*) and Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) are understood to be present.

The south and western boundaries are bordered by hedgerows that include Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.) and Hop (*Humulus lupulus*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC11 - The grassland community is consistent with the NVC MG5 community, which qualifies it as Priority Habitat.

Priority Habitats

Hedgerows
Lowland Meadows

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by Essex Wildlife Trust and is accessible to the public.

Condition Statement

Stable.

Management Issues

The site is actively managed by cattle grazing, with localised poaching on the northern boundary. A small amount of the Schedule 9 species Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is present along the bordering Sandon Brook watercourse.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change); 2015 (no change); 2024 (re-mapped to include Sandon Brook and bankside vegetation).

Site reference: Ch118

Site name: Hall Wood, Danbury

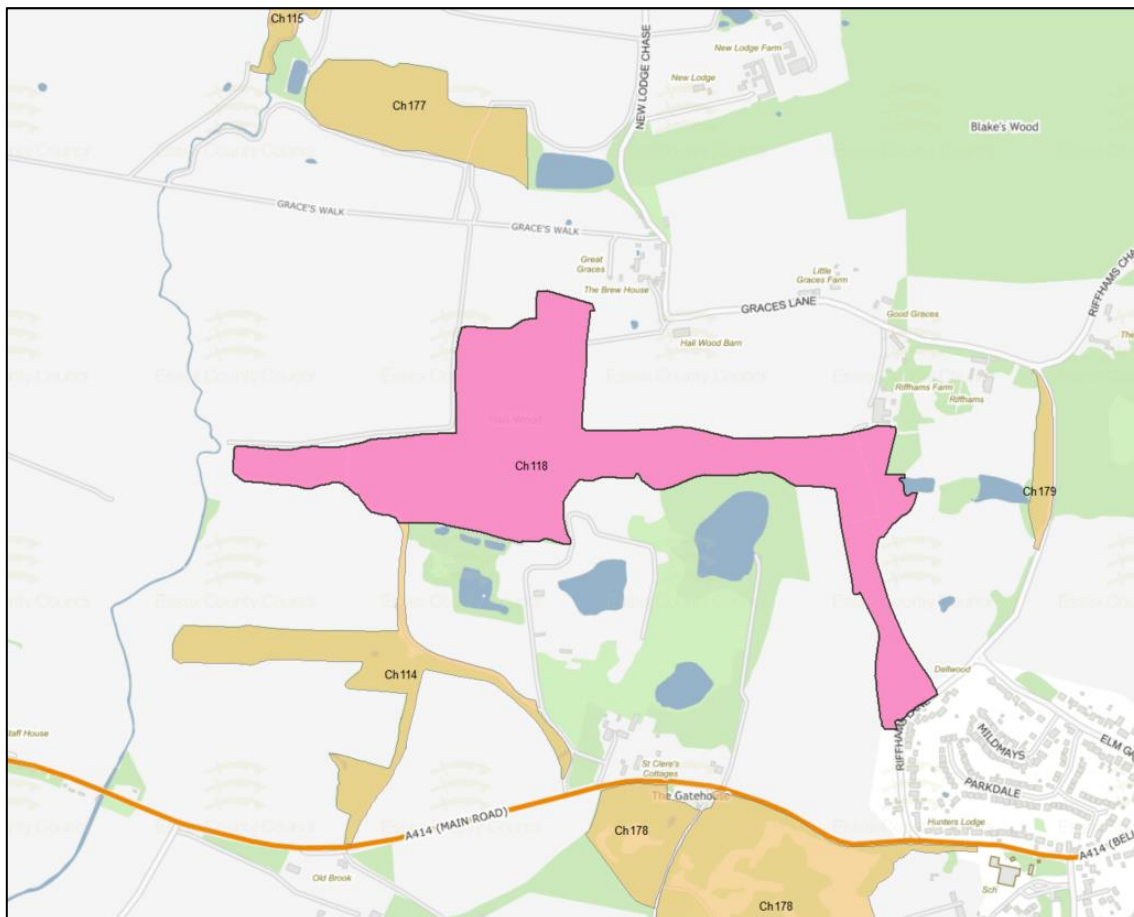
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL764060

Site area: 24.0ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This large Ancient Woodland occupies the valley of a tributary of Sandon Brook, with additional woodland blocks to the north and southeast. The eastern end of the site borders the parkland associated with Riffhams, a large country house. The site comprises essentially dry oak woodland, but with a wet woodland influence from the stream and from seepages along the steep northern valley slope.

The woodland canopy consists of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) with Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and an open understorey that includes Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Yew (*Taxus baccata*). Some sections along the stream support stands of Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).

The ground flora is variable, but diverse, and includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Soft Shield-fern

(*Polystichum setiferum*), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and Enchanter's-nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*) with a wide range of other common woodland plants.

The stream margins and seepages support Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Soft-rush (*Juncus effusus*), Blackcurrant (*Ribes nigrum*), Lady-fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), Narrow Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris carthusiana*) and Wood Club-rush (*Scirpus sylvaticus*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC1 – The whole site is included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, which is supported by the wide range of indicator species amongst the ground flora.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The wood is in private ownership with no public access, but it is crossed by a public right of way towards the eastern end.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

A non-native, and potentially invasive, bamboo species (*Bambusoideae*) is present at the eastern end. Evidence of Ash Dieback was apparent.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (minor boundary revisions); 2015 (minor boundary revisions); 2024 (minor boundary revisions).

Site reference: Ch123

Site name: The Chapel, Little Baddow

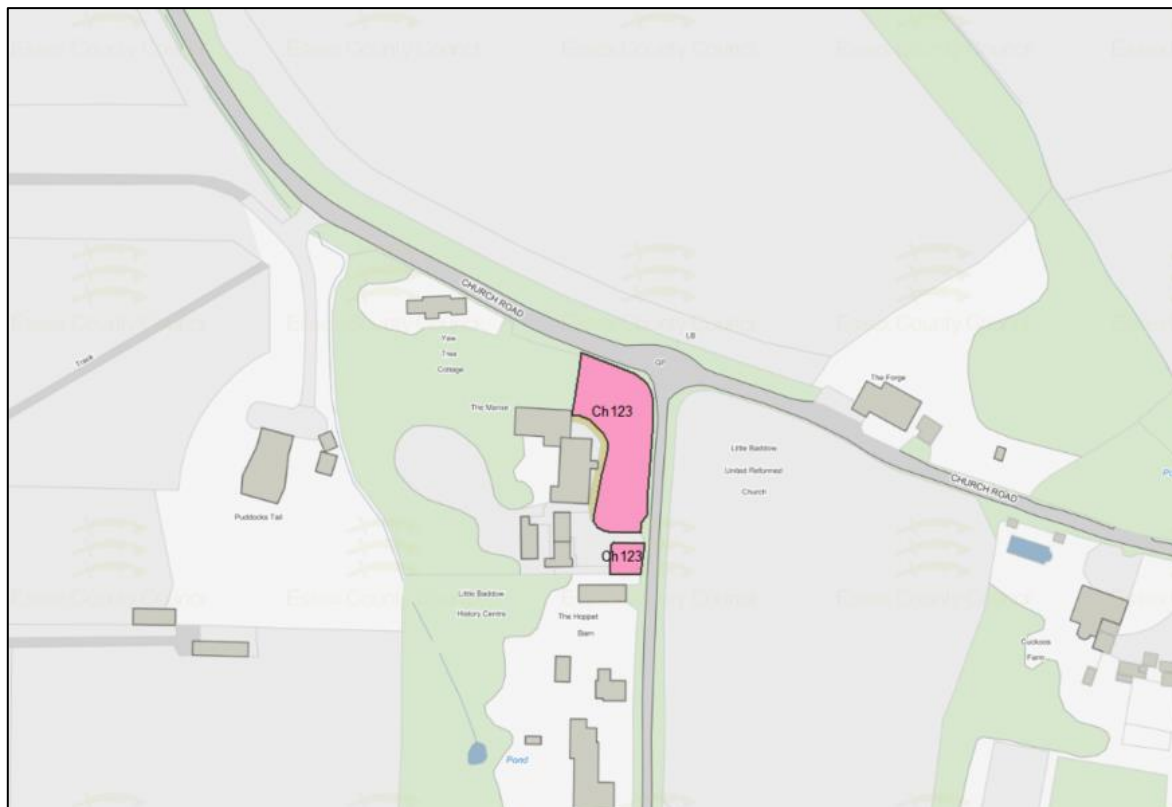
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL766077

Site area: 0.1ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC9 Other Neutral Grassland

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This small churchyard site supports species rich, acidic, unimproved grassland, an increasingly scarce habitat in the county.

The sward includes Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and cat's-tail (*Phleum* sp.) with Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Betony (*Betonica officinalis*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Common Birds-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*), Field Woodrush (*Luzula campestris*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*), Perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) Black Medic (*Medicago arabica*) and Hedge Bedstraw (*Galium album*). The Nationally Scarce Lesser Calamint (*Clinopodium calamintha*) is found mostly at the southern end of the site.

Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*) and False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) were recorded within the shaded areas along the eastern boundary.

The Essex Red List species Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) and Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*) have previously been recorded on site, as have Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratense*) and Heath Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC9 – The grassland at this site is an acidic form of the NVC MG5 community that qualifies it as Lowland Meadows Priority Habitat.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Meadows

Ownership and Access

This site is managed by the Little Baddow Christian Council and Churchyard group. The site is accessible to the public.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

The site is managed, but the presence of coarse grass species such as False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) suggest that additional management pressure may be needed.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change); 2015 (no change); 2024 (minor re-mapping).

Site reference: Ch125

Site name: Boreham Meads, Boreham

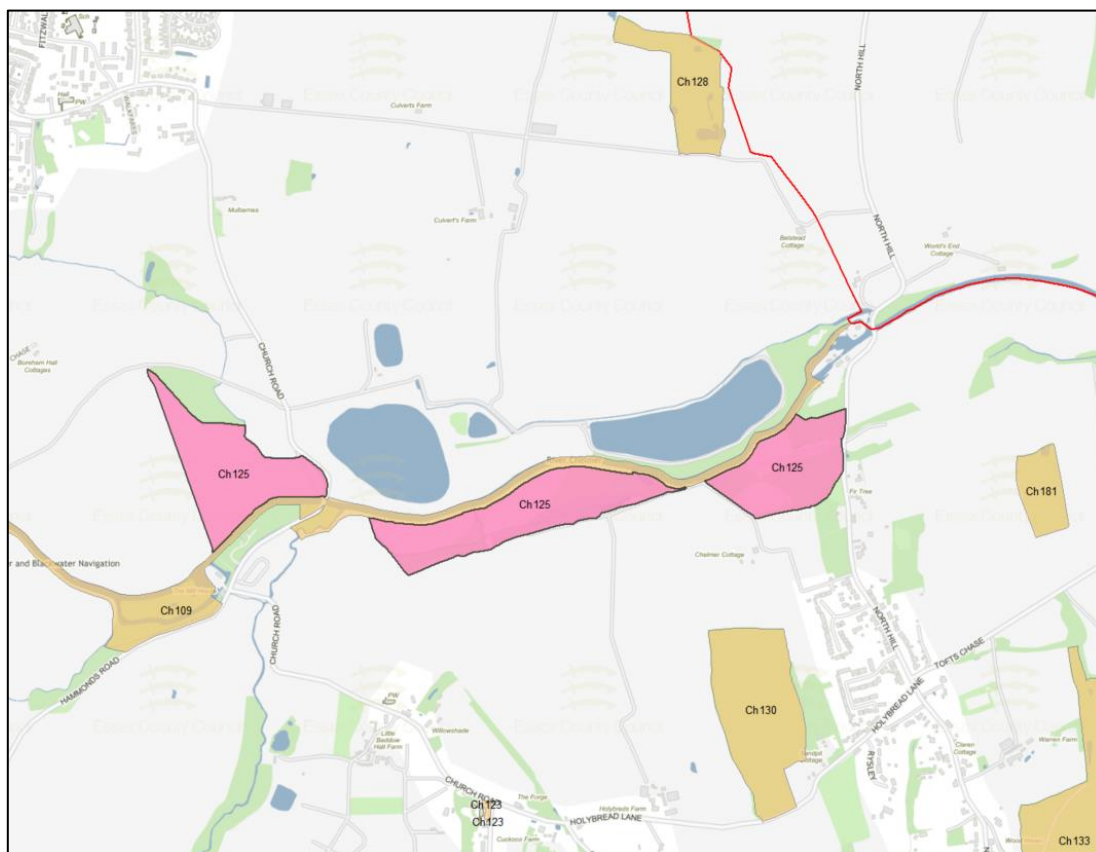
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL767086

Site area: 21.3ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC10 River Floodplain
- HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands
- HC14 Lowland Fen

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site comprises three blocks of flood plain grassland and lowland fen adjacent to the River Chelmer (forming part of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation), with associated mature trees, hedgerows and scrub habitat.

The western block, to the north of the river, supports grassland that has recovered from cultivation in the early 1990s and has now been planted with willows (*Salix* sp.). The sward includes Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), cat's-tail (*Phleum* sp.), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) with patches of Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), pond-sedges (*Carex* spp.) and Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*). The grassland also supports Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), Smooth Tare (*Ervum tetraspermum*) and Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*). The Essex Red List species Common Meadow-rue (*Thalictrum flavum*) occurs in the southeast corner of the site and on the adjacent Special Road Verge (CHL4), which is included within the site. Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*), Pepper-saxifrage (*Silene silaus*) and Dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*), all of which are on the Essex Red List, are known to be present as are Ragged Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) and Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*).

The central block and the open part of the eastern block consist of a mosaic of grassland and swamp communities that grade into each other and respond to management regimes. The grassland is dominated by coarse species such as Common Couch (*Elytrigia repens*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and Tall Fescue (*Schedonorus arundinacea*) with Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*). The swamp communities include stands of Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) with Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*) and Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*). Common Meadow-rue is present in the central block. Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and the Essex Red List Brown Sedge (*Carex disticha*) are known to be present.

Part of the eastern block is under a canopy of planted willows and other wooded and scrubby areas include Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The Essex Red List Large Bittercress (*Cardamine amara*) is present in shaded areas with Hedge Garlic (*Alliaria petiolata*) and Ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC10 – These blocks represent the only remaining uncultivated sections of floodplain along this stretch of the river, which is of significance, even if they are not managed traditionally and do not constitute Priority Habitat.

HC11 – The grassland habitat does not meet the criteria to be considered as Priority Habitat, but they are of demonstrably high biodiversity value.

HC14 – Swamp habitats within the mosaic should be considered as Lowland Fen Priority Habitat.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Fen

Ownership and Access

The three blocks are in private ownership with no public access but public rights of way run along the river edge (as part of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation) and cross the site in two places.

Condition Statement

West: Poor, stable

Central: Moderate, stable

East: Poor, stable

Management Issues

Current management is not optimal for any of the habitats present, which is leading to the dominance of coarser grasses and invasion by “weed” species such as thistles (*Cirsium* spp.), Bristly Oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*) and Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*).

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992 (part)

Site Reviewed: 2004 (significant changes to boundary); 2015 (minor boundary revisions); 2024 (river bank habitat moved to Ch109; SRV added).

Site reference: Ch129

Site name: Rectory Wood and Colam Lane Verges, Little Baddow

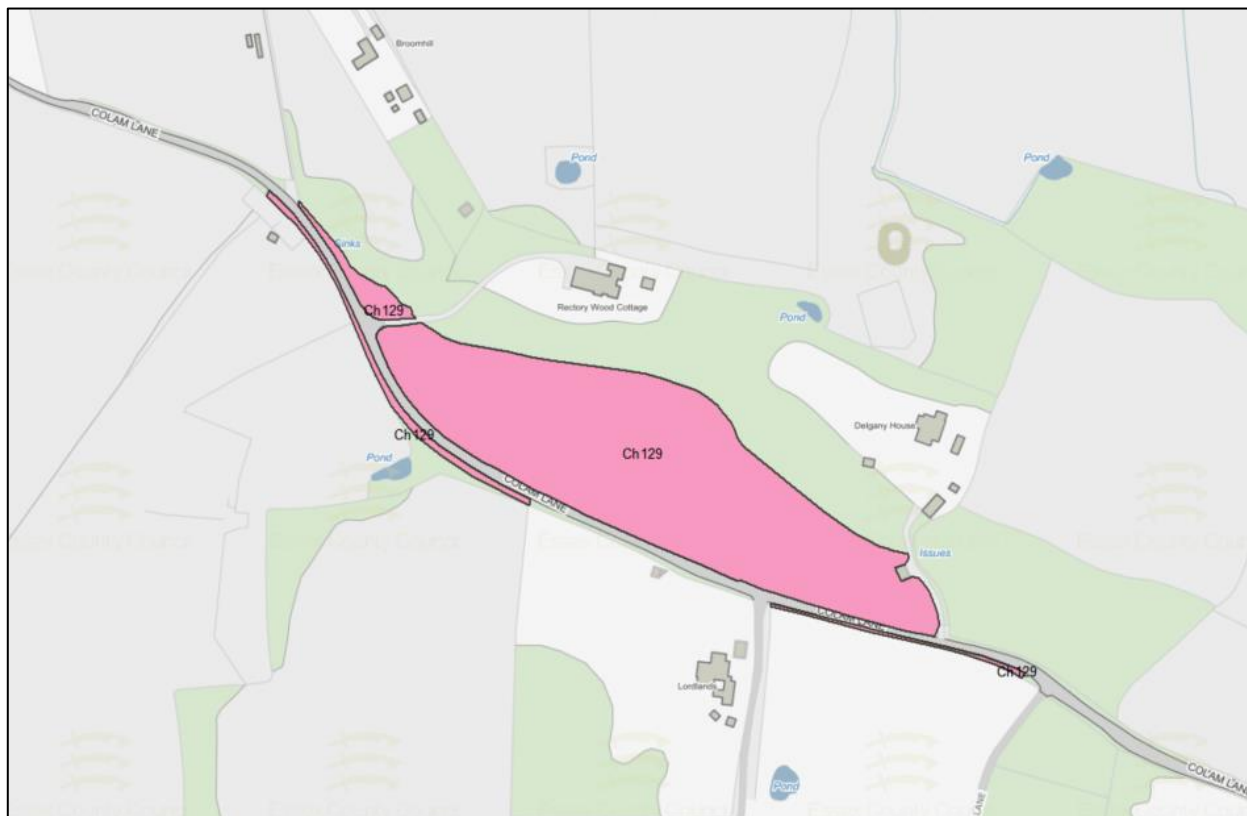
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL772074

Site area: 1.8ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-Ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This is an old, dry oak woodland, with associated species extending to the verges on both sides of Colam Lane identified as Special Roadside Verges (CHL5).

The woodland consists of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) with an open understorey that includes Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and elm (*Ulmus* sp.). The ground flora is generally sparse in the interior of the wood, but includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Blackcurrant (*Ribes nigrum*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

These species extend onto the verges of Colam Lane where there is also False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Wood Dock (*Rumex sanguineus*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*).

On the northern verge only there is also Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), Wood Meadow-grass (*Poa nemoralis*), Mouse-eared Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinalis*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Soft-rush (*Juncus effusus*) and the Essex Red List species Common Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC2 – The site is not included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, but it is shown as established woodland on late 19th Century maps and supports a structure and indicator species indicating significant age.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The wood is in private ownership with no public access but can be viewed from Colam Lane. The verges are managed by Essex Highways.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

Bramble is spreading on the southern verge and threatens to overshadow some of the key woodland species.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change); 2015 (no change); 2024 (additional woodland added, combined with Ch127 Colam Lane Verges).

Site reference: Ch130

Site name: Hollybred Wood, Little Baddow

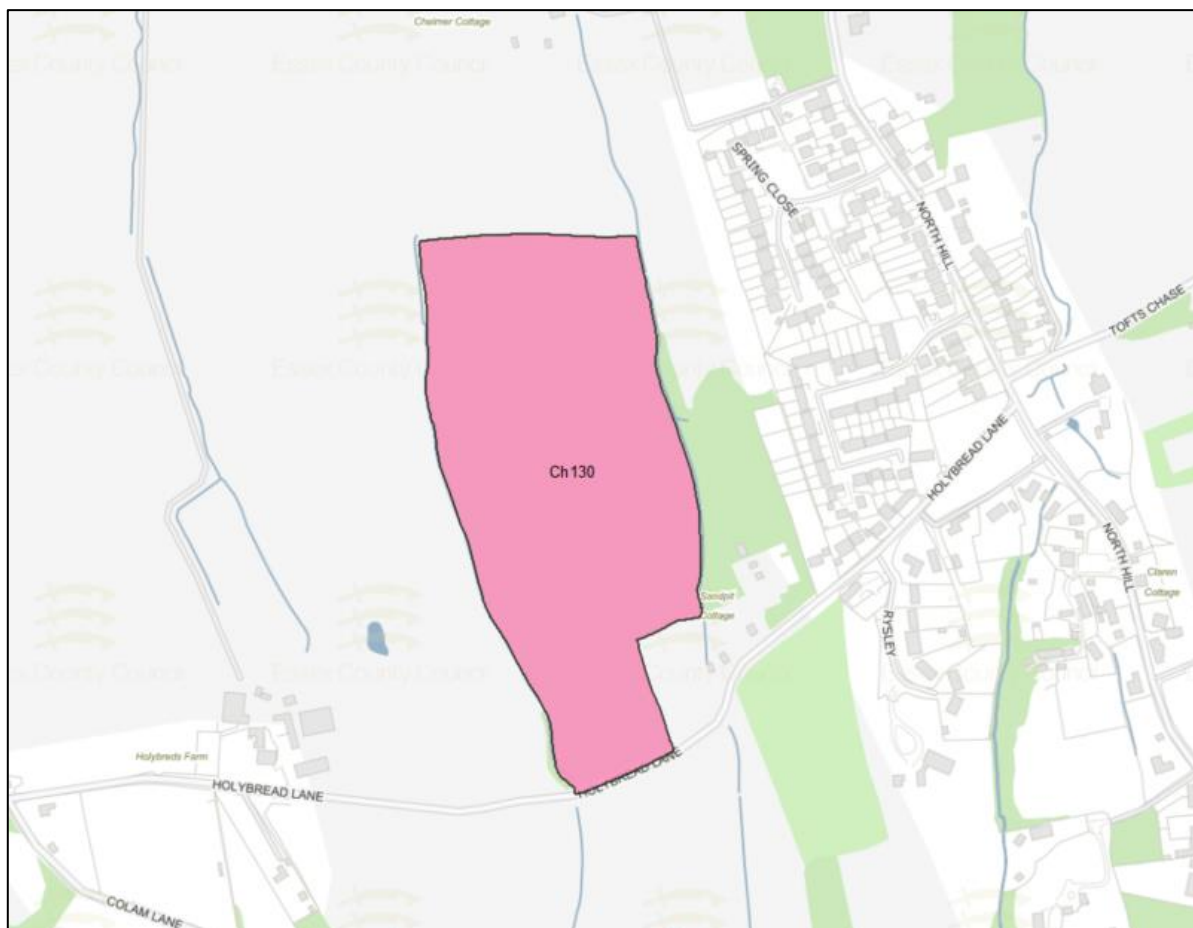
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL773080

Site area: 8.6ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This Ancient Woodland site has always been known as Hollybred Wood, despite the spelling now used for the adjacent lane.

The canopy is comprised of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) some Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice in the centre of the site and occasional Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*). The shrub layer is sparse for much of the woodland consisting of Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

The ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*), Rough Meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

This woodland is known to be used by the local population of Barbastelle Bat (*Barbastella barbastellus*), although there are not yet any known roosts within it.

Site Selection Rationale

HC1 - This site is included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, which is supported by map evidence and the species present.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Hollybred Wood is owned by Little Baddow Parish Council and is open to public access.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There is currently no active management of the wood, which will lead to a decline in condition over time.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change); 2015 (car park removed); 2024 (boundary re-mapped).

Site reference: Ch132

Site name: Little Gibcracks, Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre

Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL 78110287

Site area: 0.2ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC9 Lowland Meadows

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This small site is the churchyard of St Giles church and represents an area of old, unimproved grassland that remains species-rich.

The sward includes Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Rough Meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*), cat's-tail (*Phleum* sp.) and Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*) with Wood sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), Tormantil (*Potentilla erecta*), Mouse-ear-hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), Heath Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*) Barren strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Hedge Bedstraw (*Galium album*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), Common Toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*) and the Essex Red List species Betony (*Betonica officinalis*).

Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Green-winged Orchid (*Anacamptis morio*) and Common Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), all Essex Red List species, have been recorded previously.

The hedgerow to the rear of the cemetery contains a Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC9 – Although there is an acidic character to the grassland flora, the community is a better match for the NVC MG5 hay meadow grassland and so qualifies as Priority Habitat.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Meadows

Ownership and Access

The site is in private ownership and there is no public access.

Condition Statement

Poor, declining.

Management Issues

The burial ground used to be managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust, but there is no evidence of any recent management, and the grassland is being overtaken by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) scrub and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) with many very young oak (*Quercus* sp.) saplings throughout the site.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (no change); 2015 (no change); 2024 (no change).

Site reference: Ch165

Site name: Marconi Ponds Nature Reserve, Chelmsford

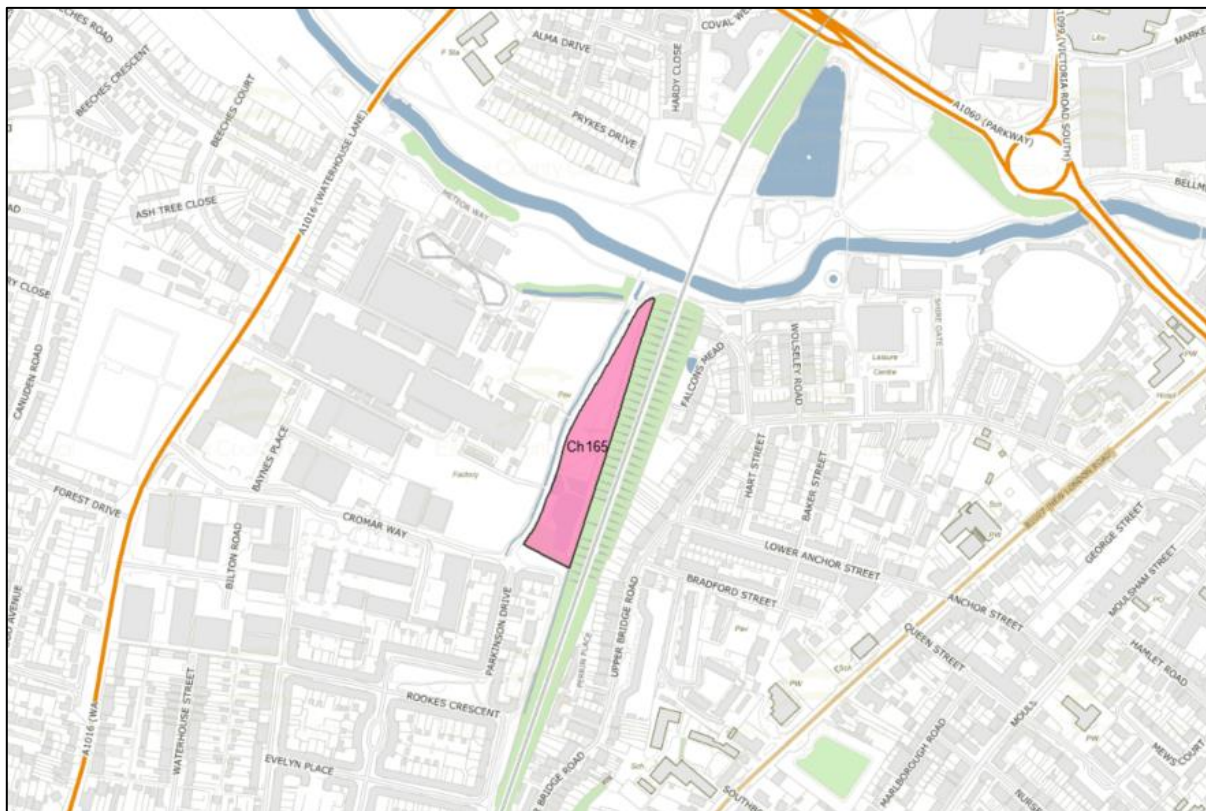
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL700063

Site area: 1.3ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC28 Small-component Mosaics
- HC31 Accessible Natural Greenspace

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This small nature reserve, adjacent to the railway embankment and close to the River Can, consists of a mosaic of young, secondary woodland, scrub and grassland with three ponds at its southern end.

The woodland and scrub component is varied with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), Norway Maple (*Platanus platanoidea*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) over a scrub layer of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Sallow (*Salix cinerea*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Yew (*Taxus baccata*), Apple (*Malus domestica*) and rose (*Rosa* spp.).

Shaded areas have a flora typical of more recent secondary woodland, including Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Ground-elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Lords-and-Ladies (*Arum maculatum*), Hedge Garlic (*Alliaria petiolata*), Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*) and Common Ivy (*Hedera helix*).

Open areas support grassland composed of Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) with localised Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*). The floristic diversity of the meadows has been augmented by seeding or planting but includes Meadow Crane's-bill (*Geranium*

pratense), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Hairy Tare (*Ervilia hirsuta*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Common Toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), Welled Thistle (*Carduus crispus*) and Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*).

The pond margins support stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Greater Pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*) with Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and Water-plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and the ponds are surrounded by Crack Willows (*Salix fragilis*) of varying sizes.

Site Selection Rationale

HC28 – The site provides a combination of scrub, grassland and woodland habitats, none of which is particularly natural or high in biodiversity value, but they combine to provide a valuable resource in an urban area, with good connectivity along the railway and river corridors.

HC31 – The site is well-used by the local community.

Priority Habitats

None

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by Chelmsford City Council and most of the site is openly accessible, excluding the area around the ponds.

Condition Statement

Grassland: Poor, stable

Woodland: Moderate, stable

Management Issues

The site supports a range of non-native species including Snow-in-summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*), Greater Celandine (*Chelidonium majus*), Canadian Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) and Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*).

Review Schedule

Site selected: 2015

Site Reviewed: 2024 (no change).

Site reference: Ch177

Site name: Long Spring Wood, Little Baddow

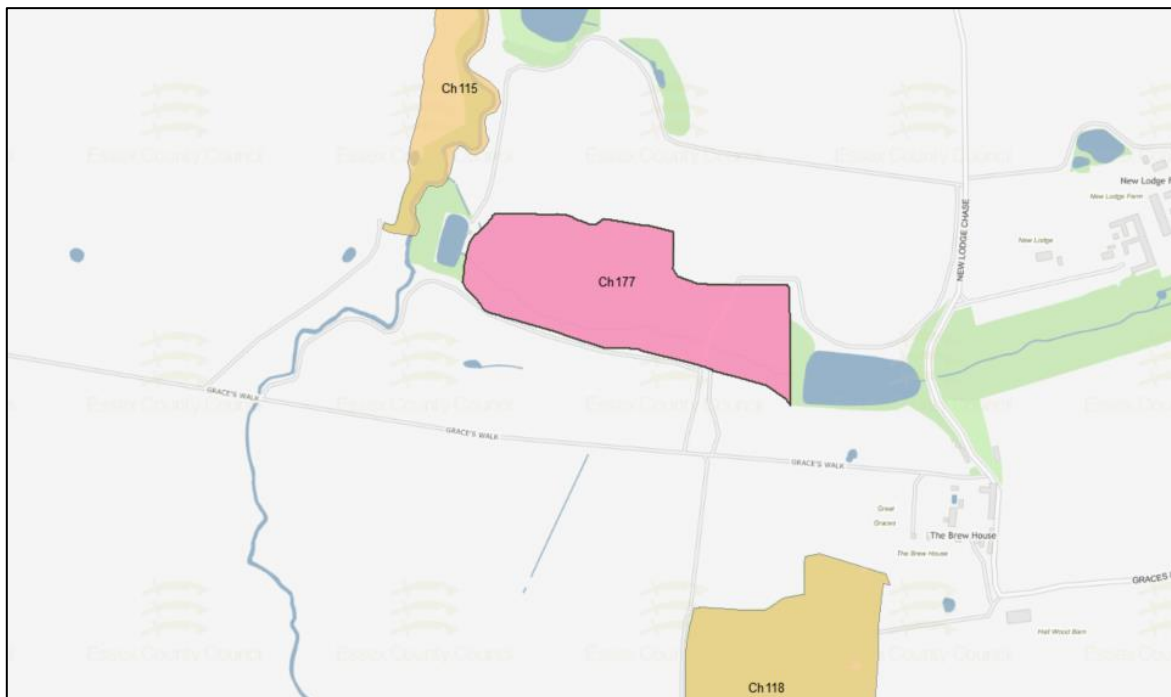
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL761067

Site area: 5.8ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This wood is not considered to be Ancient but is clearly very old and supports a community that is typical of nearby Ancient Woodlands. It includes the valley of a small stream that is a tributary of Sandon Brook.

The canopy consists of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and, along the stream, Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). The understorey includes Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and elm (*Ulmus* sp.).

The ground flora is dominated by Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) with Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Enchanter's-nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*) and Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC2 – The site is not included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, although it is shown as established woodland on 19th Century maps and supports a good diversity of indicator species.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is in private ownership with no public access but it can be viewed from public rights of way to the south and west.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of any recent management of the wood, which will affect its condition over time.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1992

Site Reviewed: 2004 (deleted); 2015 (reinstated); 2024 (no change).

Site reference: Ch178

Site name: Danbury Park, Danbury

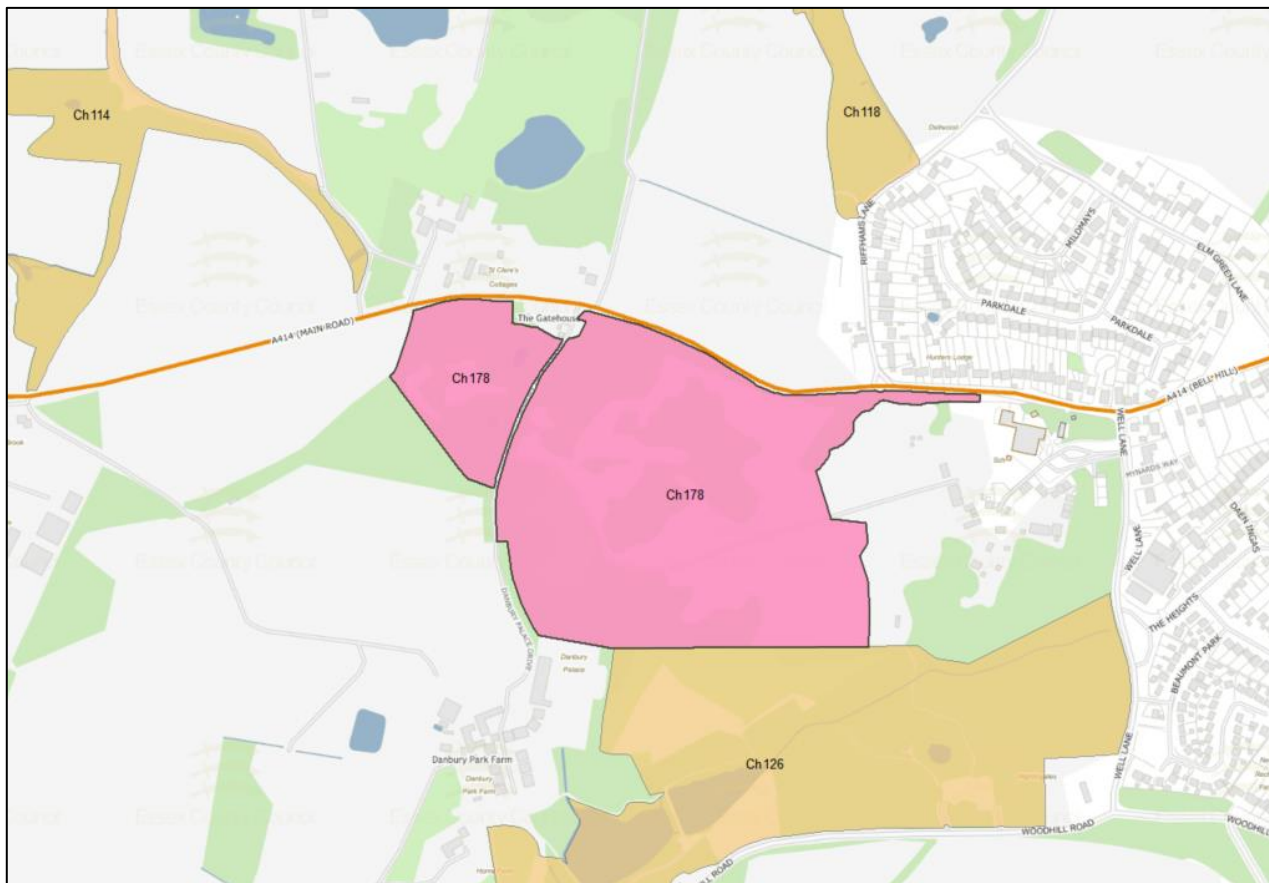
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL 767052

Site area: 19.0ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC4 Wood-pasture and Parkland
- HC13 Heathland and Acid Grassland

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is the northern section of what remains of Danbury Park, the grounds associated with Danbury Place (Palace) and consists of wood pasture in an acid grassland setting.

The site includes a large number of veteran trees, mainly of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), which provide a significant dead wood resource. The veterans are now somewhat enclosed within young oak, Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) woodland with dense Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) in places. Previous survey work revealed an important saproxylic invertebrate community, considered at the time to be regionally or nationally important. The site also supports the local population of Barbastelle bats (*Barbastellus barbastellus*), a nationally rare species with known roosts in the wider Country Park.

The acid grassland comprises Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) with Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Early Hair-grass (*Aira praecox*) and the Essex Red List species Velvet Bent (*Agrostis canina*) and Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC4 – The site is included in the national Wood-pasture and Parkland Inventory with a well-documented history and contains a number of veteran trees.

HC13 – The acid grassland is demonstrably of a community type that meets the definition for Priority Habitat.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Dry Acid Grassland

Wood-pasture and Parkland

Ownership and Access

The site is partly within the Danbury Country Park and partly within the Essex Outdoors Danbury outdoor activity centre, both managed by Essex County Council. The Country Park section is openly accessible via a series of permissive footpaths and crossed by two public rights of way.

Condition Statement

Lowland Dry Acid Grassland: Good, stable

Wood-pasture and Parkland: Moderate, declining

Management Issues

The larger portion of the site, east of the lane leading to Danbury Palace is being actively managed including cattle grazing. No management appears to have been undertaken to the parcel of land west of Danbury Palace access road. The areas of open space within the woodland include acid grassland indicators but the gaps are being encroached by Bramble scrub.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 2015

Site Reviewed: 2024 (boundary re-mapped)

Site reference: Ch179

Site name: Riffhams Lane Wood, Danbury

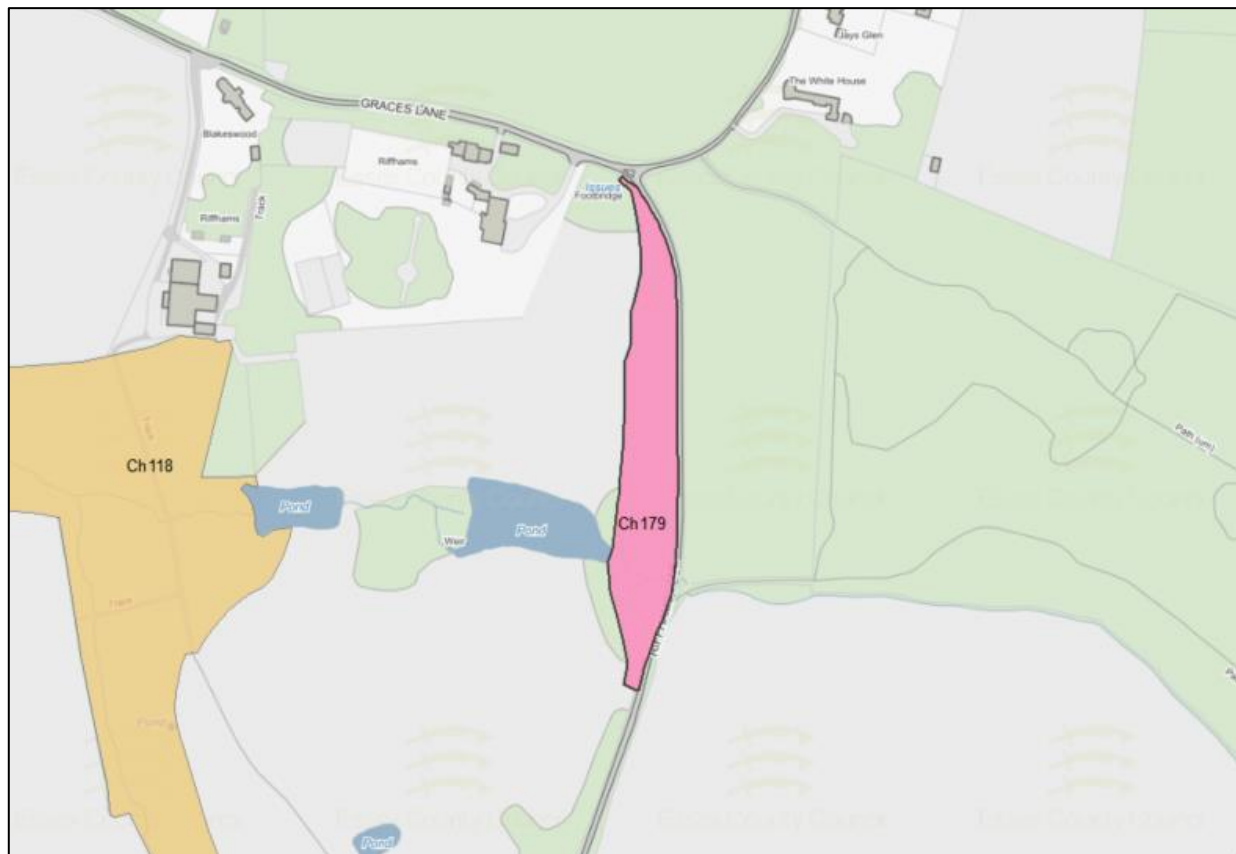
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL773060

Site area: 1.0ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site was established woodland by the mid-19th Century, but it was originally part of Lingwood Common, now a SSSI that extends east on the other side of Riffhams Lane and then formed the eastern boundary of the parkland associated with the Riffhams country house.

The canopy consists of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). The understorey includes Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and occasional Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*).

The ground flora is diverse and includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Wavy Hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), Bearded Couch (*Elymus caninus*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), Lords-and-Ladies (*Arum maculatum*), Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*), Wood Dock (*Rumex sanguineus*), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*). A damp stream edge where the land drops away at the southern end of the wood includes Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC2 – Due to its history, the site is included in the national Wood Pasture and Parkland Inventory, but in reality it bears little resemblance to those habitats. It is also identified as woodland Priority Habitat and it is selected on that criterion.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is in private ownership with no public access but can be viewed from Riffhams Lane to the east.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

The site does not appear to be managed for nature conservation outcomes. As well as the non-native species listed above, there are also several cypresses towards the southern end of the wood.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 2015

Site Reviewed: 2024 (minor extension to the south)

Site reference: Ch187

Site name: Essex Regiment Way SRV, Little Waltham

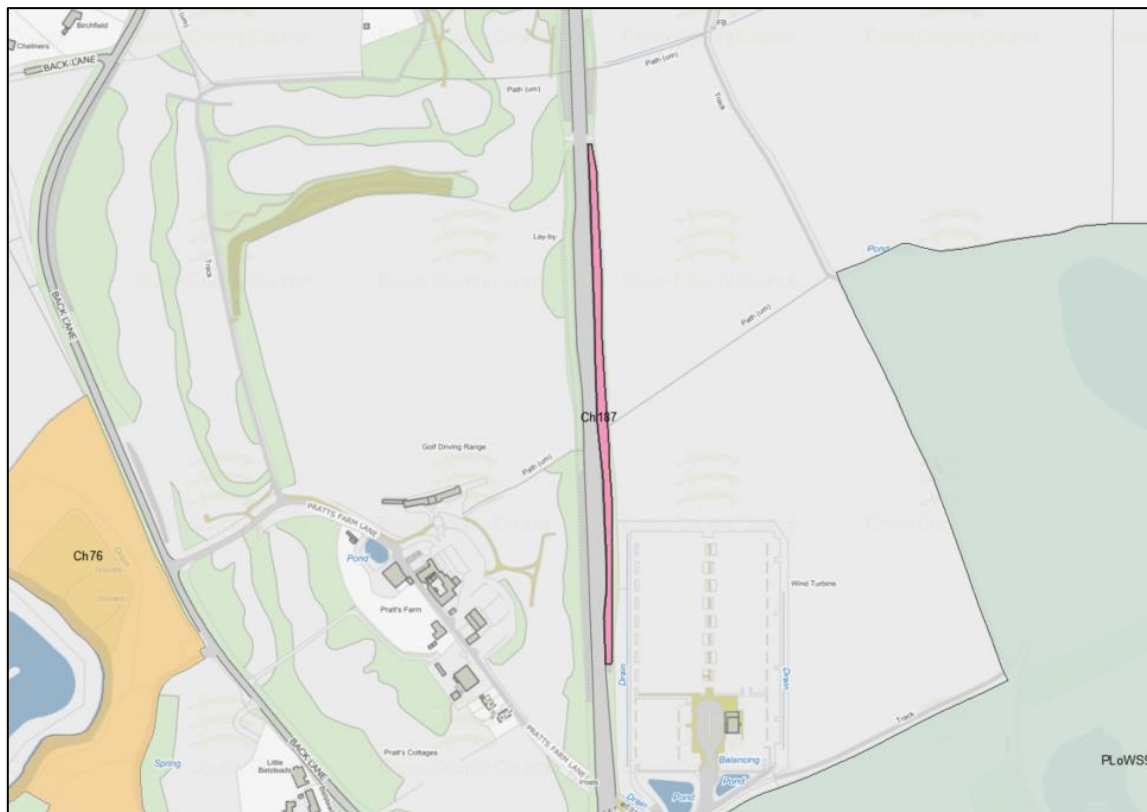
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL717120

Site area: 0.3ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC9 Lowland Meadows

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is designated as a Special Roadside Verge (CHL18) as a result of its Priority Habitat grassland and a significant population of Pyramidal Orchids (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), which has amounted to over a 1000 flower spikes in recent years.

The site consists of road verge grassland with patchy scrub and the other species present include Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Hop Trefoil (*Trifolium campestre*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), Smooth Tare (*Ervum tetraspermum*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), Common Centaury (*Centaurea erythraea*), Hawkweed Oxtongue (*Picris hieracioides*), Common Broomrape (*Orobancha minor*) and Bee Orchid (*Orchis apifera*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC9 – The grassland community is a form of the NVC MG5 community and so qualifies as Priority Habitat.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Meadows

Ownership and Access

The verge is owned and managed by Essex Highways.

Condition Statement

Moderate, declining

Management Issues

The spread of scrub across the verge is a threat to the open conditions that would maximise species diversity, although, within reason, this does not adversely affect the orchids.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 2024

Site Reviewed: -

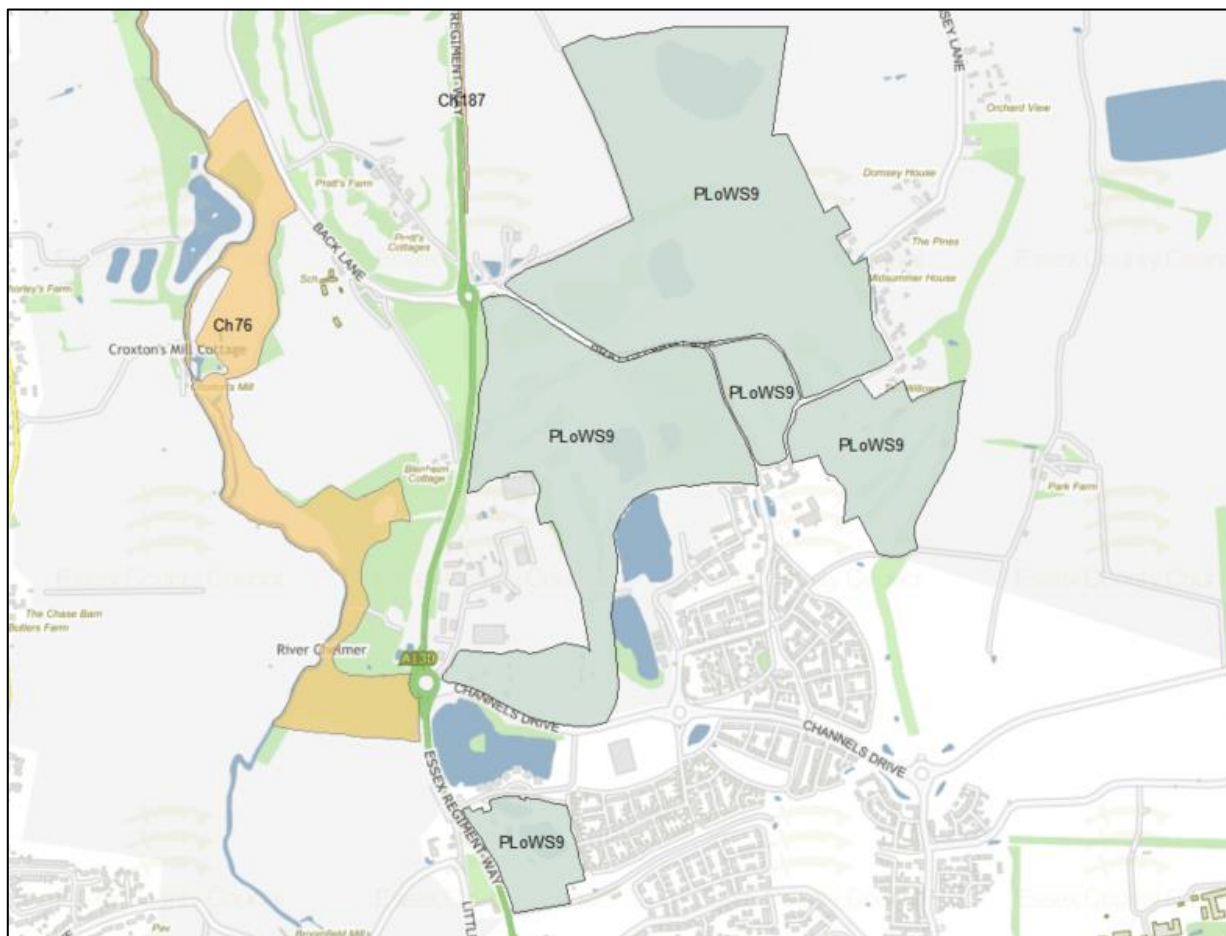
Site reference: ChPLoWS9

Site name: Channels, Little Waltham

Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL 721115

Site area: 76.2ha

Boundary Map



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Site Description

Parts of the Channels Golf Course were originally designated as LoWS Ch83 due to the presence of a significant population of Great Crested Newts associated with ponds around the site. The wider Channels site has been undergoing development for over ten years and combined with adjacent aggregate extraction, little of the original habitat remains. Some of the remaining original lakes and large ponds – themselves mostly derived from earlier aggregate extraction – now have carp in them and are unlikely to support newts or other significant biodiversity. With development due to continue for a significant time yet, this PLoWS takes in the development's green infrastructure and as yet undeveloped areas of biodiversity interest, which should be fully assessed once the full impact of the development is apparent.

An area of public open space has been created to the north of Channel Drive, which contains several ponds created as compensation for the loss of Great Crested Newt habitat elsewhere. The population status of newts in these ponds is not yet known, but the ponds do dry up in the summer.

The rabbit-grazed area north and east of Pratt's Farm Lane, which includes remnants of the former golf course, but that are not currently being managed, has the most botanical interest. The grassland habitat here is sloping and free draining, which has encouraged the presence of some acid grassland indicator species. The species present include Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Common Centaury (*Centaurea erythraea*), Common Birds-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*). Species recorded at low frequency included Tufted Hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Sheep Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and Hop Trefoil (*Trifolium campestre*).

Ownership and Access

Mixed private ownership, large portions of the site form public open space within the Beaulieu housing estate, the expansion of which is ongoing. There are public footpaths across the majority of the site.

Review Schedule

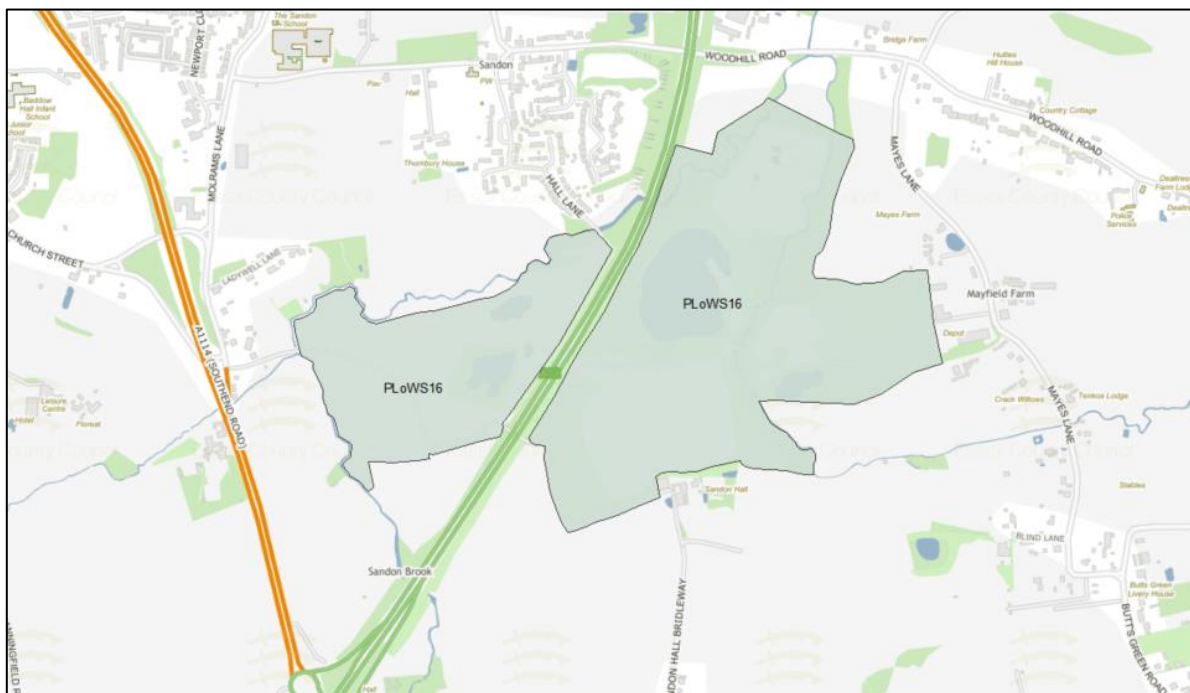
Site selected:

Site Reviewed: 2015 (Demoted to PLoWS); 2024 (boundary extensively remapped).

Site reference: ChPLoWS12
Site name: Sandon Pit, Sandon

Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL 74380668
Site area: 13.44 ha

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site takes in the still active, recently active and restored parts of Sandon Pit, the significance of which is hard to assess due to the continuing change in habitat conditions. Currently active areas are intended to be restored to create habitats of biodiversity value. Once more stability has been achieved, the site as a whole should be reassessed.

This site was formerly designated as a post-industrial, open mosaic habitat site with importance for invertebrates, and supporting some locally uncommon plants. All of the habitat for which the site was designated has or will be lost to landfill operations, with the remaining open quarry now being filled.

To the west of the A12 is a habitat compensation area that has some flower-rich areas, but it is mostly dominated by tall ruderal species, particularly thistles. Bodies of open water are surrounded by tall willow scrub.

What was the southern pit is largely bare ground, having recently been filled, with scrubby rough grassland to the west. To the east of the public footpath is more compensation habitat, comprising an artificial hill with some open sandy substrate and an abundance of flowers, with abundant Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus glaber*) with Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*), Common Centaury (*Centaurea erythraea*) and Hawkweed Oxtongue (*Picris hieracioides*). Although this looks to be good invertebrate foraging and nesting habitat, it will need management to continue to provide these resources.

The northern pit is in the process of being filled, but has some remaining open swarded slopes, amongst dense scrub. There is habitat compensation land to the north and east, including ponds for Great Crested Newts, and recently disturbed open mosaic habitat.

Ownership and Access

The site is in private ownership but is crossed by the public footpaths which run adjacent to the River Chelmer and Brook End Road South, and Sandford Mill Road.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 2004 (Ch104)

Site Reviewed: 2015 (significant boundary changes); 2024 (demoted to PLoWS12, significant boundary changes).

Place Services

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