

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

Site name: THE DOG WALK, EAST GOSCOTE Notification of Local Wildlife Site (previously known as Site of Importance to Nature Conservation)			DRAFT Local authority: Leics CC Ref no.: XX
Grid ref. SP 533 865	Date of original notification: March 2024	Date of present notification:	form completed by: Helen O'Brien
Areas of consideration used in notification. <i>(sites only need to meet the criteria within one area of consideration, but tick all those met)</i>		Site area: <i>(hectares)</i> 0.821 ha	landowner consulted? Yes
1	Habitat quality	Y	Main habitats: Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed land/Early successional habitats
2	Habitat diversity		
3	Presence of Red Data book species		
4	Significant assemblages of species		
5	Use as a wildlife resource by communities	Y	
Rationale for notification (<i>List reasons for ticking each of the above</i>) <u>Habitat quality</u> The site meets the primary criteria as an OMH for the following reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The site is at least 0.25 ha (site is 0.821ha) There is a known history of disturbance at the site with historical maps and literature detailing the sites former use as a railway station to carry munitions and supplies during WWII. Many of the buildings and structures associated with this use fell into dis-repair or were demolished. Clinker is present from the current main line and former line adjacent to the main railway line. Industrial spoil has been mounded up and runs parallel to the main railway line. Early successional communities (ESC) are present and comprise of d) ruderals such as Wild carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>), Common toadflax (<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>), Black medick (<i>Medicago lupulina</i>) and Weld (<i>Reseda luteola</i>), e) Inundation species such as Redshank (<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>), f) open grassland such as Cat's-ear (<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>) and g) flower-rich grassland Common knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), Ox-eye daisy (<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>), Bird's-foot trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>), Meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>) and Red clover (<i>Trifolium pratense</i>). The site contains unvegetated, loose bare substrate where vegetation has not yet 			

colonised or has been prevented from doing so because of regular disturbance e.g. from Rabbit grazing and people visiting the site to walk their dogs or play.

5. The site shows a spatial variation with more than one of the ESCs together with areas of bare substrate.

Use of site as a wildlife resource by the community

The site is accessible to and widely used by the local community – the proportion of site covered by paths and level of use = HIGH

Number of formal and informal access points = HIGH

Ease of access for less able people or wheelchair users = MEDIUM

Evidence of use by children for informal play using natural features = HIGH

Continuation sheet?

Recommended review period **5 years**

Additional information:

see attached vascular plant species list and report.

THE DOG WALK, EAST GOSCOTE: Local Wildlife Site

Early successional habitats/Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land

Background

Open Mosaic Habitats on previously developed land, or 'OMH', are high value habitats formed through natural regeneration of previously developed land, including land formerly quarried, mined or tipped. The best sites are noted for their high botanical and invertebrate species diversity and are some of most diverse habitats known in the UK.

To be classed as an 'Open Mosaic Habitat on previously developed land', there must have been a history of disturbance or evidence that soils have been removed or severely modified by a previous use, or that additional material or substrate such as industrial or mining waste has been added.

Vegetation usually includes a significant amount of early successional communities, with stress tolerant species, such as those tolerant of low nutrients, drought, extremes of pH, heavy metals, etc. These early successional communities may include lichens, mosses, annual or ruderal species and species of open grassland or heathland. The ruderal plants associated with bare ground provide valuable nectar and seed resources for insects, while their floral diversity ensures a rich diversity of plant feeders.

Alongside the early successional communities, there are often areas of bare ground, rocks and rubble, derelict buildings, underground voids, cliffs and outcrops. Marshy flushes, ditches, springs, shallow pools, temporary water features or deep lagoons may be present.

Sparse grassland, flower-rich grasslands, scrub, heath and wetlands may also be associated, and vegetation structure should be varied and have more variety than a single ecotone (such as scrub/grassland). There should be a diverse range of flowering plant species, providing nectar sources for insects. These species may be either native, or non-native but beneficial to wildlife.

Description of The Dog Walk Site

East Goscote village is partly built on the site of a former munitions factory that was decommissioned after World War II. The village itself comprises mainly of residential housing and small business units.

The site of the old railway station is located directly adjacent to the main line between Leicester and Peterborough and was originally used to help transport munitions and other supplies along with passenger transport. It became disused in the 1970s as part of the wider Beeching enquiry which resulted in many smaller stations closing.

The site contains hard-standing areas including a former car park, platform and buildings. These were demolished and/or left un-managed and there is clear evidence that soil has been disturbed and mounded up adjacent to the main railway line. The former railway platform is still visible in places along with clinker substrate, exposed metal workings and exposed concrete demonstrating the sites former use.

As well as un-vegetated, loose bare substrate, other areas are well-vegetated with a diverse range of plants that have colonised the site as part of the early successional process. The plants are mainly stress-tolerant species and able to withstand low nutrients or drought and toxins associated with former industrial use of the land. These comprise of annuals, lichens and mosses, ruderals and species-rich open grassland.

The site shows great spatial variation, forming a mosaic of several early successional communities together with areas of hard-standing and bare substrate.

Although areas of the site are showing signs of scrubbing over (Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Dog rose and Gorse), the vegetation appears to be naturally restricted by i) heavy rabbit grazing, ii) regular disturbance from people and dogs, iii) shallow soils and low nutrients on previously developed land e.g. hard-standing and car park areas, iv) soil toxicity associated with the sites former use.

Use of site as wildlife resource by local community

The site is directly adjacent to a large area of public open space called Jubilee Playing Fields. This is a well-used area and very popular for sport and recreational use by the local community. The open mosaic site lies to the west of the playing fields and is bounded by the railway line running alongside to the north-west.

The site can be accessed from several informal entrances adjacent to the playing fields, an entrance off the industrial estate to the south-east and from the hard-standing car park and Scout's hut to the north-east.

A series of informal desire-line footpaths provide access around the site in a largely circular route and can be joined by any one of the entrances referred to. The former railway platform is still visible and lined with Hawthorn trees which facilitates access to the pavilion car park and wider Jubilee playing fields.

The site is well used by walkers/dog walkers and local workers who appear to walk the circular route through the site or access onto the industrial premises.

The management actions needed to sustain the value are to:

1. Leave the site largely un-managed and allow for natural management to continue in the form of rabbit grazing and regular disturbance from users and dogs.
2. Review site periodically and consider intervention to control scrub and/or tall ruderal vegetation where they are becoming invasive.
3. Maintain open mosaic and sightlines within the site to encourage safe access and continue high usage by local community.

Dr Helen O'Brien, March 2024

The Dog Walk: Flowering plants and ferns (Dr H O'Brien June/July 2023)

Common Name	Scientific Name
Apple	<i>Malus pumila</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Black medick	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>
Bristly Oxtongue	<i>Picris echioides</i>
Common Cat's Ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Common Figwort	<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>
Common mallow	<i>Malva sylvestris</i>
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Common ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>
Common toadflax	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Dog-rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>
Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium molle</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
False oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>
Forget-me-not	<i>Myotis sp</i>
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
Greater celandine	<i>Chelidonium majus</i>
Greater periwinkle	<i>Vinca major</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>
Mugwort	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>
Mullein	<i>Cucullia verbasci</i>
Meadow buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
Nipplewort	<i>Lapsana communis</i>
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>
Oxford ragwort	<i>Senecio squalidus</i>
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Prickly sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i>
Red campion	<i>Silene dioica</i>
Red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
Redshank	<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>
Rosebay willowherb	<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>
Scarlet pimpernel	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Sun Spurge	<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>
Viper's-bugloss	<i>Echium vulgare</i>
Weld	<i>Reseda luteola</i>
Wetted thistle	<i>Carduus crispus</i>
White campion	<i>Silene latifolia</i>
White dead-nettle	<i>Lamium album</i>
White stonecrop	<i>Sedum album</i>
Wild carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>



