

## LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES BASILDON DISTRICT

### Ba1. Blind Lane



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#### **Ba1. Blind Lane (0.3 ha) TQ 647931**

This site is part of a larger woodland/lane complex lying within Brentwood District. The wooded green lane has abundant Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice, prominent earth banks and Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), all indicating the lane's antiquity.

A varied woodland ground flora includes Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Herb Bennet (*Geum urbanum*), Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) and Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*). The northern half of the site contains a greater diversity of interesting woodland species including Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*). The non-native Spanish Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanicus*), which can threaten the survival of the native species by hybridisation, also occurs at the southern end of the lane.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Hedgerows

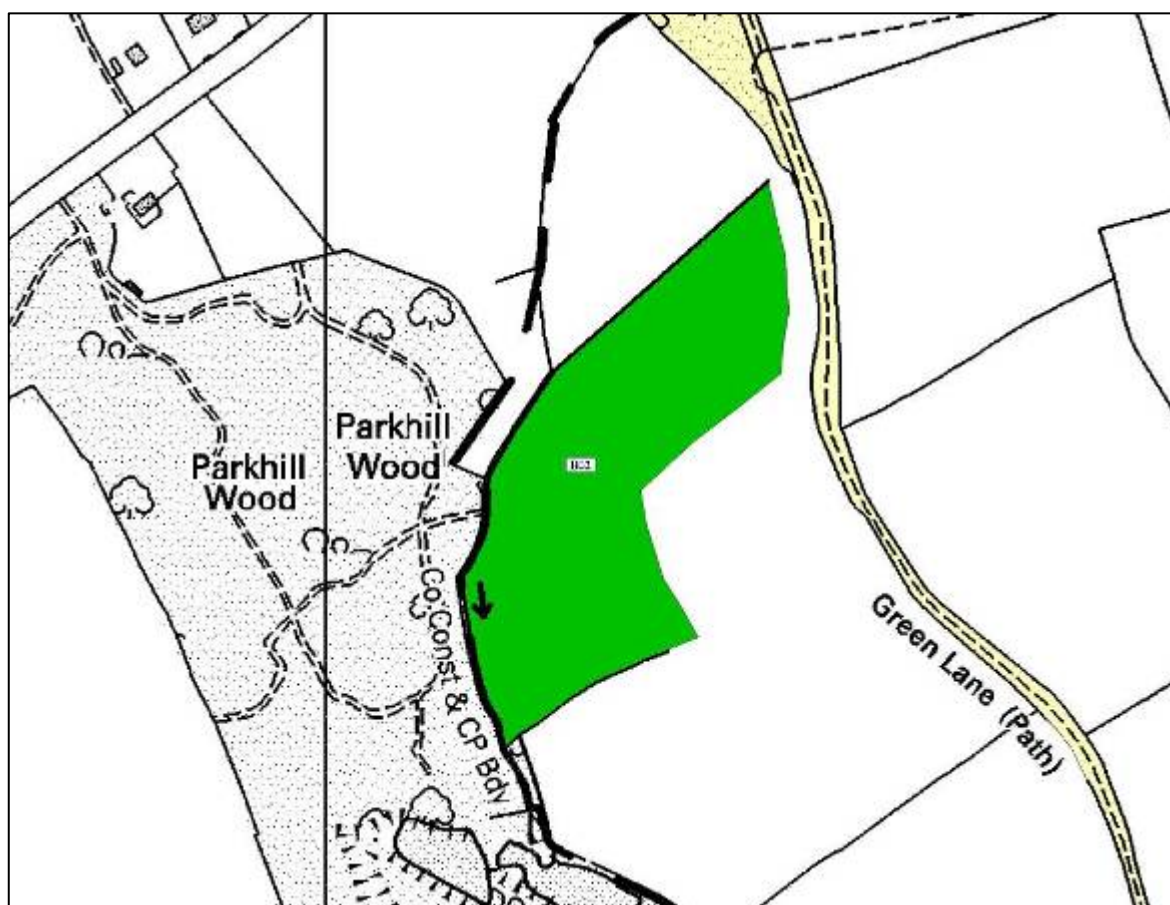
**Selection Criteria:** HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes

**Rationale:** The lane supports a variety of ancient woodland indicators and runs alongside a Brentwood Local Wildlife Site

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba2. Parkhill Wood Meadow



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### Ba2. Parkhill Wood Meadow (3.0 ha) TQ 651912

This varied site grades from freely draining acid grassland on the eastern slopes to damp, neutral soil sward on the more level section adjacent to Parkhill Wood. The acid grassland sward is typified by Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*), Heath Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinalis*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis tenuis*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) with areas of lichen heath featuring species of *Cladonia* lichen. The lush sward down slope contains Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), Lady's Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*), Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus uliginosus*) and an area dominated by Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) and Compact Rush (*Juncus conglomeratus*). Old anthills indicate a long continuity of grassland cover.

The Essex Scarce robberfly *Machimus cingulatus* has been recorded from the site, indicating the potential for other, more significant, invertebrates to be present. Common Blue butterfly was also recorded.

In the spring of 2007 the extent of dry acid grassland was significantly reduced by being ploughed up to sow maize as game cover, as occurs in adjacent fields.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Dry Acid Grassland

**Selection Criterion:** HC12 – Heathland and Acid Grassland  
HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland

**Rationale:** This site is a mixture of acid grassland, giving HC12, and neutral grassland that appears to conform to the NVC MG10 rush pasture type. MG10 is not a priority grassland type for the Essex Natural Areas and cannot be considered as the Lowland Meadows UK BAP habitat, hence the use of HC11.

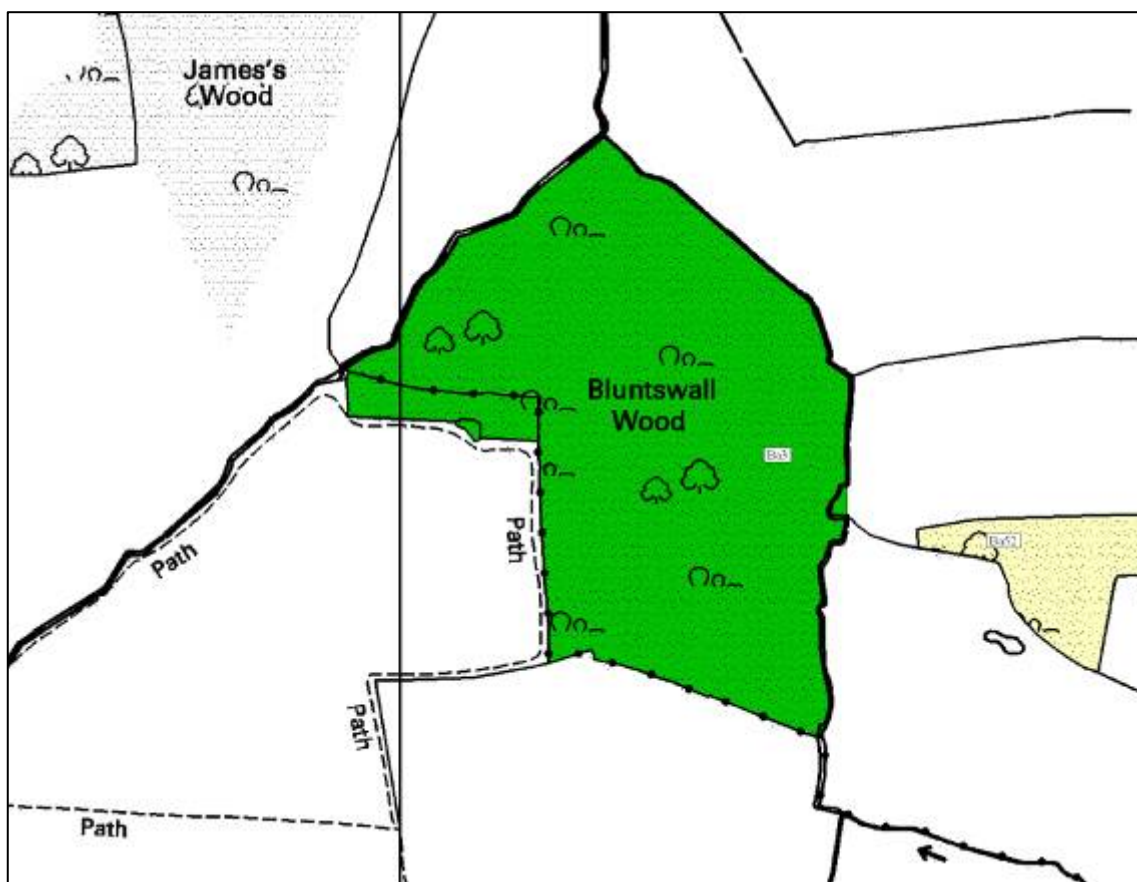
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; reduced areas as part destroyed by establishment of game cover in 2007; loss mapped more accurately in 2008 resulting in small increase in area.

### Ba3. Bluntswall Wood



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#### **Ba3. Bluntswall Wood (9.4 ha) TQ 652937**

Bluntswall is an ancient wood dominated by Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with occasional Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards, Yew (*Taxus baccata*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). The wood also contains with coppice stools of Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). On the interior corner of the south/west edge of the wood is an area with significant amounts of Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). The western edge of the southern part of the wood is dominated by Bramble.

Elsewhere the site's ground flora is contains abundant Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and a range of other typical woodland species such as Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervis*), Wood Meadow-grass (*Poa nemorosa*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*). Other ancient woodland indicator species present in small quantities include Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*).

The southern edge of the western part of the wood supports an acid grassland community including Trailing St John's-wort (*Hypericum humifusum*), parsley piert (*Aphanes* sp.), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and the Essex Red Data List species, Changing Forget-me-not (*Myosotis discolor*).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criterion:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

**Rationale:** The site features in the Ancient Woodland Inventory and supports key indicator species, justifying the HC1 criterion.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 with a minor extension in 2008 because of more accurate mapping.

## Ba4. St. Margaret's Wood and Lane



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### Ba4. St. Margaret's Wood and Lane (2.0 ha) TQ 653913

Comprising a wedge of woodland adjacent to a long green lane, this site forms a valuable wildlife corridor along the course of an ancient trackway. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice dominate the canopy of the wood. Hedges of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards bound the green lane's central grassy track, although this has been treated with a rough surfacing in places. Oak and Hornbeam pollards of some good size are present along the lane, whilst the presence of Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) testify to its ancient woodland status. A varied ground flora of grasses and herbs includes Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*) and Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*). Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) are abundant in the wooded triangle, with Three-veined Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) also suggesting an ancient origin for this site.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Hedgerows

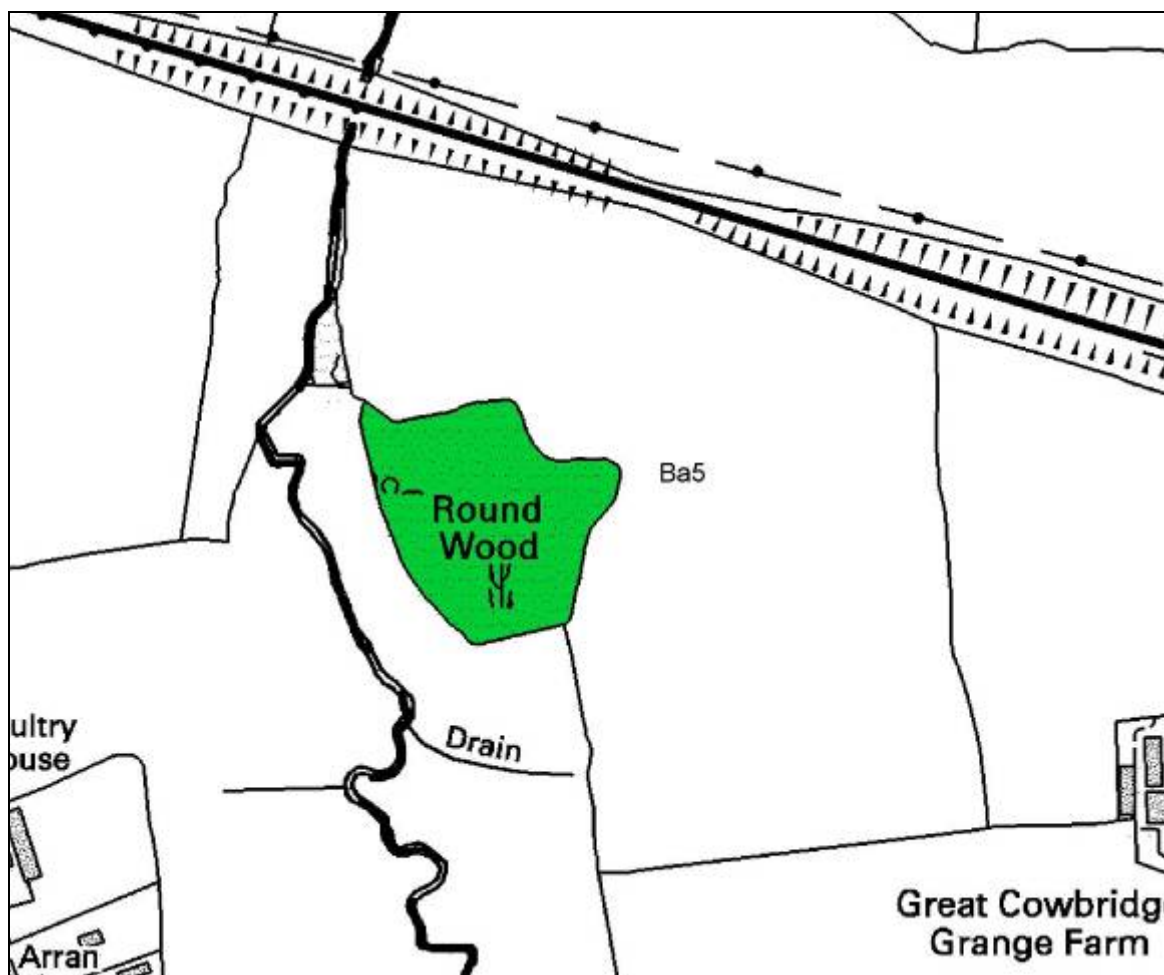
**Selection Criteria:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites  
HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes

**Rationale:** The lane supports a variety of ancient woodland indicators and provides a valuable corridor function. The wood is believed to be of ancient origin, although it does not appear in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, its size falling below the minimum threshold.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba5. Round Wood



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### Ba5. Round Wood (1.3 ha) TQ 653953

This small, possibly ancient wood comprises a canopy dominated by Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards with Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice and a sparse sub-canopy of Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) beneath. The densely shaded ground flora is typified by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and abundant Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) with Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) and Broad Buckler Fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*). A pond near the southern edge of the wood contains the Essex Red Data List Cyperus Sedge (*Carex pseudocyperus*) with Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*) and Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criterion:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

**Rationale:** The site features in the Ancient Woodland Inventory and supports key indicator species, justifying the HC1 criterion.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba6. Botneyhill Wood



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### Ba6. Botneyhill Wood (1.4 ha) TQ 657918

Botneyhill Wood, possibly ancient woodland, comprises a canopy dominated by neglected Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with occasional standards of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). A somewhat sparse ground flora would be improved by the resumption of coppice management, although Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and a small quantity of Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) are present.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criterion:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

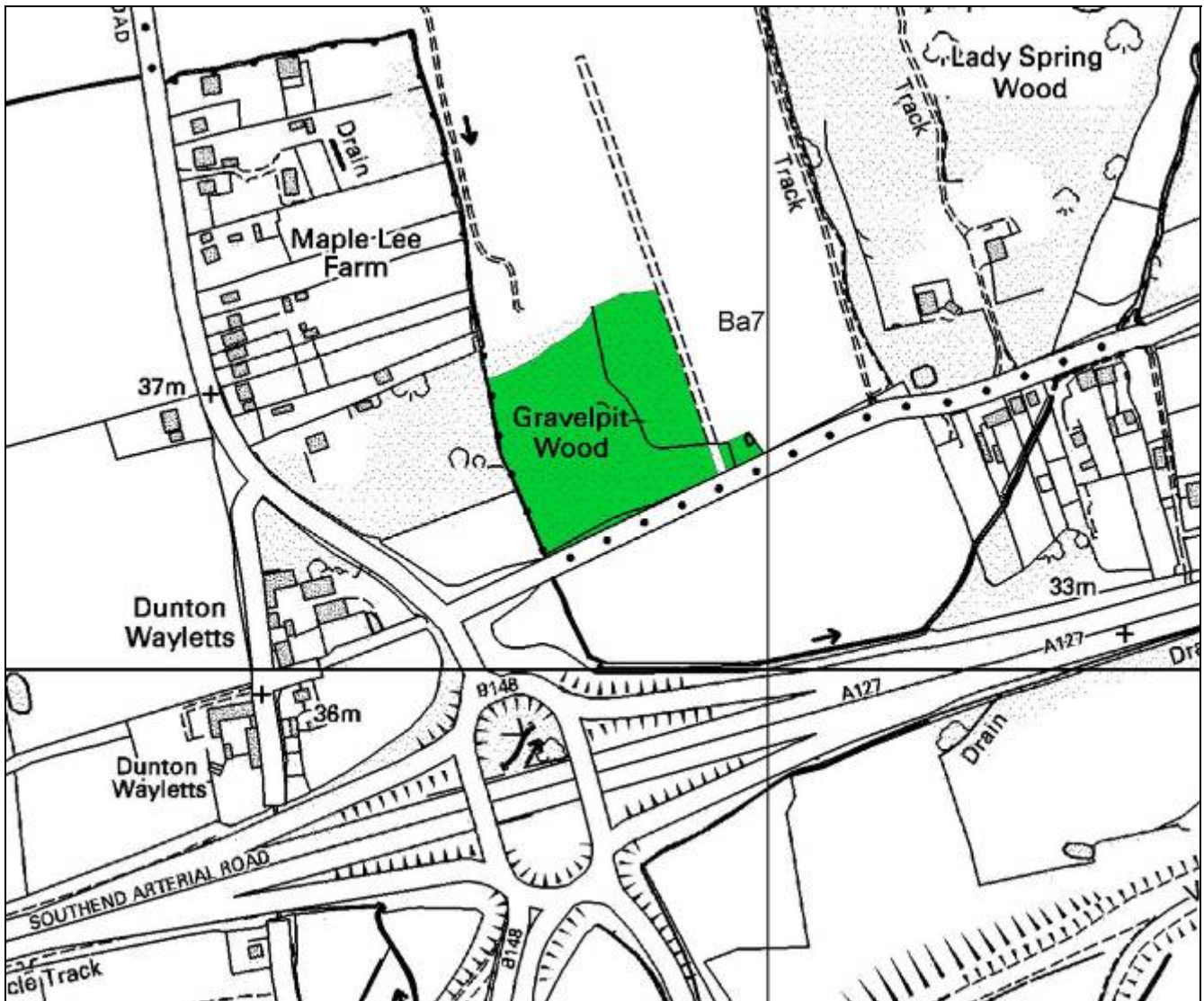
**Rationale:** The site features in the Ancient Woodland Inventory and supports key indicator species, justifying the HC1 criterion.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.



## Ba7. Gravelpit Wood



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### **Ba7. Gravelpit Wood (2.1 ha) TQ 659902**

Coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards typify the canopy of this old wood. A scattered shrub layer of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) shades a ground flora characterised by Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*), Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). The site is used for paintball gaming, which has led to disturbance of the ground flora and ground compaction.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

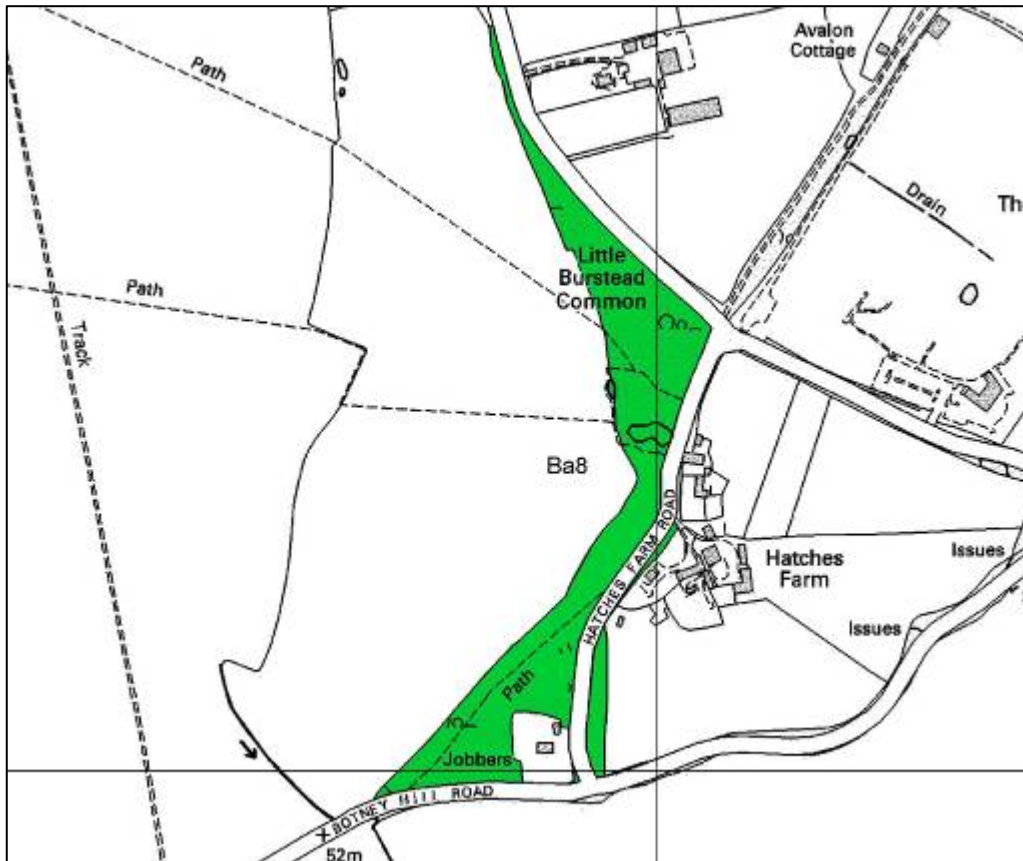
**Selection Criterion:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

**Rationale:** The site features in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, justifying the HC1 criterion.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba8. Little Burstead Common



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### Ba8. Little Burstead Common (4.0 ha) TQ 660923

Little Burstead Common is centrally located within a cluster of important sites stretching from Billericay into Brentwood District and, as such, is an integral part of a valuable wildlife corridor as well as being of interest in its own right. The site contains NVC W10 woodland consisting of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and birch (*Betula* spp.) woodland to the north and south, either side of semi-improved tall grassland, with a pond providing an additional habitat. The pond has been enlarged recently and now supports Fine-leaved Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe aquatilis*), Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), Water Plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*). The open parts of the southern half of the site are becoming increasingly dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

Long-winged Conehead Bush-cricket was recorded in 2004, this being a Nationally Scarce (Na) and Essex Rare species. The Essex Red Data List hoverfly *Cheilosia griseiventris* has also been recorded. Common Lizards are present on the site.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

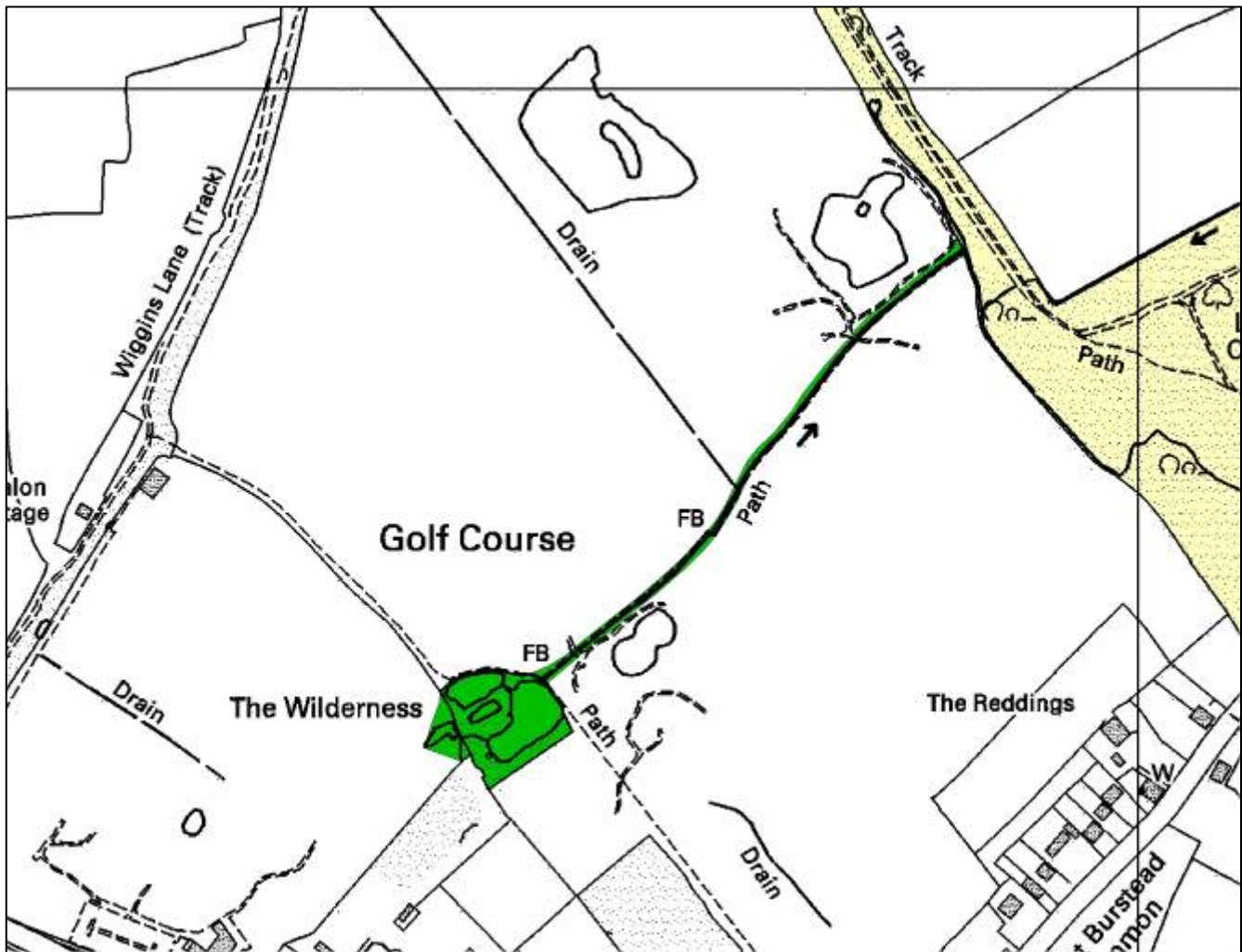
**Selection Criteria:** HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites,  
HC27 – Small Component Mosaics

**Rationale:** The woodland qualifies the site for the non-ancient BAP woodland criterion HC2. In addition the site includes a pond, rough grassland and scrub adding to its wildlife value, but that do not justify the use of further habitat criteria.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba9. The Wilderness



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### Ba9. The Wilderness (0.9 ha) TQ 665925

The Wilderness is a small Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) wood surrounding a complex of ponds that support a variety of aquatic and marginal species, such as Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*) and Water Plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*). The woodland ground flora includes the Essex Red List species Bitter Vetch (*Lathyrus montanus*) and Common Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*) with Hairy Woodrush (*Luzula pilosa*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), whilst the canopy also includes Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*); all suggesting this is a small remnant of ancient wood. The Nationally Scarce ant *Lasius brunneus* has been recorded.

Running northeast from The Wilderness, and connecting it to Laindon Common, is an old, species rich hedgerow that contains Hornbeam, Wild Service Tree, Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Bullace (*Prunus domestica*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Aspen (*Populus tremula*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Its ground flora includes Wood Anemone and Remote Sedge.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Hedgerows

**Selection Criterion:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites  
HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes  
SC1 – Vascular Plants

**Rationale:** The site does not feature in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, as it is too small to have been considered. However, it supports key indicator species, justifying the HC1 criterion. The hedgerow links two existing LoWS and has ancient woodland indicators itself.

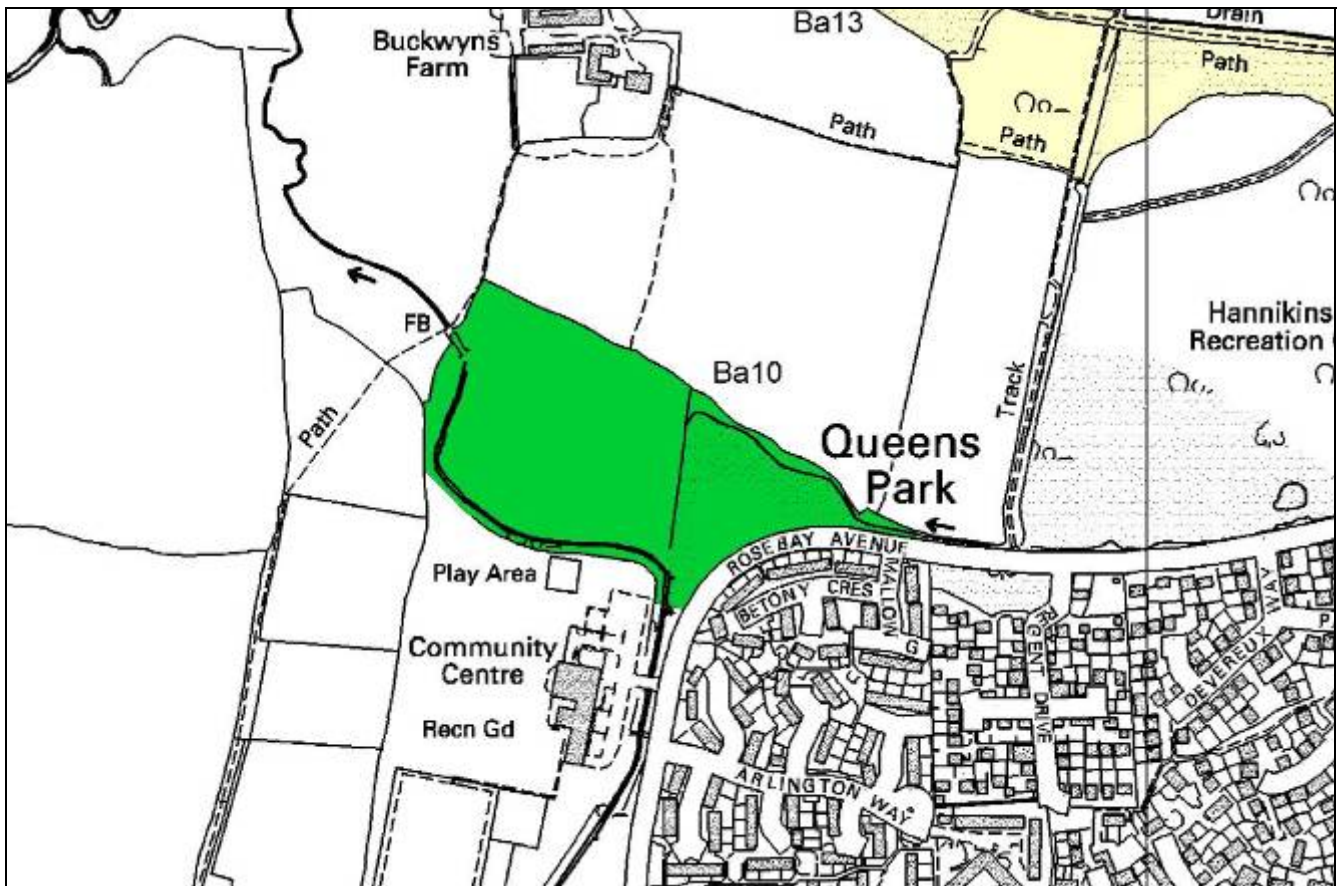
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; hedgerow added in 2009.

## Ba10. Queens Park Meadow



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### **Ba10. Queens Park Meadow (4.0 ha) TQ 666965**

This site has a species-rich mix of herbs and grasses as areas of meadow, inundation grassland and marsh. Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), rushes (*Juncus* sp.) and Greater Pond Sedge (*Carex riparia*) vegetate the less well-drained central section, whilst species found in the drier sections include Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Greater Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella major*) and Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). A former pond in the centre of the meadow has largely been vegetated over but still provides a seasonal wetland habitat. The site is now cattle grazed

The eastern triangle, bounded by large hedgerows, formerly provided an area of unmanaged marsh and swamp habitat, but has now largely been drained by the excavation of a large pond.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows  
HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland

**Rationale:** The majority of the meadow is akin to an NVC MG5 hay meadow community, with sections of MG9 wet meadow community. MG5 is a UK BAP habitat under the Lowland Meadows plan, but MG9 isn't, so HC11 is included in the selection criteria for the site.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## **Ba11. Poles Wood**



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### **Ba11. Poles Wood (1.0 ha) TQ 668905**

This small broadleaved wood comprises Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) standards with coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is also present. The ground flora typically comprises Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) with Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Three-veined Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) also present. A pond in the north-eastern corner of the wood provides an additional aquatic habitat.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criteria:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

**Rationale:** The site does not feature in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, as it is too small, but it supports key indicator species, justifying the HC1 criterion.

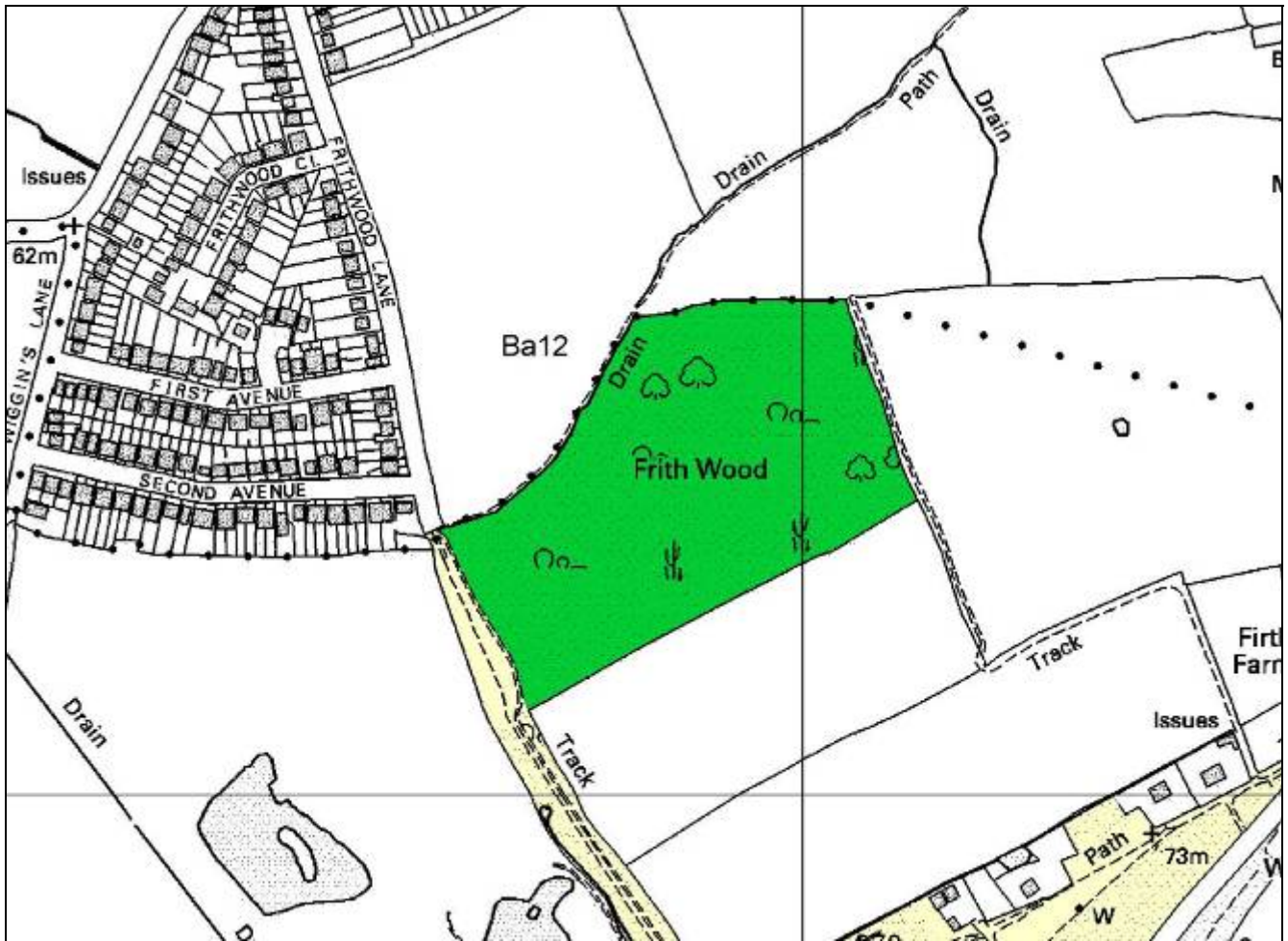
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004;

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; small reduction in 2007 due to tipping and further small reduction in 2009 because of clearance.

## Ba12. Frith Wood



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### **Ba12. Frith Wood (6.3 ha) TQ 669932**

Frith Wood is actively managed ancient woodland of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice with standards of Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*). Understorey species include Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). The current coppicing regime allows for a varied and species rich flora with Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) being prominent species. Aspen (*Populus tremula*) dominates some of the recently coppiced areas.

This site forms part of a valuable chain of Sites, including Laindon Common immediately to the south.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

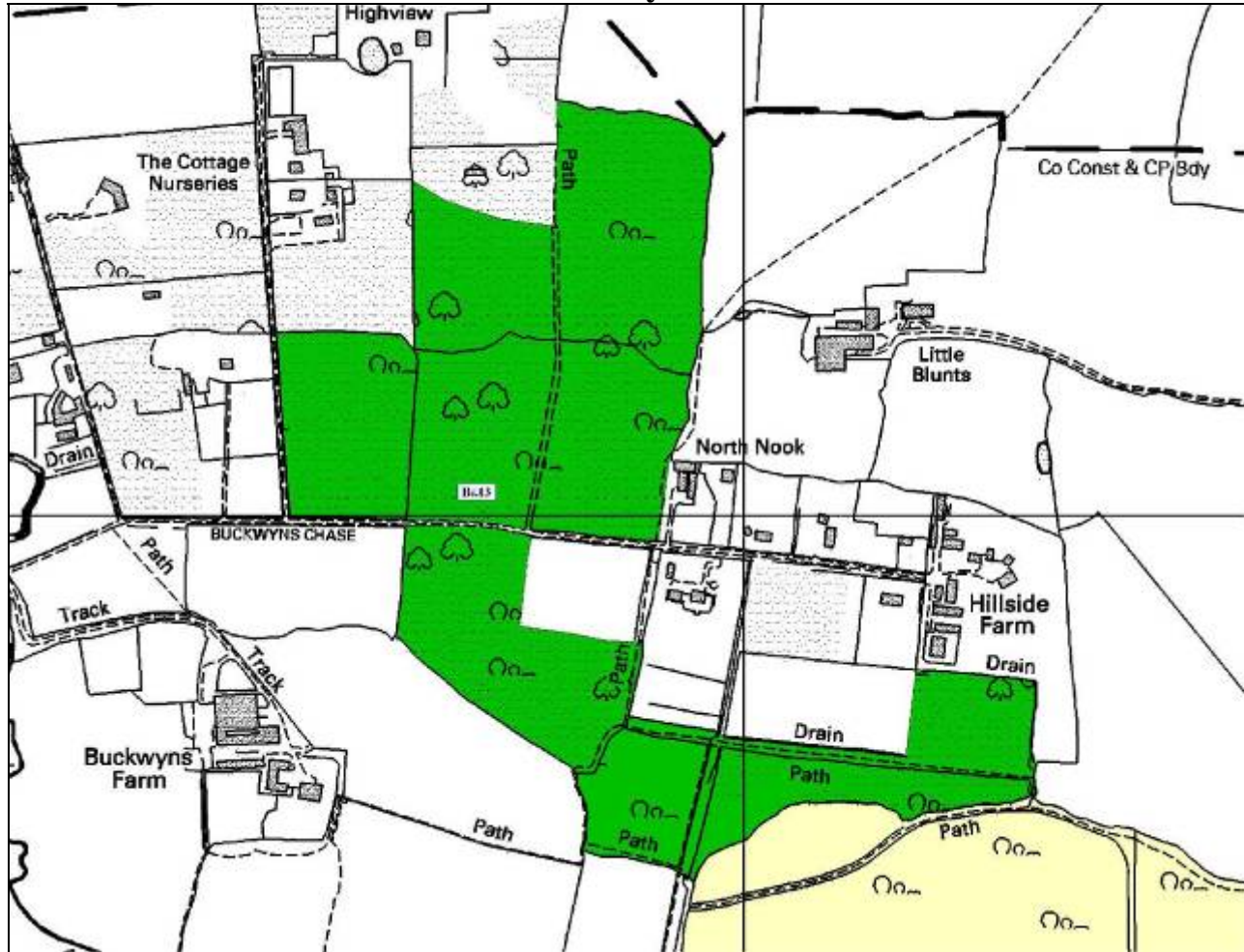
**Selection Criterion:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

**Rationale:** The site features in the Ancient Woodland Inventory and supports key indicator species, justifying the HC1 criterion.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba13. Buckwyn's Wood



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### Ba13. Buckwyn's Wood (15.4 ha) TQ 669969

This developing woodland has a canopy of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with a varied ground flora. An occasionally dense sub-canopy of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) provides a good nesting habitat for birds as well as an invaluable autumnal food supply. Some of the boundaries are likely to be formed from ancient hedgerow features and here ancient woodland indicator plants such as Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Three-veined Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Wood Meadow-grass (*Poa nemorosa*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) can be found. Elsewhere, the ground flora includes *Dryopteris* spp. ferns, Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Hedge Garlic (*Alliaria petiolata*), Rough Meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*), Wood False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine pratense*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

The habitats form a significant mosaic of semi-natural habitats when viewed in association with the adjacent Queens Park Country Park Wildlife Site.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criteria:** HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland  
HC5 – Woody Scrub



**Rationale:** Although young in parts, much of the woodland is considered to conform to the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland BAP and features a diverse and typical woodland ground flora, justifying HC2. Scrub habitat provides a valuable component of the site's value, so HC5 is added

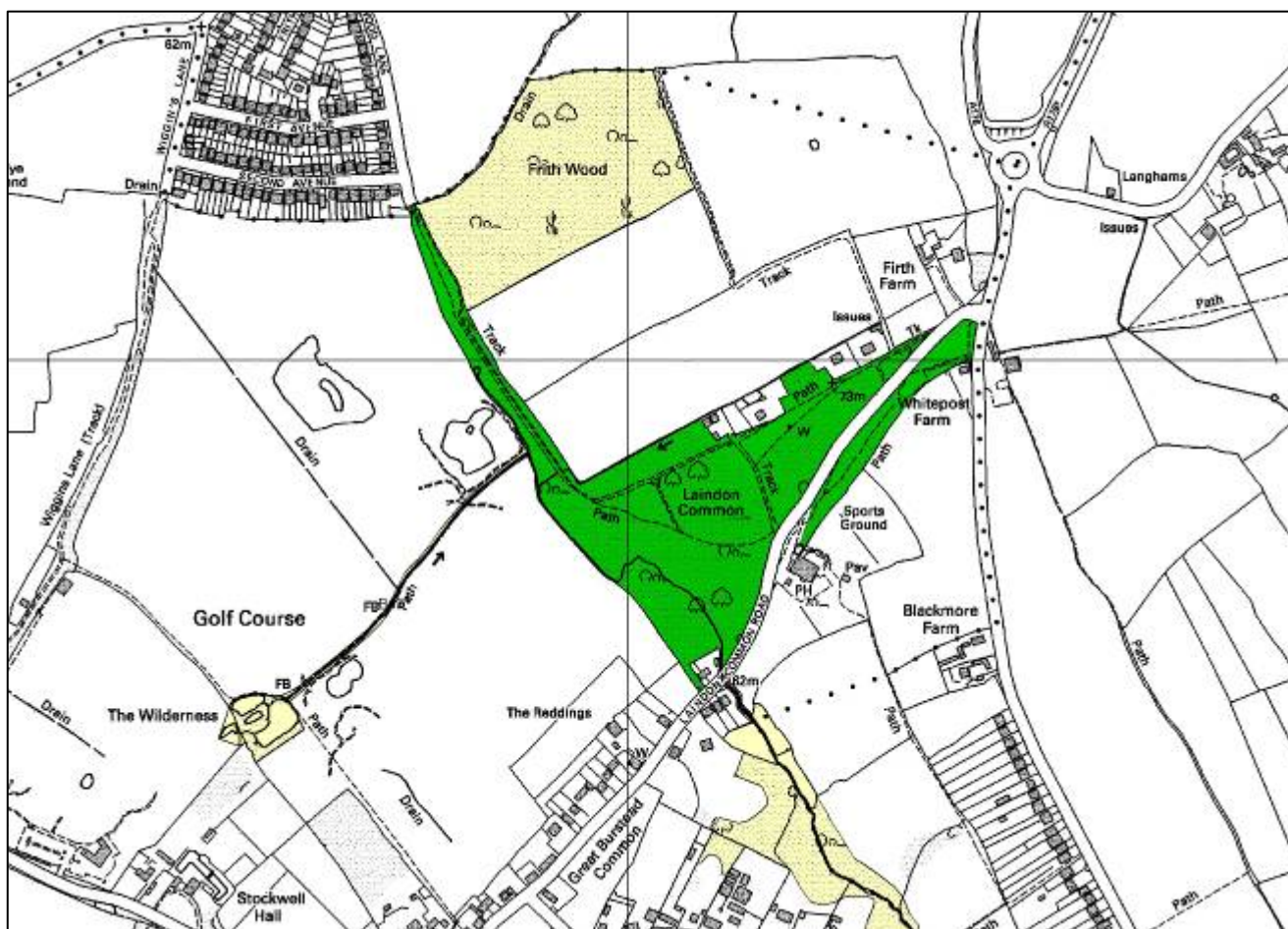
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; extended in 2008 to include further blocks of scrub habitat to the north of Buckwyns Chase.

## Ba14. Laindon Common



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### Ba14. Laindon Common (10.0 ha) TQ 671928

Laindon Common supports ancient acid grassland, invading scrub and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) woodland. An acid soil throughout the common is reflected in the flora of all the habitat types. To the west the Oak wood has a flora characterised by Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) with Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) and Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*). Several ancient woodland indicator plants are present, including Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*). The strip of woodland linking Laindon Common to Frith Wood provides an important wildlife corridor between the common and the ancient wood. To the east, between areas of Bramble and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) scrub, remnants of acid grassland include Common Bent-grass, Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*) and Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*). One of the main conservation issues will be to strike a balance between the woodland interest and the conservation of this acid grassland flora, which might formerly have covered much of the site.

The Nationally Scarce ant *Lasius brunneus* (Nb) was recorded in 2004. This arboreal species is largely restricted to large Oaks, usually in open parkland surroundings, where it forms nests under the bark or in dead limbs of the tree. Grass Snake is also present.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Dry Acid Grassland

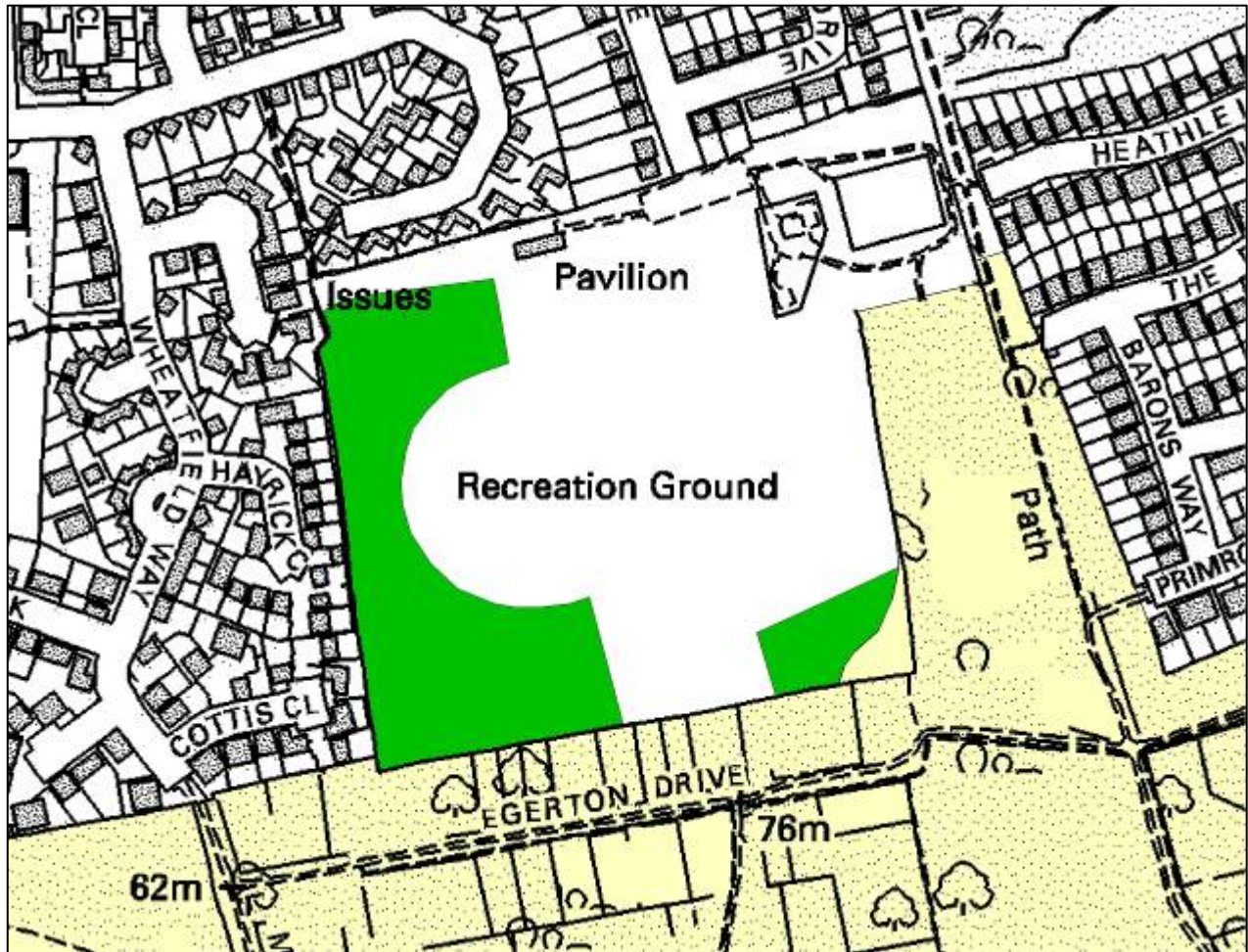
**Selection Criteria:** HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland  
HC12 – Heathland and Acid Grassland  
SC1 – Vascular Plants

**Rationale:** The site supports extensive areas of NVC W10 woodland community with good ground flora, but does not appear to be ancient, so HC2 is applied. Remaining open and recently cleared areas to the east support lowland dry acid grassland habitat (HC12). The populations of the Essex Red Data List plants Common Cow-wheat and Sneezewort are considered to be of sufficient significance in the district to justify the use of SC1.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba15. Langdon Hills Recreation Ground



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### Ba15. Langdon Hills Recreation Ground (1.8 ha) TQ 673875

Primarily used as a recreation ground, this grassland is a floristically rich site of particular note for one of the largest populations of Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) in Essex. Other species of note include Quaking Grass (*Briza media*), Yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*) and Common Twayblade (*Listera ovata*). The survival of this species rich turf is dependent upon a sympathetic mowing regime. The Site has been mapped according to the extent of meadow habitat at the current level of management, but the quantity of floristically rich turf could increase should mowing be relaxed.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows  
SC1 – Vascular Plants

**Rationale:** The hay meadow grassland community is a priority habitat for the Natural Area and so the site qualifies as UK BAP habitat and HC9 can be applied. The populations of Green-winged Orchid, Yellow Rattle and Adder's-tongue are of County importance and justify the application of SC1.

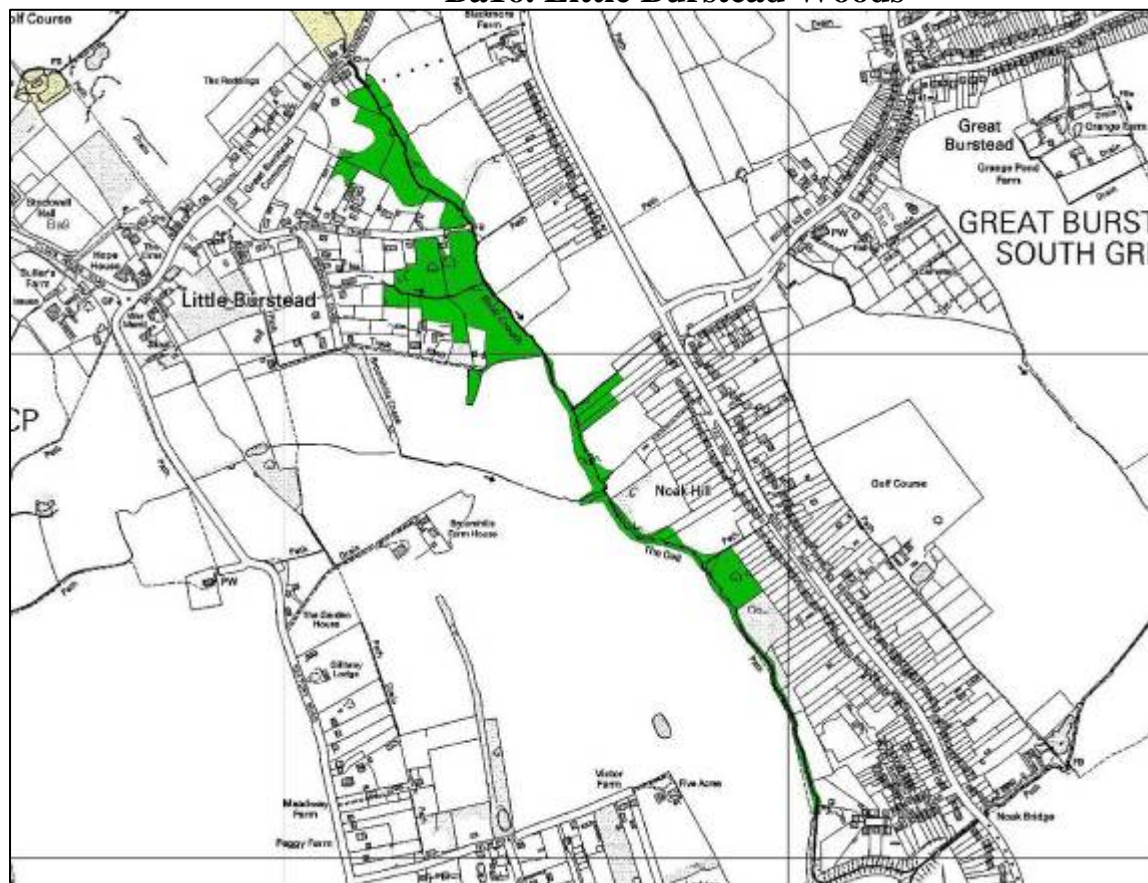
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; current extent of grassland re-mapped in 2009.

## Ba16. Little Burstead Woods



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### Ba16. Little Burstead Woods (9.9 ha) TQ 674921

This Site comprises an unusual chain of three woodlands and a narrow strip of possibly ancient streamside woodland along the course of the infant River Crouch. The upper section lies on an east-facing slope in a small valley. The canopy is composed of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*). Beneath a sub-canopy of Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) there is a varied ground flora includes Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*).

A thinner band of trees lines the course of the river to the south, forming a useful woodland corridor between Little Burstead and Noak Bridge. Here, the canopy comprises mainly Pedunculate Oak, Hornbeam, Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Ash over a scrub layer of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The typical woodland ground flora includes Bluebell and Red Campion (*Silene dioica*). Adjacent blocks of valuable habitat include an Elm copse and young scrub woodland. Towards the southern end of the site there is a large Badger sett

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criteria:** HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Rationale:** Woodland of the NVC community W8 dominates the site, which cannot be considered ancient, although the streamside may form the ghost outline of former ancient woodland. HC2 applies as this community is included in the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland BAP.

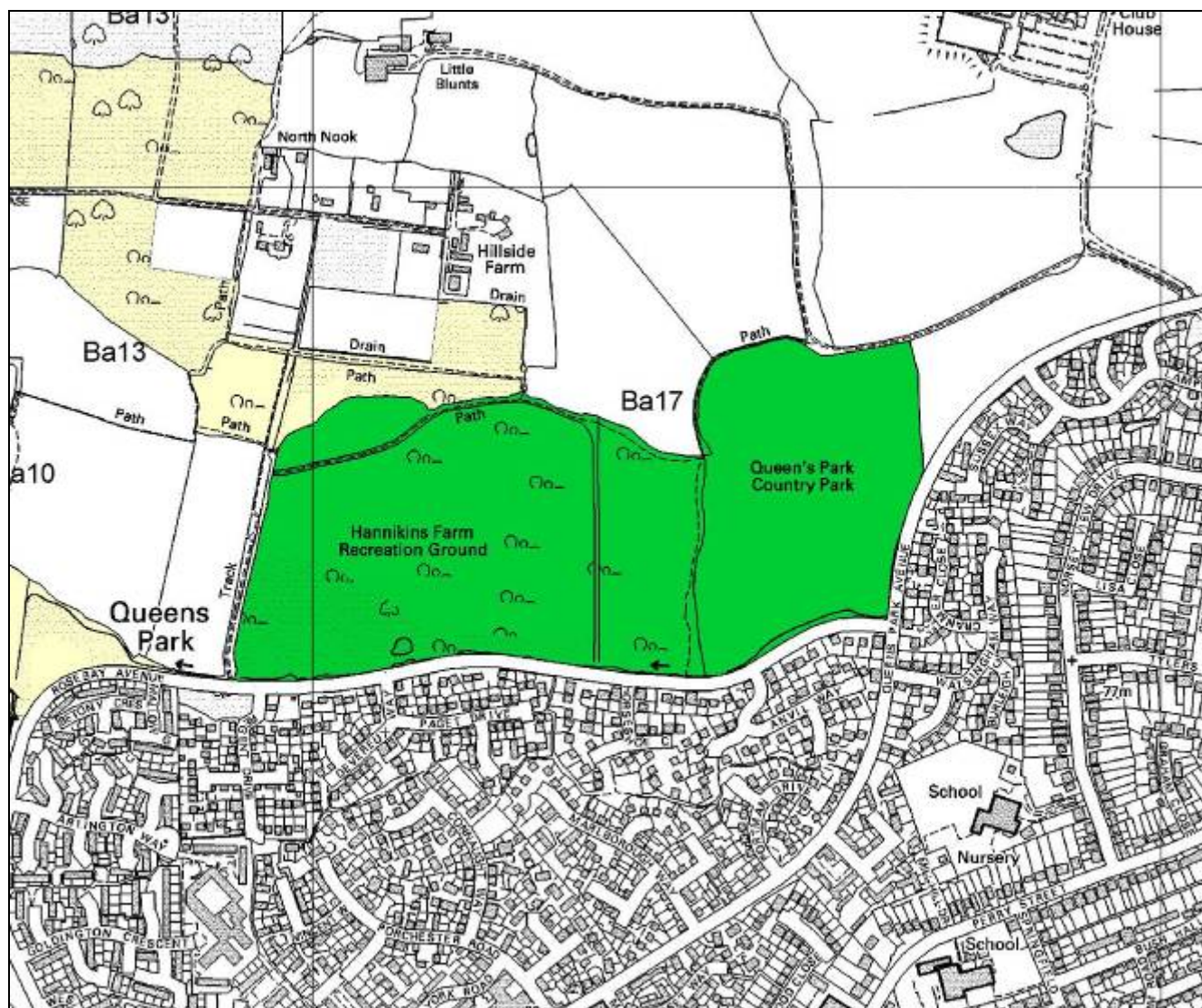
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; streamside woodland to south of main block added in 2007.

## Ba17. Queen's Park Country Park



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### Ba17. Queen's Park Country Park (24.1 ha) TQ 674966

Although recently created, the scrub and grasslands of the country park are quickly maturing into a valuable mosaic of wildlife habitats, including flower-rich grassland, which are highly attractive to a good range of invertebrates. The western field is the main amenity recreation area, with the sward comprising a rough but managed sward, rich in legumes. The sward comprises a mix of Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Timothy-grass (*Phleum pratense* agg.) and Rough Meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*). The most widespread herbs are Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Buttercups (*Ranunculus* spp.), and both Red and White Clover (*Trifolium pratense* and *T. repens*). The smaller field to the north also supports Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*) and Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*).

The central unit has a "wilder" feel to it, with a network of mown paths passing through abundant Bramble scrub, rough grassland and scattered trees. The coarser grassland sward is characterised by False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Yorkshire Fog, Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Bistort (*Polygonum bistorta*) is present at the northern end of this block. This rougher vegetation supports Common Lizard and a good variety of butterflies, including Common

Blue, Small Heath, Meadow Brown, Large Skipper and also Ringlet along the scrub wood/hedgerow margins. The path edges still support abundant clovers and other smaller herbs.

The eastern end of the site comprises four blocks of planted broadleaved woodland, separated by wide rides running east-west and north-east to south-west. The rides are, again, rich in clovers and attract many of the insects listed above. The rough grassland matrix of the planted areas comprise Bent-grasses (*Agrostis* spp.), False Oat-grass, Creeping Thistle, Cock's-foot Grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), Rough Meadow-grass, Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and Smooth Tare. The planted trees are mainly Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*).

The south boundary of the Site comprises mature, ancient, streamside woodland with mature planted broadleaved woodland adjacent. This may be the former northern boundary of an ancient wood (Millhill Wood) lost to housing development to the south. The semi-natural woodland canopy is varied, consisting of Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Hornbeam, Ash, Aspen (*Populus tremula*), Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) and some Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). A dry pond hollow supports a stand of tall Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*). The mature plantation mainly comprises Pedunculate Oak and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). The understorey and ground flora includes Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*), Wood False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) with the Essex Red List species Wood Forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*). The wood margins and associated scrubby grassland also supports Speckled Wood butterfly.

An invertebrate survey carried out during 2003 identified a total of 12 Essex Red Data List species, including several Nationally Scarce species.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

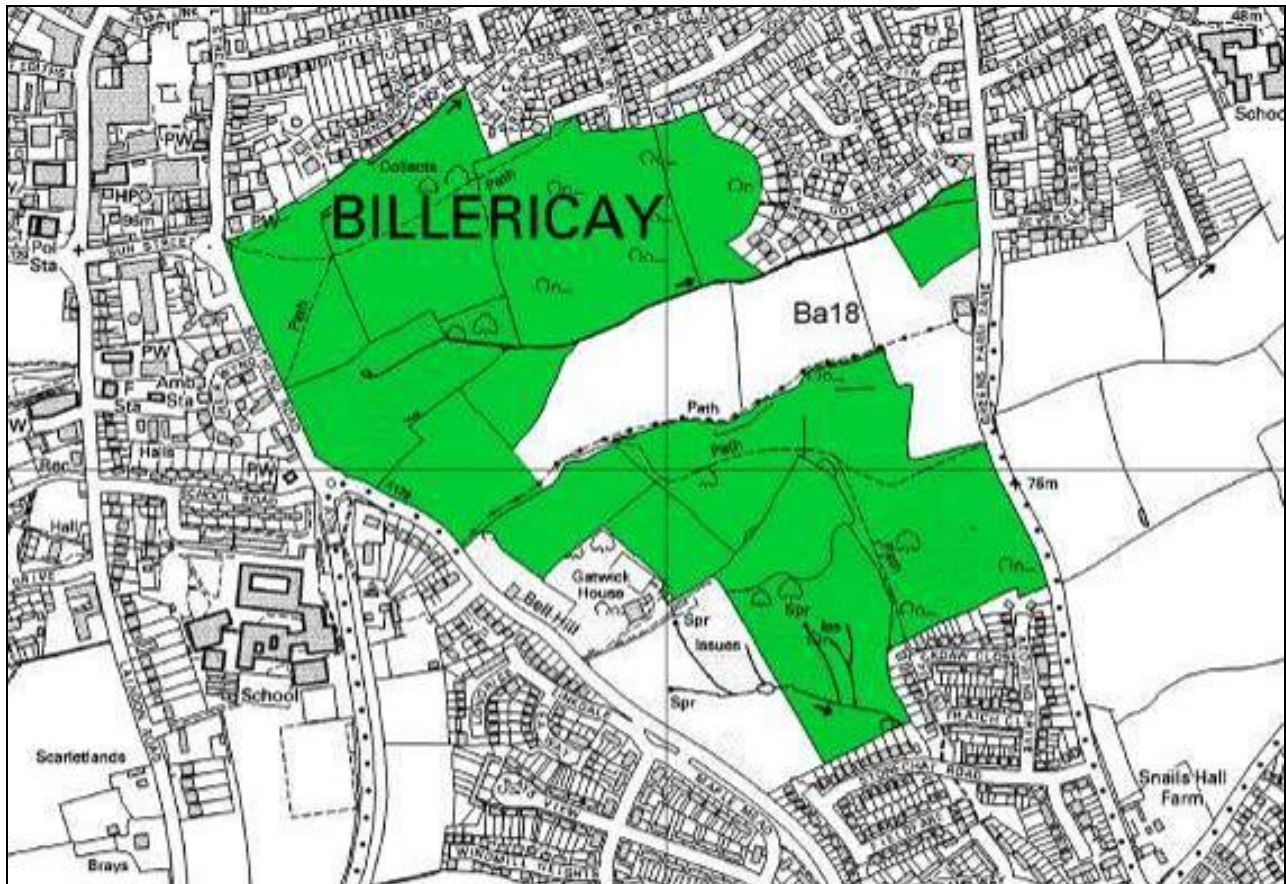
**Selection Criteria:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites  
HC5 – Woody Scrub  
HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland  
S19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages

**Rationale:** The southern edge of the site probably marks the edge of the destroyed Millhill Wood and still supports key indicator species justifying the use of criterion HC1. The grassland and scrub blocks are of sufficient value to justify HC11 and HC5 respectively. The diversity of nationally scarce and rare invertebrates supports the application of SC19.

**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:** Selected following Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.  
Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba18. Mill Meadows LNR



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### **Ba18. Mill Meadows LNR (29.8 ha) TQ 680941**

This extensive site comprises that part of the Mill Meadows Local Nature Reserve that has not been declared an SSSI (see Mill Meadows, Billericay SSSI, below). It lies largely within a stream valley, comprising well-drained, acid soils on the higher ground and waterlogged neutral soils closer to the stream. The northern half of the site supports a large area of grassland with a network of overgrown hedges, patches of woodland and scrub. These fields contain a species-rich flora, which includes Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and Pignut (*Conopodium majus*).

Eastwards and to the south of the stream, poorly drained grassland includes three species of rush (*Juncus* spp.), Lady's Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*). Further to the south, acid grassland grades into scrub and then into secondary Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) woodland. The turf includes Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*) and Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*). A few sections of mature wood contain a good woodland flora, with Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) present.

Both Common Lizard and Slow-worm were recorded on an adjacent field (now lost to development), and it is likely that both these reptiles are also present on this site. The Essex Red Data List beetles *Apion affine* and *Cryptopleurum crenatum* have been recorded here.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Lowland Dry Acid Grassland, Hedgerows



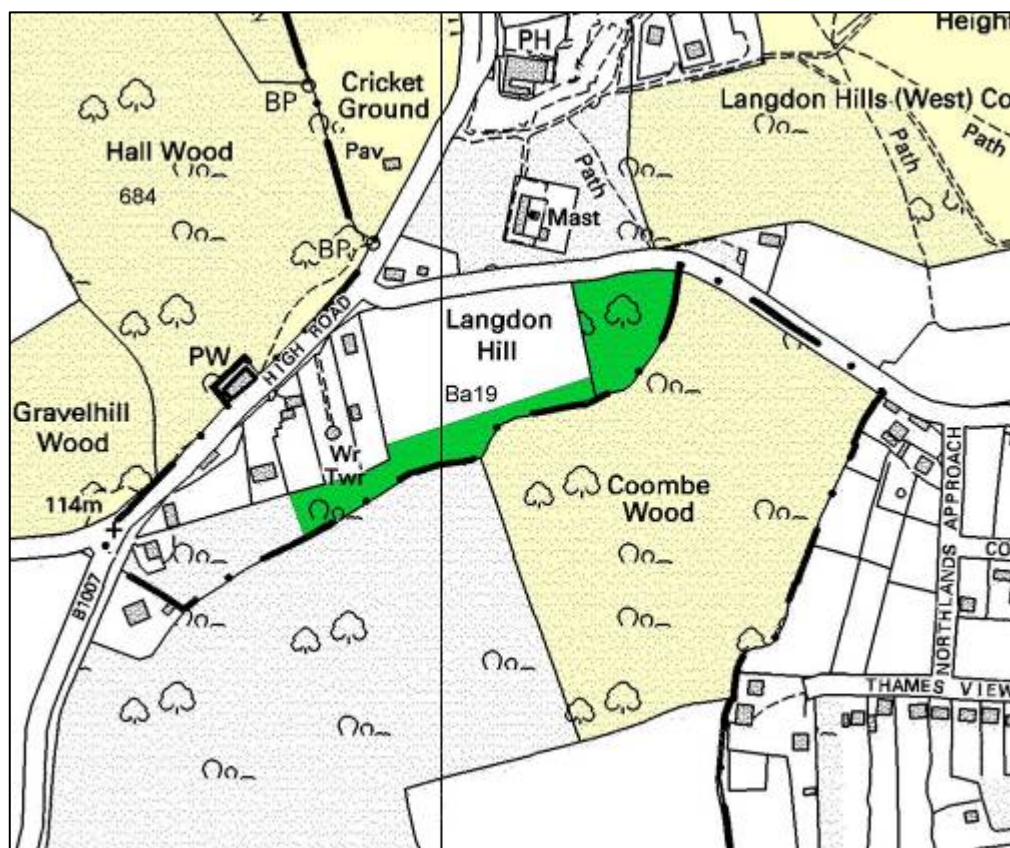
**Selection Criteria:** HC5 – Woody Scrub  
HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes  
HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland  
HC12 – Heathland and Acid Grassland  
SC1 – Vascular Plants

**Rationale:** The old field boundaries within this site enclose good semi-natural habitat justifying HC8, while the grassland is a mixture of acid grassland (HC12) and neutral grasslands including MG10 rush pasture, but not MG5 hay meadow and so HC11 is the appropriate criterion. The scrub around the site adds to its ecological value allowing the application of HC5. The population of the rare Essex Red List species Harebell is of county importance and so HC1 can be justified.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba19. Coombe Wood Extensions



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### Ba19. Coombe Wood Extensions (1.1 ha) TQ 682864

This Site comprises two sections of wood, forming an integral part of Coombe Wood (mainly in Thurrock Borough). The small triangular section of woodland to the east of the playing field is a Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) wood with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and coppiced Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) are also present. The ground flora is dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) with frequent and locally abundant Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) and Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) are also present more sparingly. Coombe Wood as a whole supports a strong population of Purple Hairstreak butterflies.

To the south of the playing field is a narrow strip of possibly ancient wood, partly stretching into a private garden (this section excluded from the Wildlife Site). It comprises an Oak-Ash woodland on relatively well-drained soils. The ground flora is characterised by Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), locally abundant Bluebell and Dog's Mercury, Red Campion and Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) amongst widespread Bramble.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criterion:** HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

**Rationale:** The woodland of this site is made up of two blocks, one of which may be ancient, but has a poor ground flora, and the other of which is not ancient. They are both consistent with the NVC W8 community and so have been selected using criterion HC2.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba20. Norsey Meadow



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### **Ba20. Norsey Meadow (6.1 ha) TQ 682951**

This ancient grassland site comprises a mosaic of rough grassland, scattered trees and scrub. The most widespread grassland species are False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Cock's-foot Grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and an increasing quantity of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). Species recorded in the past, but apparently no longer present include Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Prickly Sedge (*Carex muricata*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*).

During 2003 it received a small population of Common Lizards from a development site in Billericay.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criterion:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows

**Rationale:** This grassland is in poor condition, but is largely unimproved and so has been included under the HC9 criterion on its potential to be restored.

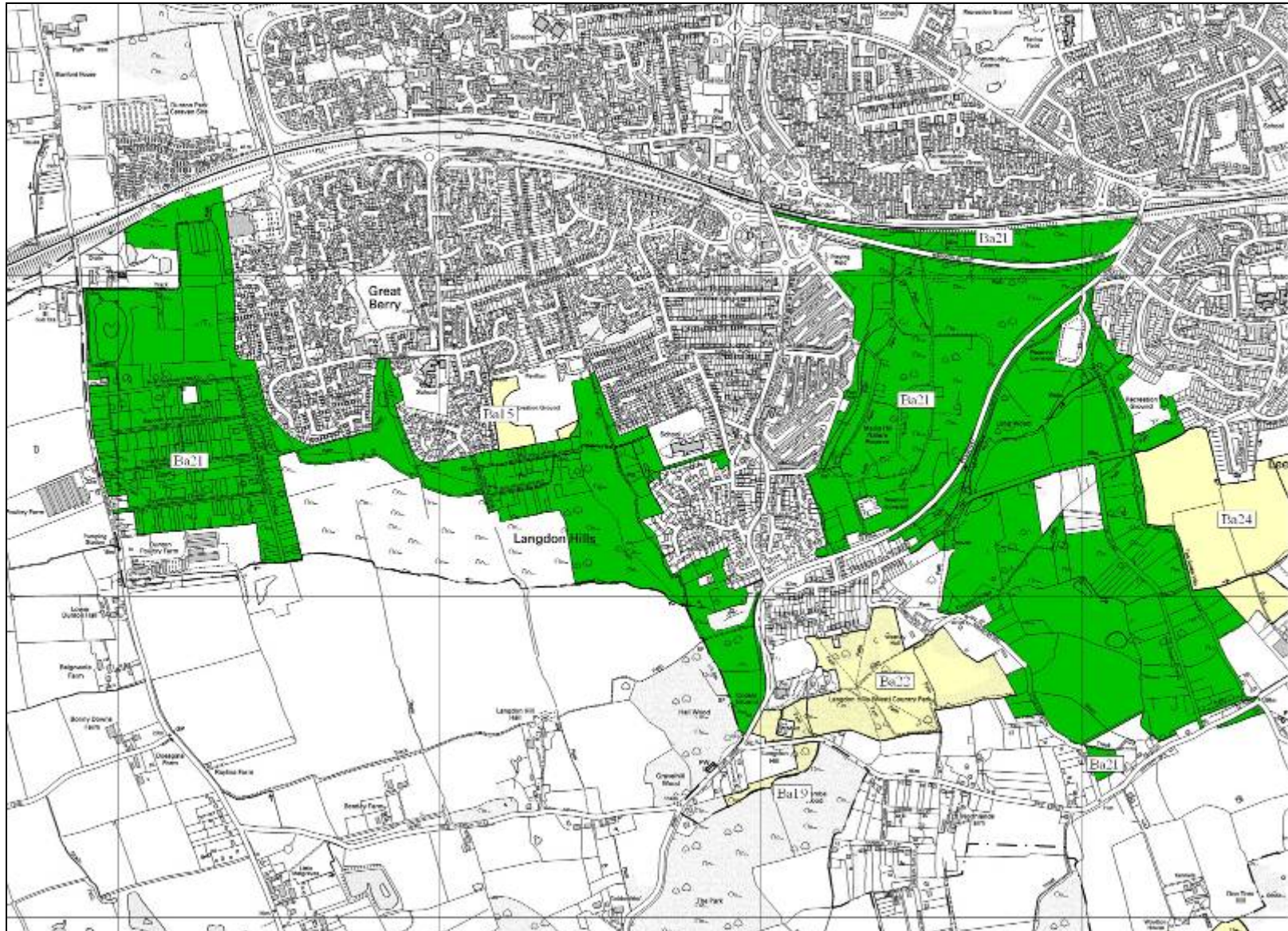
**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected during Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba21. Langdon Complex



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## **Ba21. Langdon Complex (205.9 ha) TQ683874**

**N.B. This Site is dominated by but is not identical to the Essex Wildlife Trust's Langdon Nature Reserve, including the more recently acquired Langdon Lakes and Meadows.** Land outside the reserve includes a small area of scrub adjacent to the railway line, a small parcel of land near Westley Heights and small plots around Willow Park.

The Langdon Lakes and Meadows reserve lies at the north western end of the Site. Its northern and eastern margins comprise former plotland sections now reverting to secondary woodland. The canopy comprises a mix of mainly Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) over an extensive scrubby understorey of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The ground flora here is characterised by the presence of Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), locally abundant Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Red Campion (*Silene dioica*).

To the west this scrub grades into two meadows, one of which is largely unimproved. The vegetation here comprises Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), clovers (*Trifolium* spp.) and Cock's-foot Grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), with some Pepper Saxifrage (*Silvaum silaus*), Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) and Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*). There is a breeding colony of the Grizzled Skipper, a scarce Essex butterfly and UK BAP Priority Species, on these grasslands. The landscaped lake provides a valuable habitat for invertebrates and birds with Common Terns nesting on the island.

The original Langdon Nature Reserve comprises a range of habitats including ancient and recent woodland, herb rich meadows, scrubland and numerous ponds.

Ancient woodland of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) occurs at Lince Wood, Great Berry and at Long Wood, Willow Park, whilst Marks Hill is another large area of mature woodland. The flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*). Typifying the Dunton Plotlands, but occurring throughout the reserve, colonising scrub provides a valuable breeding habitat and food source for both migratory and resident birds.

Grasslands throughout the reserve have a good mix of grass and herb species with particularly rich sites supporting Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) and Adder's-tongue Fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*). Of particular interest amongst the invertebrates is the occurrence of a locally rare cave spider. Numerous butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies and other insects are to be found throughout the reserve. The fauna includes Great Crested Newts, a very diverse butterfly assemblage that includes the Grizzled Skipper and numerous other notable invertebrates.

Small plots of land outside the ownership of the Essex Wildlife Trust form an integral part of the wildlife habitats present.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Ponds

**Selection Criteria:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

HC5 – Woody Scrub

HC9 – Lowland Meadows

HC11 – Other Neutral Meadows

HC16 – Ponds

SC15 – Great Crested Newts

SC16 – Hotspots for Reptile Diversity

**Rationale:** Sections of ancient woodland identified in the Ancient Woodland Inventory are given HC1, while other areas of NVC W8 woodland have been included on the strength of HC2. Some meadows support an NVC MG5 grassland community and so are included under the UK BAP habitat criterion (HC9). Criteria HC11 and HC5 are added as there are other grassland communities and blocks of scrub that add to the conservation value of the site. The UK BAP Pond habitat applied to ponds supporting certain species including Great Crested Newts, which also justify the species criterion SC15 because of the significance of the overall population

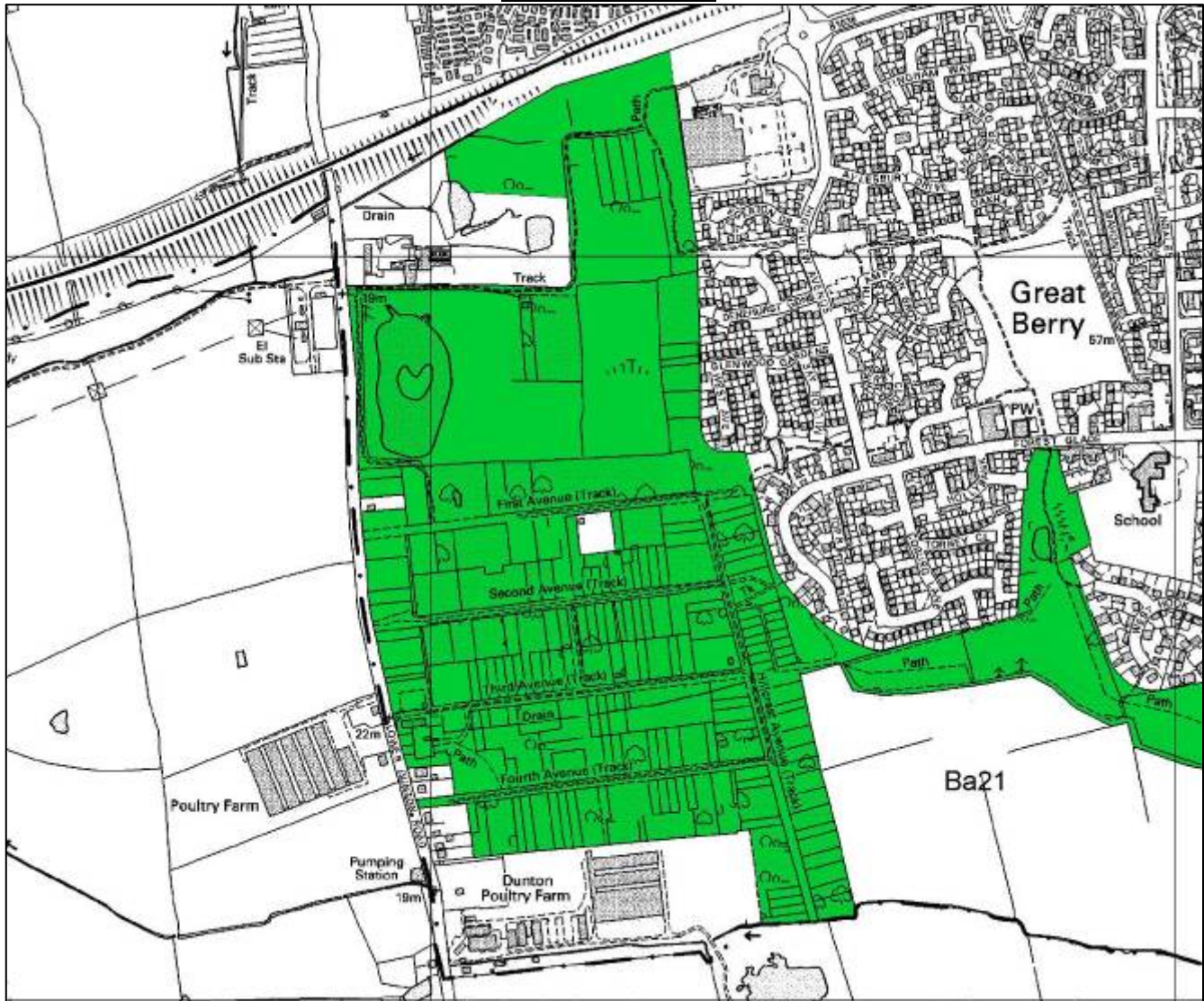
**Revision Schedule:**

**Site Selected:** 1992

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; nature reserve site combined with other sites and extended.

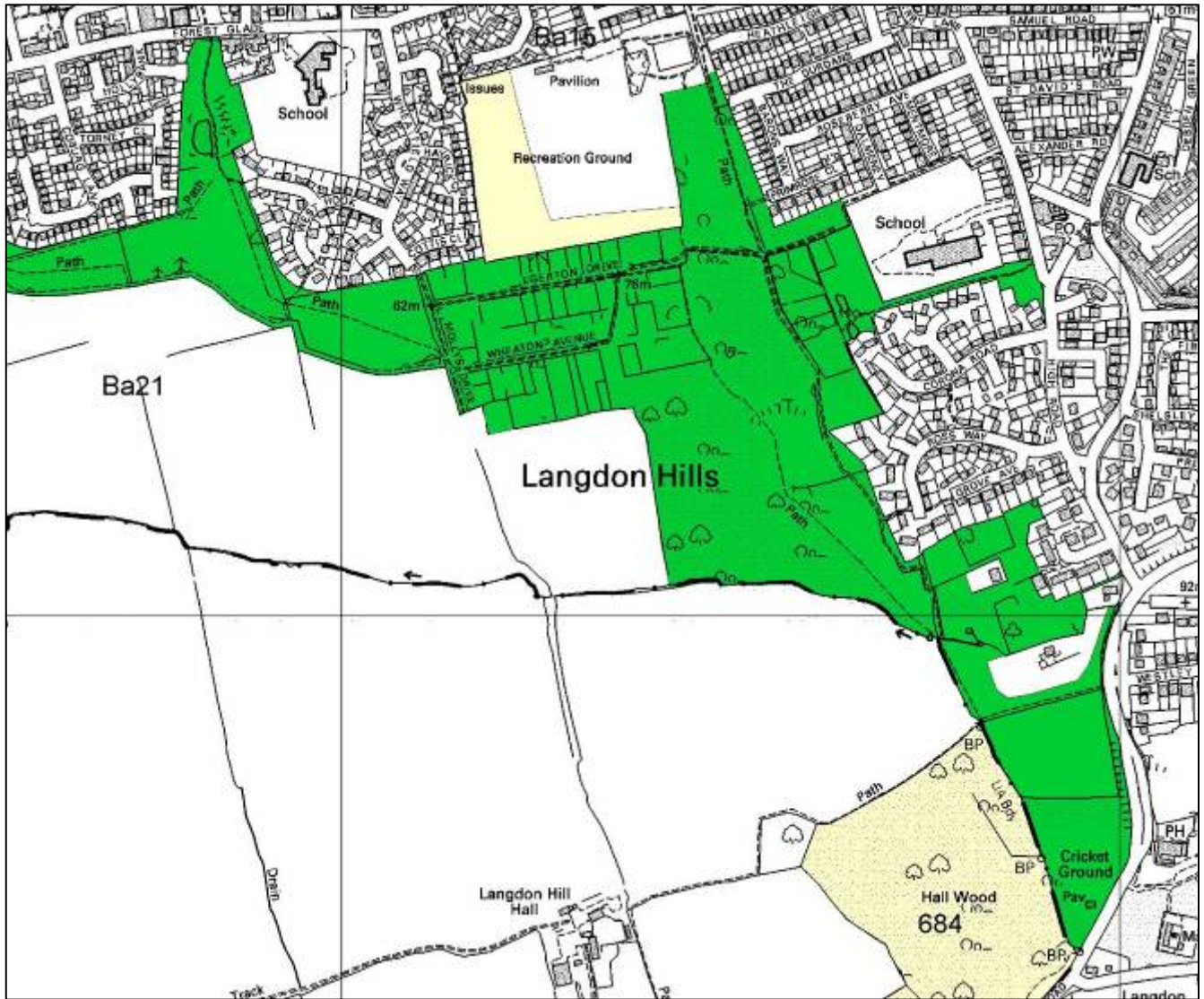
Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; two small blocks added in 2009.

**Ba21 Detail No. 1**



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**Ba21 Detail No. 2**



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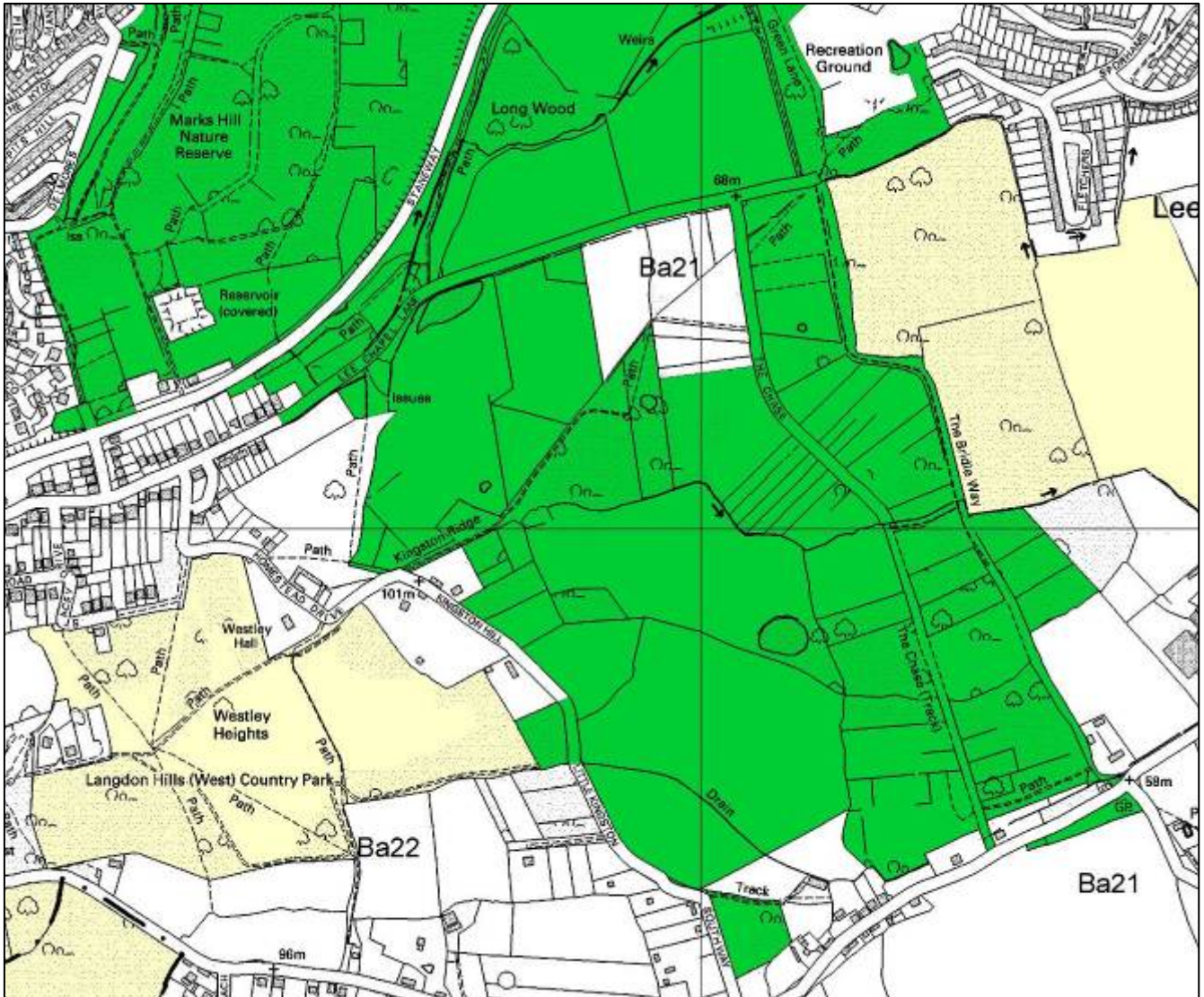
**Ba21 Detail No. 3**



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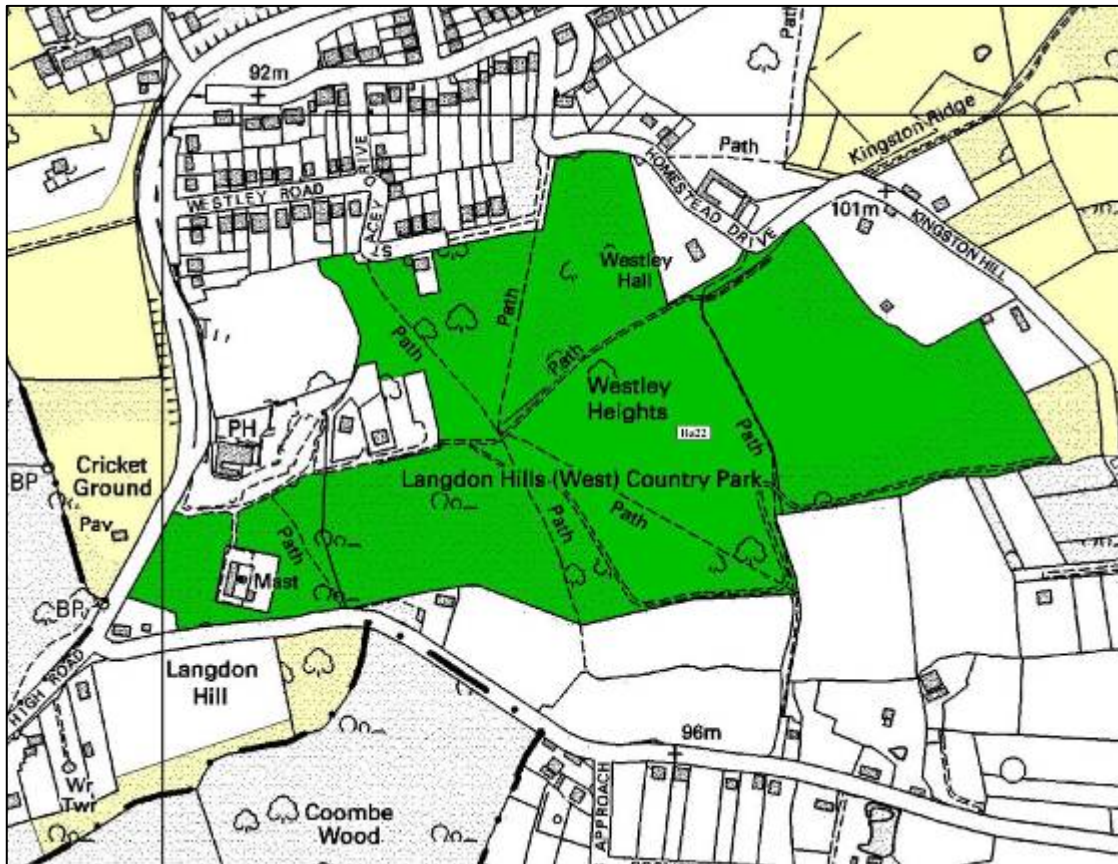


**Ba21 Detail No. 4**



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## Ba22. Westley Heights



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### Ba22. Westley Heights (17.1 ha) TQ 684867

Westley Heights combines well the recreation and wildlife objectives of the Langdon Hills country park with a mosaic of mown amenity land, rougher grassland and woodland. Whilst the wildlife value of the habitats varies, the site as a whole is included in recognition of its general wildlife interest and its potential for habitat enhancement for wildlife.

Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) characterise the mixed canopy within the scattered blocks of woodland, with Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) also present. A typical woodland ground flora includes Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*). A mix of common grassland species typifies the turf throughout the park with a few patches of acidic grassland containing Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** None

**Selection Criteria:** HC27 – Small Habitat Mosaics

**Rationale:** Through its history of park management, most of the woodland in this site does not resemble one of the priority woodland types of this Natural Area and so it does not fit the UK BAP criterion. The grassland similarly does not satisfy any criterion in itself, hence the use of the Small Habitat Mosaic Criterion.

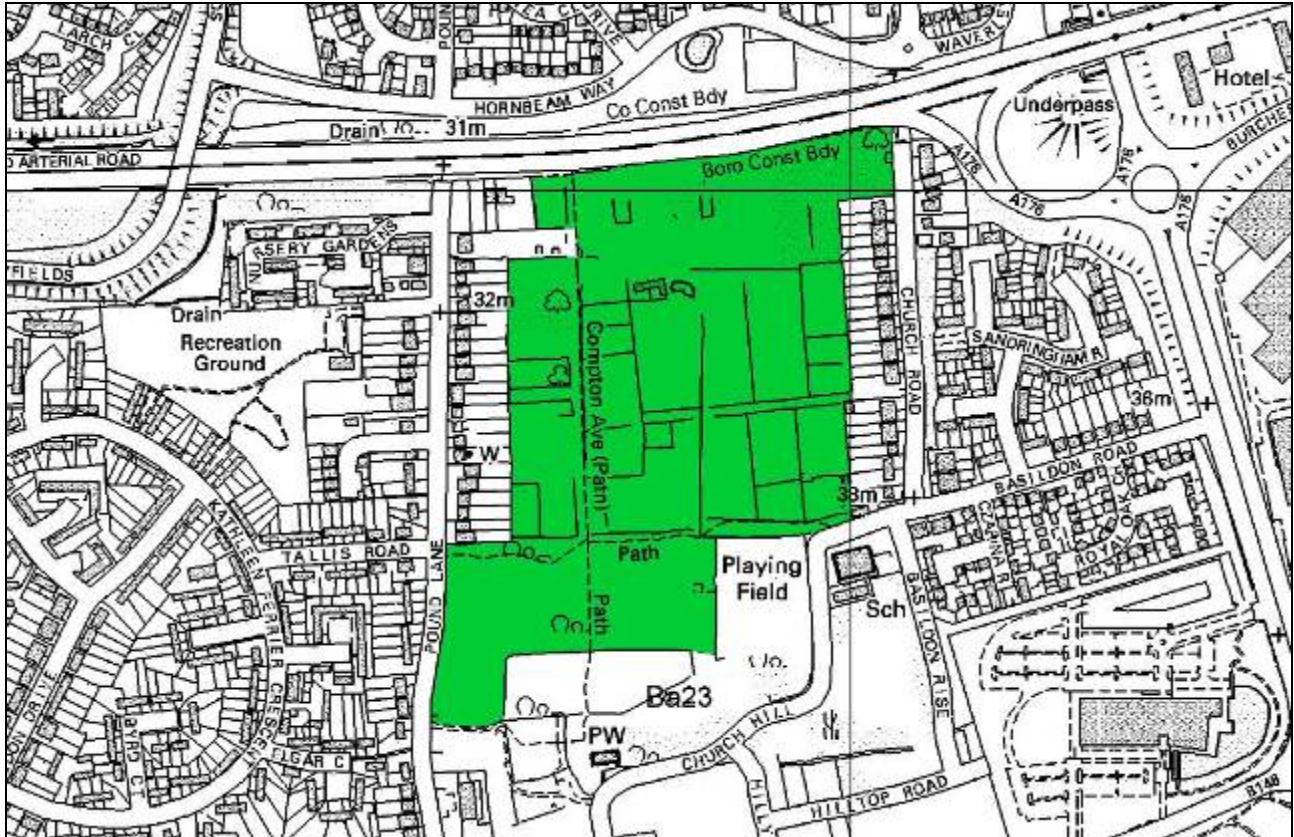
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004;

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; additional woodland at western end added in 2008.

## Ba23. St. Nicholas Church Complex



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### Ba23. St. Nicholas Church Complex (11.9 ha) TQ 688896

This Site is primarily designated in recognition of its reptile populations, although the extent of relatively unimproved, unintensively managed grassland is also important. The site is known to support Great Crested and Smooth Newts, Slow-worm, Common Lizards and Adder, making it one of the more important herptile sites in the south of the county.

The tall, unmanaged grassland to the north of the church is typically dominated by Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Creeping Bent-grass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) with few herb species except along the path edges, where the species include Zig-zag Clover (*Trifolium medium*).

Further north, scrubby meadows contains a more species-rich sward, which includes Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Pepper Saxifrage (*Silau silaus*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus uliginosus*), Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) and the grasses Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) and Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*). A section of scrubby woodland to the west contains Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and provides a valuable nesting and foraging habitat for birds. The habitats as a whole support a variety of birds, mammals and invertebrates in a predominantly urban environment. The Nationally Scarce (Nb) and Essex Red Data List pyralid moth *Calamatropha paludella* occurs here near to a pond, where the larvae live within the leaves of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and Scarce Emerald damselfly has also been recorded by the pond.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows, Ponds

**Selection Criteria:** HC5 – Woody Scrub  
HC9 – Lowland Meadows

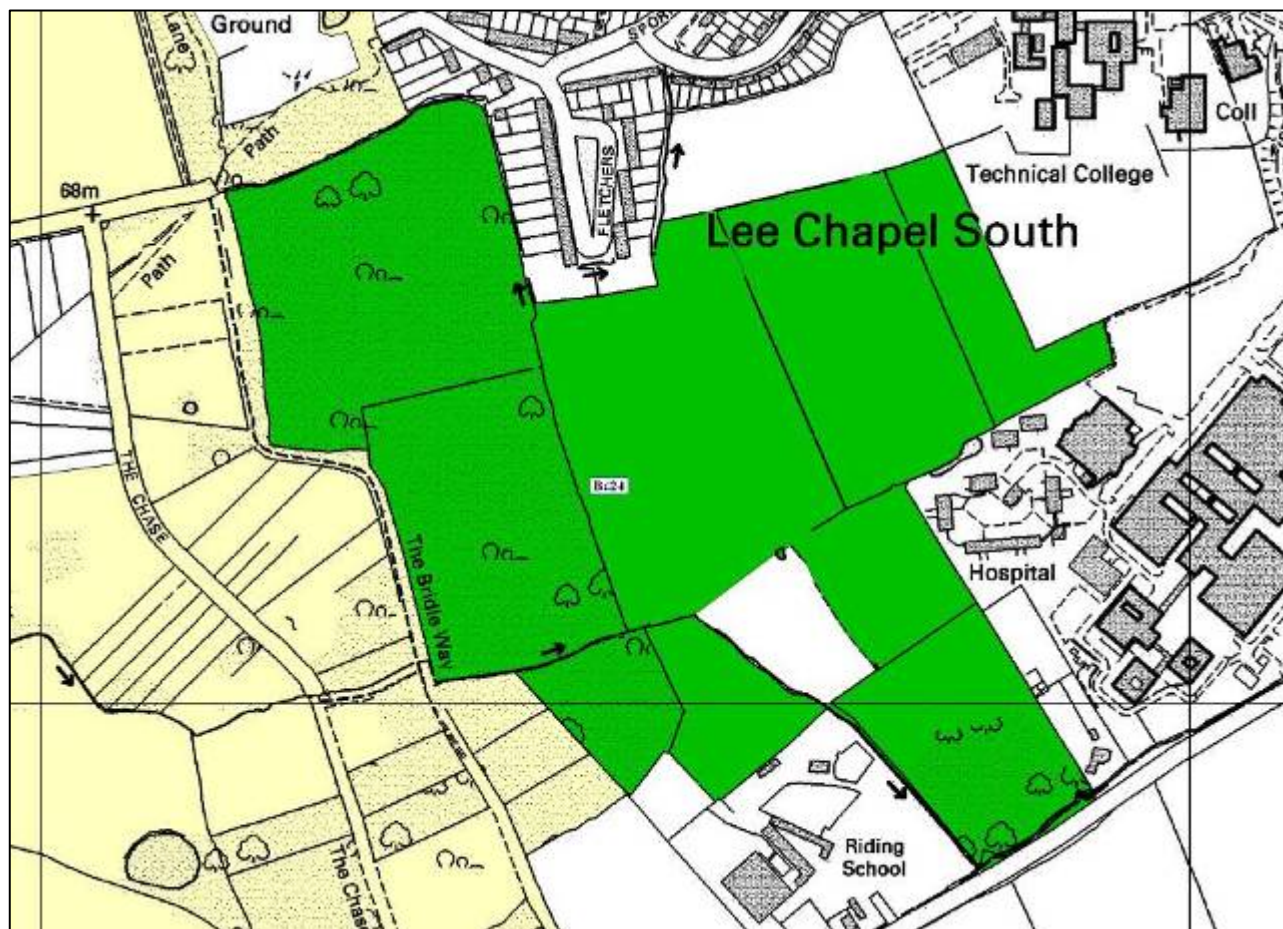
HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland  
SC16 –Hotspots for Reptile Diversity

**Rationale:** The main grassland is a modified form of the NVC MG5 community and so qualifies as a UK BAP habitat and allows the use of criterion HC9. The other grassland nearer the church has become MG1, although it has potential for restoration, and so is listed under HC11. The scrub in the northern part of the site adds significantly to its conservation value. The site's reptile populations are sufficiently important to justify the inclusion of the reptile hotspot criterion.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba24. Dry Street Pastures



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### Ba24. Dry Street Pastures (27.7 ha) TQ 693874

This site represents a series of flower-rich pastures and other grassland habitats stretching from The Chase south-eastwards to Basildon Hospital. Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), Adder's-tongue Fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) and Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) have been recorded here. The invertebrate fauna includes several Nationally Scarce and at least one Nationally Rare (RDB) (and Essex Red Data List) invertebrates, including the Adonis Ladybird (*Hippodamia variegata*), the weevil *Ceutorhynchus campestris*, the flower-beetle *Olibrus millefolii*, the dung fly *Scathophaga scybalaria* and the Red Data Book fly *Myopites inulaedysentericae*. Also present is the Grizzled Skipper – a scarce Essex butterfly, but one which forms a meta-population of some significance within the grasslands of this Site and the Langdon Complex (Ba21). Adder, Slow-worm, Common Lizard and Grass Snakes have been recorded. In addition, the sections immediately adjacent to the Langdon Complex Site are likely to provide additional terrestrial habitat for the Great Crested Newts known to breed in several nearby ponds.

The washland habitat at the southern end of the site is flower rich with scattered willow scrub. Species present include Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus glaber*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*). The vegetation present suggests that it could be an important area for invertebrates.

The site includes a good network of hedgerows, some of which are of considerable age. Breeding bird records, some of which are directly related to these hedgerows, indicate an interesting and diverse community including significant species such as Turtle Dove, Reed Bunting, Song Thrush, Bullfinch, Skylark, Linnet, Yellowhammer and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows, Hedgerow, Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

**Selection Criteria:** HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes  
HC9 – Lowland Meadows  
HC26 – Post-industrial Sites  
SC1 – Vascular Plants  
SC16 – Hotspots for Reptile Diversity  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates  
SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages

**Rationale:** Most of the grassland qualifies as UK BAP habitat and so HC9 applies. The site contains good quality hedgerows surrounding semi-natural habitat and so HC8 applies. The washland section is classed as post-industrial. Populations of Adder's-tongue and Green-winged Orchid are strong enough to justify the SC1 criteria, but insufficient data is available for the other Essex Red List species reported as present. A population of Grizzled Skippers justifies the UK BAP Priority species criterion and four reptiles species have been recorded.

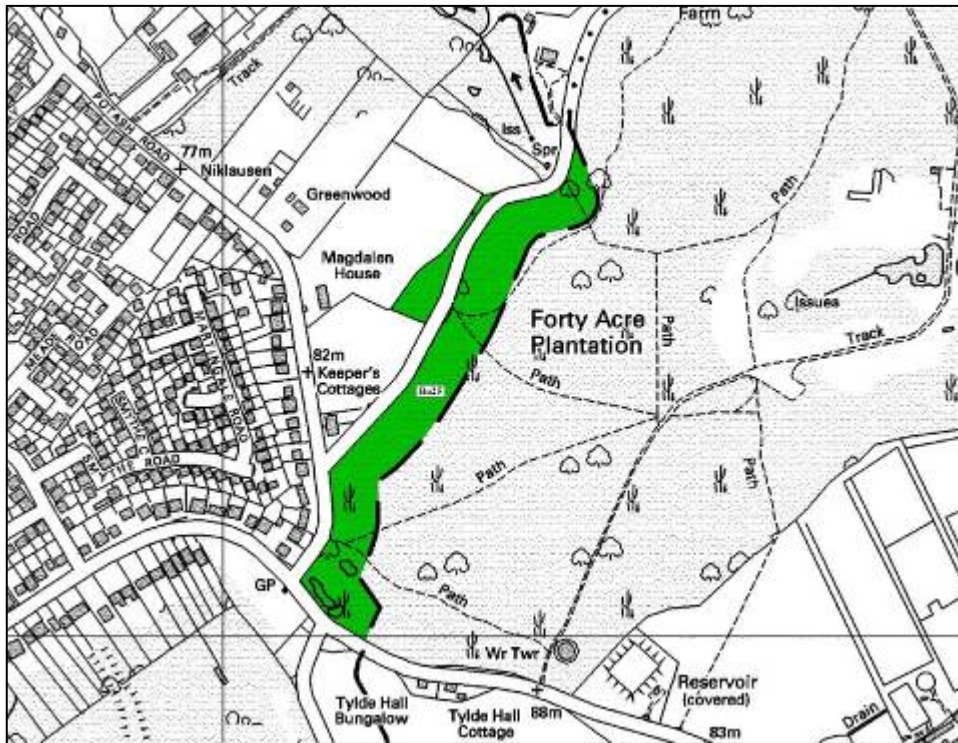
**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected following Local Wildlife Site review in 2004;

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; four fields added and one removed in 2008 following assessment of grassland.

## Ba25. Forty Acre Plantation



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### Ba25. Forty Acre Plantation (3.5 ha) TQ 693964

Only the western edge of this ancient wood lies within Basildon District, the remainder being in Chelmsford Borough. This section comprises actively coppiced Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) standards plus scattered Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) on the boundary banks. Within a matrix of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and (*Pteridium aquilinum*), the ground flora includes occasional, but locally abundant, Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*), occasional Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), locally abundant Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), some Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Hairy Wood-rush (*Luzula pilosa*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) and also Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*).

Although not ancient woodland, having been free of woodland cover during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the block of woodland to the west of Goatsmoor Lane contains coppiced Sweet Chestnut and a number of ancient woodland indicators, which may have spread from the old hedge bank on the western boundary. Species include Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Bluebell, Wood Anemone, Pignut and Blackcurrant (*Ribes nigrum*).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criterion:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

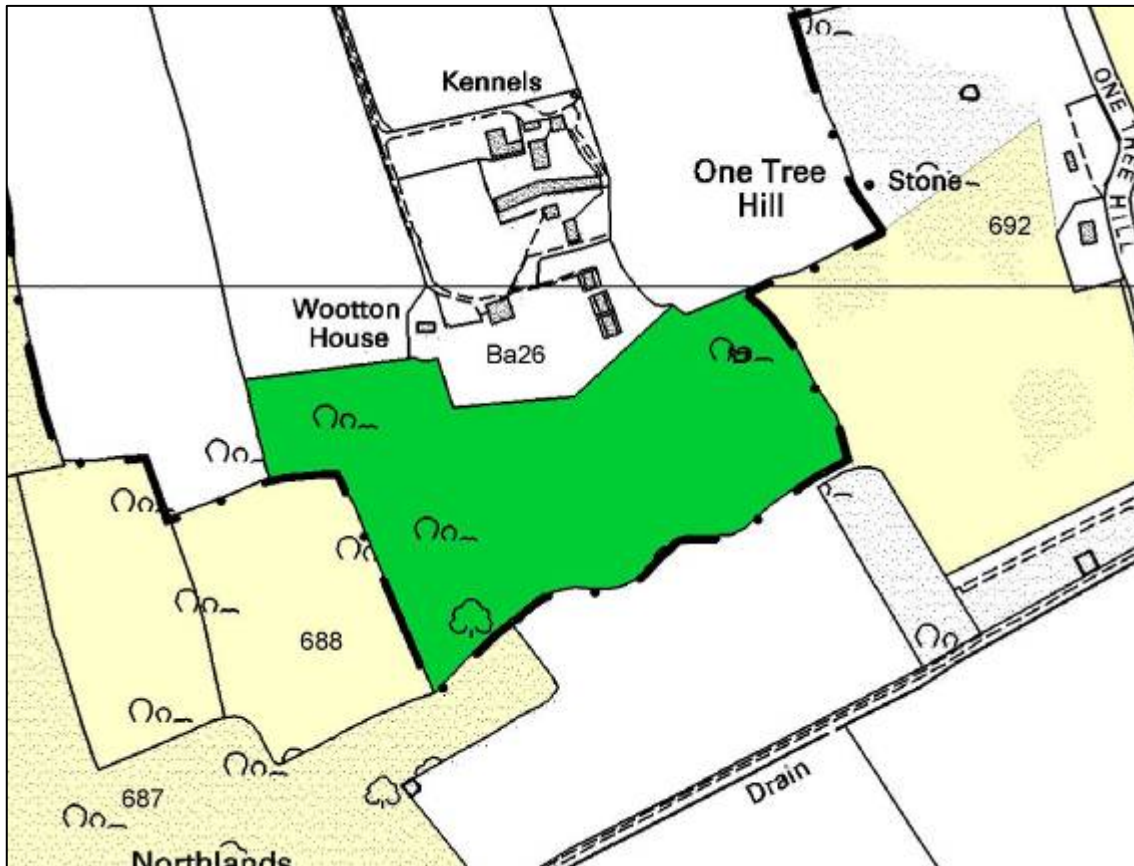
SC1 – Vascular Plants

**Rationale:** The main site features in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, justifying the HC1 criterion, but the western block isn't. It is a typical NVC W8 community and supports good ground flora and so it qualifies as UK BAP habitat and satisfies criterion HC2. The population of Great Wood-rush is significant enough for the site to meet the Vascular Plant criterion.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; woodland block to west of Goatsmoor Lane added in 2008.

## Ba26. "Kennels Wood"



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### Ba26. "Kennels Wood" (4.7 ha) TQ 694859

Forming part of the Country Park at One Tree Hill, this Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) scrub wood has a relatively open canopy of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) with occasional Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The increased invasion by Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) on the northern margin may be of some management concern, although this tree can be significant for small birds, which feed on the sometimes abundant aphid load of this tree.

The developing woodland flora includes Wood False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Hairy Brome (*Bromus ramosus*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) and Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*). Habitat diversity is supplemented by grassy rides that contain a good mix of grasses and herbs, in which Roesel's Bush-cricket can be found. Part of the site boundary is an ancient parish boundary earthbank.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** None

**Selection Criterion:** HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

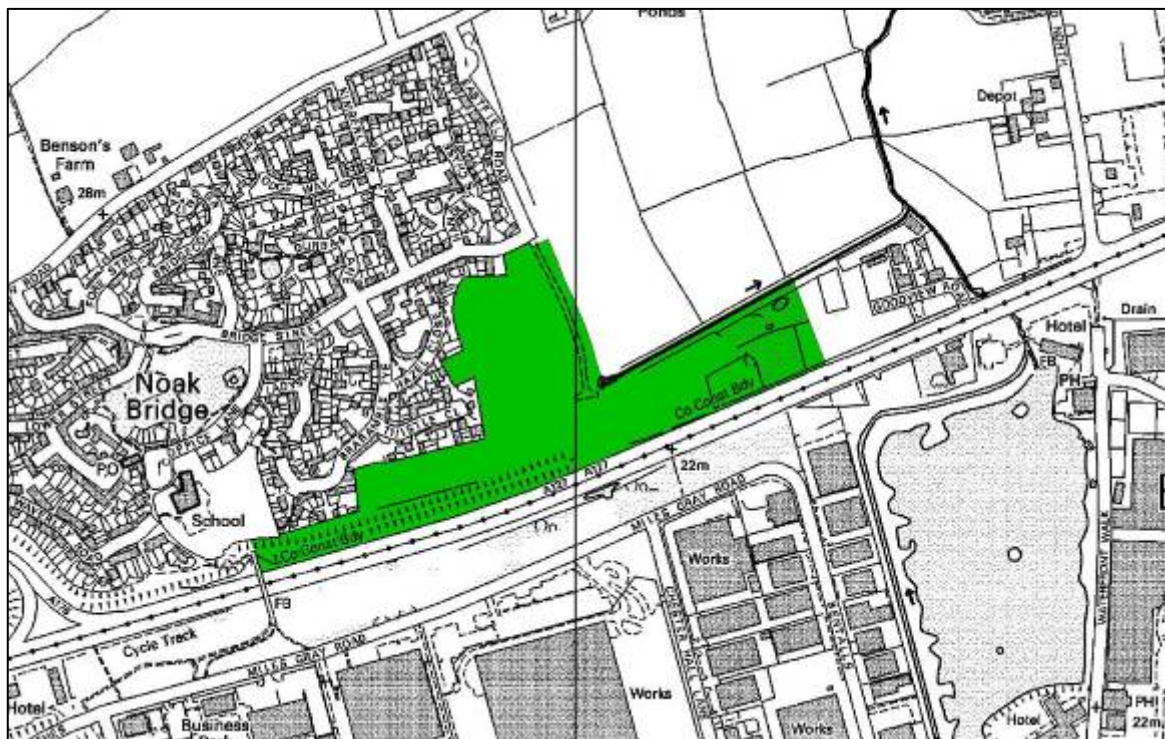
**Rationale:** Although not considered to correspond to the UK BAP Priority Habitat, this site is included on the strength of criterion HC2, as it is developing into an NVC W8 community, supports a diverse ground flora and, being part of the One Tree Hill Country Park, offers significant opportunities public access and education.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.



## Ba27. Noak Bridge Reserve



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### Ba27. Noak Bridge Reserve (8.7 ha) TQ 700905

This site includes the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve, created as a receptor site for Great Crested Newts and other herptiles, including Adder, during the construction of adjacent housing. A 2008 survey recorded a peak count of 95 Great Crested Newts from the five ponds on the site.

The majority of the site consists of a mixture of willow (*Salix* sp), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) scrub with Bullace (*Prunus domestica*) and young Oak (*Quercus robur*) woodland. Grassy meadows, clearings and path edges support a range of herbs including Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) and Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*). A number of ponds are scattered throughout the scrub, one of which has a strong population of the invasive alien, New Zealand Stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*) and another is choked with Floating Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*). Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) is growing around one of the larger ponds beside the entrance track.

Along the southwest edge is a band of broadleaf woodland planted on a high bund beside the A127.

#### UK BAP Priority Habitats: Ponds

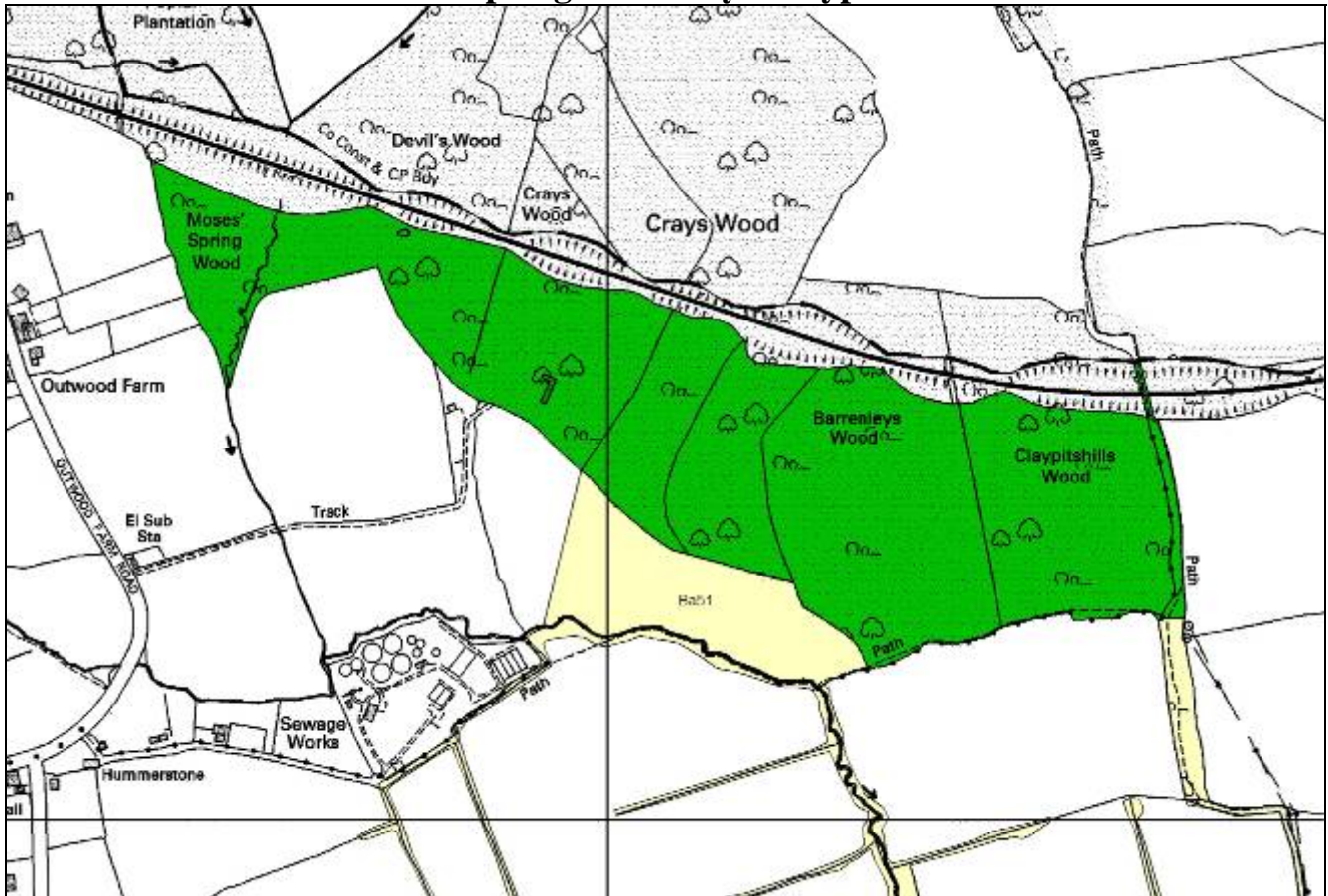
**Selection Criterion:** HC5 – Woody Scrub  
SC15 – Great Crested Newts

**Rationale:** The site is included under criterion SC15, relating to the high Great Crested Newt population breeding in the ponds. The Woody Scrub criterion (HC5) is added as this habitat is considered to be an important component of the ecological value of the site.

**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba28. Moses' Spring/Barrenleys/Claypitshills Woods



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### Ba28. Moses' Spring/Barrenleys/Claypitshills Woods (23.8ha) TQ 701944

This large, mainly ancient woodland complex, bounded to the north by a railway line, comprises a mixed canopy of overgrown Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice with standards of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash. In the extreme north-east corner is a clone of Elm (*Ulmus* sp.) suckers and some Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) invasion. The ground flora is typified by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). A narrow section of the site, to the west of the Barrenleys compartment is recent secondary woodland, but its canopy and ecology is now intimately associated with that of the surrounding ancient woodland stands.

A strong colony of the fern Hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) is growing on the eastern parapet of the adjacent railway bridge.

Results of recent breeding bird surveys include the following National UK BAP species: 2-3 pairs of Bullfinch, 1-2 pairs of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and 3-4 pairs of Song Thrushes. Other, locally significant species recorded recently include Nuthatch.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criterion:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

SC5 – Notable Bird Species

**Rationale:** The majority of the wood is Ancient and so satisfies criterion HC1; the remainder is of NVC type W8 and so can be included under HC2. The known populations of key woodland species, particularly Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, allow for the use of SC5.

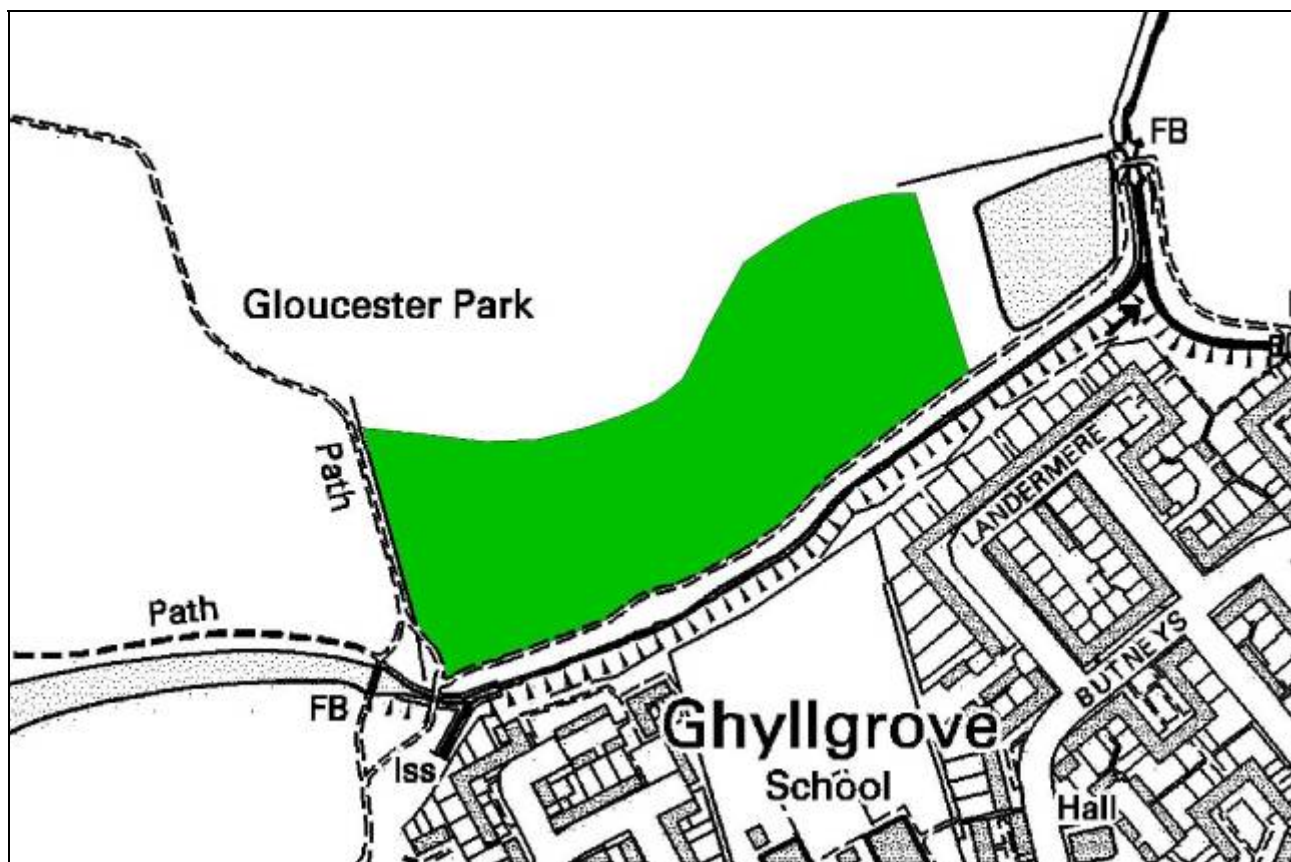
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change; minor extension in 2007 to include railway bridge; green lane in southeast corner removed in 2008 and added to hedgerow site Ba31.

## Ba29. Gloucester Park Meadow



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### Ba29. Gloucester Park Meadow (3.2 ha) TQ 703893

This area of grassland within Gloucester Park is managed to promote its floristic and invertebrate interest. The flower-rich sward is typified by the presence of Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Timothy-grass (*Phleum pratense* agg.), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Tufted Hair Grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*) with locally abundant Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and occasional Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*) and Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*). The Essex Red List species Corn Parsley (*Petroselinum segetum*) and Corky-fruited Water Dropwort (*Oenanthe pimpinelloides*) were recorded, the latter in three patches. Prickly Sedge (*Carex muricata* ssp. *lamprocarpa*) was also recorded.

Other species of note that have not been recorded in recent years include Dyer's Greenweed (*Genista tinctoria*), Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) and Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC9

**Rationale:** The site supports an NVC MG5 community and so qualifies as UK BAP habitat.

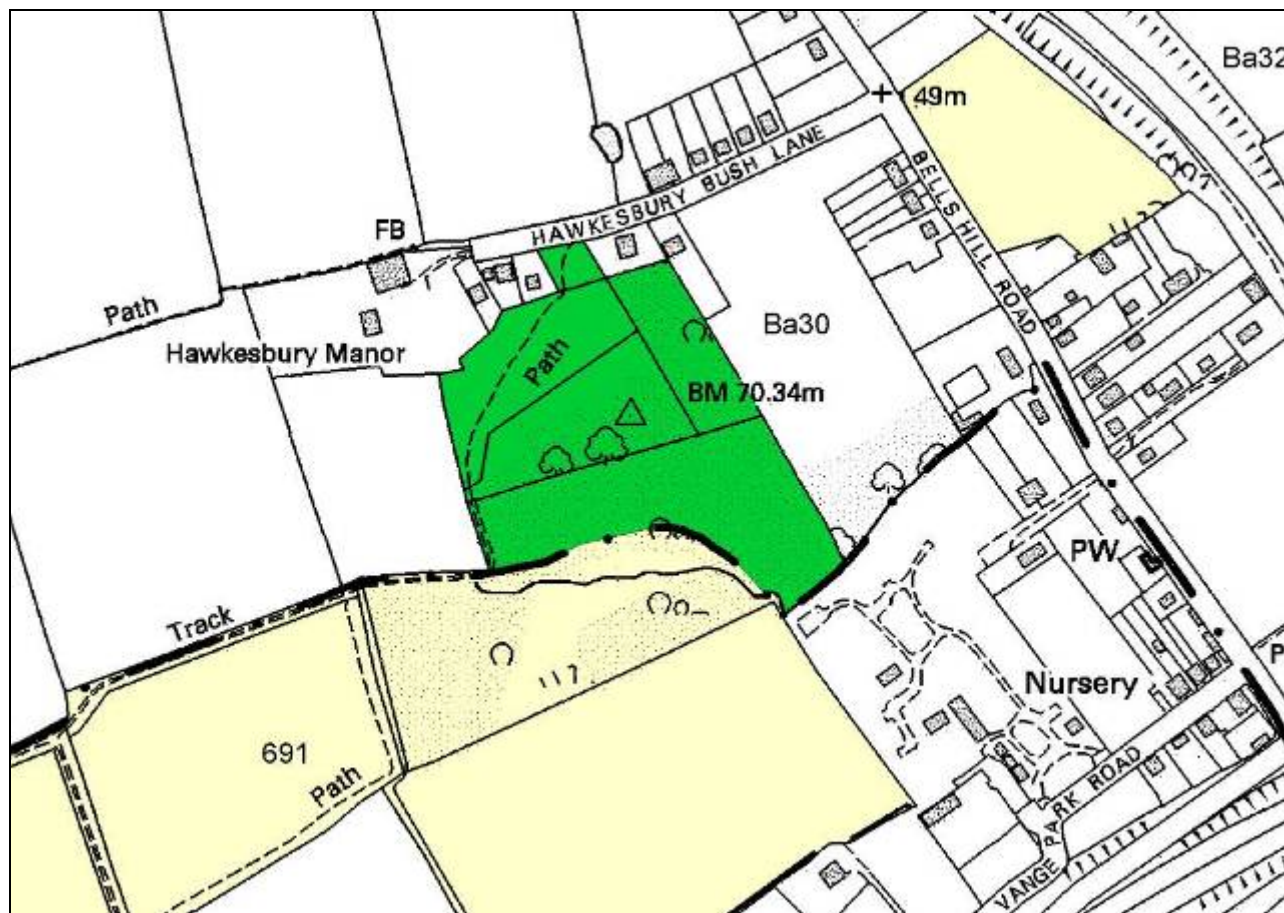
**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected after Local Wildlife Site review in 2004;

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; re-mapped more accurately in 2007.

## Ba30. Hawkesbury Manor



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### Ba30. Hawkesbury Manor (3.6 ha) TQ 705867

This site comprises grassland, scrub and woodland habitats producing a rich assemblage of flora and fauna. The site's value is further enhanced by its location adjacent to part of the Basildon Meadows SSSI to the east and Thurrock District's Dry Street Hill Fields Wildlife Site to the south, effectively forming one large hillslope wildlife site of considerable importance.

The relatively unimproved grassland contains a diverse mix of herbs and grasses including Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) and Common Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), the latter two species being of particular note. Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) has also been recorded. The encroaching Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) scrubland to the south also includes fragments of species rich grassland and grades into a small section of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) woodland to the east. Corky-fruited Water Dropwort (*Oenanthe pimpinelloides*) formerly grew along the southern boundary, but has been lost through scrub encroachment.

The site is known to support populations of two national Biodiversity Action Plan bumblebees: *Bombus sylvarum* and *B. humilis*, whilst the Site also qualifies under reptile selection criteria, supporting Adders, Slow-worm and Common Lizard. White-letter Hairstreak butterflies, associated with suckering Elm, and Glow-worm have also been recorded.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

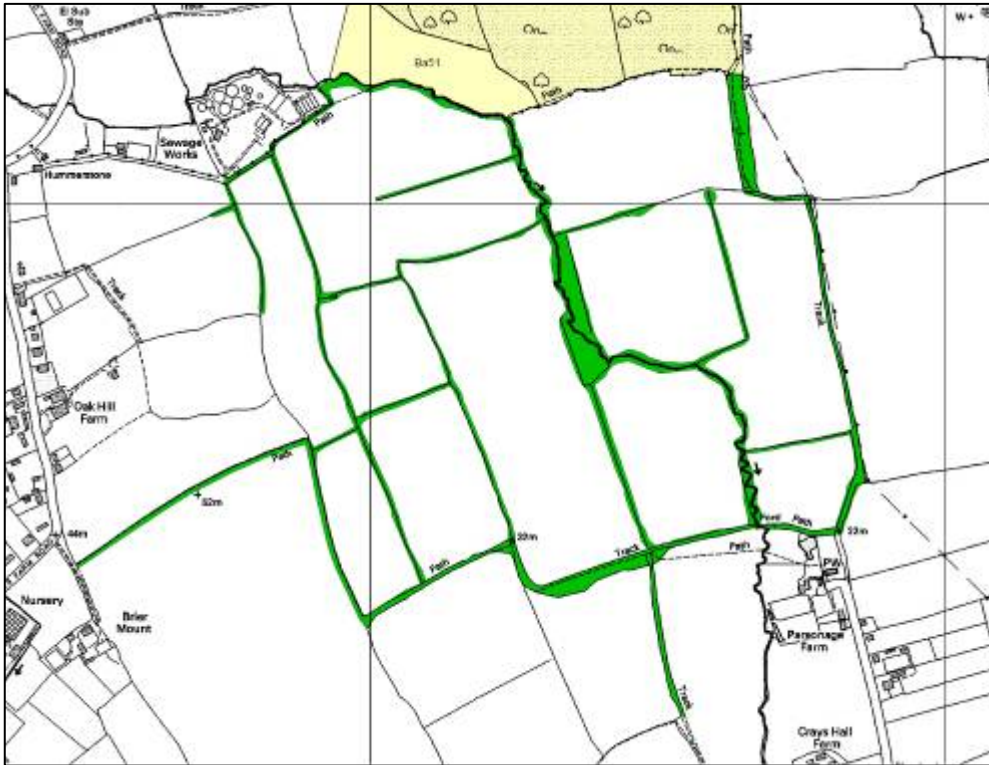
**Selection Criteria:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows  
HC28 – Habitat Extension Mosaics  
SC16 – Hotspots for Reptile Diversity  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates

**Rationale:** The main selection criterion is HC9, relating to the grassland habitat, with the scrub and woodland included under criterion HC28, Habitat Extension Mosaics. Criterion SC16, Hotspots for Reptile Diversity, is justified by the three reptile species present and SC18, UK BAP Priority Invertebrates, can be included because of the BAP bumblebees present.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba31. Parsonage Farm Green Lane



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### Ba31. Parsonage Farm Green Lane and Hedges (9.4 ha) TQ 705934

This site is based upon the green lane, hedgerows of which consist of Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*, planted), Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Willows (*Salix* spp.), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with large Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) standards bound the grassy centre of this ancient green lane. A good ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), Three-veined Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Hairy-brome (*Bromopsis ramosus*), Wood False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*), Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), Wood Meadow-grass and Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*).

The adjoining hedgerow network, largely to the north of the green lane, is not so diverse in its make up, but is of uniformly good quality, many with broad based, tall hedges and old standards. There is minimal semi-natural habitat associated with most of the hedges, but the site acts as a woodland wildlife corridor or "stepping stone" between the tree-lined River Crouch to the south and the large ancient woods of Billericay to the north.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Hedgerows

**Selection Criterion:** HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes

**Rationale:** This site connects to the extensive woodland site to the north and consists of good quality, old hedgerows

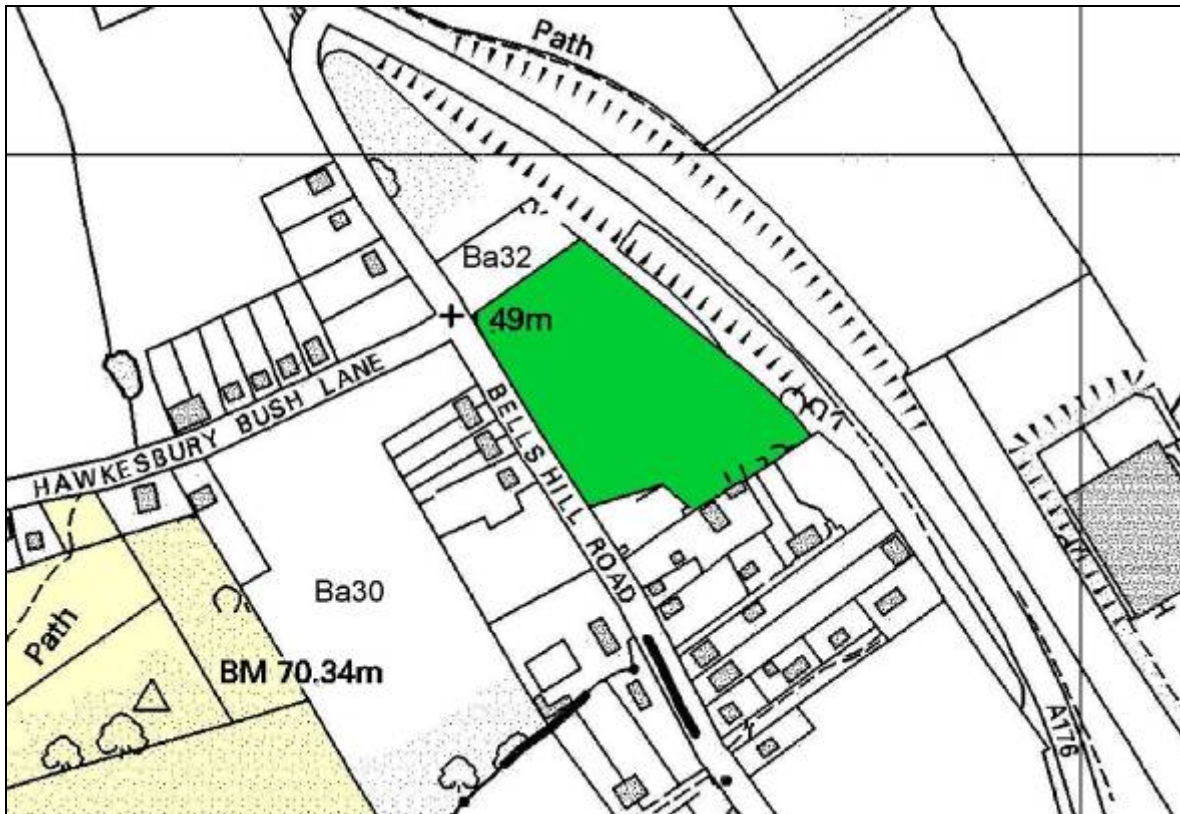
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; greatly extended in 2009, including green lane formerly part of Ba28.

## Ba32. Bells Hill Meadow



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### **Ba32. Bells Hill Meadow (1.5 ha) TQ 707868**

This is an old grassland site, with a wealth of scarce plants and animals having been recorded here in recent times. The flower-rich sward is notable for Green-winged Orchids (*Orchis morio*), Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Common Quaking-grass (*Briza media*), Pepper Saxifrage (*Silaum silaus*), Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) and Deptford Pink (*Dianthus armeria*) amongst Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) and Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*). Eight species of bumblebee have been recorded using the site, including the national Biodiversity Action Plan species *Bombus humilis* and *B. sylvarum*. Grass Snake, Common Lizard and Slow-worm have also been recorded. It is one of the meta-population sites for Grizzled Skipper butterfly, comprising a series of grasslands along the southern flank of the district.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows  
SC1 – Vascular Plants  
SC16 – Hotspots for Reptile Diversity  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Species

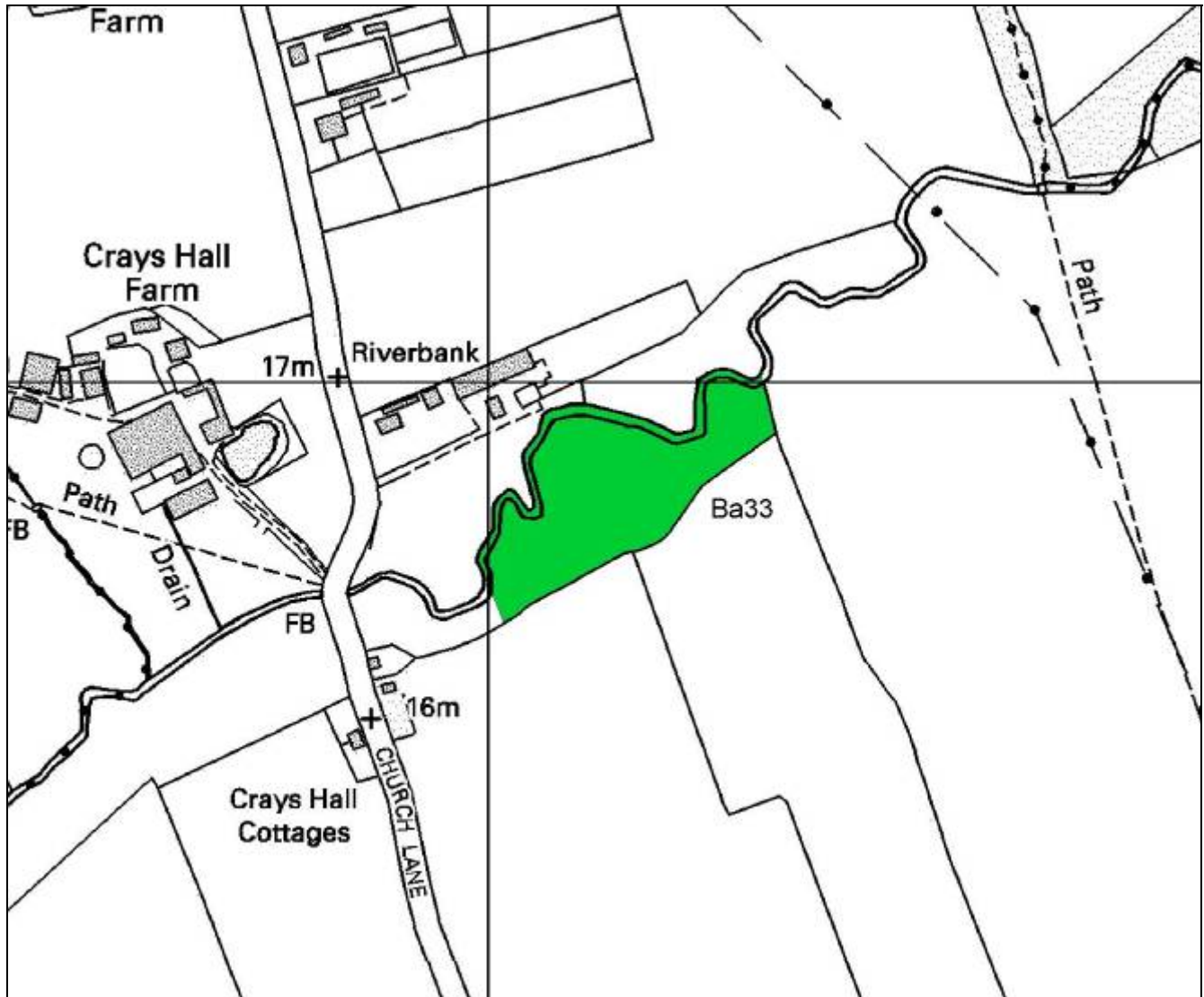
**Rationale:** HC9, Lowland Meadows, applies to this NVC MG5 meadow with SC16 Reptile Hotspot and SC18 UK BAP Invertebrate populations (bumblebees and Grizzled Skipper). SC1 for Vascular plants is also included on account of populations of Deptford Pink, Adder's-tongue, Yellow Rattle and Pepper Saxifrage.

**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:** Selected after full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.



## Ba33. Crays Hall Meadow



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### **Ba33. Crays Hall Meadow (1.4 ha) TQ 711929**

This riverside meadow comprises a varied mix of grass species including Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Creeping Bent-grass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*). Amongst the herbs present are Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and Pepper Saxifrage (*Silaum silaus*) the latter being generally indicative of unimproved grassland. This site represents one of the few remaining species-rich grasslands within the Crouch valley.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

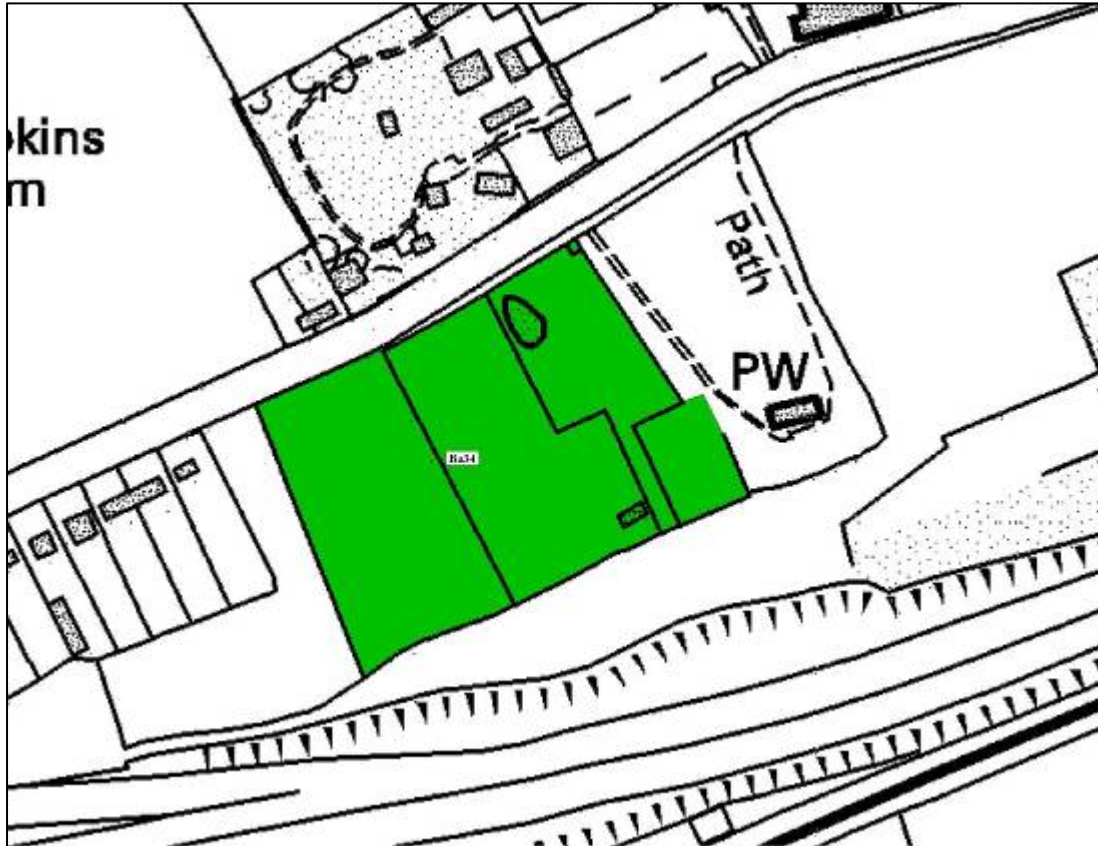
**Selection Criterion:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows

**Rationale:** HC9, Lowland Meadows, applies to this NVC MG5 meadow.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba34. All Saints Grasslands, Vange



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### **Ba34. All Saints Grasslands, Vange (1.9 ha) TQ 715867**

This site includes some horse grazed paddocks and a small part of the yard of a now redundant church with a less intensively managed flower-rich sward. The most widespread species are Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Autumn Hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*) and Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) are also present.

The site also supports Common Lizard, the Nationally Scarce (Na) Wasp Spider *Argiope bruennichi* and a good variety of grassland and hedgerow butterflies.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC9

**Rationale:** The grassland is of a NVC MG5 community.

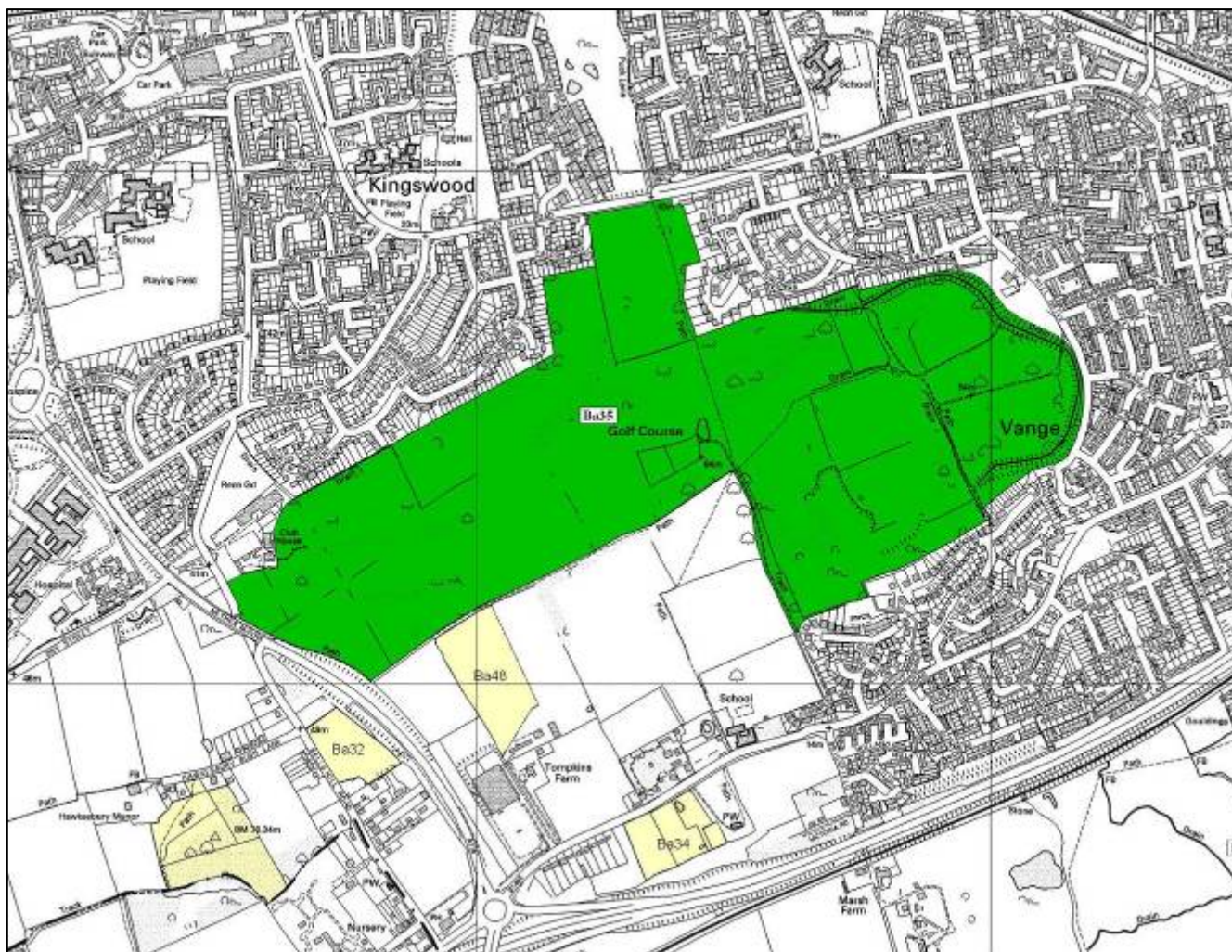
**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected after Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; boundary change in 2008 removing most of churchyard and adding adjacent paddocks.

## Ba35. Vange Hill and Golf Course



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### **Ba35. Vange Hill and Golf Course (73.1 ha) TQ 719874**

This Site extends the previous Vange Hill site to include the whole of the Basildon Golf Course, which has been shown to support a nationally significant invertebrate fauna.

The eastern part of the site, Vange Hill, supports areas of species-rich grassland amongst scrub and young woodland, and includes a series of semi-circular earthbanks and ditches. The grass sward is typified by the presence of Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Timothy-grass (*Phleum pratense* agg.) and Rough Meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*), with rougher areas being mainly False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), Cock's-foot Grass (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Common Couch-grass (*Elymus repens*). Amongst this, the most abundant herbs are Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), Bristly Ox-tongue (*Picris echioides*), Hoary Ragwort (*Senecio erucifolius*) and Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*). More notable herbs include Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*), Bythinian Vetch (*Vicia bythinica*), Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*), Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) and Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*). Some sections of the large ditches contain water and support both marginal and aquatic vegetation including rushes and sedges.

The golf course is broken up by a series of hedgerows and tree belts, with flowery margins to the fairways and several blocks of woodland. The fairway margins include important nectar sources such as Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and a variety of yellow Asteraceae. The main block of wood lies to the south and comprises Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), English Elm (*Ulmus procera*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) with an often dense shrub layer of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). The ground flora includes Wood False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) and Wild Clematis (*Clematis vitalba*).

Unsurprisingly, this flower-rich and diverse habitat structure has been shown to support a very rich and important invertebrate fauna. Three national Biodiversity Action Plan species have been recorded to date: the bumblebees *Bombus sylvarum* and *B. humilis*, plus the fly *Dorycera gramineum*. The species assemblage includes 20 nationally threatened Red Data Book species and over 60 Nationally Scarce species. Many of these species have quite specific and increasingly scarce habitat requirements, such as large expanses of flower-rich grassland with a nectar source available throughout the summer, areas of completely uncut grassland or dead wood nesting habitat. The dead wood habitat around the golf course was noted as being of particular importance and even some of the fairways provide foraging opportunities in the form of clover species.

Adders, Common Lizard and Slow-worm have also been recorded.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC5 – Woody Scrub  
HC9 – Lowland Meadows  
HCr28 – Habitat Extension Mosaics  
SC16 – Hotspots for Reptile Diversity  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates  
SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblage

**Rationale:** The site contains a mosaic of habitats that combine to give considerable conservation value, including NVC MG5 grasslands around the earthworks (HC9), blocks of scrub (HC5) and other grasslands and woodland (HC28). Three reptile species are present and three BAP invertebrates have been recorded (SC18), together with a wide range of nationally scarce and rare invertebrates (SC19).

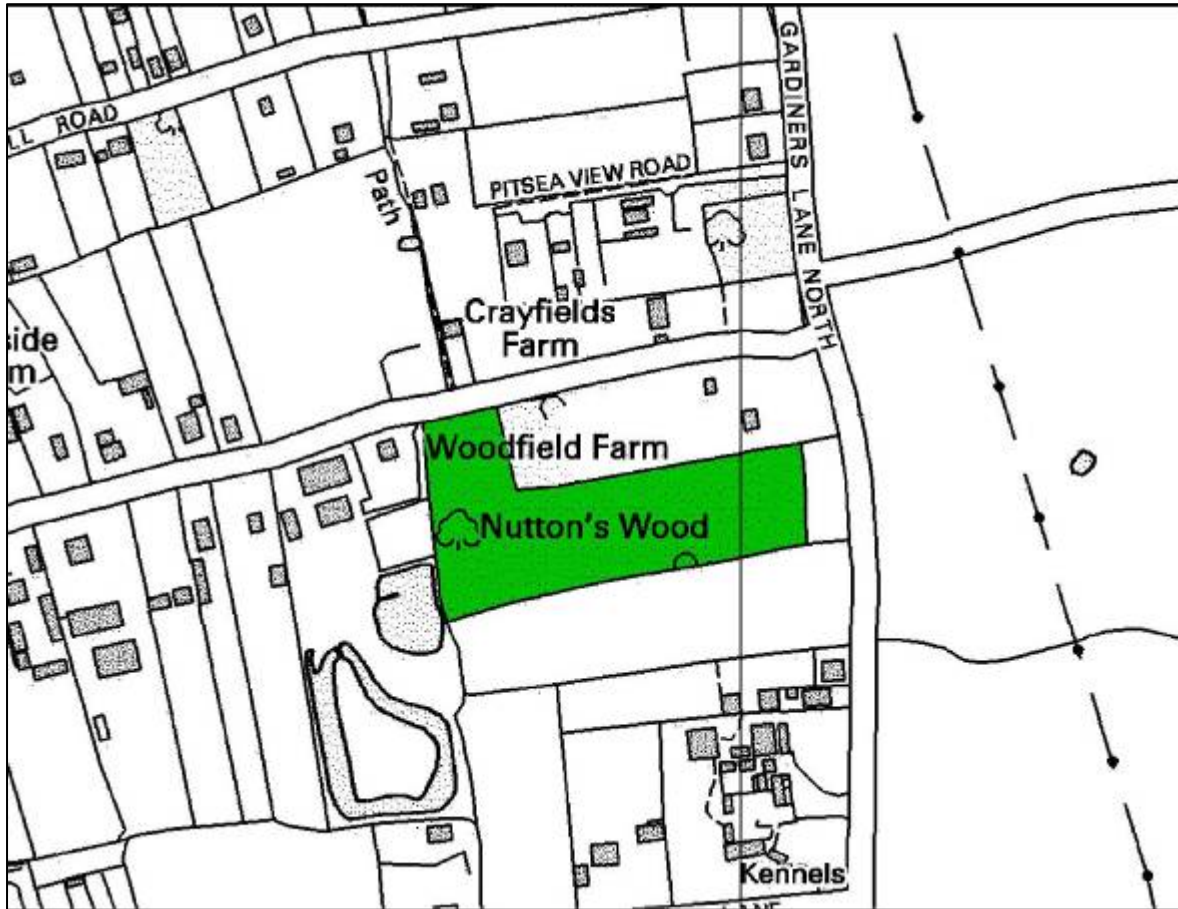
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; two existing sites combined and extended.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; small grassland area added in 2007; Basildon Golf Course added in 2008.

## Ba36. Nuttons Wood



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### Ba36. Nuttons Wood (1.7 ha) TQ 719917

This Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) dominated wood contains a sub-canopy of Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) with coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). Of particular interest are a number of Wild Service Trees (*Sorbus torminalis*), indicating the probable ancient origins of this wood. Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) typify the ground flora with Hairy Brome (*Bromus ramosus*) and Wood False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) on the roadside bank. The site includes a small section of more recent but very similar woodland at its eastern end.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criteria:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

**Rationale:** The majority of the wood is ancient and so satisfies criterion HC1; the remainder is of NVC type W8 and so can be included under the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion (HC2).

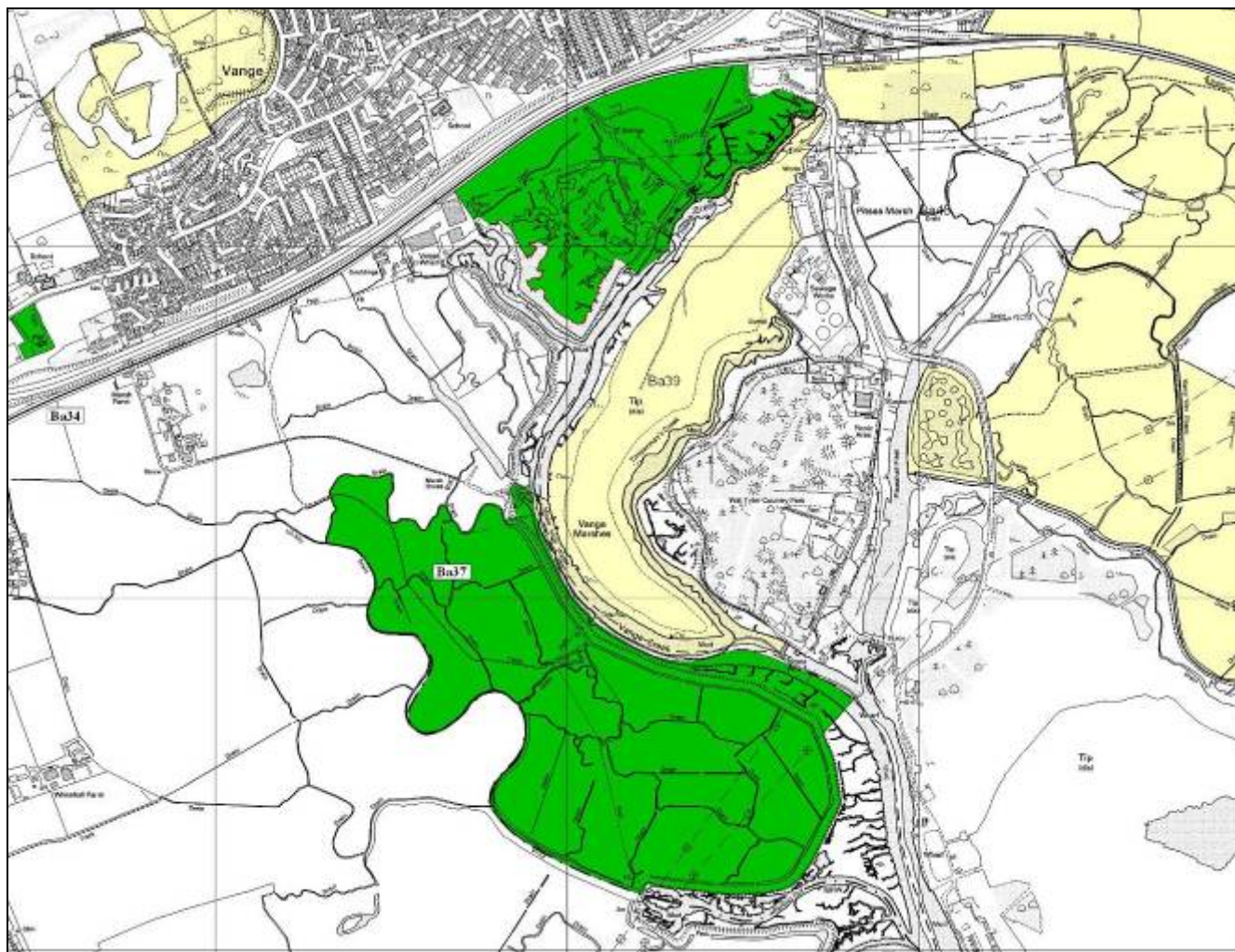
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004;

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; remapped in 2007 reducing the area.

## Ba37. Vange Creek Marshes



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### **Ba37. Vange Creek Marshes (122.1ha) TQ 730860**

Lying on the alluvial flood plain of the Thames estuary, these two sections of grassland comprise remnant grazing-marsh with associated ditches, dykes and reedbeds supporting a diverse flora and fauna and providing a natural extension to the Vange and Fobbing Marshes SSSI. They are both now under the management of the RSPB.

The section of grassland to the east of Vange Wharf, Vange Marsh North, has been modified since the Site's original identification as a SINC, by the creation of a complex of brackish to freshwater lagoons, cut by spits and bars of bare and poorly vegetated ground. The following breeding bird species were recorded in 2007: Avocet, five pairs; Lapwing, two pairs; Redshank, one pair; Reed Bunting, seven pairs; Cetti's Warbler.

The remaining fragment of grassland here is species-rich, with a sward of Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), Creeping Bent-grass (*A. stolonifera*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Timothy-grass (*Phleum pratense* agg.). The herbage is very rich, with good quantities of Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Autumn Hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*), Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus glaber*) and Hoary Ragwort (*Senecio erucifolius*). Noteworthy plants such as Strawberry Clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*), Hairy Buttercup (*Ranunculus sardous*), Sea Clover (*Trifolium squamosum*), Slender Hare's-ear (*Bupleurum tenuissimum*) and Pepper Saxifrage (*Silaum silaus*) occur more sparingly. This flower-rich sward supports the national

Biodiversity Action Plan bumblebees *Bombus humilis* and *B. sylvarum*, as well as the Nationally Scarce (Nb) bee *Melitta tricincta*. Overall, the invertebrate populations are likely to be very significant. Water Voles are present on a ditch that runs across the site and recent records suggest that Great Crested Newts occupy one of the ponds.

At the eastern end of the northern block is an area of saltmarsh and a significant bed of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), with Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) and Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) around its margins.

The bulk of the site comprises grazing marsh to the south of Marsh House, known as Vange Wick Marsh. The pastures comprise a mix of Meadow Barley, Crested Dog's-tail, Timothy-grass, Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and Common Bent-grass. The seawall supports the nationally scarce Sea Barley (*Hordeum marinum*) and Slender Hare's-ear as well as Sea Wormwood (*Artemisia maritima*). Elsewhere, typical herbs include Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Wild Carrot, Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Autumn Hawkbit, Strawberry Clover and Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*). The ditches support locally abundant Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and breeding birds include five pairs of Lapwing and two of Redshank. Again, the national BAP bumblebee *Bombus humilis* has been recorded here. Other, more typical invertebrates include the Nationally Scarce Ruddy Darter dragonfly plus Lesser Marsh Grasshopper and Roesel's Bush-cricket.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Coastal and Flood Plain Grazing Marsh, Reedbeds, Coastal Saltmarsh, Intertidal Mudflats

**Selection Criteria:** HC14 - Reedbeds  
HC20 – Coastal Grazing Marsh  
HC22 – Saltmarsh and Mudflats  
SC5 – Notable Bird Species  
SCr18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates

**Rationale:** All remaining coastal grazing marsh and all intertidal habitat outside of SSSIs should be selected under their relevant criteria. The site includes a significant reedbed. Breeding wader numbers justify SC5, while the two BAP bumblebees mean that SC18 is applicable.

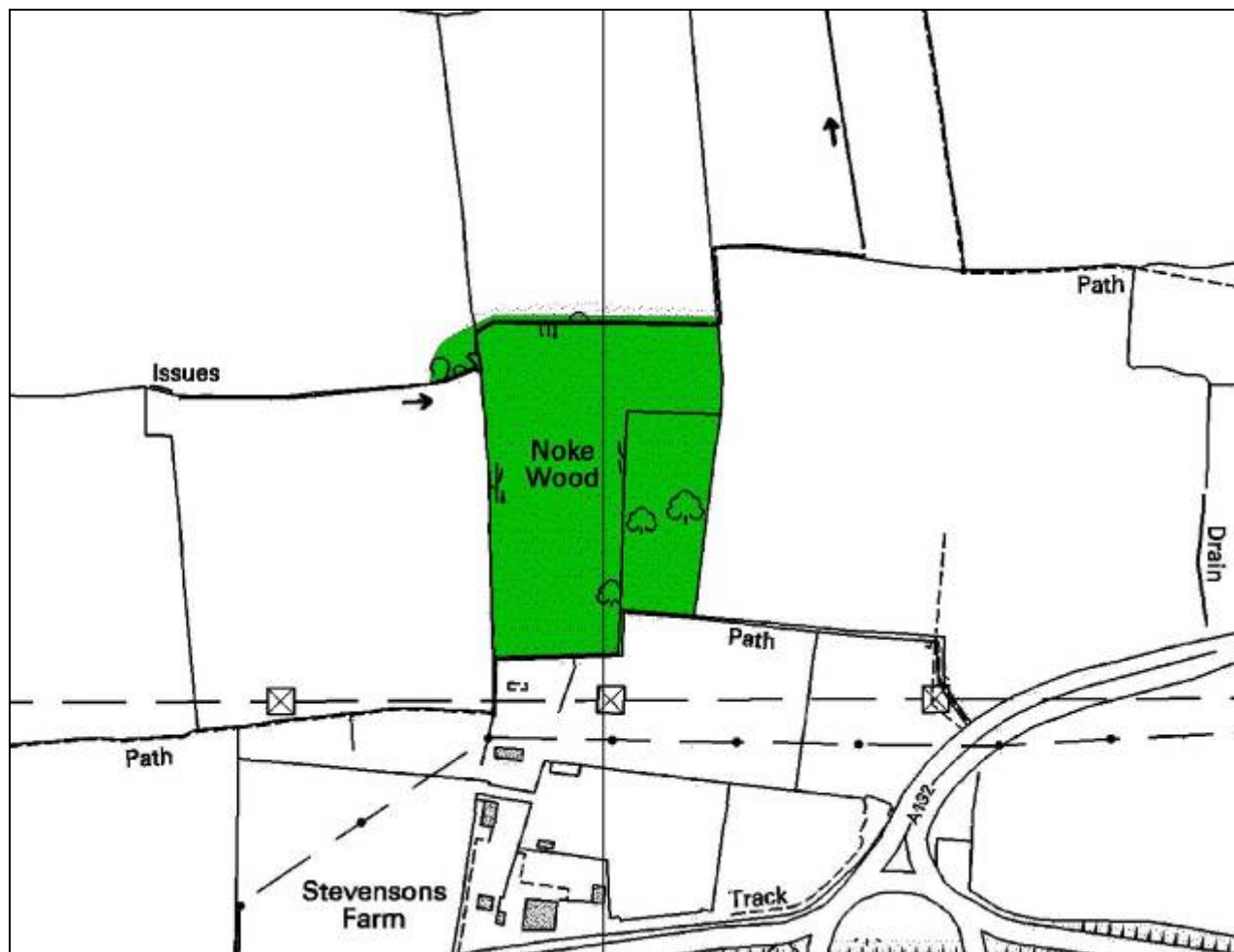
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; lagoon area removed and site extended to south; grassland to east separated and made into Ba46.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; extensively changed in 2007: lagoon and inter-tidal habitats added, grassland area removed.

## Ba38. Noke Wood



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### **Ba38. Noke Wood (4.2 ha) TQ 730915**

Noke Wood comprises both mature recent and possibly ancient woodland of predominantly Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice and standards and coppiced Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). A stand of Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is of note. An outstanding ground flora includes a rich mix of woodland species including Early Purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*), Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) and Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

**Selection Criteria:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites  
HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites  
SC1 – Vascular Plants

**Rationale:** Both woodland selection criteria (HC1 and HC2) are applicable and the Vascular Plant criterion (SC1) is included for the combined populations of Greater Butterfly and Early Purple Orchids.

**Site Selected:** 1992

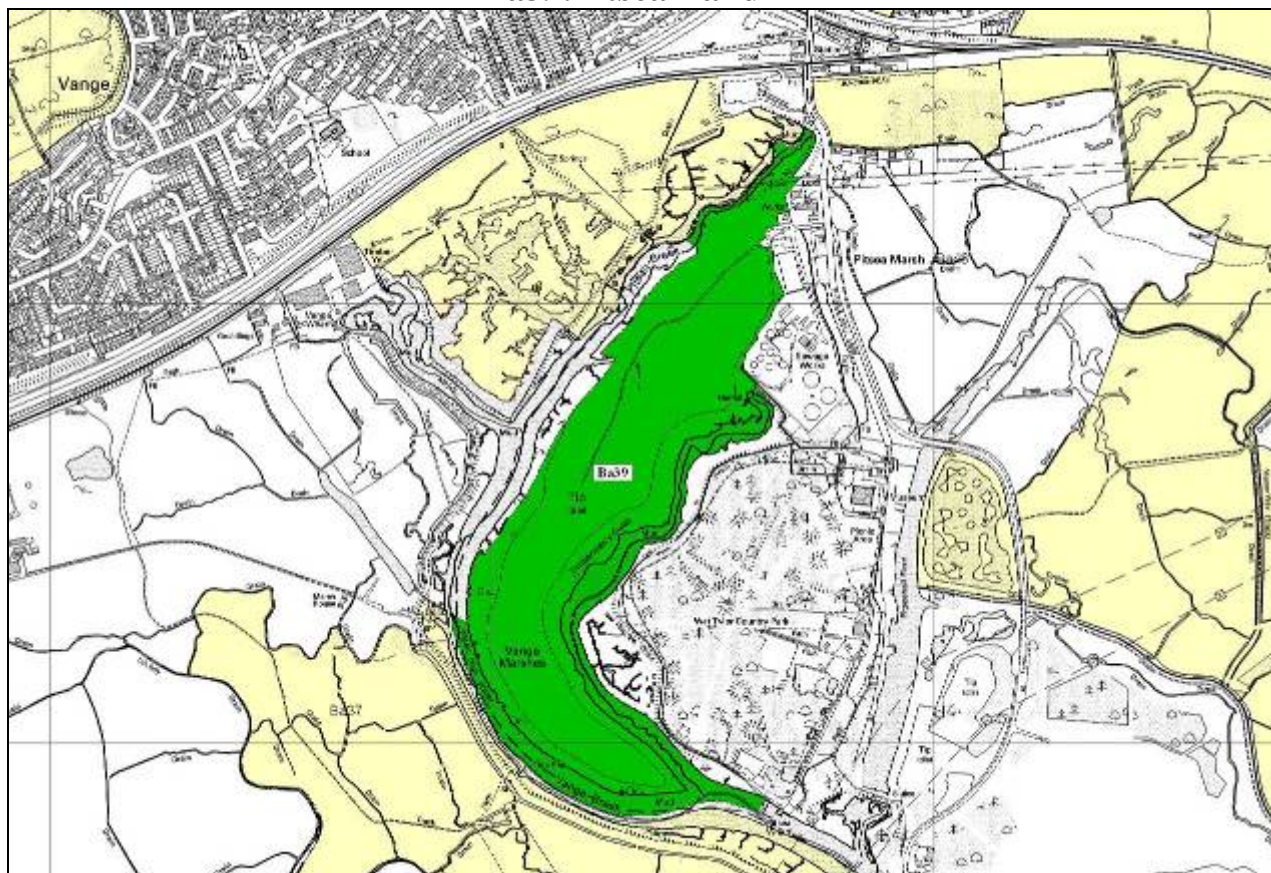
**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004;

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; minor change in 2007 with re-mapping of northern boundary.



## Ba39.Pitsea Landfill



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### **Ba39. Pitsea Landfill (46.6 ha) TQ 732865**

The site is largely made up of rank grassland dominated by False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Common Couch-grass (*Elytrigia repens*) and Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*). In areas with a sparser sward, more flower rich communities have developed featuring the Essex Red List species Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*) together with Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus glaber*) and Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*). The grassland is interspersed with scattered scrub and dense scrub thickets, composed largely of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and rose (*Rosa* agg.). It also includes a fringe of inter-tidal habitat along Vange, Pitsea and Timberman's Creeks.

The area of rough grassland that has developed over this former landfill site has been used as a receptor site for significant populations of Common Lizards, Slow-worm, Grass Snake and Adder.

The site also supports an interesting invertebrate fauna, including the Biodiversity Action Plan bumblebees *Bombus humilis* and *Bombus sylvarum*. Other notable (and Essex Red Data List) invertebrates include: the spiders *Singa hamata* and *Trachyzelotes pedestris* (both Nationally Scarce, Nb), the leaf beetle *Podagrira fuscipes* (Nationally Scarce, Na), the fly *Asiraca clavicornis* (Nb) and the Six-belted Clearwing Moth *Bembecia scopigera* (Nb).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land, Coastal Saltmarsh, Intertidal Mudflats

**Selection Criteria:** HC22 – Saltmarsh and Mudflats  
HC26 – Post-industrial Sites  
SC16 – Hotspots for Reptile Diversity  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates

## SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages

**Rationale:** As a landfill site, the habitat is post-industrial with adjacent, non SSSI intertidal areas. In addition the site has strong reptile populations (SC16), supports BAP bumblebees (SC18) and survey evidence shows that overall it supports an Important Invertebrate Assemblage (SC19).

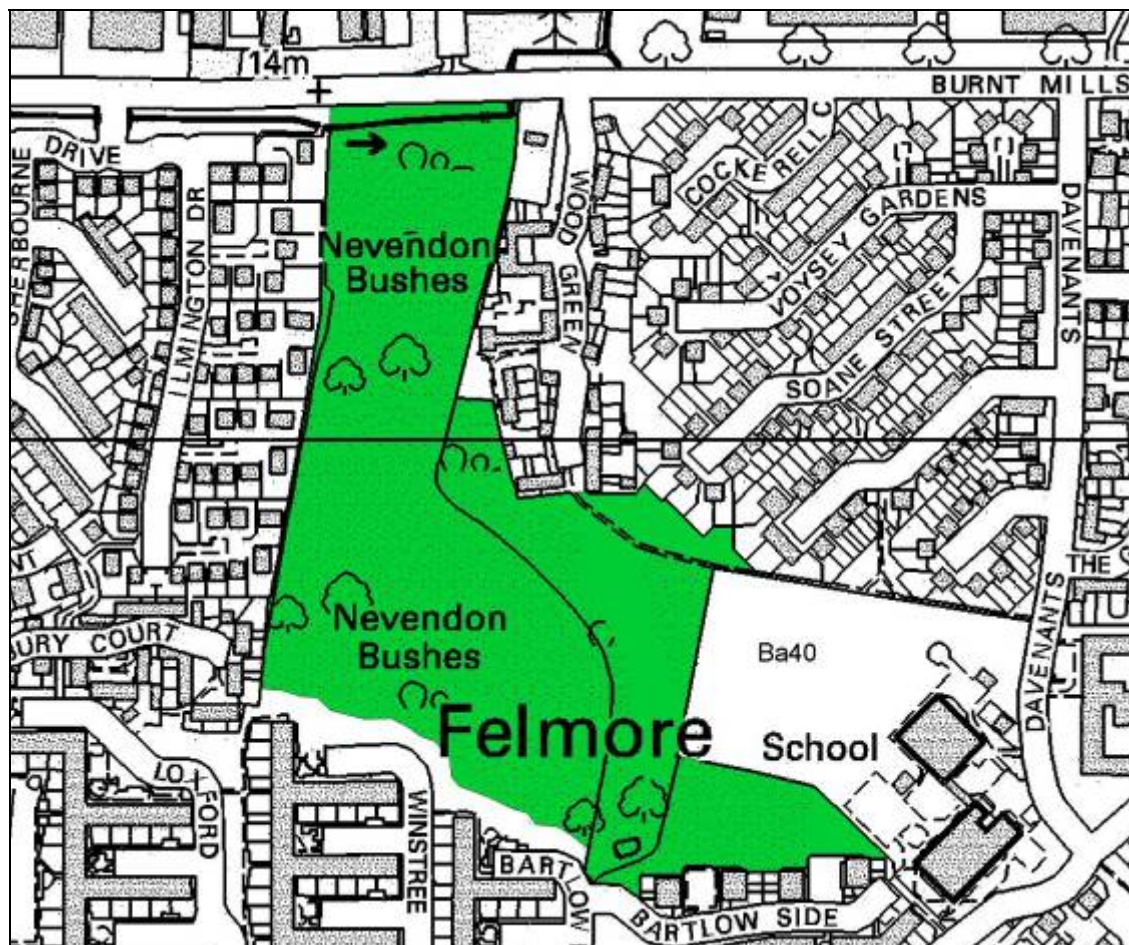
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; extended in 2008 to include adjacent intertidal habitat.

## Ba40. Nevendon Bushes



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### Ba40. Nevendon Bushes (6.2 ha) TQ 736899

This site comprises the ancient Nevendon Bushes, plus an area of recent woodland and grassland on its eastern side, providing a valuable wildlife habitat in an urban environment. The majority of the woodland canopy comprises Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), with a greater quantity of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) towards the east. The understorey comprises suckering Elm (*Ulmus* spp.) and a scattered shrub layer of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), with Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) also present. The ground flora is dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Ivy (*Hedera helix*) but also includes Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*) and Wood False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*).

A small pond adds to the habitat diversity, although this is becoming choked with the exotic *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*, as well as the native Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*). Marginal species include Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) and the pond is now known to support a breeding population of Great Crested Newts, with a peak count of 48 during a survey of the pond in 2006.

The recent scrub and woodland extension to the east is variable in composition. At the south-eastern extremity, the canopy is very similar to that of the main wood, with Field Maple, Hawthorn, Ash and Pedunculate Oak over abundant Ivy, with some Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Giant Fescue (*Festuca gigantea*) and other woodland herbs. Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) is locally abundant and this comprises the main shrub species to the north of the recent woodland extension. This advancing scrub is invading a former grassland site, with a central path now effectively forming a “woodland glade” or ride through the scrub wood. The remaining grassland is still

flower-rich and includes Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) and Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Ponds

**Selection Criteria:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

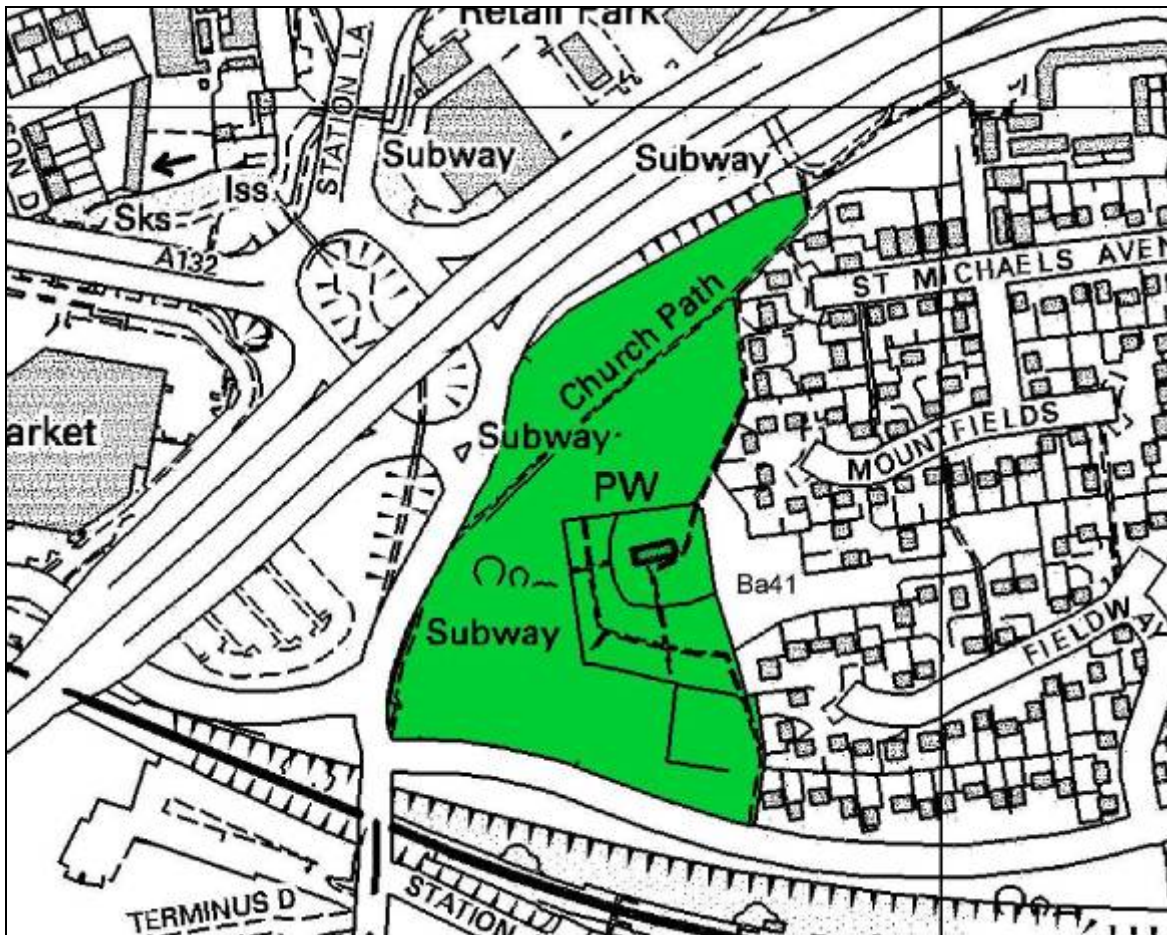
SC15 – Great Crested Newts

**Rationale:** Part of the site is included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory and the remaining woodland is of the NVC W8 community. The site is known to support a significant Great Crested Newt population, of importance because of its position within the urban area.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba41. Pitsea Mount



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### Ba41. Pitsea Mount (3.3 ha) TQ 738877

This site comprises sections of former plotland habitat, featuring a wide variety of fruit trees, flower-rich grassland and a redundant churchyard. The grass sward is typified by the presence of Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Meadow-grasses (*Poa* spp.) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), whilst herbs include Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Autumn Hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*), Corky-fruited Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe pimpinelloides*), Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and clovers (*Trifolium* spp.).

The site has a very important invertebrate fauna, including the national Biodiversity Action Plan bumblebee *Bombus humilis*, the Nationally Scarce (Na) digger wasp *Crossocerus binotatus* at only its second Essex site in over a century, the national Biodiversity Action and Red Data Book (RDB2) hoverfly *Doros profuges* (its first Essex record for over 20 years) and the scarce Essex butterfly, the Marbled White. Slow Worms are also present.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** None

**Selection Criteria:** HC5 – Woody Scrub  
HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates  
SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages

**Rationale:** The grassland on this site is not unimproved, but does resemble the NVC MG5 community and supports some key plant species. Scrub adds to the conservation value of the site. Invertebrate data show the site to support an important assemblage including two UK BAP species.

**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:** Added after Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba42. Wickford Riverside



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### Ba42. Wickford Riverside (6.0 ha) TQ741937

This Site is made up of the bank side vegetation of the River Crouch along with the river itself and some adjacent rough pastures forming a corridor that helps bring wildlife into Wickford town centre. The site is also well-used by local residents as a walkway into the urban centre. A good mix of grass and herb species includes Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Lady's Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Bulbous Buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*) and Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*). The block of semi-improved grassland towards the southern end of the corridor contains Meadow barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) and Autumn Hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*).

A ruderal component in the vegetation helps to ensure that there is a long flowering season across the site, providing early spring nectar and pollen for insects such as the Tawny Mining Bee (*Andrena fulva*) and bumblebees such as *Bombus terrestris*. Common Lizard can be found in the rougher grassland areas. Together with the River Crouch and its floating and marginal vegetation, which includes Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*) and Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), this site provides a valuable habitat for insects, mammals and birds, being one of the few moderately species-rich grasslands remaining along the River Crouch.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows, Hedgerows

**Selection Criterion:** HC27 – Small-component Mosaics

**Rationale:** The site includes small areas of BAP hedgerow and lowland meadow habitat, but insufficient to select the site on those criteria, although the overall value of the site justifies inclusion.

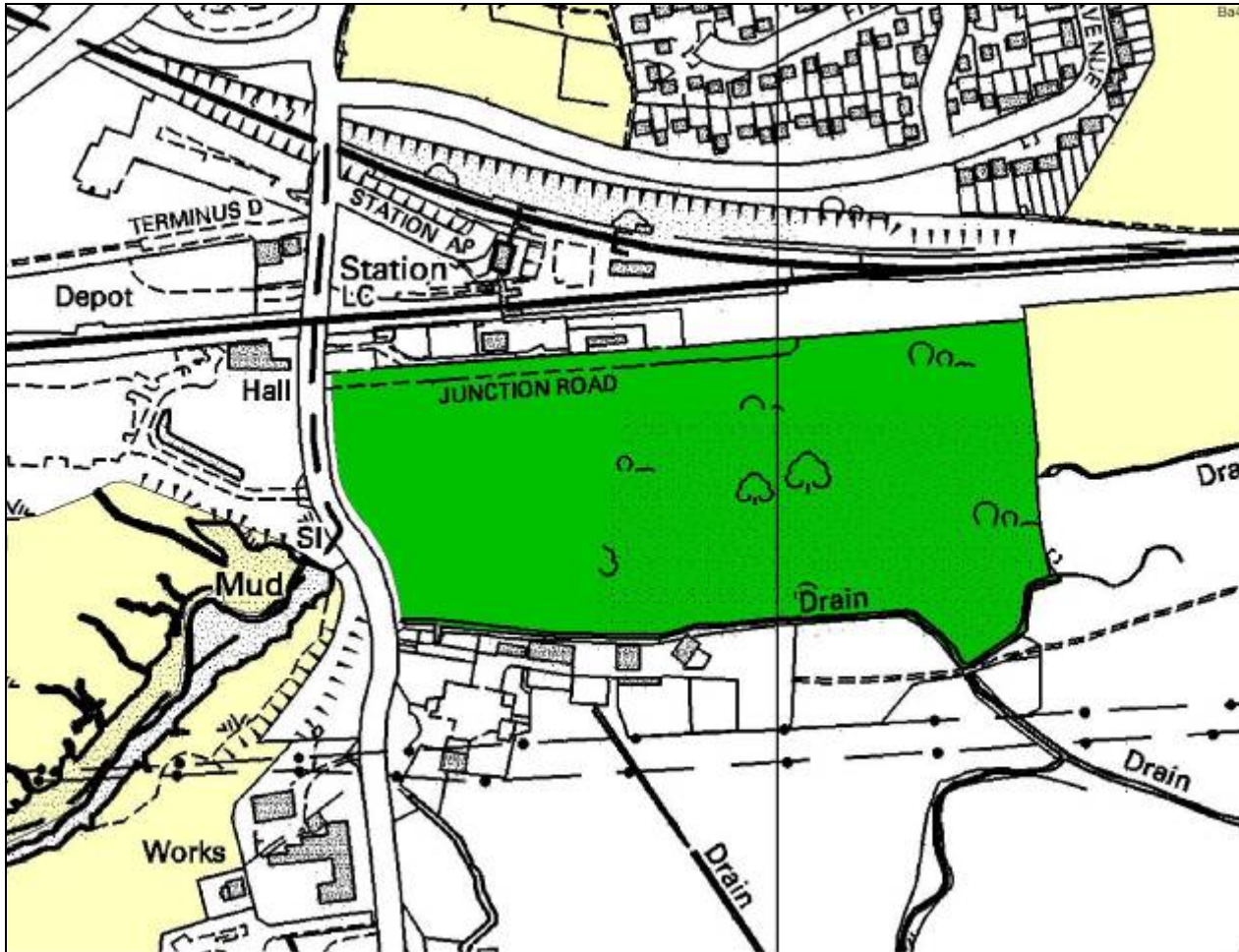
**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:**

Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; extension along river corridor.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; area reduced in 2007 when meadows were cultivated, but river corridor slightly extended to west.

## Ba43. “Untidy Industries” Site



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### Ba43. “Untidy Industries” Site (7.3 ha) TQ 741874

This post industrial “brownfield” site amply demonstrates the ecological value of such land. Recent surveys have shown the presence of nine nationally threatened Red Data Book species, plus a further 41 Nationally Scarce species. This invertebrate assemblage is supported by the environmentally stressed but flower-rich disturbed ground at the western end of the site and also the rougher grassland and scrub towards the east. The two national Biodiversity Action Plan bumblebees *Bombus humilis* and *B. sylvarum* have been recorded. It is thought that the combination of large expanses of flower-rich grassland for foraging and rough grassland bordering scrub for nesting is vital for the survival of these species.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

**Selection Criteria:** HC26 – Post-industrial Sites  
SC18 – UK BAP priority Invertebrates  
SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages

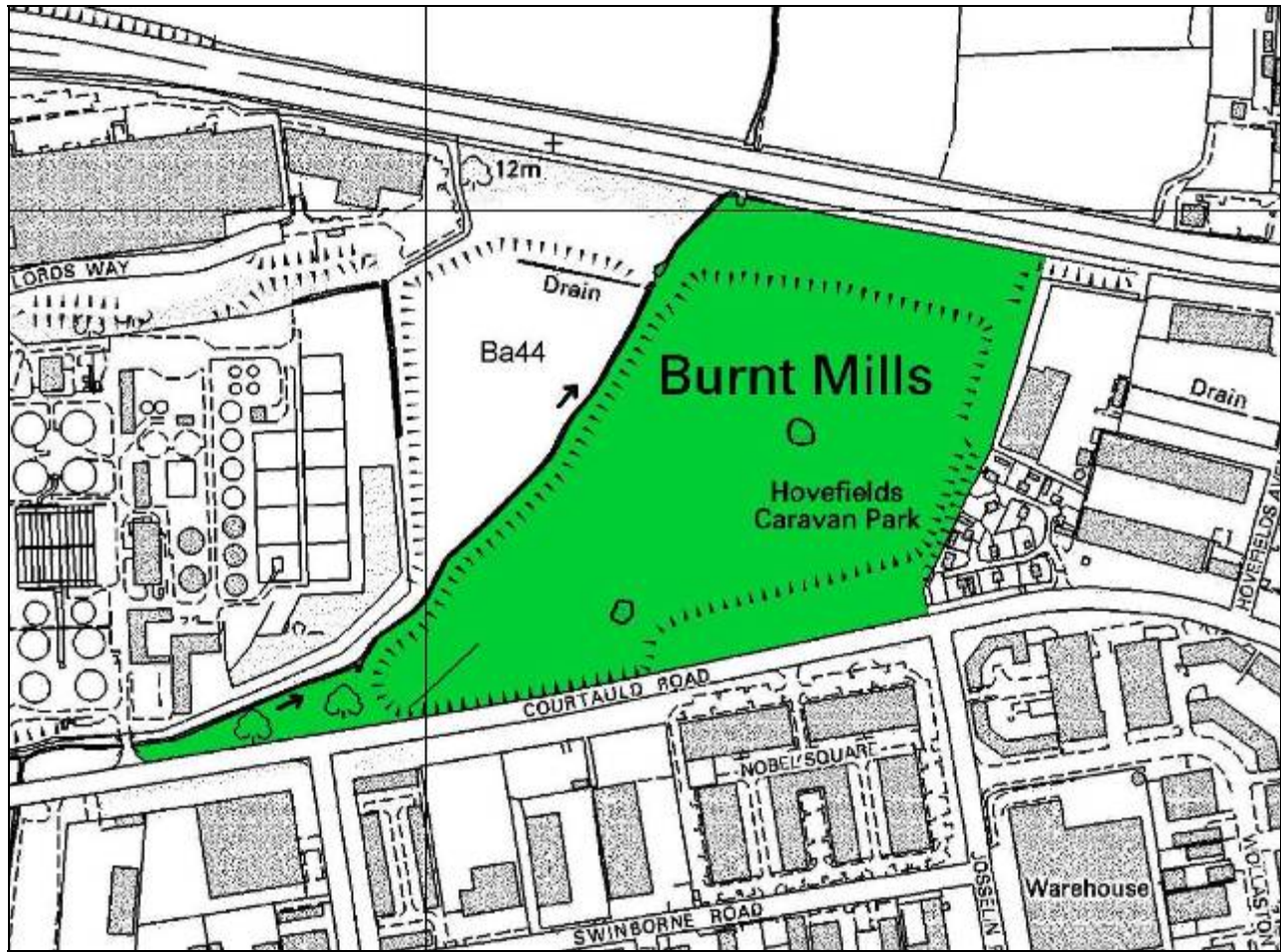
**Rationale:** This former industrial site is largely selected because of the quality and quantity of invertebrate data available including two BAP bumblebees.

**Site Selected:** 2004

**Revision Schedule:** Added after Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.



## Ba44. Burnt Mills



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### Ba44. Burnt Mills (11.5 ha) TQ 743908

This large, poorly drained site contains a good mix of wet grassland species, with a strip of marshy grassland beside the western boundary ditch being of particular interest. Here, Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), False Fox Sedge (*Carex otrubae*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) dominate the flora. The poor soil, possibly the result of topsoil removal, typifies the rest of the site and is reflected by a diverse mix of herbs, grasses and sedges including Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), abundant Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Pepper Saxifrage (*Silaum silaus*). The wetland habitats are important for its amphibian populations.

An invertebrate survey carried out in 2007 confirmed the continued presence of the bumblebees *Bombus sylvarum* and *B. humilis*, both UK BAP priority species, together with a wide range of other nationally significant invertebrates. As an engineered flood pound area, the site's ecology can to an extent, be likened to that of older river flood plain grasslands, but it also exhibits many of the habitat features that characterise valuable post-industrial sites.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

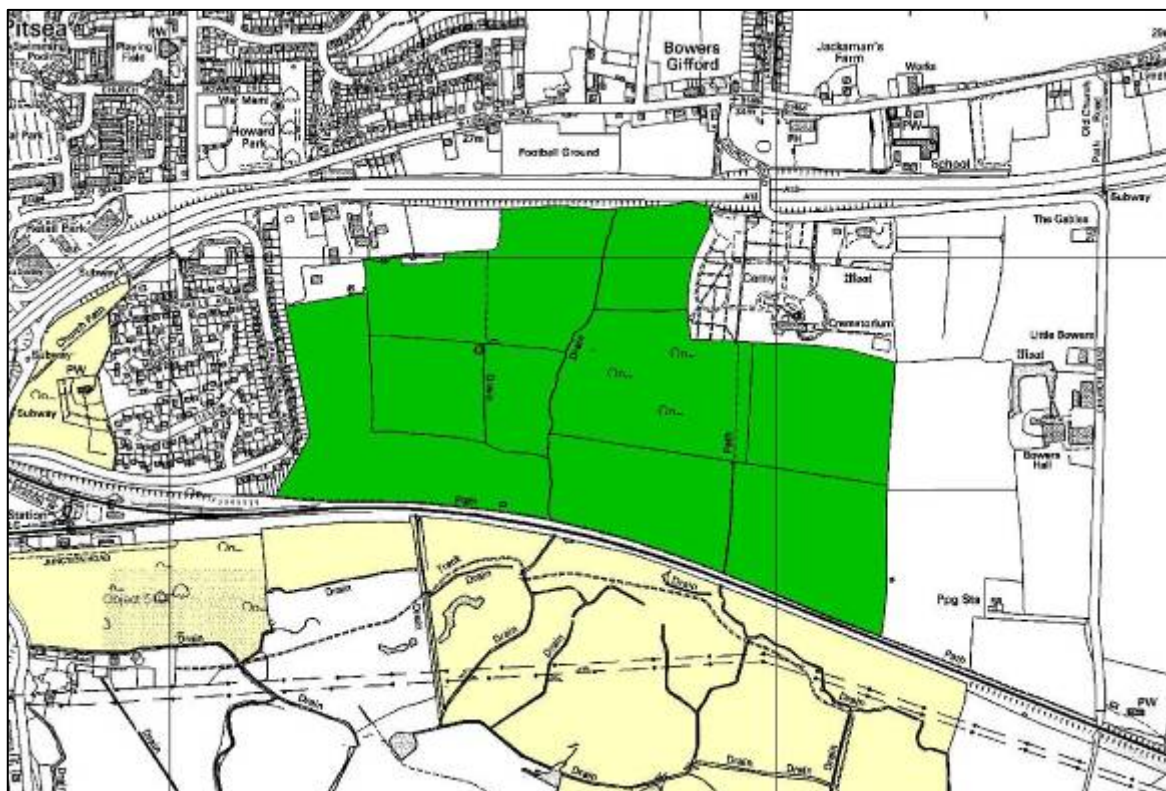
**Selection Criteria:** HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands  
HC26 – Post-industrial Sites  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates  
SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages

**Rationale:** This site was engineered as a washland and so should be considered as post-industrial. It has valuable grasslands, but they are not unimproved and so qualify under the other neutral grassland criterion. Good invertebrate data reveals a wide range of nationally scarce and rare species including two BAP bumblebees.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba45. Bowers Gifford Grasslands



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### Ba45. Bowers Gifford Grasslands (43.5 ha) TQ 747875

This series of unintensively managed hill-slope grasslands is flower-rich, is likely to support interesting invertebrate populations and, despite the intervening railway line, provides a semi-natural extension to the grasslands and marshes to the south. Its principal point of interest is the large population of Hairy Vetchling (*Lathyrus hirsutus*) spread across the lower slopes. Although there is no universal consensus on whether or not this plant is truly native to Britain, it has been known in south Essex for centuries and is clearly well at home on the dry grassy slopes of the north Thames estuary in Essex.

The sward elsewhere comprises a mixture of Creeping Bent-grass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Meadow Brome (*Bromus commutatus*), Timothy-grass (*Phleum pratense* agg.) and Meadow-grasses (*Poa* spp.). The herbs include unusually large quantities of Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), plus Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Autumn Hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), Corn Parsley (*Petroselinum segetum*), Hairy Buttercup (*Ranunculus sardous*) and Common Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*). Butterfly species note included Small Heath, Small Copper and the Essex Red List species Marbled White.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows  
SC1 – Vascular Plants

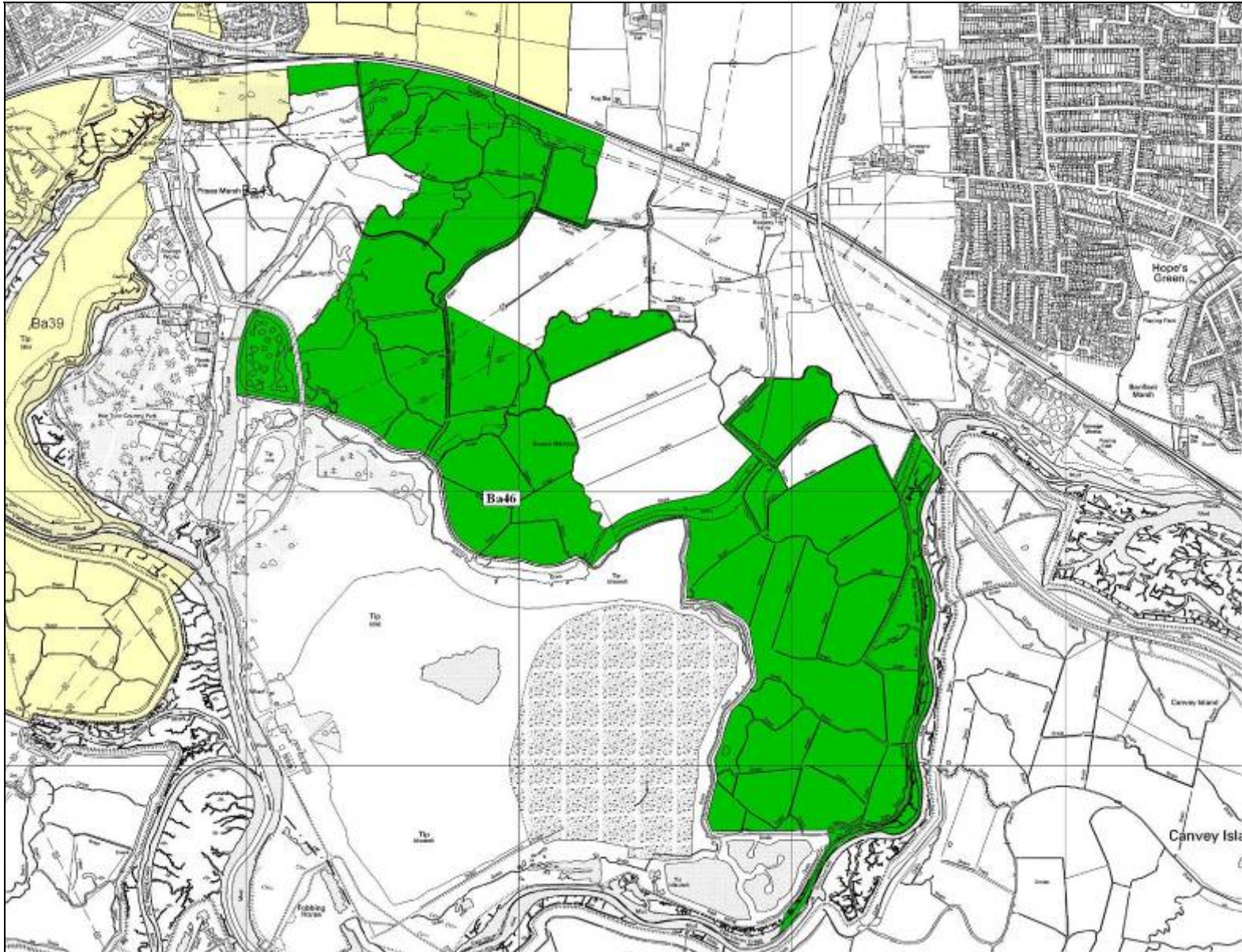
**Rationale:** The site is judged to support grassland that qualifies as the Lowland Meadows UK BAP habitat and so is given criterion HC9. SC1 is also applied for the population of Hairy Vetchling.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004.

Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009; additional grassland added in 2007.

## Ba46. Bowers Marshes



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## **Ba46. Bowers Marshes (244.2ha) TQ 750860**

This Site incorporates the former Pitseahall Lake SINC. This lake has been excavated to encourage breeding and overwintering waders and has already attracted many species such as Redshank, Lapwing and Ringed Plovers. Its ecological value lies in its close proximity to the intertidal habitats of Vange Creek, the wetlands of Pitseahall Fleet and the grasslands that comprise the bulk of this site. The site includes the non-SSSI intertidal habitat in East Haven Creek.

The grasslands in the northern unit, adjacent to the railway line, comprise a mosaic of grazing land, wet drains, Reed (*Phragmites australis*) beds and Sea Club-rush (*Scirpus maritimus*) swamp. The grassland sward is patchy in composition, with Common Couch-grass (*Elymus repens*), Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Creeping Bent-grass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) and Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) all attaining localised abundance. The herb layer is of note for the abundance of Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), which supports foraging bumblebees including *Bombus humilis* and *B. sylvarum*, both national Biodiversity Action Plan species. The Manor Way, an old trackway, is included within this part of the site. As well as providing additional foraging habitat for invertebrates and food and cover for birds, its form provides a useful windbreak for wintering birds on the open marshes. The weedy but flower-rich central track provides good feeding areas for small birds as well as attracting a variety of butterflies, including Small White, Common Blue and Small Tortoiseshell.

A total of 27 species of grass and over 65 species of herb has been recorded from the main body of marshes to the north of the landfill site. Species of note include the Nationally Scarce Stiff Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia rupestris*), Hairy Buttercup (*Ranunculus sardous*), Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus tenuis*) and plentiful Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*).

The ditch flora is also diverse, with Marsh Speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*) being of note, as a scarce Essex plant. Other species that are present and are characteristic of grazing marsh drains include Soft Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum submersum*), Fat Duckweed (*Lemna gibba*), Brackish Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus baudotii*) and Fennel Pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*). However, one of the most important features is the collective quantity of Reed (*Phragmites australis*), forming linear but extensive bands of reedbed, a biodiversity Action Plan habitat, which is of value for breeding birds and also a number of Reed-dependent invertebrates.

The ditch invertebrates themselves are of great importance, with several nationally threatened Red Data Book and Nationally Scarce species having been recorded. These include the beetles *Graptodytes bilineatus*, *Ochthebius pusillus*, *Enochrus halophilus* and *Limnoxenus niger*, the shore bug *Saldula opacula*, the midge *Dixella attica* and the Scarce Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes dryas*).

Other features of interest include the scattered population of Water Vole, breeding Skylark (both BAP species), Adder and Common Lizard.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marshes, Reedbeds, Saline Lagoons, Coastal Saltmarsh, Intertidal Mudflats

**Selection Criteria:** HC14 – Reedbeds  
HC20 – Coastal Grazing Marsh  
HC22 – Saltmarsh and Mudflats  
HC23 – Saline Lagoons and Borrow Dyke Habitat  
SC12 – Breeding Water Vole Colonies  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates  
SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages

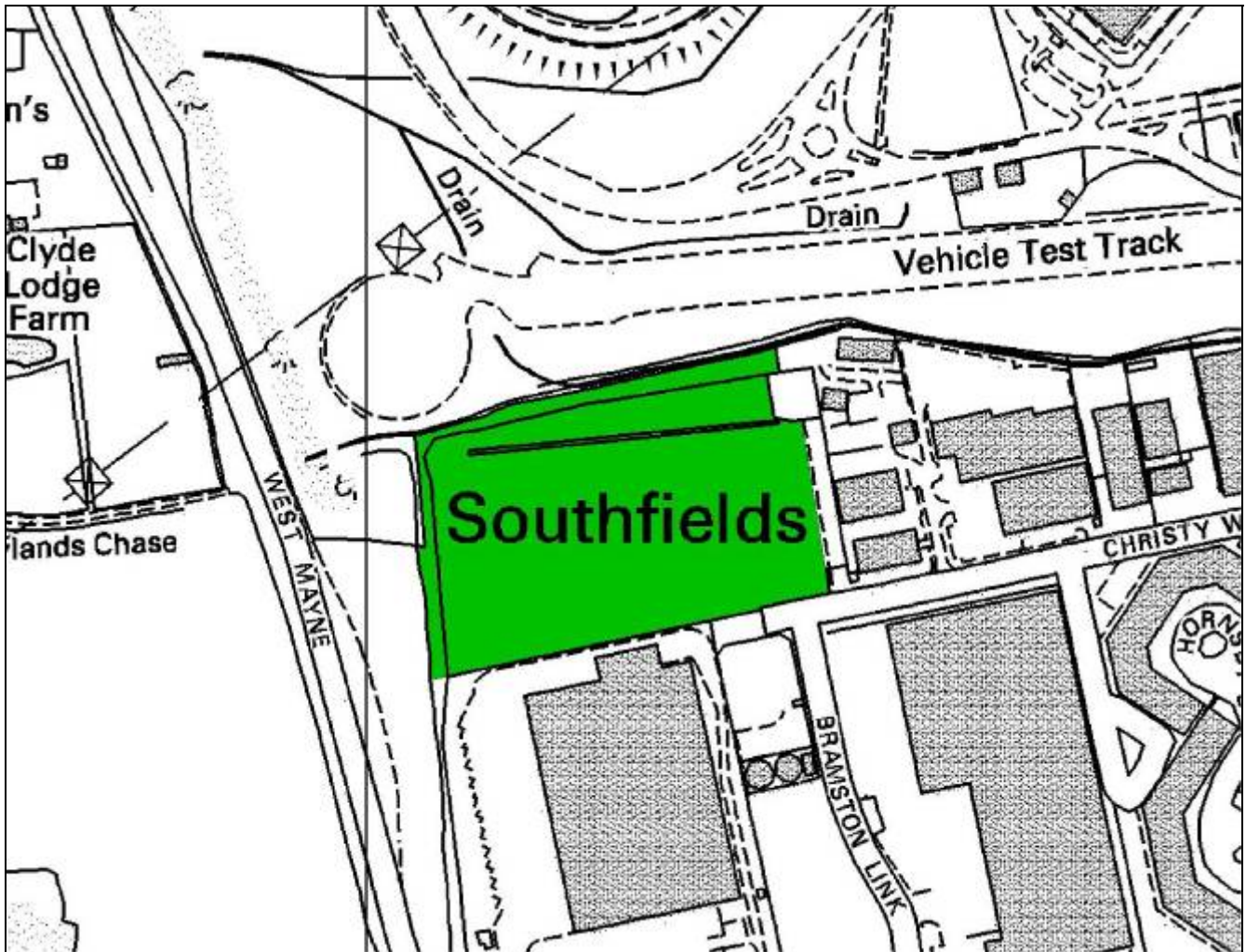
**Rationale:** The majority of the site is coastal grazing marsh, with small reed beds and adjacent non-SSSI intertidal habitat. HC23, Saline Lagoons, refers to borrowdykes with known populations of saline lagoon

specialists. Invertebrate survey data demonstrate the importance of the assemblage including one of the BAP bumblebees. Many of the ditches and borrow dykes support Water Voles.

**Site Selected:** 1992

**Revision Schedule:** Full Local Wildlife Site review in 2004; Reviewed annually during SLA 2007-2009 without change.

## Ba47 Southfields Washlands



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### Ba47. Southfields Washlands (3.3ha) TQ 661892

An unusual site consisting of a mixture of sparsely vegetated calcareous grassland, scattered scrub, rough grassland and wet willow scrub. A wide range of unusual plant species is present and the site is likely to support a diverse and interesting invertebrate community. It appears as though parts of the site at least have been stripped of topsoil.

Along the southern and western edges of the site, separated from the adjacent industrial estate by a thick hedgerow, is a band of short, sparsely vegetated grassland with a high bare ground component. Flowering plants include Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*), Hop Trefoil (*Trifolium campestre*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus glaber*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Common Centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*), Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) and Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum*). Amongst these and the more common species are a number of significant Essex Red Data List species: Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acer*), Carline Thistle (*Carlina vulgaris*), Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*), Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*), Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) and Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*), which is particularly abundant along the western end of the site.



The central part of the site consists of tall grassland dominated by Tufted Hair-grass and Common Couch-grass (*Elytrigia repens*) with scattered Sallow (*Salix cinerea*), Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and rose (*Rosa* agg.) scrub. There is an abundance of Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) and frequent Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) thickets.

Along the northern edge of the site is a concrete channel that overflows into the site leaving standing water amongst willow scrub and patches of rush and sedge beds.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

**Selection Criteria:** HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland  
HC26 – Post-industrial Sites  
SC1 – Vascular Plants

**Rationale:** The assemblage of species is indicative of calcareous soils and includes several of the species listed in Appendix 5 of the selection criteria document. The site is an engineered washland and so should be considered post-industrial. The Vascular Plants criterion is applicable on account of populations of Yellow-wort, Kidney Vetch, Carline Thistle and Pale Flax.

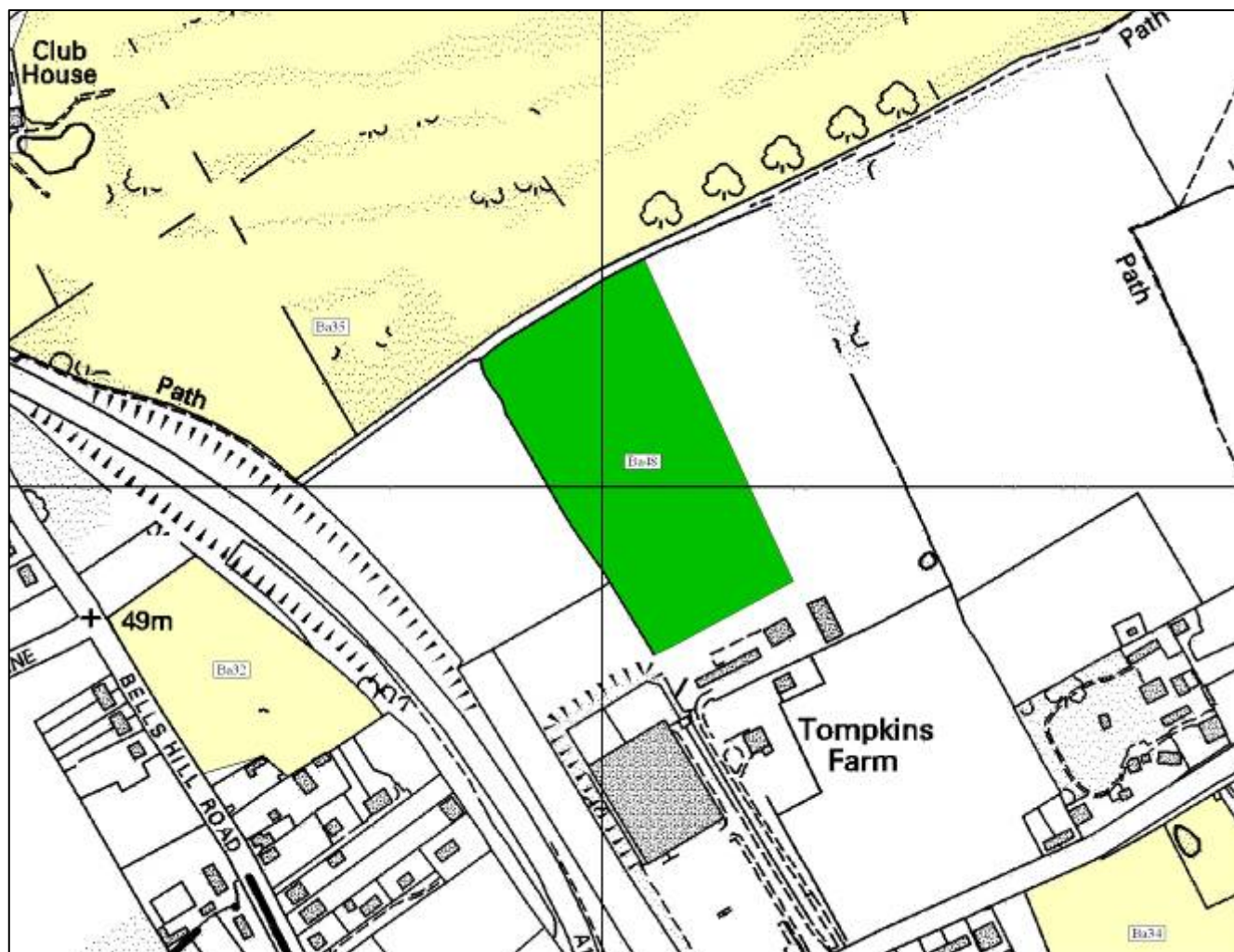
**Site Selected:** 2007

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected during SLA 2007.

Assessed in the SLA 2008-2009 without change.

## Ba48 Tompkins Farm Meadow



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### **Ba48. Tompkins Farm Meadow (2.9 ha) TQ710870**

This sloping meadow is notable for its large population of Spiny Restharrow (*Ononis spinosa*), suggesting that it has never been agriculturally improved. The sward includes other indicators of antiquity in the form of Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*) with Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) also present.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows

**Rationale:** The grassland appears to be unimproved and to be of the NVC MG5 community.

**Site Selected:** 2007

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected during SLA 2007.

Assessed in the SLA 2008-2009; boundary remapped in 2009 following changes in habitat management.

## Ba49. Home Farm Meadow



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### Ba49. Home Farm Meadow (1.5ha) TQ759913

This narrow, unimproved grassland has a sward composed of Creeping Bent-grass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and, increasingly, False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Cock's-foot Grass (*Dactylis glomerata*). Other species include Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*), Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Hoary Ragwort (*Senecio erucifolius*) and the Essex Red Data List species Pepper Saxifrage (*Silaum silaus*) and Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*). Common Lizards are also present.

It is partly horse grazed, but the thick hedgerows are spreading rapidly into the meadow.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Meadows

**Selection Criteria:** HC9 – Lowland Meadows

**Rationale:** The grassland appears to be unimproved and to be of the NVC MG5 community.

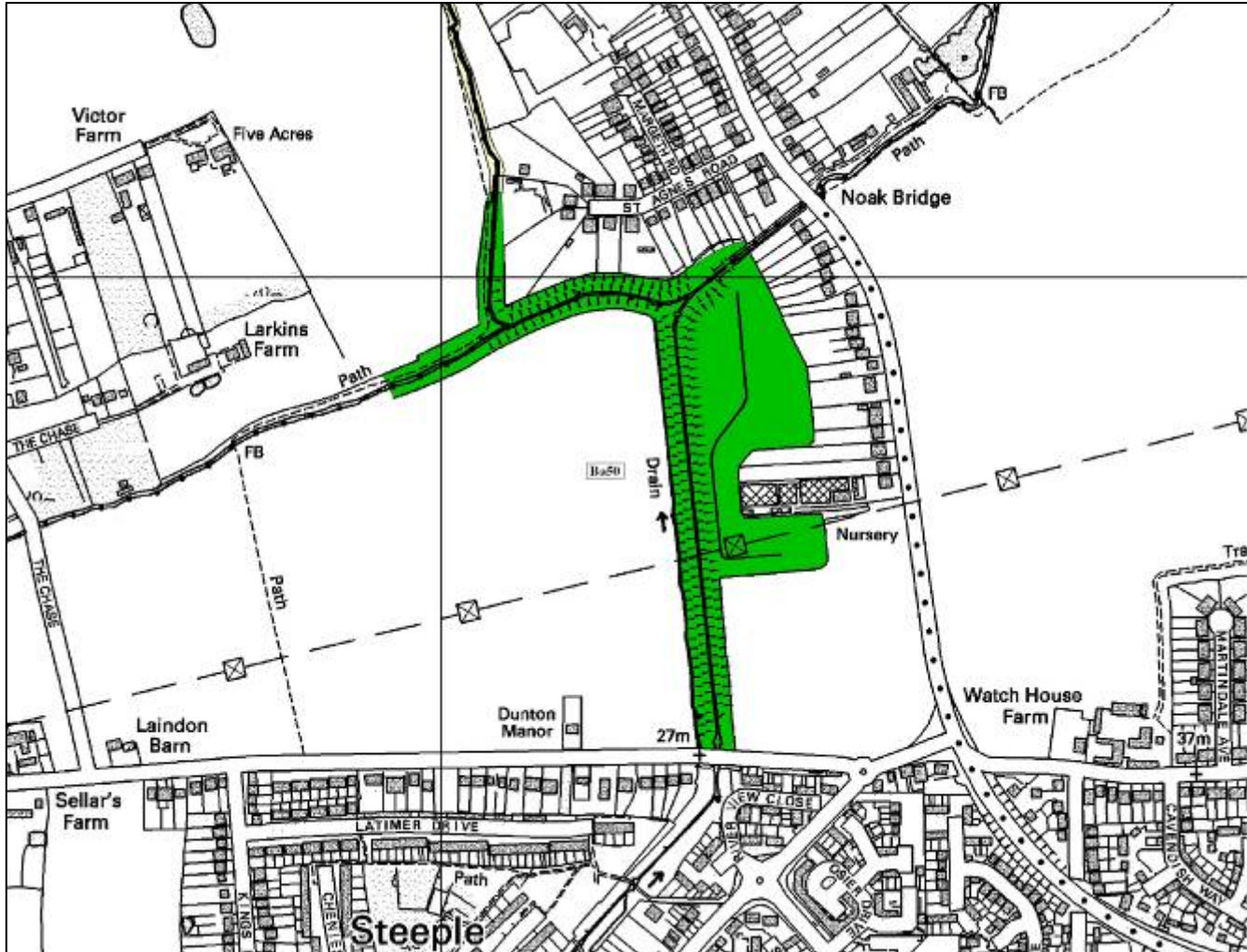
**Site Selected:** 2007

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected during SLA 2007.

Assessed in the SLA 2008-2009; extended in 2008 to include further grassland.

## Ba50. River Crouch at Noak Bridge



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### Ba50. River Crouch at Noak Bridge (6.2ha) TQ683908

The area consists of two distinct habitats: the River Crouch and its banks; and a flood alleviation area east of the river.

The river is quite narrow at this point, but supports a dense and varied emergent and bank side vegetation featuring Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*), Yellow Flag (*Iris pseudacorus*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*). The upper banks consist of rank grass dominated by Common Couch-grass (*Elytrigia repens*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Cock's-foot Grass (*Dactylis glomerata*) with abundant Nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Water Voles are active on the river.

The flood alleviation area includes a scrubby, raised ridge surrounded by low-lying, herb rich grassland. It appears as though parts of this area are seasonally wet and a channel, dry at the time of the visit, runs parallel to the ridge. Much of the grassland area is dominated by Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and False Oat-grass, but there are also patches of open sward with more flowers. Species included Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*), False Fox Sedge (*Carex otrubae*), Prickly Sedge (*Carex muricata* ssp.

*lamprocarpa*), Compact Rush (*Juncus conglomeratus*), Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), Welled Thistle (*Carduus crispus*), Greater, Common and Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot Trefoils (*Lotus uliginosus*, *L. corniculatus* and *L. glaber*), Salsify (*Tragopogon porrifolius*), Goat's Rue (*Galega officinalis*) and Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*).

Small Copper and Common Blue butterflies are present as is the Wasp Spider (*Argiope bruennichi*). The diversity of flowering species suggests that this may be an important foraging area for invertebrates in the wider landscape.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

**Selection Criteria:** HC17 - Rivers  
HC26 – Post-industrial Sites  
SC12 – Breeding Water Voles

**Rationale:** This engineered washland is considered post-industrial. The river is included because of its Water Vole population.

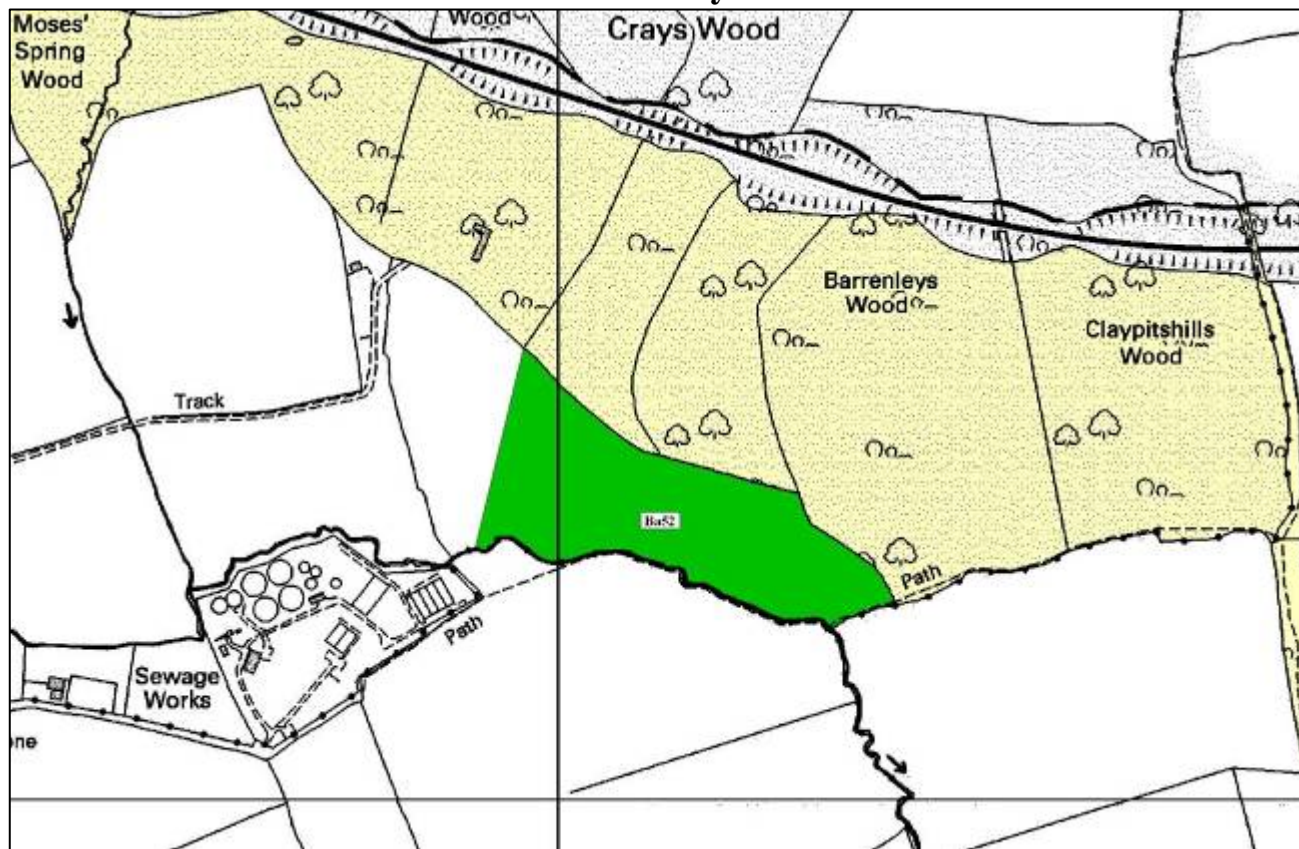
**Site Selected:** 2008

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected during SLA 2008.

Assessed in the SLA 2009 without change.

## Ba51. Barrenleys Meadow



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### Ba51. Barrenleys Meadow (3.7ha) TQ701942

The grassland community contains some of the species typical of acidic grasslands in Essex, including Common Bent-grass (*Agrostis tenuis*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), with some more typical of neutral grassland, such as Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Self Heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) and Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*). It also contained small quantities of Heath Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*), which, following the loss of the majority of heath and acid grassland habitat in Essex, is now most often found on acidic woodland rides. On the lower slopes, towards the stream, the sward is lush with Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and patches of Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*). Species diversity is low, but this is often the case with grasslands with an acidic influence.

This combination results from the meadow lying on the border between Claygate Beds and the underlying London Clay, with alluvium along the border of the stream.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Dry Acid Grassland

**Selection Criteria:** HC12 Heathland and Acid Grassland

**Rationale:** This site supports an acid grassland community.

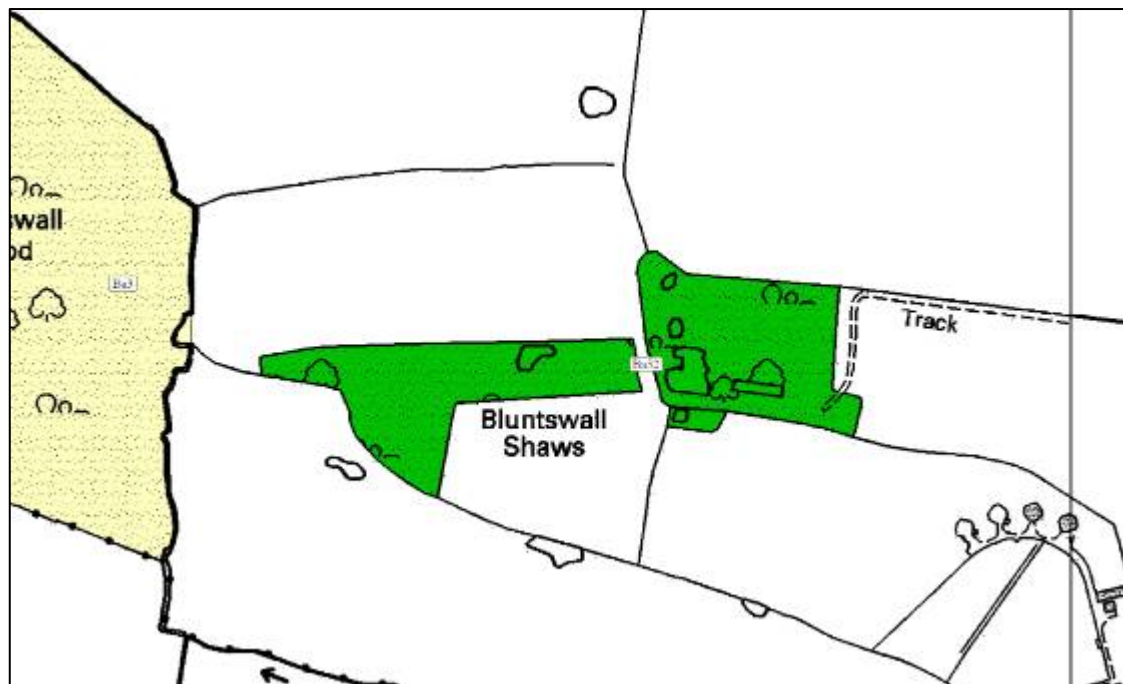
**Site Selected:** 2008

**Revision Schedule:**

Selected during SLA 2008.

Assessed in the SLA 2009 without change.

## Ba52. Bluntswall Shaws



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### Ba52. Bluntswall Shaws (3.1ha) TQ656935

These small blocks of woodland are adjacent to the ancient Bluntswall Wood and share much of that site's character. They are largely dominated by Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards with Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) coppice. The canopy also includes Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*), while the varied understorey features Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is prominent within the ground flora alongside Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), Broad Buckler Fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*) and Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*).

There are a number of damp hollows within the woodlands, but only one permanent pond, possibly landscaped in recent times and surrounded by willows (*Salix* sp.). The western block includes a more open strip indicating some disturbance in the recent past.

The name of these blocks suggests antiquity, a shaw being a strip of woodland forming a field boundary, usually created from the extension of an old hedgerow or being the remains of cleared woodland. There remain prominent ditch and bank features around and within the blocks and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show them in their current form as mature woodland.

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

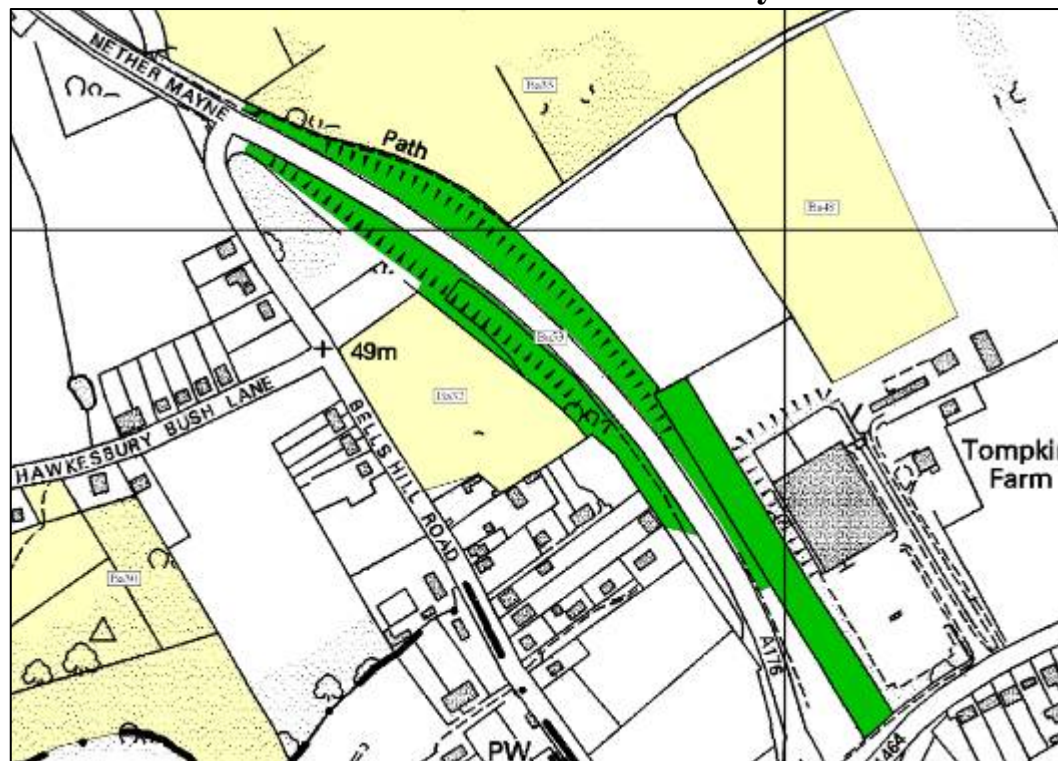
**Selection Criteria:** HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites

**Rationale:** Although not on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, their species and topography suggest an ancient origin

**Site Selected:** 2009

**Revision Schedule:** Selected during SLA 2009.

## Ba53. Nether Mayne



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### Ba53. Nether Mayne (2.8ha) TQ708869

This site is a well-managed roadside verge situated in a cutting and located within a Local Wildlife Site cluster on the southern side of Basildon. It consists of a mosaic of flower-rich grassland and young scrub managed on rotation for the benefit of the plants and invertebrates known to be present.

The plant community features Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla repens*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*) and Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). Species of greater conservation significance include Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Spiny Restharrow (*Ononis spinosa*), Corky-fruited Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe pimpinelloides*) and Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*).

The verge is known to support a range of butterflies including Marbled White, Green Hairstreak and the UK BAP Priority species Grizzled Skipper.

A strip of rough grassland to the east of the verge, bounded by a large, old hedgerow, is also included. Species present include Common Knapweed, Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) and Corky-fruited Water-dropwort

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** None

**Selection Criteria:** HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland  
SC18 – UK BAP Priority Invertebrates

**Rationale:** This species rich grassland site is not unimproved and so could not be selected as Lowland Meadows. SC18 is applied because of the presence of Grizzled Skipper.

**Site Selected:** 2009

**Revision Schedule:** Selected during SLA 2009.



## Ba54. The Wick Country Park



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### Ba54. The Wick Country Park (17.3ha) TQ758916

This site is a recently created country park hosting an education centre and comprising a mixture of rough grassland, young planted woodland and amenity grassland, bounded and crossed by old hedgerows. North Benfleet Brook flows through the site and a lake has been excavated.

The majority of the grassland is of no botanical interest, but its management encourages good populations of invertebrates. In some areas thinner topsoil has led to the development of finer grasses and a more diverse herbaceous component. These areas are characterised by the presence of Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*).

The lake has some shallow margins where fringes of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) are established. The various ponds around the site contain Common Reed and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) and have been shown to support a good range of dragonflies and damselflies.

Pill boxes within the site support both Hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) and the Essex Red Data List species Flattened Meadow-grass (*Poa compressa*).

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** None

**Selection Criteria:** HC28 – Habitat Extension Mosaics  
HC30 – Urban Sites

**Rationale:** This site is composed of a mosaic of habitats that are not of sufficient value to justify selection on their own. The site has clear education value for the nearby population centres.

**Site Selected:** 2009

**Revision Schedule:** Selected during SLA 2009.