Thames Valley

Environmental Records Centre

TVERC

Sharing environmental information in Berkshire and Oxfordshire

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LAND NORTH OF ST. CLEMENTS

PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY REPORT

2018

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ABOUT TVERC

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) is a 'not for profit' organisation covering Berkshire and Oxfordshire. We are run by a partnership and are one of a national network of local records centres. We are a member of the Association of Local Records Centres (ALERC) and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN). Our funding partners include all the local authorities in Oxfordshire & Berkshire plus the Environment Agency. We also work closely with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). We provide our funding partners with annually updated species and sites information, and undertake surveys of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). We also carry out data analysis for the monitoring of local authority Local Plans. We provide information to parish councils, local people, conservation bodies, land-owners, students and commercial organisations such as ecological consultants and utilities companies via data searches, data licensing and data exchanges.

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SITE NAME:

Land north of St. Clements

GRID REFERENCE:

SP52740636

DATE SITE SURVEYED:

30th July 2018

SURVEYOR(S):

Julie Kerans

DISTRICT / UNITARY:

Oxford City

ASSESSMENT OF SURVEY (inc time taken, weather conditions and any limitations)
Approximately 1.5 hours were spent on site in sunny conditions. All the main habitats on the site were seen. The grassland had been recently cut at the time of the survey and additional species may be present but not recorded.

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT:

Field adjacent to St. Clements Church Headington Hill, Oxford

SITE AREA (Ha):	**MAJOR ASPECT:**	**MAJOR SLOPE:**	**ALTITUDE** (m):
1.4	None	Flat ground	60

GEOLOGY (solid / drift from Geology maps)

Bedrock:	WEST WALTON, AMPTHILL CLAY, KELLAWAYS, OXFORD CLAY AND KIMMERIDGE CLAY FORMATION
Superficial:	N/A

SPECIAL INTEREST OF SITE:
Habitats: Semi-improved neutral grassland

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1. SITE DESCRIPTION

HABITATS ON SITE (Phase 1 and/or S41 habitat of principal importance)	ADJACENT LAND USE / HABITAT (Phase 1 classification)	BOUNDARIES TO SITE (river, ditch, fence, hedgerow etc)
Semi-improved neutral grassland	Urban development	Road
Scrub and tall herb		Fence
Amenity grassland		River
Buildings and hardstanding		

1.1. BRIEF OVERVIEW

The site is a semi-improved neutral grassland field with areas dominated by tall herb and scrub. It includes nettle, false oat-grass and Yorkshire fog with creeping thistle, hogweed, cleavers and cocks-foot. The River Cherwell flows along the western edge and the site includes a few wetland species such as great willowherb, marsh woundwort and wild angelica.

1.2. DESCRIPTION

The current boundary to the south includes an area with buildings, hardstanding and strips of amenity grassland. This was not accessed but could be seen from adjacent area and appears to be of limited wildlife interest.

The main part of the site is semi-improved neutral grassland with tall herb. It is dominated by false oat-grass and Yorkshire fog with creeping bent, cock's-foot, red fescue and rough meadow-grass. There are patches of nettle and bramble. Tall herbs include locally abundant creeping thistle and frequent hogweed with cow parsley, mugwort, common ragwort and broadleaved dock. There is also yarrow, hedge bindweed, creeping buttercup, cleavers, nipplewort, germander speedwell, ribwort plantain, ground ivy, wood avens and herb Robert.

Trees and shrubs at the field edges include sycamore and ash with hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple and English elm. There are small amounts of Norway maple and horse chestnut. Along the river edge, there are abundant crack willows with smaller amounts of goat willow.

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2. TYPICAL SPECIES

The site includes areas of semi-improved grassland with a few wetland species.

Table 1. Typical wetland species

Taxon Group	Taxon Name	Common Name	1988	2018
Higher Plants	Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet	x	
Higher Plants	Epilobium hirsutum	Great willowherb	x	x
Higher Plants	Calystegia sepium	Hedge bindweed	x	x
Higher Plants	Typha latifolia	Reedmace		x
Higher Plants	Angelica sylvestris	Wild angelica		x
Total			**3**	**4**

3. PRESENT USE AND MANAGEMENT OF SITE

Use: Permanent grassland: meadow

Management: Mown

Other details:

RECOMMENDATIONS

The site lacks priority habitat. It includes semi-improved neutral grassland and tall herb with marginal areas of scrub. These are common, widespread habitats that are relatively easy to replace if lost. They have some value for wildlife but based on the current recorded interest would not meet the criteria for selection as an Oxford City Wildlife Site.

The site provides potential habitat for invertebrates, birds, reptiles and mammals (including bats and otter). The boundary hedges/lines of trees and marginal scrub provide potential commuting routes for bat species. Trees including the crack willow pollards along the river bank have potential for roosting bats.

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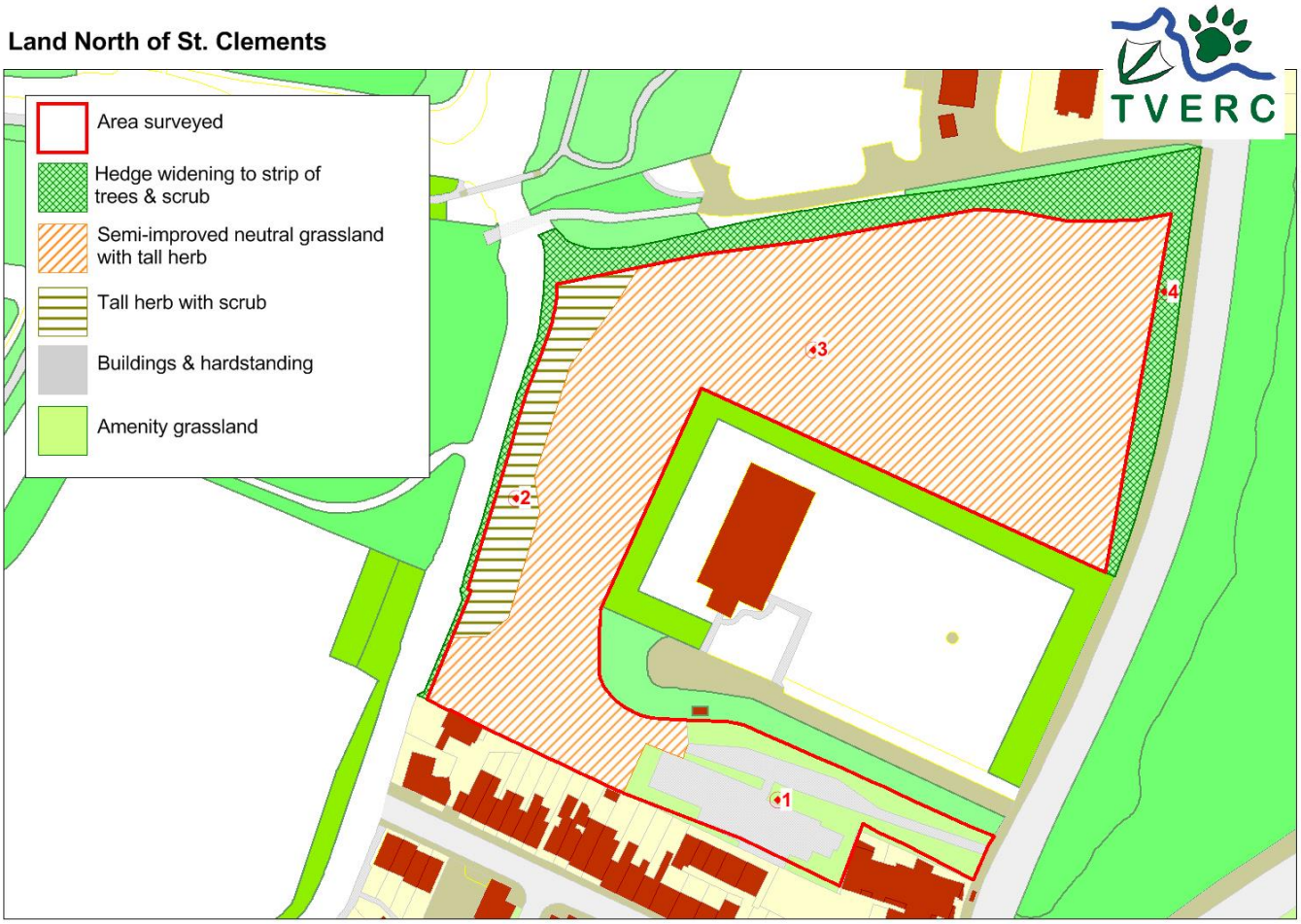
Type of recommendation	Tick	Description
Boundary change	☒	If retained as a site of interest the boundary should be amended to remove buildings and areas of hardstanding
Status	☐	With the current level of recorded wildlife interest, the site is unlikely to meet the Oxford City Wildlife site criteria.

4. LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: HABITAT MAP



Map produced by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre in 2018 © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Oxfordshire County Council Licence No 100023343 (2018) FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY, NO FURTHER COPIES MAY BE MADE.

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APPENDIX 2: TARGET NOTES & PHOTOGRAPHS

Target note 1. Buildings and hardstanding with a marginal amenity grassland strip.

Target note 2. Tall herb and bramble scrub with trees along the river edge. It is locally dominated by nettle and bramble with false oat-grass, cleavers, creeping thistle, hedge bindweed, great willowherb, marsh woundwort and hogweed. There is a small amount of wild angelica and pendulous sedge. Trees along the river edge include crack willow, ash and sycamore with grey willow and hawthorn. The field layer under includes ivy, giant fescue, herb Robert, germander speedwell, lord's-and-ladies and nettle.

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Target note 3. Semi-improved neutral grassland with tall herb. Most of the field, except some sections of the field margins, had been recently cut at the time of the survey. It includes false oat-grass, cock's-foot, rough meadow-grass, creeping bent, Yorkshire fog with patches of nettle and bramble. Creeping buttercup is locally abundant with other broadleaved herbs including yarrow, creeping thistle, hogweed, field bindweed, cow parsley, dock species, germander speedwell, ribwort plantain and ground ivy. Along the northern edge of the field, there is a wet ditch with great willowherb and pendulous sedge.

Cut grassland

Ditch to the north

Target note 4. Semi-improved neutral grassland and marginal trees and scrub. Uncut areas at the field margin to the east are dominated by false oat-grass with tall herbs including spear thistle, creeping thistle, hogweed, common ragwort and mugwort. Trees and shrubs at the margins include sycamore, ash, field maple, rowan horse chestnut, English elm and hawthorn.

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APPENDIX 3. SPECIES RECORDS

The following table lists the species recorded during the survey carried out on 30th July 2018. They include estimates of species abundance using the DAFOR scale. The DAFOR scale ranks species according to their relative abundance within a particular area of vegetation and bare no relevance to the status of the species in the wider landscape. The following abbreviations are used; D – dominant, A – abundant, F – frequent, O – occasional, R – rare. The abbreviation L is also used to indicate species that are local in their distribution.

Common name	Scientific name	Abundance
Field Maple	Acer campestre	R
Norway Maple	Acer platanoides	R
Sycamore	Acer pseudoplatanus	LF
Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	R
Horse-Chestnut	Aesculus hippocastanum	R
Creeping Bent	Agrostis stolonifera	F
Wild Angelica	Angelica sylvestris	R
Cow Parsley	Anthriscus sylvestris	LF
Lesser Burdock	Arctium minus	R
False Oat-Grass	Arrhenatherum elatius	LD
Mugwort	Artemisia vulgaris	R
Lords-And-Ladies	Arum maculatum	R
False-Brome	Brachypodium sylvaticum	R
Hairy Brome	Bromopsis ramosa	R
Hedge Bindweed	Calystegia sepium	LF
Pendulous Sedge	Carex pendula	O
Rosebay Willowherb	Chamerion angustifolium	R
Creeping Thistle	Cirsium arvense	LA
Spear Thistle	Cirsium vulgare	LF
Field Bindweed	Convolvulus arvensis	LF
Dogwood	Cornus sanguinea	R
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	O
Cock's-Foot	Dactylis glomerata	A
Common Couch	Elytrigia repens	O
Great Willowherb	Epilobium hirsutum	LF
Hoary Willowherb	Epilobium parviflorum	R
Giant Fescue	Festuca gigantea	R
Red Fescue	Festuca rubra	LF
Ash	Fraxinus excelsior	LA
Cleavers	Galium aparine	LA
Cut-Leaved Crane's-Bill	Geranium dissectum	R
Herb-Robert	Geranium robertianum	R

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Common name	Scientific name	Abundance
Herb Bennet	Geum urbanum	R
Ground-Ivy	Glechoma hederacea	LF
Ivy	Hedera helix	LA
Hogweed	Heracleum sphondylium	F
Yorkshire-Fog	Holcus lanatus	LD
Nipplewort	Lapsana communis	R
Perennial Rye-Grass	Lolium perenne	R
Gipsywort	Lycopus europaeus	R
Meadow Brown	Maniola jurtina	P
Chinese Muntjac	Muntiacus reevesi	P
Timothy	Phleum pratense	R
Bristly Oxtongue	Picris echioides	R
Small White	Pieris rapae	P
Ribwort Plantain	Plantago lanceolata	O
Greater Plantain	Plantago major	R
Rough Meadow-Grass	Poa trivialis	LF
Creeping Cinquefoil	Potentilla reptans	LF
Cherry Laurel	Prunus laurocerasus	R
Blackthorn	Prunus spinosa	O
Creeping Buttercup	Ranunculus repens	LA
Bramble	Rubus fruticosus agg.	LD
Broad-Leaved Dock	Rumex obtusifolius	O
White Willow	Salix alba	R
Goat Willow	Salix caprea	R
Crack Willow	Salix fragilis	LA
Common Ragwort	Senecio jacobaea	LF
Groundsel	Senecio vulgaris	R
Prickly Sow-Thistle	Sonchus asper	R
Rowan	Sorbus aucuparia	R
Marsh Woundwort	Stachys palustris	R
Hedge Woundwort	Stachys sylvatica	R
Dandelion	Taraxacum officinale agg.	O
Yew	Taxus baccata	R
Upright Hedge-Parsley	Torilis japonica	R
Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	P
Bulrush	Typha latifolia	R
English Elm	Ulmus procera	O
Common Nettle	Urtica dioica	LD
Germander Speedwell	Veronica chamaedrys	R