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THORNBURY GREEN SPACES

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT PLANS

SUMMER 2022

For

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

CHANTRY ROAD PLAY AREA

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ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

This plan is one of a series commissioned by Thornbury Town Council with the aim of identifying measures by which the biodiversity interest of green spaces in the town might be enhanced, whilst maintaining their value for both formal and informal recreation.

A site survey was carried out on 5th September 2022. It covered vegetation types and plant species, insects and birds, and potential for other groups was assessed.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary

Chantry Road Play Area is dominated by close mown grassland with other vegetation at present limited to a small group of trees.

The Play Area is rather isolated from other green spaces within an area of housing, but it provides a stepping stone between Chantry Playing Fields and the grounds of The Castle School.

2.2 Vegetation

The areas described below are shown on the attached map.

The majority of the site has close mown grassland, which is dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), with other grass species including creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and rough-stalked meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*). The frequency of herb species within the sward is low. The species present are dandelion (*Taraxacum vulgare agg*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) and autumn hawksbeard (*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*).

There is a small group of Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) trees in the western corner of the site. The largest tree supports a growth of mistletoe (*Viscum album*).

The site boundaries are fences and lack any vegetation.

2.3 Fauna

No birds were present on the site; the following species were recorded in the surrounding area: lesser black-backed gull, carrion crow; magpie, robin and wood pigeon.

The only insect species recorded was *Episyrphus balteatus* fly.

2.4 Amenity

The site has very well used and maintained children's play equipment.

3 EVALUATION

3.1 Introduction

Various criteria are used in assessing the biodiversity value of sites. These include rarity, in terms of either habitats or species, which can be viewed in a range of contexts from international to local and also degree of threat: some species remain widespread but are of conservation concern because their populations have declined rapidly. Some habitats take many centuries, or require very specialised conditions, to develop their full diversity and those that cannot be recreated are more highly valued than those that can be readily created. The extent and connectivity of habitats is of importance, since many species rely on large areas of habitat or on having access to different habitat types at different stages in their life cycle. This can be particularly important in urban areas, where species can be lost from small and isolated areas of habitat, even if these remain in good condition. Conversely, sites can have value in a wider context if, for example, they allow wildlife to colonise gardens and other sites in the surrounding area or if they allow wildlife to move into and across otherwise inhospitable areas. In accessible urban areas the public appeal or visibility of wildlife is also a factor in contributing to public enjoyment and wellbeing.

Guidance on site evaluation is given in various documents, including the South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, and has been followed here.

3.2 Habitats

The grassland that dominates the site has been intensively managed and the use of fertilisers in particular has excluded all but the most tolerant species of plant. Frequent mowing means that the grassland is not of significant value for invertebrates, or for other animals.

The grassland across the site is of minimal nature conservation value.

The population of mistletoe associated with the Norway maple tree is of some interest, although this species is fairly widespread in and around Thornbury.

The population of Norway maple is of nature conservation value in a local context.

3.3 Protected and Invasive Species

No signs of any protected species were seen on or around the site and it has very little potential for any such species.

No scheduled invasive species were recorded on the site.

3.4 Summary

Area	Scale of Interest	Features of Interest
Main grassland	Minimal	
Norway maple	Local context	Mistletoe

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Aims

To maximise the biodiversity interest of the site whilst maintaining its value for amenity and other interests.

4.2 Objectives

To provide small areas of tree planting on the site.

To plant hedges on the boundaries of the site.

4.3 Constraints

The main constraints on management for biodiversity here is the need to maintain the value of the site for amenity, including retention of the play equipment and a surrounding area of close mown grassland.

There are practical constraints on some potential measures. Initiatives such as the creation of beds of wildflower planting would be worth consideration if there is support and enthusiasm for such measures but have not been recommended here because they require a commitment to relatively intensive management if they are to be maintained in the long term.

4.4 Rationale

The potential to enhance the biodiversity value of this site is limited by its small size and the need to retain formal play opportunities across most of the area. There are good opportunities to plant hedges along site boundaries, and also to plant trees in small parts of the site. Fruit trees would be suitable due to their community value, as well as high attractiveness to wildlife.

4.5 Management Proposals

1 Maintain management of amenity grassland as at present over most site but avoid fertiliser use on the grassland.

2 Plant hedges along the boundaries of the site using the following mix:

Field maple	*Acer campestre*
Dogwood	*Cornus sanguinea*
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*
Spindle	*Euonymus europaea*
Wayfaring tree	*Viburnum lantana*

3 Plant trees and shrubs in the areas shown on the attached map. The following is a suggested planting list:

Apple	*Malus domestca*
Plum	*Prunus domestica*
Pear	*Pyrus communis*
Rowan	*Sorbus aucuparia*

4 Install bug hotels at the locations shown. Suitable designs are given at the links below:

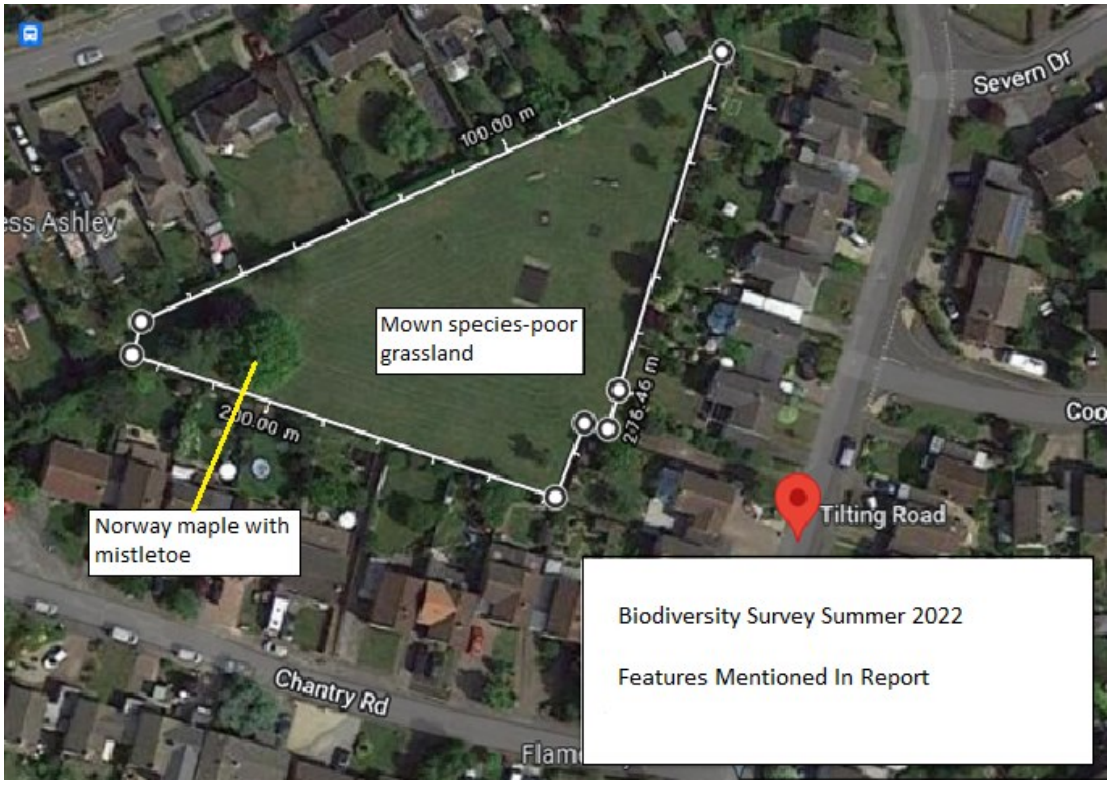
https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/

https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/Resources/Project/Make-a-bug-hotel

Measures such as drilling holes in wooden posts can also provide nest sites for solitary bees – fence posts on the boundaries of the site may provide suitable locations.

4.6 Work Planner

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Maintain amenity grassland, avoid use of fertilisers	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout
Plant hedges		Oct-Feb	Oct-Feb		
Plant trees and shrubs			Oct-Feb		
Install bug hotels		Feb			
Maintain bug hotels		As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary


Severn Dr
100.00 m
Mown species-poor grassland
276.46 m
200.00 m
Norway maple with mistletoe
Tilting Road
Chantry Rd
Biodiversity Survey Summer 2022
Features Mentioned In Report


Severn Dr
100.00 m
Plant fruit trees
276.46 m
200.00 m
Plant fruit trees
Tilting Road
Chantry Rd
Biodiversity Survey Summer 2022
Enhancement Proposals
Hedge Planting
Bee Hotels

Photograph 1: The main grassland

Photograph 2: Fences suitable for hedge planting