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Parish Plans Biodiversity Project

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# Starcross

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Report by the  
Devon Biodiversity Records Centre  
and  
Devon County Council

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October 2004

*Devon  
Biodiversity  
Records  
Centre*

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre is operated by the Devon Wildlife Trust and supported by a partnership of Local Authorities, statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations



DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

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# Starcross - Parish Plan Biodiversity Project

## Introduction

Much of the wildlife interest of Starcross is centred around the Exe Estuary where the main emphasis is on birds. Starcross golf range, Cockwood marshes and the damp fields between Staplake Mount and the estuary all provide valuable resting and feeding areas for the migratory birds that visit the mudflats of the Exe Estuary. There are views over the estuary from many areas throughout the town, and several companies run boat excursions from the jetty that afford good views of the estuary and its bird life.

As well as the designated sites, there is much interest in the hedgerows, the railway embankment and the many ditches and streams in the parish. These features all act as corridors encouraging the movement of wildlife, and may support many animals and plants. These areas may in turn provide links to other areas of wildlife interest in the parish, such as areas of species-rich grassland and woodland.

## Designated Sites

### Ramsar Site

The *Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat* requires contracting countries to designate suitable wetlands, selected for their international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology for inclusion in a *List of Wetlands of International Importance* and known as '**Ramsar Sites**'.

Ramsar sites may be identified using a number of criteria, including a numeric selection criteria which draw on waterbird counts. Thus '*a wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds*' or '*if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird*'. The Exe Estuary qualifies under both these criteria. This designation is aimed to provide increased protection and management for wetland areas, which are important for breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

### Exe Estuary Special Protection Area

The European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (EC/79/409) emphasises the need to conserve bird habitats as a means of maintaining populations and it is intended that this should be achieved by the establishment of a network of **Special Protection Areas**. These are also identified using a number of methods, including a numeric selection criterion, using waterbird counts.

In 1991 when the citation was made, the Exe Estuary qualified by regularly supporting 200 avocets (then 20% of the British wintering population) and 5% of the Slavonian Grebe population in Britain as well as hosting significant passage populations of Sandwich terns and common terns. Also there were small numbers of red-throated divers, black-throated divers and great northern divers present over-wintering.

The estuary also qualifies as a wetland of international importance by regularly supporting over 20,000 waterfowl in winter. These include large numbers of dark-bellied Brent geese, oystercatchers, grey plover, dunlin, black-tailed godwit, bar-tailed godwit, curlew, wigeon, redshank and red-breasted merganser.

### **Exe Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest:**

A **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** is a statutory designation notified by English Nature because of the plant, animal or geological features contained. SSSIs are of national importance.

The Exe Estuary has been identified as a SSSI because of its estuary habitats, which include **mudflats, saltmarsh, reedbed, marshy grassland** and the Exeter canal. Mudflats and coastal saltmarsh are listed in the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan** as priority habitats, and estuaries are also listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as a priority habitat.

Mudflats are very productive areas and support an abundance of organisms such as lugworms, ragworms and other species such as the 'peppery furrow shell'. These invertebrates provide food for large numbers of birds and fish. The mudflats provide feeding and resting areas for internationally important populations (20,000+) of migrant and wintering wildfowl and waders.

Also the numbers of Cormorant, Dark-bellied Brent Goose, Red-breasted Merganser, Avocet, Ringed Plover and Black-tailed Godwit using the Exe Estuary are nationally important (Devon Bird Report, 2002).

Saltmarshes, too, are important areas for birds, providing breeding sites and feeding areas. They are also important for invertebrates, and provide nursery sites for a variety of fish. Saltmarsh is often lost to erosion and pollution and there are now only some 45,000 hectares left in Britain.

### **Starcross Golf Range County Wildlife Site**

This site has been identified as a County Wildlife Site on account of its wintering bird interest. During the winter the area is a vital feeding and resting area for large flocks of birds attracted to the Exe Estuary. The site attracts internationally important numbers of brent geese, curlew, oystercatchers and godwits and is a protected bird area from 16 October to 31 March each year.

Brent geese like the short grass of the golf course. They also eat the eelgrass, which grows in the estuary, but this can only be reached at low tide. The golf course is extremely important, as it is a quiet retreat when the tide is in.

Both species of eelgrass (*Zostera marina* and *Zostera noltei*) are found on the Exe Estuary and eelgrass beds are of national importance and are listed as a **Priority UK Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat**. The species that are known to occur in the UK are nationally scarce, occurring in between 16-100 10 km squares. Eelgrass beds form important nurseries for juvenile fish, providing protection from predators.

**County Wildlife Sites (CWS)** are sites of county importance for wildlife, selected on the basis of the habitat or the known presence of particular species. It is not a statutory designation like SSSIs, and so does not have the same legal status. However, County Wildlife Sites are usually included in Local Plans as sites of substantive nature conservation interest and are covered by Planning Policy. CWS recognition does not demand any particular actions on the part of the Landowner and does not give the public rights of access. However, it may increase eligibility for land management grants.

## **Other habitats (identified from field survey):**

### **Species-rich hedges**

Hedgerows tend to be taken for granted as they always seem to be there, providing such a constant in a familiar landscape. However, they do require regular attention to keep them in good condition. That so many are still in good condition is a testament to the skill and hard work of generations of farmers. But there are changes even in the oldest hedgelines as the way the majority are managed has altered. There is now less farm labour available and more reliance on mechanical cutting rather than traditional hedge laying.

Even the mechanical cutting has changed as reciprocating cutters that could cut shrub stems cleanly have given way to tractor-mounted flails which can tackle slightly older growth but at the expense of every stem being shattered. Flailing can actually promote bud development (on hawthorn, for example, research indicates that severe damage to the end of a branch encourages shoot development further down in the base of the plant which can help to thicken it up). However, flailing can also leave shrubs susceptible to infection. As individual hedge plants die, they leave gaps which render the hedge less effective and which would in the past have been filled when the hedge was next layed.

With the advent of mechanical hedge-trimming has come another change - it is now possible to trim all the hedges on a farm in one year. It is this that perhaps has had the most impact on the vertebrate wildlife. Fruiting and seeding species are very much less productive and there is a different and less varied structure. Also, shrubs that do produce a good berry crop are

sometimes cut in the early autumn before the birds, particularly the migrants, can gain any advantage from this food source. A couple of generations ago, many hedges on a farm might have been cut less frequently, allowing them to be much more productive in the meantime.

Recognising these changes does allow choices in the way hedges are managed in the future. Hedges can be cut on a two or even three year rotation. Alternatively, perhaps only one or two of the three 'faces' (the top and the two sides) could be cut in any one year. This wouldn't stop road or drive side hedges being cut from both the safety and visual aspects but for the majority of hedges it would have two major benefits: it would take less time (and hence cost) and it would benefit wildlife! However, whatever pattern of cutting is adopted, "all hedges, except perhaps holly, will need laying or coppicing sooner or later because they will become thin at the base. This is the best form of long-term management" (*Devon's hedges: Conservation and management*, Devon County Council / Devon Hedge Group).

Once it was realised nationally that many thousands of kilometres of hedgerow were being lost annually and that something ought to be done about it, the Hedgerow Regulations (made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995) were introduced in England and Wales in 1997 to protect them. The Regulations are intended to prevent the removal of most countryside hedgerows without first submitting a hedgerow removal notice to the local planning authority. The local planning authorities are only able to require the retention of 'important' hedgerows. The Regulations then set out criteria to be used by the local authority in determining which hedgerows are important. (Bickmore, 2002)

In such a clearly agricultural landscape, the hedgerows and hedgebanks represent continuity as features in the landscape and provide a significant wildlife resource at a time when the fields themselves are being more intensively used. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK Steering Group, 1995) lists ancient and or species-rich hedgerows as one of its priority habitats.

Various definitions of species-rich hedges have been used in different parts of the country but it would not be unreasonable to treat a hedge that has five or more woody species in a 30 metre length as a 'species-rich' one.

Hedgerows are often an essential corridor for the movement of wildlife and may support many animals and plants. The hedgerows close to Tiverland Farm and Staplake Mount are species-rich with six or seven woody species recorded in a 30 metre length. These include holly, hazel, pedunculate oak, hawthorn, blackthorn, ash and wych elm. The hedgerows also have a moderately rich bank flora with agrimony, yarrow, wild madder, tufted vetch, fleabane, meadow vetchling, tansy and black bryony all present. The hedge close to Tiverland Farm also follows a parish boundary, suggesting it may be quite old. Seven woody species were recorded from this hedge.

Species-rich hedges are listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as a habitat of conservation concern in Devon. Most of the hedges along the lanes

of Starcross could be classified as species-rich, with an average of six woody species in a 30 metre length.

### **Cemeteries/ churchyard**

A small area of moderately species-rich grassland is found in the churchyard of St. Paul's Church. Species recorded include yarrow, creeping buttercup, rough hawkbit, cock's-foot, red fescue, spotted medick, field speedwell, shepherd's purse, creeping cinquefoil and red clover.

### **Recreation areas and public open space**

There are a number of areas of amenity grassland and open space in Starcross managed as recreation grounds and playing fields, as well as a good network of public footpaths, and links to several cycle routes. The Exe Valley Way cycle route runs from Starcross to Exeter, then through Tiverton and up to Exmoor. There is also a link to the Two Counties Way. Taunton is 56 miles from Starcross! The South West Coast Path runs along the edge of the estuary at Starcross, going south towards Dawlish or north towards Exeter.

The playing field off new road has unmanaged edges dominated by coarse grasses such as cocksfoot, false oat-grass and wall barley. Other species recorded include yarrow, rough hawkbit, autumnal hawkbit, cat's-ear, ragwort and ribwort plantain. This overgrown area is probably of importance for invertebrates. Bees and grasshoppers were abundant.

There is a small area of waste ground off General's lane, which forms another area of tall, unmanaged grassland, tall herbs and scrub. This appears to be public open space next to a housing estate, but there is potential to develop this area into a nature reserve. Dominant species are tansy, fleabane, creeping thistle, false oat-grass and rosebay willowherb. Other species include cocksfoot, meadow buttercup, hedge bindweed, bramble and mugwort.

### **Allotments and Gardens**

Gardens and allotments provide a haven for wildlife and can provide links to other areas of wildlife habitat. The allotments of Starcross are private and are not publicly accessible unless you rent one. A number of species have been recorded from gardens in Starcross including badger, grass snake and house sparrow.

## **Railway embankment and water's edge**

It is possible to walk along the estuary edge and there are extensive views over the estuary and mudflats. The south West Coast Path follows the edge of the estuary, as does the railway embankment. The railway network forms a comprehensive system of wildlife corridors and links to other areas of wildlife interest. The railway line is overlooked by the road and provides an opportunity to view the wildlife that may live there.

The habitats along the railway line are diverse, including dense scrub, rank grassland as well as mosses and lichens. Species recorded along the railway line include bramble, blackthorn, ivy, ribwort plantain, false oat-grass, field bindweed, red valerian and field horsetail. The scrub and grassland provide cover for birds and small mammals and the railway embankment may support uncommon species such as greater knapweed, musk mallow and wild carrot.

## **Species-rich grassland**

Several areas of species-rich grassland exist within the parish. Mary Pratt a local naturalist noted these areas. An interesting field is found to the south-west of Tiverland Farm. Lousewort, common centaury and common restharrow were recorded from this field. Another interesting area is found just outside the parish to the east of Warboro plantation. This area is fairly herb rich with ox-eye daisy, meadow buttercup, red clover, common sorrel and ribwort plantain. A third field close to Staplake Mount (which is seasonally inundated) also has a good variety of flora present. Species recorded include common bird's-foot trefoil, common knapweed, meadow buttercup, creeping cinquefoil, common mallow and black medick. These records were all recorded whilst walking public rights of way.

Flower-rich meadows and pastures are a habitat of conservation concern in Devon and are listed in the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as well as the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan**. Unimproved neutral grassland habitat has undergone a huge decline in the 20th century, almost entirely due to changing agricultural practice. It is estimated that by 1984 in lowland England and Wales, semi-natural grassland had declined by 97% over the previous 50 years to approximately 0.2million ha.

Unimproved grassland is often very flower-rich and as a result of this attracts an abundance of butterflies and other invertebrates. The rich insect life in turn attracts bats such as the greater horseshoe bat and birds such as the green woodpecker and ciril bunting.

## **Potential County Wildlife Sites**

There are five potential County Wildlife Sites in Starcross parish. These are sites identified as having possible interest but not fully surveyed. Some of these sites will be areas of significant wildlife interest.

Some of these areas were looked at from the road during the survey to assess their wildlife interest.

**Brickhouse Copse** is an area of broadleaved woodland and semi-improved grassland.

**Staplake Farm** comprises semi-improved grassland and marsh following a stream. Wetland-type vegetation recorded includes yellow flag iris, willowherb sp., marsh thistle and hemlock water-dropwort. These types of wetland habitats are becoming increasingly rare in Devon and may support species such as reptiles and amphibians and dragonflies and damselflies.

**Staplake Mount** is an area of semi-improved grassland, which could potentially be of interest as there are several other areas of species-rich grassland close by.

**Wood Brake** is an area of secondary broadleaved woodland and plantation adjacent to the parish boundary. Species recorded from the hedgebanks include honeysuckle, polypody, black spleenwort, foxglove, greater stitchwort, wood sage and common dog violet. Species recorded from the canopy include sweet chestnut, pedunculate oak, ash and sycamore. There is holly, beech and hazel in the understory.

**Cockwood Marsh** is an area of semi-improved grassland, reedbed, scrub and tall herb vegetation. Part of this area (near to Cockwood Harbour) is now a playing field/village green and is accessible to the public.

## Species

### Protected Species

A report from the DBRC database showing what legally protected, locally notable or noteworthy (e.g. Japanese Knotweed) species are known to have been present in and around Starcross has been prepared and is presented separately (Appendix 1).

### Birds

Several species of birds were recorded during the survey including woodpigeon, swallow and buzzard.

The Exe estuary regularly attracts up to 20,000 waders and wildfowl and is an internationally important site for wintering birds. Birds such as curlew, redshank, avocet and dunlin are easily seen on the mudflats. The Starcross golf range is also an important resting area for birds and regularly attracts birds such as little egret, brent geese, oystercatcher and lapwing.

Other areas around Starcross appear to be of some importance for migratory birds. A field near Staplake Mount (close to the estuary edge) supports fieldfares and redwings, as well as meadow pipit, starling, skylark and curlew. Cockwood Marsh comprises semi-improved grassland dissected by a network of ditches and attracts birds such as reed warbler, grey heron, house martin and swallow.

The curlew has undergone a decline as a result of agricultural change, as they have very specific breeding requirements. This has led to a drastic loss of breeding birds with a 43% loss on the Culm measures between 1972 and 1991, and it is thought there are only 30 breeding pairs left in Devon. As a result of this the curlew is listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan**. Curlews nest on moors and heaths in Devon, and gather on the coasts from July onwards, where they feed on the abundant invertebrates that live in the sediment.

### Plants

The areas of marshy grassland and saltmarsh on the estuary support rare plant species such as parsley water-dropwort, marsh arrowgrass and bulbous foxtail grass.

Small-flowered buttercup, rootless duckweed and rough hawk's-beard (Devon Notable plant species) have been recorded from Cockwood Marsh.

Plant species noted on a visit on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2004 are listed in Appendix 2.

## **Mammals**

Badgers are frequently recorded from the area, but sadly most badger records are from road casualties rather than live sightings. Live badgers have been recorded from several gardens in Starcross, and there are also several records of badger setts in the area. The A379 at Starcross appears to be something of a black-spot for badger road deaths with some 25 reported casualties in 5 years.

There are frequent sightings of brown hare in the many arable fields around the village. The **brown hare** is listed on the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan** as a species of conservation concern. The brown hare was probably introduced to us by the Romans and is fairly common in areas of arable crops and grass leys. The hare is listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan as it has undergone a significant decline in the last 50 years, probably associated with changes in farming practice and increased use of pesticides. Other species recorded in the parish include roe deer and American mink.

## **Invertebrates**

Several common butterfly species were recorded during the survey. These include meadow brown and speckled wood. A jersey tiger moth was also seen. This is an uncommon species being mostly confined to the south coast of Devon. It is Nationally scarce having been recorded from only 31-100 10km squares in Great Britain since 1980.

The rare white admiral butterfly has been recorded from the edge of Starcross parish from Black Forest. The white admiral is a declining butterfly species associated with woodland rides and glades. It is mainly found in the south of Britain and has a particular stronghold in the south of Devon.

## **Reptiles and Amphibians**

Little information is held on reptiles and amphibians in Starcross. The only species recorded from Starcross is a grass snake from a garden in the village. It is likely that frogs, toads and newts are found in garden ponds in the area, and suitable habitat is also present in the network of ditches and ponds at Cockwood Marsh and the golf course as well as the marshland area at Staplake Farm.

## **The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).**

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) describes the key actions needed to look after 37 of Devon's most important habitats and species. It does not stand alone, but is part of a much wider process aimed at conserving our biodiversity.

The Devon BAP is a direct descendent of a process started at the famous 'Earth Summit' held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At this summit, world leaders pledged to halt and reverse the loss of the planet's biodiversity. For its part, the UK government produced a series of Action Plans for a great many threatened habitats and species. These national plans have been joined by a series of regional Action Plans aimed at providing a more local perspective.

The Devon BAP builds on this endeavour, identifying local priorities and providing targets and plans of action for the County.

All of this work has one aim: to encourage practical action on the ground. Its success depends upon us all.

### **Biodiversity links:**

- The Devon BAP can be viewed at [www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity). This site also contains links to other nature conservation issues relevant to Devon, such as information on hedges. If you do not have access to the internet and require paper copies of relevant sections of the Devon BAP please contact Devon County Council's Biodiversity Officer on 01392 382804.
- Details of biodiversity planning in the South West region can be viewed at [www.swbiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.swbiodiversity.org.uk).
- National Action Plans can be viewed at [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk). This site also contains useful background information on UK biodiversity action planning.

## Links between the wildlife of Starcross and the Devon BAP:

Starcross wildlife feature	Brief description of feature	Link with the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)
Exe Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest	An estuary with mudflats, saltmarsh, reedbeds and marshy grassland. Of major importance for its overwintering and migratory populations of wading birds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuaries Habitat Action Plan</li> <li>• Curlew Species Action Plan</li> </ul>
Species-rich Hedges	Important – often ancient – wildlife habitats that can also form an important network of corridors along which wildlife can move and disperse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Species-rich Hedges Habitat Action Plan</li> <li>• Dormouse Species Action Plan</li> <li>• Great green bush-cricket Species Action Plan</li> </ul>
Churchyard & other areas of species-rich grassland	These features support species-rich grassland, which has been protected from agricultural improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Habitat Action Plan</li> </ul>

View the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan at [www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity).

## Some Ideas for Local Action...

This section of the report is provided by Devon County Council (contact: nature@devon.gov.uk).

A major step to knowing what you can do for your local wildlife and geology is to know what you have already got. This report will help you in this, but it is just a start.

Ultimately, the protection and enhancement of the local natural environment requires the interest and enthusiasm of the local community.

There follow some initial ideas for local nature conservation action. Many of them will directly help to achieve the objectives of the habitat and species action plans contained in the **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan**.

It is by no means an exhaustive list. As a community, you may have many more ideas for action that you would like to take forward in the coming years.

### 1 Further survey:

This report is just a beginning. Carrying out further survey within your area will help build a better picture of the wildlife present, and of the opportunities for enhancement. Gaining a better understanding of the resource is usually a key objective of the Devon BAP's habitat and species action plans.

Specific features to survey in Starcross might include hedges and species-rich grassland. The last two actions would directly contribute to the **Species-rich Hedges Action Plan** and the **Flower-rich meadows and pastures Action Plan**.

One example of survey work that might usefully be undertaken would be to produce a hedgerow appraisal for your local area. Comparing the current distribution of hedges against boundary lines shown on old maps will give a clue as to how this important resource has changed over recent years. It may also highlight opportunities for restoring hedges in your area. It might also be possible to assess the condition of hedges and this may, in turn, give some ideas about improving their future management to benefit wildlife.

Survey work could be undertaken as a community group or in liaison with conservation groups active in the area. For example, the Devon Wildlife Trust is active around Starcross and manage nature reserves close by.

Help to build up a picture of the state of Devon's environment by sending your records to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre where they can be properly collated.

## **2 Influence the management of Public Open Space:**

Creating areas of more species-rich grassland will help to reduce the isolation of the remaining fragments of traditionally managed agricultural land, contributing to the **Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Action Plan**. Churchyards have often received less intensive management than the surrounding land and can provide good opportunities for wildlife.

Planting up areas that are currently of little wildlife interest with new copses of native trees and shrubs will also help to attract wildlife. Suitable sites might include unused areas of playing fields, for example.

## **3 Build relationships with local landowners:**

Encourage the adoption of more wildlife-friendly land management. For example, hedges that are cut only every other year (or even a longer rotation) will provide an autumn and winter source of nuts and berries for birds and small mammals (and can save the landowner money in management costs). The improved management of hedgerows is a key objective of the **Species-rich Hedges Action Plan**. If the owner is willing, why not get involved with practical management, such as traditional hedge laying or pond restoration?

## **4 Adopt a road verge:**

Many verges can have a significant value for wildlife because they have escaped the intensive management of the surrounding farmland. Ensuring such verges are managed for their wildlife is a very positive step, again contributing to the **Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Action Plan**.

There are, of course, obvious health and safety implications to roadside management. It is an action that would need to be undertaken in close liaison with the relevant highways authority (generally, this is the Highways Agency for motorways and trunk roads, and Devon County Council for all other roads).

## **5 Wildlife gardening:**

Green up your garden! Collectively the gardens of Starcross represent a significant area that could be used to benefit wildlife. Large or small, you can turn your garden (or a part of it!) into a haven for wildlife. A very good source of information on wildlife gardening is the English Nature web site:

[www.english-nature.org.uk/Nature\\_In\\_The\\_Garden](http://www.english-nature.org.uk/Nature_In_The_Garden)

English Nature is the Government's adviser on nature conservation. Its web site also contains links to a number of other very useful sources of information.

## **6 Join local conservation organisations:**

One example of a prominent local conservation organisation is the Devon Wildlife Trust. This trust has a number of Local Groups which, amongst other things, get involved in practical management work. Details of DWT's local groups can be found at the Trust's web site: [www.devonwildlifetrust.org](http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org).

## **7 Japanese Knotweed:**

Not something to cherish, but it can't be ignored! Unfortunately, Japanese Knotweed is present at one location in Starcross Parish. Introduced into Britain by the Victorians, Japanese Knotweed is a native of Japan, north China, Korea and Taiwan. It flourishes in Britain's mild and fertile environment and has no natural biological enemies here. Consequently, it is very invasive and can overrun large areas, replacing our native flora. It is a serious pest which can be so vigorous as to cause significant damage to buildings and roads. It is also a difficult plant to eradicate.

For these reasons Japanese Knotweed is listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as a plant that is not to be planted or otherwise introduced into the wild. In addition, all parts of the plant are considered as controlled waste under the Waste Regulations.

What can you do?

- Firstly, it is important to build up a picture of where Japanese Knotweed is present. This will give an idea of the scale of the problem and will help to prevent it being accidentally spread during any ditch clearance, highway work and so on. To help develop an understanding of the problem in Devon, records should also be sent to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre<sup>1</sup>. Ideally, records should include when you first saw it and confirmation of when it was seen most recently; its precise location (notes or a sketch map are helpful, as is a grid reference if you have one); the kind of habitat it is in (e.g. next to running water, on a road verge), and a rough indication of how abundant it is.
- Secondly, be careful not to spread the plant further! This is all too easily done as it can regenerate from even the smallest fragment and is easy to spread unknowingly. It is important not to flail it or to try and dig it up. Often, it is best not to cut Japanese Knotweed at all, but if it is it should be very carefully disposed of on site when dead or removed as Controlled Waste. Any tools used should be properly cleaned.
- Finally, if Japanese Knotweed is on your land, the best way to prevent its spread is to control or eradicate it as soon as possible. Regular cutting can weaken and eventually kill the plant but it is a time-consuming job and

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<sup>1</sup> DBRC, Shirehampton House, 35-37 St David's Hill, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4DA. Phone: 01392 273244; Fax: 01392 433221; E-mail: [dbrc@devonwt.cix.co.uk](mailto:dbrc@devonwt.cix.co.uk)

proper disposal of the cut material can be a problem. Usually, the most effective method of control is to treat the plant with herbicide. This can take a number of years to be successful but if the plant is left untreated it will inevitably spread. A number of issues should be taken into account in deciding which herbicide to use, particularly the presence of water (where special care needs to be taken and the advice of the Environment Agency must be sought).

Fortunately, a great deal of advice (including an Environment Agency Code of Practice) is available on the Devon Knotweed Forum's web pages. You are recommended to view these at:

[www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity/japanese\\_knotweed](http://www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity/japanese_knotweed).

## Useful sources of further information:

- Devon Wildlife Trust: [www.devonwildlifetrust.org](http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org)
- Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society: Secretary tel: 01837 53360
- English Nature: [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)
- Plantlife: [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)
- RSPB: [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)
- The Woodland Trust: [www.woodland-trust.org.uk](http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk)
- The Living Churchyards & Cemeteries Project, Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Society, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ  
Tel: 01203 696969 ext. 364/339.

## Possible sources of funding:

A number of potential sources of funding are available for local biodiversity projects. Each has its own rules, criteria and objectives but the following sites may be worth checking for suitability:

Awards for All: [www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)

Countryside Trust Awards: 01242 521382 or [www.countryside-trust.org](http://www.countryside-trust.org)

Living Spaces: 0845 600 3190 or [www.living-spaces.org.uk](http://www.living-spaces.org.uk)

Local Heritage Initiative: 01226 719019 or [www.lhi.org.uk](http://www.lhi.org.uk)

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## Appendix 1 – Notable sites and species within Starcross Parish.

File Code	Site Name	Grid Ref.	Area (ha)	Description	Status
SX98/077	Staplake Farm	SX973813	1.5	semi-improved grassland, marsh	pCWS
SX98/078	Staplake Mount	SX970822	2.0	Semi-improved neutral grassland	pCWS
SX98/090	Southbrook	SX976808 & SX976810	2.5	Open water & marshy grassland	pCWS
SX98/070	Wood Brake	SX952818	11.8	Broadleaved Woodland and plantation	pCWS
SX98/073	Cockwood Marsh	SX970806	11.0	Saltmarsh & open water, reedbed & grazing marsh	pCWS
SX98/085	Starcross Golf Range	SX976812	6.6	Wintering bird interest	CWS
SX98/001	Exe Estuary	SX980838	2139.2	Tidal estuary with mudflats, saltmarsh, reed beds, marshy grassland & pond. Important ornithological & botanical assemblages.	SSSI/SPA/ Ramsar

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** these are notified by English Nature because of their plants, animals or geological features (the latter are geological SSSIs or gSSSI). English Nature needs to be consulted before any operations likely to damage the special interest are undertaken. SSSI is a statutory designation with legal implications.

**County Wildlife Sites (CWS):** these are sites of county importance for wildlife, designated on the basis of the habitat or the known presence of particular species. This is not a statutory designation like SSSIs, and does not have any legal status. County Wildlife Sites are usually included in Local Plans as sites of substantive nature conservation interest and are covered by Planning Policy Guidance note nine (PPG9). CWS recognition does not demand any particular actions on the part of the Landowner and does not give the public rights of access. However, it may increase eligibility for land management grants.

**Potential County Wildlife Sites / Unconfirmed County Wildlife Sites (pCWS or Unc):** these are sites identified as having possible interest but not fully surveyed. Some of these sites will be areas of significant wildlife interest.

No.	Name	Latin Name	Location	Date	UK Protection	International Protection	Status
1	Badger	Meles meles	Black Forest	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
2	Badger	Meles meles	Black Forest	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
3	Roe Deer	Capreolus capreolus	Black Forest	1999	DA	Bern III	
4	Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	Black Forest	1999			UKBAP(P);

							DBAP
5	Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	Near Kenton	1997			UKBAP(P); DBAP
6	Badger	Meles meles	Black Forest	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
7	Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	Beside lane near arable field, West of Church Brake, Kenton area.	2001			UKBAP(P); DBAP
8	Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	Cotton Cross	1994			Amber
9	Badger	Meles meles	A379 between Dawlish and Cockwood.	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
10	Badger	Meles meles	A379 at Cotton, near Starcross.	2004	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
11	Badger	Meles meles	A379 on the left hand side just before Cofford Farm, travelling from Dawlish to Cockwood.	2003	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
12	Badger	Meles meles	A379, between Dawlish and Starcross just before bend in road near Cockwood marsh	2003	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
13	Badger	Meles meles	A379 adjacent to Cofford Farm, travelling from Dawlish to Cockwood.	2003	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
14	Badger	Meles meles	A379	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
15	Badger	Meles meles	A379 Starcross to Dawlish section	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
16	Badger	Meles meles	A379 between Dawlish and Starcross. On the verge of the road just south of the corner at Cofford Farm.	2003	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
17	Badger	Meles meles	A379, Dawlish to Starcross, by Cofford Farm.	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
18	Badger	Meles meles	A379	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	

19	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	A379 travelling from Cockwood to Dawlish on LH side of road just after sharp LH bend.	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
20	Great Green Bush Cricket	<i>Tettigonia viridissima</i>	Along A379 from Cockwood Marsh to bottom of steep hill going into Dawlish.	2001			DBAP
21	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	A379, Cofford Farm, near Starcross.	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
22	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	On lane just west of Staplake Farm, Starcross	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
23	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	A379, between Starcross and Kenton, near Powderham castle.	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
24	Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	Laurel Cottage, Stoplake Lane, Starcross Exeter	2002	WCA 5(KIS)	Bern III	
25	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Staplake Road, Starcross	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
26	a bat	bat sp.	Staplake Mount Cottage, Staplake Road, Starcross.	1999	WCA 5, 6	EC IVa; Bonn II	
27	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Garden at Exeleigh.	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
28	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	A379, between Starcross and Kenton	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
29	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Cockwood Marsh, Dawlish.	2002			Amber
30	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Garden of Kafra, Staplake Road.	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
31	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Alotments adjacent to Staplake Road, near MAFF	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
32	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	A379	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
33	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	On a verge of the A379 about 0.5 miles south-east of the end of Kenton houses.	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	

34	Badger	Meles meles	A379 Starcross	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
35	Badger	Meles meles	In garden of Exleigh bungalows.	2002	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
36	Badger	Meles meles	A379 Starcross to Kenton	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
37	Badger	Meles meles	A379, near FRCA at Starcross	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
38	Badger	Meles meles	On the side of the A379 at Starcross, about 100m before turning to Stile Farm on the left.	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
39	Badger	Meles meles	In Painter's Wood, Starcross. Next to sewage works.	2003	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
40	Badger	Meles meles	In Painter's Wood just west of the track and south of the sewage works, Starcross.	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
41	Badger	Meles meles	Painter's Wood, Starcross.	2002	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
42	Badger	Meles meles	A379	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
43	Badger	Meles meles	Minor road between Cockwood and Starcross	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
44	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	In hedgerows around allotments and field opposite along Brickyard lane, Starcross.	2001			Red
45	Badger	Meles meles	Garden of Heywood drive.	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
46	Badger	Meles meles	Exstowe, Starcross.	2003	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
47	Badger	Meles meles	Neighbour's garden at Starcross.	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
48	Badger	Meles meles	Garden of East Extowe.	1999	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
49	Badger	Meles meles	In garden of Exstowe House, Starcross, close to the A379.	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
50	Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	Cockwood Marsh,	2002	WCA 1		Amber

			Dawlish.				
51	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	A379: right hand side of road, heading from Starcross to Dawlish, 100 metres past turning to Cockwood (across the harbour).	2001	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
52	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	A379, near Cockwood	2000	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
53	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	The Chimneys, Starcross.	2003			Amber
54	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Staplake, Starcross	2001			Red
55	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002			Amber
56	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002	WCA 1		Red
57	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002			DBAP; Amber
58	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002	WCA 1		Amber
59	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002			Amber
60	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002			Amber
61	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002	WCA 1		Amber
62	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002			Amber
63	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Field at Staplake,	2001			UKBAP(P);

			Starcross	- 2002			Red
64	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Field at Staplake, Starcross	2001 - 2002			Red
65	Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Southern edge, Cockwood Marsh	2001	WCA 8 (S)		
66	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	Cockwood Marsh	2001			Amber
67	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Cockwood Marsh	2001			Red
68	Rootless Duckweed	<i>Wolffia arrhiza</i>	North-South ditch, Cockwood Marsh	2001			NS
69	Rough Hawk's-beard	<i>Crepis biennis</i>	Southern edge, Cockwood Marsh	2001			DN2
70	Rough Hawk's-beard	<i>Crepis biennis</i>	Northern edge, Cockwood Marsh	2001			DN2
71	Small-flowered Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus parviflorus</i>	Field 1, Cockwood Marsh	2001			DN3
72	Small-flowered Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus parviflorus</i>	North-South ditch, Cockwood Marsh	2001			DN3
73	Small-flowered Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus parviflorus</i>	Southern edge, Cockwood Marsh	2001			DN3
74	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Cockwood Marsh	2001			Amber
75	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Golf course at Starcross	2002			Amber
76	Japanese Knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Beside the railway line next to the A379 at Starcross.	2003	WCA 9		
77	Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Field on west side of A379, south of Starcross (golf course).	2002			Amber
78	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Field on west side of A379, south of Starcross (golf course).	2002			Amber
79	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Field next to Golf course at Starcross	2002			Amber
80	Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>	Ditch, Bishop's Clyst	1978			DN1

81	White Admiral	Ladoga camilla	Black Forest Lodge	1998			DeclineD
82	White Admiral	Ladoga camilla	Black Forest	1999			DeclineD
83	White Admiral	Ladoga camilla	Black Forest	1998			DeclineD

- WCA 1**      **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 1:** birds which are protected by special penalties at all times.
- WCA 5**      **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 5:** species protected against killing, injury, disturbance and handling.
- WCA 5 (KIS)**      **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 5: (killing & injury):** species protected against killing, injury and sale only.
- WCA 6**      **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 6:** animals (other than birds) which may not be killed or taken by certain methods
- WCA 8 (S)**      **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 8: (sale):** plants protected against sale only.
- WCA 9**      **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 9:** animals and plants for which release into the wild is prohibited.
- BA**      **Protection of Badgers Act 1992:** badgers may not be deliberately killed, persecuted or trapped except under licence. Badger setts may not be damaged, destroyed or obstructed.
- DA**      **Deer Act 1991:** deer protected under the Deer Act.
- Bern III**      **Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) Appendix III:** Exploitation of listed animal species to be subject to regulation
- ECIVa, IVb**      **EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats & Species Directive) Annex IVa:** Exploitation of listed animals and plants to be subject to management if necessary.
- Bonn II**      **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) Appendix II:** Range states encouraged to conclude international agreements to benefit species listed.
- UKBAP(P)**      **UK Priority Species (Short and Middle Lists - UK Biodiversity steering Group Report 1995)** i.e. species that are globally threatened and rapidly declining in the UK (by more than 50% in the last 25 years). Has a Species Action Plan.
- DBAP**      **Devon Biodiversity Action Plan species:** these have been identified as species of key conservation concern in Devon.
- Decline**      Substantial local decline in Devon

**Red List** Bird species of high conservation concern, such as those whose population or range is rapidly declining, recently or historically, and those of global conservation concern.

**Amber List** Bird species of medium conservation concern, such as those whose population is in moderate decline, rare breeders, internationally important and localised species and those of unfavourable conservation status in Europe.

**NS** **Nationally Scarce:** 15-100 10km squares in Atlas of British Flora 1962.

**Devon Notable Species:** Selected species recorded from over 50 2km squares in the Atlas of Devon Flora 1984 (R.B. Ivimey-Cook, Department of Biological Sciences, The University of Exeter).

**DN1** **Devon Notable<sup>1</sup>:** 1-25 2 km squares in Atlas of Devon Flora 1984.

**DN2** **Devon Notable<sup>2</sup>:** 26-50 2 km squares in Atlas of Devon Flora 1984.

**DN3** **Devon Notable<sup>3</sup>:** Selected species recorded from over 50 2 km squares in Atlas of Devon Flora 1984.

## **Appendix 2**

Species list for Starcross parish, recorded during the field survey on 19/08/04.

<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>Common name</b>
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser Burdock
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-ladies
<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black Spleenwort
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False-brome
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	Butterfly-bush
<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Buzzard
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's-purse
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red Valerian
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawk's-beard
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler-fern
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> agg.	Male Fern
<i>Epilobium</i> sp.	a willowherb
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle
<i>Euphorbia peplus</i>	Petty Spurge
<i>Euplagia quadripunctaria</i>	Jersey Tiger
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Japanese Knotweed
<i>Festuca rubra</i> agg.	Red Fescue
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Galium mollugo</i>	Hedge Bedstraw
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-robert
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Herb Bennet

<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Swallow
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog
<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Wall Barley
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly
<i>Iris foetidissima</i>	Stinking Iris
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Iris
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	Red Dead-nettle
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling
<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	Autumnal Hawkbit
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	Rough Hawkbit
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle
<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	Meadow Brown
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineapple Weed
<i>Medicago arabica</i>	Spotted Medick
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick
<i>Meles meles</i>	Badger
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	Hemlock Water-dropwort
<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	Speckled Wood
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Green Alkanet
<i>Petasites fragrans</i>	Winter Heliotrope
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed
<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	Hart's-tongue
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i> agg.	Knotgrass [agg.]
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i> agg.	Polypody
<i>Populus alba</i>	White Poplar
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	Common Fleabane
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	an oak
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Rosa</i> sp.	a rose (unidentified)
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild Madder
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Salix</i> sp.	a willow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	Grey Squirrel
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Common Figwort
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort

<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black Bryony
<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	Tansy
<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	Dandelion
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Wood Sage
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wych Elm
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell
<i>Veronica persica</i>	Common Field-speedwell
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet