

Parish Biodiversity Audit

for

West Down

Consultation draft – August 2009

Christine Mason
Green Ecology Ltd

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West Down - Parish Plan Biodiversity Project

This document has been produced as a starting point to help community action for wildlife. By starting to bring together knowledge of the natural assets of the parish, it may go some way to achieving its aim of contributing to - and stimulating ideas for - local action.

It should be emphasised that it is just a beginning. It does not represent a comprehensive account of the parish and is based largely on existing records held by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC). There will be a wealth of local knowledge that can be used to build upon and improve this report. Indeed, it is important that it is seen as a 'living document' and one that belongs to the parish. It is hoped that it will be added to and refined by the people of West Down parish in future years.

Did you know...?

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006

Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places the following biodiversity duty on all public bodies:

'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'

The duty applies to all local authorities, including parish and town councils. Its purpose is to raise the profile of biodiversity and make it a 'natural and integral' part of policy and decision making.

The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has issued guidance for local authorities on implementing this biodiversity duty. It can be downloaded from Defra's website: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/pdf/biodiversity/la-guid-english.pdf

Introduction

Biodiversity is a term that describes all of life on earth, from the smallest micro-organism to the largest mammal, the Blue whale. Life is found almost everywhere on the planet and in huge variety. Even a humble back garden may be home to thousands of species and is therefore an important part of the planet's biodiversity. The West Down Parish Biodiversity Audit begins to describe the area's local wildlife and shows how it fits into the wider picture of biodiversity in Devon and the UK.

West Down parish lies in an idyllic position not far from the north Devon coast, 7 kilometres south of Ilfracombe and 6 kilometres north of Braunton. The parish is crossed from north to south by the main A361 Braunton to Ilfracombe link road to the west of the village. The parish lies within the North Devon Biosphere Reserve.

The village of West Down is the main settlement in the centre of the parish. The parish shares common boundaries with Ilfracombe to the north, Morteohoe and Georgeham to the west, Braunton to the south and Bitaddon to the east.

The parish's economy was traditionally based around agriculture and iron mining. The population of the parish is approximately 600 with around 400 in West Down village itself. Local services include the parish church, parish hall (with post office), village shop, a primary school and a public house. There are also a number of holiday and caravan parks and serviced and self-catering holiday accommodation across the parish.

Beyond the boundaries of West Down village, the parish is rural and sparsely populated. Other small settlements and hamlets within the parish include Dean to the north west and Cheglinch to the north of the village. There is an industrial estate near Mullaton Cross on the most northerly edge of the parish.

Much of the parish is over 200m above sea level dissected by a number of steep sided wooded stream valleys running from a north east to south west direction. The landscape is dominated by agricultural areas consisting mainly of arable land and pastures grazed by sheep and cattle. The patchwork of fields is surrounded by hedges. The fields include unimproved and semi-improved grassland on the steeper sloping fields and improved grassland or arable land generally on the more gently undulating areas. The steep valley sides of the River Caen form the southern boundary of the parish and are predominantly wooded. The north western tributary valley of the Caen (part of the route of the main A361) is also steep sided and wooded. The northern sections of the parish rise to over 250 metres above sea level and are more gently undulating dissected in parts with wooded stream valleys. Wind sculpted treetops level with the top of the valley sides are a distinctive local landscape feature. Another landscape feature is the network of Beech hedges which dominate higher ground and provide shelter from the prevailing onshore winds.

The site of Fullabrook Wind Farm is just to the south of the parish. It is anticipated that the wind farm will start generating electricity from mid-2010. The Fullabrook Wind Farm Community Fund has been set up for projects benefiting residents within 5 km of the wind farm (including West Down parish) together with community groups across the wider area.

There are four County Wildlife Sites (CWS) within the parish. Buttercombe Wood is an area of acidic ancient semi-natural woodland largely replanted with conifers and with heathland interest along the sides. Stoneyard Wood is acidic ancient semi-natural woodland and unimproved wet neutral grassland.

Snowball meadow is an area of semi-improved neutral grassland and Roborough Wood is semi-natural broadleaved woodland.



View from west side of parish towards West Down village

West Down parish is relatively under-recorded and there are a large number of Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites (34 in total). These are areas that have been identified as having possible interest but not yet fully surveyed. Most of these unconfirmed sites are semi-improved natural grassland on publicly inaccessible farmland or broadleaved woodland within private grounds.

There are a number of pleasant footpaths and other Rights of Way within the parish. West Down is part of Devon County Council Parish Paths Partnership.

Notable sites and species recorded with Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC) within and close to West Down parish are given in Appendix 1. The species include those listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP), such as such as the Bullfinch, Brown Hare and Yellowhammer and also in the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (Devon BAP). Otters, listed in both the UK and Devon BAP, have been recorded in the north-west tributary of the Caen in the south of the parish. An explanation of the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan is presented on page 29.

The parish audit visit for this report was carried out in February 2009. It should be borne in mind that this is not the ideal season to carry out biodiversity surveys as many species will not be visible at this time of the year. A full species list recorded during the February audit visit is given in Appendix 2.

Designated Sites

Many designated sites are on private land: the listing of a site does not imply any right of public access.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are notified by Natural England (formerly English Nature) because of their plants, animals or geological features (the latter are geological SSSIs or gSSSI). Natural England needs to be consulted before any operations likely to damage the special interest are undertaken. SSSI is a statutory designation with legal implications. The nearest SSSI is the Caen Vallet Bat SSSI, just north of Braunton, designated for its importance as a Greater Horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* maternity roost. Although there are no SSSI designations within the parish itself, this does not necessarily mean that there are no sites of potential high biodiversity importance where sensitive and appropriate management is essential to preserve wildlife value.

Special Areas of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC): these are notified by Natural England because they contain species and/or habitats of European importance (listed in the Habitats Directive 1994), and are part of a network of conservation sites set up through Europe known as the Natura 2000 series. On land, all candidate SACs are, or will be notified as SSSIs. Natural England needs to be consulted before any operations likely to damage the special interest are undertaken. SAC is a statutory designation with legal implications.

West Down parish does not lie within a designated SAC. The nearest SAC is at Braunton Burrows 6 kilometres to the south west. Braunton Sands SAC is the UK's largest sand dune system with over 400 associated plant species. A full listing of Special Areas of Conservation can be found on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee website: www.jncc.gov.uk

Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites

Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) are earth science sites that are of regional or local importance. Like County Wildlife Sites, they are included in Local Plans and referred to under PPG9 (see below). These may represent good examples of local rock formations or landform features or they may contain interesting fossils.

There are no RIGS within the parish of West Down.

County Wildlife Sites

There are four County Wildlife Sites (CWS) within West Down parish:

- Buttercombe Wood County Wildlife Site
- Stoneyard Wood County Wildlife Site

- Snowball Meadow County Wildlife Site
- Roborough Wood County Wildlife Site

County Wildlife Sites 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 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and does not have any legal status. County Wildlife Sites are usually included in Local Plans as sites of regional or local biodiversity interest and are covered by Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9). 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.

Note: 'Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' was published by the Department of the Environment in August 2005. Planning Policy Statements (PPS) set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of planning in England. PPS9 sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. This PPS replaces Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 (PPG9) on nature conservation published in October 1994.

Records of previous habitat and species surveys for these CWSs are kept with the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC), from which the descriptions here are largely derived; conditions may have changed since these surveys. All of the sites are privately owned, some with little or no public access on to them. Some of the sites however can be seen from public roads and footpaths.

Buttercombe Wood County Wildlife Site

A survey in 1994 recorded Buttercombe Wood as 19.9 ha of acidic ancient semi-natural woodland largely replanted with conifers. The site lies to the south west of West Down village and runs adjacent to the A361. Hidden Valley Holiday Park adjoins the woods along its south east edge. The majority of the site has been clear felled and replanted with differing age blocks of single stand conifer. There is a well established heath community along the rides and the edges of the plantation with abundant Bell heather *Erica cinerea* and Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*. There are some remaining areas of broadleaved woodland dominated by Sessile oak *Quercus petraea* with occasional Beech *Fagus sylvatica* on the northern edge of the site. Ash *Fagus sylvatica* dominates the eastern edges which slope steeply towards the stream. Whilst most parts of the plantation areas have little or no understorey there is a good structure in the Ash dominated sections with an understorey of abundant Hazel *Corylus avellana* and occasional Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. The groundflora in parts contains species associated with freely draining acidic conditions including Wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*, Common cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense*, Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and Heather *Calluna vulgaris*. 12 ancient woodland indicator species are recorded across the site including Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, Hart's

tongue fern *Phyllitis scolopendrium* and Pignut *Conopodium majus*. The site is also used by a herd of Red deer *Cervus elaphus*.



Hidden Valley holiday park with Buttercombe Wood CWS in distance

[Links to Devon; North Devon and UK BAPs](#)

Key habitats:

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (UK BAP); Oak woodland (Devon BAP, North Devon BAP)

Stoneyard Wood County Wildlife Site

The site is located along the southern edge of the parish and consists of 23.2 ha of acidic ancient semi-natural woodland and unimproved wet neutral grassland. Surveyed in 1994 the grassland is recorded as being species-rich containing species such as Water forget-me-not *Myostis scorpioides*, Heath spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, Ragged-robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and Hemlock water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata*. The woodland itself is dominated by Sessile oak *Quercus petraea* with a dense understorey of Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. Large parts of the wood have been coppiced (approximately 30 and 60 years ago). The coppiced Oak re-growth has formed a dense canopy resulting in an impoverished ground flora in parts. The site was not surveyed during the audit visit, however the aerial photograph of the parish does indicate some recent low level coppicing or thinning on the northern edges of the woodland. 14 ancient woodland indicator species have been recorded on the site including Primrose *Primula vulgaris*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Slender St. John's-wort *Hypericum perforatum* and Polypody *Polypodium vulgare*.

[Links to Devon, North Devon and UK BAP](#)

Key habitats:

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (UK BAP); Oak woodland (Devon BAP, North Devon BAP)

Key species:

- Primrose (Devon BAP)

Snowball Meadow County Wildlife Site

The site is located near the south-east edge of the parish and can be seen from the public footpath which runs along Wood Lane from Rock Hill south of the village. The site was last surveyed in 2008 and has been identified as 2.6 ha of semi-improved and unimproved neutral grassland. The site lies at the bottom of an attractive valley and consists of two linear fields divided by a tree lined stream. The site borders Roborough Wood CWS to the east. The site is grazed by cattle and sheep and the sward is closely cropped. The most abundant grasses, on the slightly improved sections, are Sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and Perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. Herb species are common and include Common sorrel *Rumex acetosa* and Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*. The less improved sloping sections appear to have moderately species-rich swards amongst patches of low Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. Herb species in these more interesting sections include Self-heal *Prunella vulgaris*, Pignut *Conopodium major* and most notably Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla vulgaris* ssp. *vestita*, a Devon notable species.

The stream is a central feature of the site and adds significantly to the site's biodiversity. Associated species along the stream include Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Sallow *Salix cinerea* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* with a diverse ground flora including Brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*, Water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides* and Water figwort *Scrophularia aquatica*. The stream is an important habitat for Otters *Lutra lutra*, Water shrew *Neomys fodiens*, aquatic vertebrates and a good range of damp loving plants.

Links to Devon, North Devon and UK BAP**Key habitat:**

- Flower rich meadows and pastures (Devon BAP)
- Neutral grassland (UK BAP)
- Farmland (North Devon BAP)
- Rivers, streams, floodplains and fluvial processes (Devon BAP); Rivers (UK BAP)

Key species:

- Otter (UK BAP, Devon BAP)
- Primrose (Devon BAP)
- Yellowhammer (UK BAP)

Roborough Wood County Wildlife Site

Located near the southern edge of the parish Roborough Wood CWS was fully surveyed in 2008 and consists of 5.3 ha of semi-natural broadleaved woodland. The site is situated on a south to south-west facing slope above a stream in a fairly undisturbed valley containing an attractive mosaic of habitats that include semi-improved damp and dry grassland, scrub and hedgerows with frequent standard trees and woodland. The valley is part of the feeding territory of Greater Horseshoe bats *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* as it is close to the Caen Valley SSSI and to some of the old mines used for over-wintering. The stream at the bottom of the site is known to be frequented by Otters.

The site contains a good diversity of woodland habitat and species. The largest portion of the site is dominated by small but mature Sessile oak much of it formerly coppiced. The eastern edge of this part of the wood has an interesting acidic ground flora with species such as Bilberry, Common cow wheat and Hair moss *Polytrichum formosum*. Other areas are dominated by Ash (of various ages including some almost veteran standards) with Hazel. The most north westerly tip of the site (approximately 30%) is young secondary woodland dominated by Hazel coppice with Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. Ancient woodland indicator species are present throughout (29 species in total) and include Sanicle, Primrose, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* and Yellow pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*.

Links to Devon, North Devon and UK BAP

Key habitat:

- Oak Woodland (North Devon, Devon BAP, UK BAP)
- Lowland mixed deciduous wood (UK BAP)

Key species:

- Otter (Devon BAP, UK BAP)
- Primrose (Devon BAP)
- Greater horseshoe bat

Other designations and regional classifications

North Devon's Biosphere Reserve

The very special nature of the environment of northern Devon has been recognised at an international level through UNESCO's designation of a Biosphere Reserve centred on the dune system of Braunton Burrows. This designation recognises that the iconic dune ecosystem does not sit in isolation from its surrounding landscapes and so defines wider zones (buffer and transition zones) where management is sympathetic to the needs of the core site and where sustainable development enhances the overall

environmental quality of the area. Local communities are a critical part of the development and enhancement of the Biosphere Reserve and can fully participate in the management of the area through the Biosphere Reserve Partnership.

West Down parish sits within the 'transition zone' for North Devon's Biosphere Reserve, recognising the part that it and its people have to play in the maintenance and enhancement of the area's natural resources.

The Vision for North Devon's Biosphere Reserve is that:

'North Devon will be a great place to live, work and visit where a superb natural environment underpins jobs, recreation and healthy living. The area will be a world class exemplar for sustainable development.'

A Management Strategy and Action Plan is currently being developed to set out how that vision can be achieved.

Natural Areas

Natural England's Natural Areas divides the country into areas containing common or associated ecological and landscape features. The parish of West Down sits within the Exmoor and the Quantock Hills Natural Area. This Natural Area incorporates areas with internationally important habitats, such as upland heath, western heath, western oakwoods, blanket bog and certain types of marshy grassland. Other habitats, of national importance, such as sea cliffs and slopes and upland rivers and streams are also represented here. It is also characterised by having unimproved grassland, grazing marsh and a network of hedgerows (source: Exmoor and the Quantock Hills Natural Area Profile, Exmoor National Park and English Nature, 1997). Further information about the Exmoor and the Quantock Hills Natural Area can be found on Natural England's website: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Other habitats (identified from field survey):

Species-rich hedges

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. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan now defines a BAP priority hedges as any native hedge over 20m in length, species rich or not.

Many of the hedges surrounding the fields and lanes across the parish, like many of the area's hedges, are probably of medieval origin. These form an important landscape feature as well as providing an important wildlife habitat for birds, butterflies, invertebrates and mammals such as Dormice and bats. These hedges also provide sheltered wildlife corridors through areas of farmland allowing wildlife to move between areas of habitat.

There are some very different types of hedges with different characters across the parish. The best examples of hedges can be found on the slopes of the river and stream valleys of the parish particularly in the southern and western parts. Here species include Hazel, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Holly, Beech and Oak. Many of these hedges are on traditional Devon hedgebanks with a diverse bank flora providing an impressive spring bank display. Single species Beech hedges on higher ground north of the village are more prevalent.

Many of the field hedges on the higher ground where land use is dominated by arable and livestock agriculture are closely trimmed and relatively low in height. Such hedges would benefit from being allowed to regrow to provide habitat for species such as Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* and Brown hairstreak *Thecla betulae* butterfly which rely on hedgerows that have had at least two years growth as they lay their eggs on two year old Blackthorn twigs. The management of hedgerows does allow light to penetrate down to the hedgebank, however and on higher ground the hedgebanks surveyed were predominantly species rich. The hedgerows themselves would largely be classed as species poor being three to four species usually Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Beech and Hazel with occasional Holly and Oak.

Many of the hedges on the steeper slopes of the river and stream valleys sloping away from the higher ground are under-managed. It is difficult for light to penetrate to the herb layer and consequently hedgebanks are less floristically diverse. There are gaps in many of these undermanaged hedges which would benefit from some laying. This itself will allow more light to reach the hedgebanks encouraging greater plant diversity.

Due to the time of year and time constraints it was not possible to survey the hedges in any detail and further surveys are recommended.

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 (or, as it is known in Devon, 'steeping').

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 steeped.

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.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Species-rich hedges (Devon BAP, North Devon BAP); Hedgerows (UK BAP)



Beech Hedges on higher ground

Churchyards

St. Calixtus parish church is located in the centre of the village. There is a large graveyard here surrounded in part by some stone walls, on which grow several species of mosses and lichens. The majority of the grassland within the graveyard is managed by frequent cutting and is dominated by grasses such as Perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Red fescue *Festuca rubra* and Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*. The sward is herb rich in places and includes Ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*, Common daisy *Bellis perennis*, Creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, Mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella* with Lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria* in more shaded parts, There are a small number of mature Yew trees *Taxus baccata* close to the west entrance to the churchyard.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Cities, towns and villages (Devon BAP); Towns and villages (North Devon BAP)
- Flower-rich meadows and pastures (Devon BAP)



St. Calixtus Churchyard

Stone walls

Stone walls surround the churchyard and many gardens of West Down. The packhorse stone bridge to the east of the bridge is an interesting example and plants colonising the wall include Maidenhair spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes* and Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris* and several species of moss. Walls are important for lichens, mosses and flowering plants and with crevices can also provide value for invertebrates and reptiles.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Cities, towns and villages (Devon BAP); Towns and villages (North Devon BAP)



Pilton Bridge and Pilton Bridge Green

Recreation areas and public open space

There is a small pocket of parish owned and maintained grassland on the east side of the village known locally as Pilton Bridge on the banks of the stream. This is a small area of grassland planted with bulbs and mature trees. A small bench has been installed. The sward is dominated by Perennial ryegrass with Lesser celandine in the shaded parts close to the stream.

There is a small picnic area and car park next to the A361 north of Dean Cross. This was not surveyed during the audit visit. There are various private recreation areas within the parish including a golf course east of Willingcott Cross and recreation areas within the holiday parks and self-catering complexes across the parish.

The village and wider parish is well served with a network of public rights of way. West Down Parish Council is an active member of Devon County Council's Parish Paths Partnership (P3). The footpaths, bridlepaths and byways are all well signed and maintained and walked regularly by residents of the parish. Recent projects include the installation of bridges and boardwalks at Easter Ground to the north east of the village and modification

of stone stiles to improve easy access. West Down is often cited as a highly successful P3 parish and often used as a case study for training other parish councils.

There are a number of farms in agri-environmental schemes including Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship. As part of the Stewardship scheme some farms offer permissive access for 'conservation walks'. Details of such access can be found on the Natural England website: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Allotments and gardens

Gardens are a haven for wildlife and can provide links to other areas of wildlife habitat. There is a network of gardens in West Down providing a habitat link with the churchyard, hedgerows and the surrounding countryside.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Cities, towns and villages (Devon BAP); Towns and villages (North Devon BAP)

Redundant and traditional buildings

Traditional buildings are present in the parish and can be important for a number of species including the Barn owl and various bat species.



Barn near West Stowford

Rivers and Ponds

The River Caen and its main tributary form the southern and western boundaries of the parish. The River Caen rises just near to the western boundaries of the parish near West Stowford. From here it flows south westwards forming the southern parish boundary with Braunton. The main tributary of the Caen rises just north of Trimstone Manor in the north west of the parish before flowing southwards running parallel to the A361. It meets the main river at the parish boundary south of Spreacombe Bridge. A smaller

tributary rises from the north east edge of the parish and flows southwards along its valley through Farriel Woo then along the eastern edge of the village and southwards through Snow Ball Meadow and Roborough Wood before joining the main river at the parish boundary with Braunton. These water courses provide an important feature and habitat for wildlife for the parish. The Caen valley is known to be an important feeding territory for Greater Horseshoe bat. Otters are known to frequent the river and stream valleys within the parish and provide habitat for Water shrew, aquatic invertebrates and wide diversity of aquatic and streamside plants.

There are a number of ponds within the parish on private grounds offering an important habitat for associated plant and animal species such as toads, frogs, invertebrates and aquatic plants (for example ponds at West Stowford Farm, Buttercombe Barton, Little Comfort, Trimstone Manor and Willingcott Valley Golf Club and). There is a fishing pond at Fullabrook Mill on the parish boundary and a recently excavated stream fed pond near West Stowford Barton.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Rivers, streams, floodplains and fluvial processes (Devon BAP); Rivers (UK BAP)
- Ponds (UK BAP)

Roadside verges

Roadside verges often support flower-rich grassland, as well as a variety of other semi-natural habitats. They may also support populations of scarce or declining species of flora and/or fauna, some of which enjoy statutory protection. Linear grassland habitats provide a valuable wildlife resource. Verges provide shelter and food for a variety of species from small mammals, to birds of prey and insects.

Devon has a very substantial resource of roadside verges, with approximately 14 000 km of roads, corresponding to about 2 000 ha of roadside verge. However, of this very large resource, the area that is species-rich is relatively small and localised in distribution.

Devon County Council and Highways Agency manage roadside verges to incorporate prescriptions to maintain or enhance wildlife interests. Devon County Council operate a Special Verge Scheme to manage areas of particular wildlife or amenity value. These verges are protected from damaging activities, and grass cutting is limited to specific periods to avoid the destruction of attractive stands of wildflowers.

One major road runs through West Down Parish - the A361 Braunton to Ilfracombe road. In addition, some of the minor roads close to the village have verges which can be important wildlife corridors associated with hedges.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Flower-rich meadows and pastures (Devon BAP)

Unimproved grassland

Flower-rich meadows and pastures are a habitat of conservation concern in Devon and are listed on 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 0.2 million 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 *Picus viridis*.

There are significant areas of unimproved and semi-improved neutral grasslands within the parish. One example includes Snowball Meadow which has been identified and classified as a County Wildlife Site. There are also a number of areas which have been identified but not fully surveyed for example at Buttercombe Barton and Little Comfort.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Flower-rich meadows and pastures (Devon BAP)
- Neutral grassland (UK BAP)

Woodlands

West Down is not a heavily wooded parish, but there are several areas of important woodland, mainly in the sheltered river and stream valleys of the parish concentrated largely along the south west parish boundary. These are mainly semi-natural mixed broadleaved woodlands, and include Buttercombe Wood CWS, Stoneyard Wood CWS and Roborough Wood CWS.

Buttercombe Wood CWS has been identified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland largely replanted with conifer. Buttercombe Wood is identified in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Ancient Woodland is a term applied to woodlands which have existed from at least medieval times to the present day without ever having been cleared for uses other than wood or timber production. A convenient date used to separate ancient and secondary woodland is about the year 1600. In special circumstances semi-natural woods of post-1600 but pre-1900 origin are also included. The Devon Ancient Woodland Inventory was prepared in 1986 by the Nature Conservancy Council.

Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites include: Easter Ground (Farriel Wood), Titching Park Cleaves, Trimstone Wood and Aylescott Wood. Farriel Wood was visited on the day of the audit visit. The site was not fully surveyed but was found to be relatively species rich with some interesting streamside habitat. Species included Sessile oak, Ash, Alder, Opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, Holly, Hart's-tongue and Primrose. The community audit contact has been visiting the woods over several decades and confirms that this site is undisturbed and its diverse wildlife remains largely unchanged.



Easter Ground (Farriel Wood) UWS

The majority of woods within the parish are Oak dominated. Oak dominated (English oak *Quercus robur*, sessile oak or hybrids between the two) woodlands predominately occur in the steeper river valleys, particularly in southern Dartmoor, and less so across Devon's lowland areas, here usually in small blocks. The ground flora of oak woodland is generally rich, with mosses ferns and woodland species such as Bluebell and Wood-sorrel. Oak woodlands are also a good habitat for a variety of birds and invertebrates. They are associated with a number species of conservation concern: mammals such as the Dormouse and a number of bat species, birds (including the Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, Pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* and Wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*); butterflies (including the Silver washed fritillary *Argynnis paphia* and Pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne*, Purple emperor *Apatura iris* and Wood white *Leptidea sinapis*) and moths (such as the Orange upperwing *Jodia croceago* and Double line *Mythimna turca*) together with plants such as the Bluebell, Wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* and endemic Whitebeams *Sorbus sp.* These oak woodlands are threatened by such factors as neglect and lack of management, inappropriate grazing pressure, invasive species (for example rhododendron) and softwood forestry.

Oak woodland is a Devon and North Devon BAP priority habitat. Lowland mixed deciduous woodlands are in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats list.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Oak woodland (Devon BAP, North Devon BAP)
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (UK BAP)

Veteran trees

English Nature (now Natural England) has defined veteran trees as: "trees that are of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of their age, size or condition". In relation to oak it has been taken that trees with a diameter at breast height of more than:

- 1.0m are potentially interesting
- 1.5m are valuable in terms of conservation
- 2.0m are truly ancient.

Veteran trees will be at least as big as these measurements (these figures refer to girth at breast height and not to diameter):

- 1 metre - Hawthorn, Blackthorn
- 2.5 metres - Field Maple, Rowan, Yew, Birch, Holly
- 3 metres - Oak, Ash, Scot's Pine, Alder
- 4.5 metres - Sycamore, limes, chestnuts, elms, poplars, Beech, willows, pines, non-native trees.

It has been estimated that Britain may be home to around 80% of Europe's ancient trees. Veteran trees are large old trees found in wood-pasture and parkland, but also in a number of other locations: ancient yews in churchyards; mature oaks in hedgerows; Black Poplars *Populus nigra* along stream-sides; and many noble trees in ancient woodlands.

Ancient trees support particularly rich assemblages of invertebrates, fungi, mosses and lichens. Several species of bat may use hollow trees as roosting sites and birds such as Tree Creepers *Certhia familiaris* and woodpeckers feed on the insects living in the bark. Insects such as stag beetles and hornets are associated with old trees.

There are two significantly aged Yews *Taxus baccata* near the western entrance of the St. Calixtus churchyard. No roadside ancient trees were recorded during the visit though there are a number of potential areas on private land across the parish. Ancient Ash trees are recorded at the top of Roborough Wood CWS.

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Parkland and wood pasture (Devon BAP, North Devon BAP, UK BAP)

Green lanes

A green lane can be defined as an unmetalled track with field boundaries either side. These boundaries may be banks, hedges, woodland edge, stone walls or fences and often features such as ditches or streams are incorporated within the lanes.

The combination of the track, its boundaries and associated features create a landscape unit with its own microclimate and ecology. These sheltered conditions within lanes are of great importance to butterfly populations and may be more botanically species-rich than single hedge boundaries.

There are a number of footpaths with hedges either side, some of which run along the routes of possible sunken old lanes. These together with some green lanes, such as Trimstone Lane support, a range of plant and animal species. Primrose, Hart's-tongue, Lords-and-Ladies *Arum maculatum*, Red Campion *Silene dioica*, Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Holly, Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, Beech and Oak were some of the species recorded during the audit visit.



Trimstone Lane

Links to key habitats in Devon, North Devon and UK BAPs

- Species-rich hedges (Devon BAP, North Devon BAP); Hedgerows (UK BAP)

Other possible habitats

Arable fields can support a number of rare arable weeds but this is usually in association with spring cereals and winter stubble; and associated field margins can be particularly important.

No parklands or orchards were seen during the visit. Traditional orchards have great cultural and landscape importance and can be really valuable habitats for a wide range of species from fungi and lichens, through insects and other invertebrates, to birds and mammals. There are however a

number of private estates within the parish which may contain parkland habitat (for example Trimstone Manor).

Links to key habitats in Devon; North Devon and UK BAPs

- Farmland (North Devon BAP); Arable field margins (UK BAP)
- Parkland, wood pasture (Devon BAP, North Devon BAP, UK BAP)

Unconfirmed County Wildlife Sites

The Devon Biodiversity Records Centre has identified 34 potential Unconfirmed County Wildlife Sites in or bordering West Down parish. These are sites identified as having possible interest but which have not been fully surveyed. Some of these sites may contain areas of significant wildlife interest and further surveys will have to be done to determine whether they are of sufficient quality to be designated. The Unconfirmed County Wildlife Sites identified by DBRC, along with an associated map showing their locations, are also listed in Appendix 1.

Unconfirmed County Wildlife Sites within West Down parish.

Site Name	Grid Ref.	Area (ha)	Description
Smallacombe Bridge	SS489407	53.5	Unimproved & semi-improved neutral grassland with scrub
Spreacombe Bridge (S)	SS497401	1.8	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Willingcott Hill	SS495414	14.5	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Bradwell	SS498426	10.3	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Willingcott Farm	SS489430	0.8	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Trimstone	SS493436	1.1	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Spreacombe Lodge Farm	SS495423 & SS491425	17.5	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Lower Aylescott (N)	SS527418	2.4	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Twitching Park Cleaves	SS532424	2.7	Broadleaved woodland
Aylescott Copse	SS528421	1.1	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Easter Ground (Farriel) Wood	SS520427	4.1	Broad-leaved woodland
Mullacott Cross	SS510444	1.8	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Centenary Plantation	SS542419	4.1	Broadleaved woodland
Aylescott Wood (W)	SS524412	2.1	Broadleaved woodland
Snowball Fields	SS517411	7.7	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Roborough Bridge Fields	SS518419 & SS517418	2.7	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Wood Lane Cottage (W)	SS514416	1.3	Broadleaved Woodland
Little Comfort (N)	SS511405	3	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Little Comfort	SS511404	2.6	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Hybrid Farm	SS507415	2.5	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Buttercombe Lane	SS504421	15.9	Semi-improved neutral grassland
West Dean Farm	SS503425	1.4	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Dean Cross (N)	SS504428	1.5	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Cheglinch (W)	SS509432		Semi-improved neutral grassland
Twitchen Cross Woods	SS507435	1.2	Broadleaved woodland
Trimstone Wood	SS501432	1.5	Broadleaved woodland
Trimstone (N)	SS501435	2.3	Semi-improved neutral grassland
Twitchen	SS509438	0.9	Semi-improved neutral grassland

Lower Aylescott (S)	SS522415	3.3	
Pine's Dean	SS498405	0.9	
Bradwell Mill	SS499430	6.8	
Aylescott	SS529422	1.8	
Pembroke House			

Species

Important species

A report from the DBRC database showing which legally protected, locally notable (e.g. Otter) or noteworthy (e.g. Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*) species are known to have been present in and around West Down is presented separately (Appendix 1). Appendix 2 gives the species noted during this survey. It should be borne in mind that February is not the ideal season to carry out biodiversity surveys as some species will not be visible at this time of the year and a further survey at a more appropriate time of the year is recommended.

Birds

Several species of birds were recorded during the survey including Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Great Tit *Parus major*, Black-headed gull *Larus ridibundus*, Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*, Rook *Corvus frugilegus*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* and Robin *Erithacus rebecca*.

Other birds of note recorded within West Down on the DBRC database include Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* which are UK BAP priority species. Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* has been recorded at Hidden Valley Park and is protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedule 1. (Definitions of the various legislative protections can be seen in Appendix 1).

There are no records held with DBRC of Barn owl *Tyto alba* within the parish but they could be present as there are suitable habitats. The Barn owl requires areas of open, rough grassland where its preferred food of mice and voles are found. It is largely nocturnal and feeds almost exclusively on small mammals, particularly voles, but also takes shrews, mice, rats and very occasionally, birds.

The Barn owl has undergone a major decline in the last century due to changes in agricultural practice, as well as loss of nesting sites such as old barns and hollow trees. It is estimated that there are now about 350-470 pairs in the county. The Barn owl is listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan as species of conservation concern and is also on the Amber List.

Plants

Despite the time of year a large number of plant species were noted on the audit visit to the parish in February 2009, these are listed in Appendix 2.

DBRC records Hairy Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus subbiflorus* within the parish which is nationally scarce and a Devon notable species. Nuttall's Water-weed *Elodea nuttallii* recorded at Hidden Valley Park is also a Devon Notable species, though it is introduced and considered invasive.

The Bluebell, recorded in various locations, is protected against sale under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Schedule 8 (S).

The Primrose can be seen in many places in the parish. It is listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan as it is intended to help to raise public awareness of the need to conserve commonplace and characteristic elements of Devon's countryside. The Primrose is not rare in Devon, but it may act as an indicator species to the health of Devon's environment, and by conserving the Primrose, we may help to conserve some of the habitats in which it is found. These include woodlands, hedges, road verges and churchyards.

Devon whitebeam *Sorbus devoniensis*, also known as French hales, has been recorded near the coast towards Exmoor and although not recorded within the parish may be present. The Devon whitebeam is a nationally scarce and notable species in Devon and is listed in the Devon, Exmoor and UK Biodiversity Action Plans. The best known of the sorbus family is the Rowan or Mountain ash, but Devon is also home to other rarer whitebeams, some of which are found nowhere else. The Devon whitebeam is largely a hedgerow species and occurs mainly across the North and west of Devon, though rarer hybrids are normally found in sliff-top locations. The loss of hedges and too frequent and too close cutting of hedges threaten this species.

Japanese Knotweed is an invasive alien plant and has been recorded in the parish.

Mammals

Mammal species recorded within West Down parish by DBRC include Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*, Badger *Meles meles*, Otter *Lutra lutra*, Water shrew *Neomys fodiens* and Roe deer *Capriolus capreolus*.

The Otter is listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan as a species of conservation concern and is a UK BAP priority species. Formerly widespread throughout the UK, the Otter underwent a rapid decline in numbers from the 1950s to 1970s and was effectively lost from midland and south-eastern counties of England by the 1980s. Populations remain in Wales, south-west England and much of Scotland, where sea loch and coastal colonies comprise one of the largest populations in Europe. There is also a significant population of Otters in Northern Ireland. The decline now appears to have halted and sightings are being reported in former habitats. Devon has an internationally

important Otter population and Otters are now found on most watercourses and wetlands throughout the County. Otters are even now recolonising areas where they were thought to have been lost during the 60's and 70's.

The Caen river and stream valleys are known to be part of the feeding territory of Greater Horseshoe bats. The parish is close to the Caen Valley SSSI and has a number of old mines used for overwintering hibernation. All species of British bat are protected under UK law and international law. This makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take a bat, or to damage, obstruct or destroy any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection.

Buildings are the most favoured roost sites and more than half of known roosts are in buildings less than 30 years old. Pipistrelles prefer to roost in very confined spaces around the outside of the building, typical sites being behind hanging tiles, weather boarding, soffit and barge or eaves boarding, between roofing felt and roof tiles or in cavity walls. Pipistrelles rarely enter roof spaces except in the more stable, well-established large colonies found particularly in older buildings.

The Dormouse is listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plans as a species of conservation concern in Devon and is a priority species in the UK BAP. Nationally, the Dormouse has experienced a marked contraction in range in recent decades, and has become extinct in up to seven counties where it occurred in the last century, representing about half of its former range.

In Devon, the Dormouse appears to be holding its own, and the county is now a major stronghold of the species. However, no detailed quantification of population change has been possible, due to lack of comparable data over time. Having said this, indirect evidence, from the losses of hedgerow length and declines in quality of hedgerows and woodlands that have occurred in the county over the past few decades, suggests that Dormice may have declined in a similar fashion. Although there are no records of Dormice within the parish they may be present as there is suitable habitat.

Invertebrates

Due to the time of year of the audit visit there were no invertebrates recorded on the parish site visit. Generally there is considerable under-recording of invertebrates with few records for the parish on the DBRC database.

DBRC has records in West Down Parish of Speckled wood *Pararge aegeria*, Silver washed fritillary *Argynnis paphia* and Meadow brown *Maniola jurtina* butterflies and Dark bush-cricket *Pholidoptera griseoptera*. Dragonflies and damselflies include Golden ringed dragonfly *Cordulegaster boltonii* and Demoiselle agrion *Calopteryx virgo*.

Reptiles and amphibians

There are no records for reptiles held with DBRC. It is probable that Common Frog *Rana temporaria*, Common toad *Bufo bufo* and Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* are located in gardens in or around West Down. The community contact has reported seeing in the past both Slow-worms and snakes within the parish. The Common toad and Slow-worm are UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species. No reptiles or amphibians were recorded during the audit visit due to the time of year. However large quantities of toad spawn were present in the marshy grassland next to the stream near Farriell Wood.

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (Devon BAP).

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan 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. 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.
- The North Devon BAP can be viewed at : www.northdevon.gov.uk/webbiodiversityactionplan.pdf
- Details of biodiversity planning in the south-west region can be viewed at www.swbiodiversity.org.uk.
- National Action Plans can be viewed at www.ukbap.org.uk. This site also contains useful background information on UK biodiversity action planning.

Links between the main wildlife habitats of West Down and the Devon and UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP)

West Down wildlife feature	Brief description of feature	Link with the Devon BAP	Link with the UK BAP	Link with North Devon BAP
Broadleaved Woodland	Secondary broadleaved woodland Ancient Semi-Natural woodland Ancient oak woodland Wet woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oak Woodland Habitat Action Plan • Greater Horseshoe bat species Action Plan • Dormouse Species Action Plan • Primrose Species Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowland mixed deciduous woodland Habitat Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oak woodland Habitat Action Plan
Traditional hedges	Extensive network of traditional hedges throughout the parish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species-rich Hedges Habitat Action Plan • Primrose Species Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient and/or species rich hedgerows Habitat Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species rich hedgerow Habitat Action plan
Grassland: unimproved grassland and grass verges	Areas of semi-improved and unimproved grassland, which have been protected from agricultural improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Habitat Action Plan • Primrose Species Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arable field margins Habitat Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmland Habitat Action plan
Rivers, streams and ponds	River Caen and tributaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers, streams, floodplains and fluvial processes Habitat Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers Habitat Action Plan 	
Veteran Trees	Ancient churchyard Yews Ancient Ash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood-pasture and Parkland Habitat Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkland and Wood Pasture Habitat Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood pasture and parkland Habitat Action Plan

View the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan at www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity

View the North Devon Biodiversity Action Plan at

www.northdevon.gov.uk/webbiodiversityactionplan.pdf

View the UK Biodiversity Action Plan at www.ukbap.org.uk

Some Ideas for Local Action...

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

A major step towards 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 surveys:

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. West Down is relatively unrecorded in terms of biodiversity.

Specific features to survey in West Down might include hedges and for Otter signs (Otters have been recorded in the Caen and its tributaries within the parish boundaries). These actions would directly contribute to the species-rich hedges habitat and the Otter species action plans.

It might be useful, for example, to undertake a hedgerow survey and 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.

A survey of Devon whitebeam would be invaluable, but would require specialist knowledge in order to identify the species.

Survey work could be undertaken as a community group or in liaison with conservation groups active in the area.

Operation Otter is an initiative organised by the Devon Wildlife Trust (www.devonwildlifetrust.org), which aims to monitor and protect Devon's Otter population with the help of volunteers.

The Ancient Tree Hunt is co-ordinated by the Woodland Trust and encourages people to report occurrences of individual or clusters of ancient trees. More information about The Ancient Tree Hunt can be found at:

www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk/project/getinvolved/takepart.htm

You can 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. There are surprisingly few records for the parish, so any records (including 'who', 'where', 'what' and 'when') of any species recognised is useful.

Follow the links to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre:

www.devonwildlifetrust.org

e-mail: dbrc@devonwildlifetrust.org

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre
c/o Exeter Central Library
Castle Street
Exeter
EX4 3PQ

Tel. (01392) 274128

2 Influence the management of public open space:

West Down parish has relatively few public spaces within and around the village. However those that exist do have a high potential value for wildlife.

There is potential for further enhancement for wildlife here in the churchyard. Some areas, for example in the corners or around the perimeters, could be identified, where the grass was cut once in late summer, leaving the flowering plants to seed like in a hay meadow. This would enhance the value for wildlife, in particular for flowering plants and nectar feeding invertebrates.

The parish council is already active within the Parish Paths Partnership and current and future work will all contribute to the enjoyment and appreciation of biodiversity within the parish.

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 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 Hedgerow Habitat 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 Habitat 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:

You could 'green up' your garden! Collectively the gardens of West Down represent a significant area that could be used to benefit wildlife. The proximity of the stream to many of the gardens is an added bonus. Large or small, you can turn your garden (or a part of it) into a haven for wildlife. There are some very good sources of information on wildlife gardening:

- The Natural England/English Nature web site:
[www.english-nature.org.uk/Nature In The Garden](http://www.english-nature.org.uk/Nature_In_The_Garden)
(or call 01733 455101 for free leaflets on wildlife gardening).
Natural England (formerly 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.
- The Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) web site:
<http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/index.php?section=people:garden>

Which also has links to DWT approved garden centres.

6 Join local conservation organisations:

The Devon Wildlife Trust is a prominent local conservation organisation. There are also a number of local membership groups specialising in specific interests (for example Devon Fungus Group and Devon Mammal Group) which frequently carry out surveys and studies, hold talks and training sessions for volunteers and members.

7 Community involvement in the North Devon Biosphere Reserve:

Further information about the North Devon Biosphere Reserve, the Management Strategy and Action Plan and details of how your local community can become involved can be found at:

www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk

or the Biosphere Reserve Service can be contacted on 01237 423655

8 Link biodiversity to West Down Parish Plan and Community projects:

You could encourage any future parish plans to consider further the impact on the biodiversity and wildlife of the parish. There may also be considerable scope to set up projects which encourage community involvement in biodiversity within the parish through the Fullabrook Wind Farm Community Fund. £3.4 million is being made available over the lifetime of the wind farm via the Fullabrook Wind Farm Community Interest Company which is currently being formed.

9 Japanese Knotweed:

Not something to cherish, but it can't be ignored! Unfortunately Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* is present within West Down parish according to records held by DBRC. 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 Centre¹. 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

¹ DBRC, E-mail: dbrc@devonwildlifetrust.org

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 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

Useful sources of further information:

The following organisations can offer advice and information on various wildlife topics as well as organising events and carrying out projects.

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers: www.btcv.org.uk

British Dragonfly Society: www.dragonflysoc.org.uk

Butterfly Conservation: www.butterfly-conservation.org (Tel: 0870 7744309)

Devon Bat Group: www.dbg.me.uk

Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society: www.devonbirds.org

Devon Mammal Group: www.devonmammalgroup.org

Devon Wildlife Trust: www.devonwildlifetrust.org (Tel: 01392 279244)

Natural England: www.naturalengland.org.uk
(Tel: 01392 889770; 0845 600 3078)

Plantlife: www.plantlife.org.uk (Tel: 01722 342730)

RSPB: www.rspb.org.uk

The Woodland Trust: www.woodland-trust.org.uk (Tel: 01476 581111)

The Living Churchyards & Cemeteries Project, Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Society, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ Tel: 01203 696969 ext.364/339.

In addition, Devon County Council has developed a Community Biodiversity Toolkit available via the DCC web site (www.devon.gov.uk/biodiversity). This toolkit aims to provide practical advice on management to encourage wildlife and, in particular, will provide a central point from which to access the large amount of advice that is already available from a huge range of other organisations

In addition to management advice, the toolkit will also provide guidance on seeking funding for project work. You may also find the following sources of funding useful.

Possible sources of funding:

Heritage Link – a funding directory supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. A good source of information.

<http://www.heritagelink.org.uk/fundingdirectory/main/fundinghome.php>

Major sources of funding

Environmental Stewardship – whole farm agri-environment scheme funding.

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/default.aspx

SITA Trust - Enriching Nature: for biodiversity conservation projects within ten miles of any landfill site in England.

www.sitatrust.org.uk

GrantScape – significant sums of money often available for biodiversity action, including landscape-scale projects.

www.grantscape.org.uk/home

The Tubney Charitable Trust – large funds available but on an invitation-to-bid only basis.

www.tubney.org.uk

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation – no maximum size of grant. “Priority will be given to high quality projects that are exemplars of good practice or imaginative approaches to old problems, that have wider impact, leading to changes in the law, policy or practice or that may be viewed as difficult to support or too 'high risk' by other funders.”

www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Big Lottery Fund – “Every year BIG gives out millions of pounds from the National Lottery to good causes. Our money goes to community groups and to projects that improve health, education and the environment.” Often has large programmes relating to the environment, for example:

- *Changing Spaces: Access to Nature* - grants: £50,000 - £715,000. This programme aims to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors, particularly those who face social exclusion.
http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_cs_access_nature?regioncode=-uk
- *Changing Spaces: Community Places* - grants: £10,000 - £450,000. This programme will fund community groups who want to improve local green spaces such as play areas, community gardens and parks.
http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_cs_comm_spaces?regioncode=-uk

Possible funding for smaller projects

It should be noted that many of these grants only have a finite pot of money and this could run out at any time. It is also important to check that your project meets any relevant funding criteria. Please check with the different organisations before applying.

Big Lottery Fund (see above) – BIG also gives smaller grants, for example:

- *Awards for All England* - Grants: £300 - £10,000. 'Awards for All gives money to projects that encourage people to take part in arts, sport, heritage and also community projects'.
http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_a4a_eng?regioncode=-uk

AONB Sustainable Development Funds -

- Blackdown Hills
- East Devon
- North Devon
- South Devon
- Tamar Valley

Biffawards - grants for biodiversity projects within 10 miles of a Biffa operation (landfill)

www.biffaward.org/projects/smallgrants.php

BBC Breathing Places – currently only available for projects that have received Breathing Places funding already. Grants of £1000 to £5000 available.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_breathingplaces

SITA Trust - Enriching Nature: for biodiversity conservation projects within ten miles of any landfill site in England.

www.sitatrust.org.uk

Forestry Commission - grants and sources of funding available for improving biodiversity (for example, the Woodland Improvement Grant).

www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/hcou-4u4j28

Tree Council - small grants for schools and communities for tree planting schemes.

www.treecouncil.org.uk/?q=grants

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www.jncc.gov.uk

www.naturalengland.org.uk

www.swenvo.org.uk

www.swbiodiversity.org.uk

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www.pondconservation.org.uk

www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk

www.northdevon.gov.uk

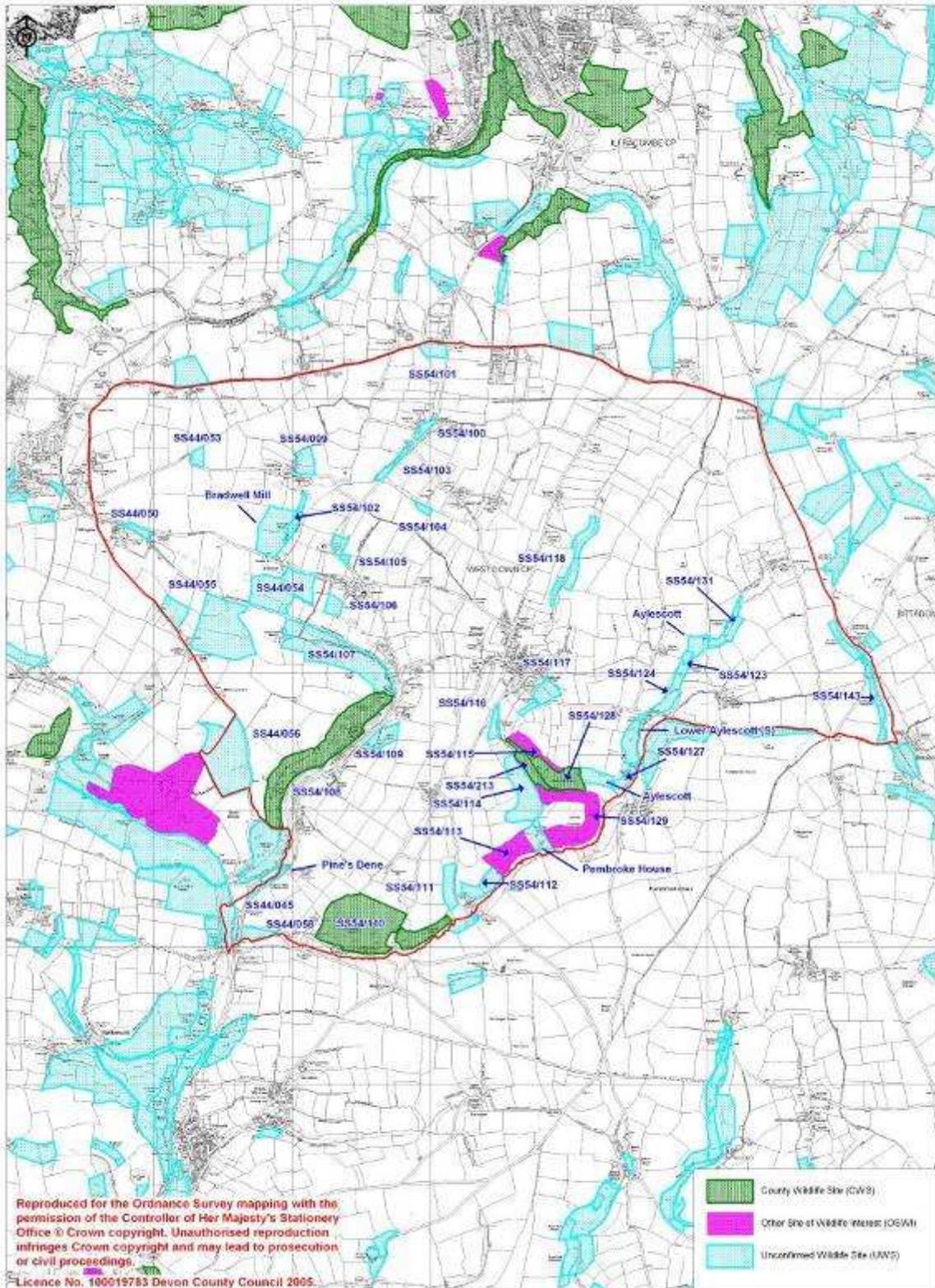
Acknowledgements

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Cllr Tony Hewitt

Appendix 1 – Notable sites and species recorded within West Down parish during field visit.

Statutory and non-statutory sites within West Down Parish (2008)



Statutory & non-statutory sites within West Down Parish (2008)

File Code	Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Description	Status
SS54/108	Buttercombe Wood	SS 503415	19.9	Acidic ancient semi-natural woodland largely replanted with conifers. Heath interest along the rides.	CWS
SS54/110	Stoneyard Wood	SS 505402	23.2	Acidic ancient semi-natural woodland & unimproved wet neutral grassland	CWS
SS54/213	Snowball Meadow	SS517413	2.6	Semi-improved and unimproved neutral grassland	CWS
SS54/128	Roborough Wood	SS520412	5.3	Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	CWS
SS54/113	West Down Wood	SS 515407	5.3	Broadleaved plantation on ancient woodland site	OSWI

SS54/129	Snowball Wood	SS 522410	10.4	Acidic ancient semi-natural woodland largely replanted with broadleaves	OSWI
SS54/115	Wood Lane Cottage	SS520416	2.6	Mosaic of scattered bracken, gorse and slightly acidic grassland	OSWI
SS44/045	Smallacombe Bridge	SS489407	53.5	Unimproved & semi-improved neutral grassland with scrub	UWS
SS44/058	Spreacombe Bridge (S)	SS497401	1.8	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS44/056	Willingcott Hill	SS495414	14.5	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS44/054	Bradwell	SS498426	10.3	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS44/050	Willingcott Farm	SS489430	0.8	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS44/053	Trimstone	SS493436	1.1	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS44/055	Spreacombe Lodge Farm	SS495423 & SS491425	17.5	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS

SS54/124	Lower Aylescott (N)	SS 527418	2.4	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/131	Twitching Park Cleaves	SS 532424	2.7	Broadleaved woodland	UWS
SS54/123	Aylescott Copse	SS 528421	1.1	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/118	Easter Ground Wood	SS 520427	4.5	Broadleaved woodland	UWS
SS54/101	Mullacott Cross	SS510444	1.8	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/143	Centery Plantation	SS542419	4.1	Broadleaved woodland	UWS
SS54/127	Aylescott Wood (W)	SS524412	2.1	Broadleaved woodland	UWS
SS54/114	Snowball Fields	SS517411	7.7	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/117	Roborough Bridge Fields	SS518419 & SS517418	2.7	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/116	Wood Lane Cottage (W)	SS514416	1.3	Broadleaved woodland	UWS
SS54/112	Little Comfort (N)	SS514405	3	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/111	Little Comfort	SS511404	2.6	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS

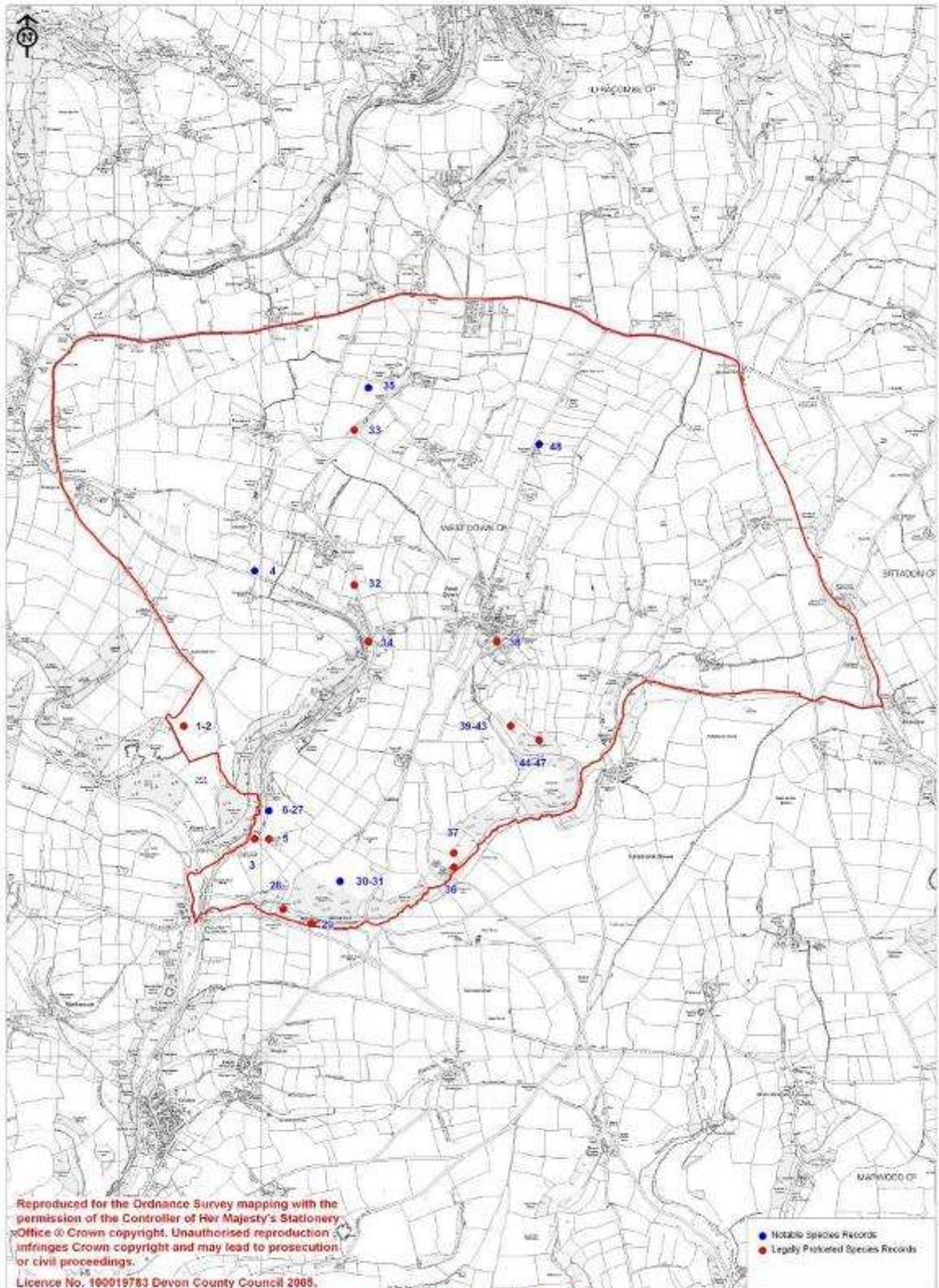
SS54/109	Hybrid Farm	SS507415	2.5	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/107	Buttercombe Lane	SS504421	15.9	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/106	West Dean Farm	SS503425	1.4	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/105	Dean Cross (N)	SS504428	1.5	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/104	Cheglinch (W)	SS509432		Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/103	Twitchen Cross Woods	SS507435	1.2	Broadleaved woodland	UWS
SS54/102	Trimstone Wood	SS501432	1.5	Broadleaved woodland	UWS
SS54/099	Trimstone (N)	SS501435	2.3	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
SS54/100	Twitchen	SS509438	0.9	Semi-improved neutral grassland	UWS
	Lower Aylescott (S)	SS525415	3.3		UWS
	Aylescott	SS522412	2.3		UWS
	Pine's Dene	SS498405	0.9		UWS
	Bradwell Mill	SS499430	6.8		UWS
	Aylescott	SS529422	1.8		UWS
	Pembroke House				UWS

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 Statement note nine (PPS9). 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 Sites of Wildlife Interest (OSWI): these are sites of significant wildlife interest within a local context that have been surveyed but do not reach the criteria for County Wildlife Sites. They are not covered by PPS9, but may be included in Local Plans.

Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites (UWS): these are sites identified as having possible interest but not fully surveyed. Some of these sites will be areas of significant wildlife interest.

Legally protected & notable species records within West Down Parish (2008)



Legally protected & notable Species within West Down Parish (2008)

No	Common Name	Scientific Name	Location	Date	Grid Reference	UK protection	International protection	Status
1	Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	Willingcott Hill, near West Down, Ilfracombe.	2002	SS494413			UKBAP (P); DBAP
2	Weasel	Mustela nivalis	Willingcott Hill, near West Down, Ilfracombe.	2002	SS494413		Bern III	
3	Japanese Knotweed	Fallopia japonica	Along line of the old Barnstaple to Ilfracombe Railway in Stream Valley, just off the A361 and opposite Pines Dene.	2002	SS499405	WCA 9		
4	Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	Woolacombe	2002	SS499424			UKBAP (P); DBAP
5	Badger	Meles meles	A361, Braunton to Ilfracombe	1999	SS500405	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
6	Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
7	Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407	WCA 1		Amber
8	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos minor	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Red

9	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
10	Nuttall's Water-weed	<i>Elodea nuttallii</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2004	SS500407			DN1
11	Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2004	SS500407	WCA 5	EC IIa, IIIa; Bern II	UKBAP (P); DBAP
12	Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2004	SS500407			DBAP
13	Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2004	SS500407	DA	Bern III	
14	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002-2004	SS500407			UKBAP (P); Red
15	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			UKBAP (P); Red
16	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
17	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
18	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			UKBAP (P); Red
19	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
20	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
21	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2004	SS500407			UKBAP (P); DBAP
22	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula</i>	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			UKBAP (P); Red

		pyrrhula						
23	Dunnock	Prunella modularis	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
24	Goldcrest	Regulus regulus	Hidden Valley Park	2002-2004	SS500407			Amber
25	Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
26	House Martin	Delichon urbica	Hidden Valley Park	2002	SS500407			Amber
27	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	Hidden Valley Park	2002-2004	SS500407			UKBAP (P); Red
28	Otter	Lutra lutra	Caen	1987	SS501400	WCA 5	EC IIa, IIIa; Bern II	UKBAP (P); DBAP
29	Otter	Lutra lutra	Stoneyard Wood	1997	SS503399	WCA 5	EC IIa, IIIa; Bern II	UKBAP (P); DBAP
30	Bluebell	Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Stoneyard Wood	1994	SS505402	WCA 8 (S)		
31	Primrose	Primula vulgaris	Stoneyard Wood	1994	SS505402			DBAP
32	Badger	Meles meles	A361, 0.3 miles from the Foxhunters Inn in the direction of Ilfracombe.	2002	SS506423	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
33	Badger	Meles meles	A361, 0.15 miles before the junction with the minor road to Trimstone, north west of the village of West Down near	2004	SS506434	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	

			Ilfracombe.					
34	Badger	Meles meles	A361 300 metres away from The Foxhunters Inn, in the direction of Braunton.	2002	SS507419	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
35	Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	Twitchen, Westdown.	2000	SS507437			UKBAP (P); DBAP
36	Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	Little Comfort Farm, West Down, near Ilfracombe.	2002	SS513403	WCA 1		Amber
37	Otter	Lutra lutra	Caen	1979	SS513404	WCA 5	EC IIa, IIIa; Bern II	UKBAP (P); DBAP
38	a Bat	Chiroptera	Woodlands Cottage, West Down, Ilfracombe.	1994	SS516419	WCA 5, 6	EC IVa; Bonn II	
39	Bluebell	Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Snowball Meadow	2008	SS517413	WCA 8 (S)		
40	Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	Snowball Meadow	2008	SS517413			UKBAP (P); Red
41	Otter	Lutra lutra	Snowball Meadow	2008	SS517413	WCA 5	EC IIa, IIIa; Bern II	UKBAP (P); DBAP
42	Primrose	Primula vulgaris	Snowball Meadow	2008	SS517413			DBAP
43	Water Shrew	Neomys fodiens	Snowball Meadow	2008	SS517413	WCA 6	Bern III	

44	Badger	Meles meles	Roborough Wood	2008	SS519412	WCA 6, BA	Bern III	
45	Primrose	Primula vulgaris	Roborough Wood	2008	SS519412			DBAP
46	Roe Deer	Capreolus capreolus	Roborough Wood	2008	SS519412	DA	Bern III	
47	Bluebell	Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Roborough Wood	2008	SS519412	WCA 8 (S)		
48	Hairy Bird's-foot-trefoil	Lotus subbiflorus	West Down	1990	SS519433			NS; DN1

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 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 II** **Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) Appendix II:** Special protection for listed animal species and their habitats.
- 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
- ECIIa, IIb** **EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats & Species Directive) Annex IIa and IIb:** Designation of protected areas for animal and plant species listed.
- ECIIIa, IIIb** **EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats & Species Directive) Annex IIIa and IIb:** Species used as criteria for designating Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
- 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.
- 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 Notable¹:** 1-25 2 km squares in Atlas of Devon Flora 1984.
- 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.

Appendix 2 - Species list recorded within West Down parish during field visit.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Annual Meadow-grass	<i>Poa annua</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Common Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum aggregate</i>
Common Mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Creeping Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
English Stonecrop	<i>Sedum anglicum</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Germander Speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys's</i>
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
Greater Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria holostea</i>
Greater Tussock Sedge	<i>Carex paniculata</i>
Ground-ivy	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
Groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>
Hart's-tongue	<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Herb-Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Lesser Celandine	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>
Lords-and-Ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>
Maidenhair Spleenwort	<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>
Male-fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Mouse-ear Hawkweed	<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>
Navelwort	<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>
Norway Spruce	<i>Picea Abies</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus sp</i>
Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage	<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Pine	<i>Pinus sp.</i>
Polypody	<i>Polypodium agg.</i>
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Red Campion	<i>Silene dioica</i>

Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i> agg.
Red Valerian	<i>Centranthus ruber</i>
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus</i> sp.
Snowdrop	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>
Spear Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Traveller's-joy	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>
Vetch	<i>Vicia</i> sp
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>

King Alfred's Cakes fungus	<i>Daldinia concentrica</i>
Jew's Ear fungus	<i>Auricularia auricula-judae</i>

Birds

Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>

Mammals

Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>
Mole (hills)	<i>Talpa europaea</i>

Amphibians

Common Toad (spawn)	<i>Bufo bufo</i>
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Appendix 3: Biodiversity Features of West Down Parish

Statutory and non-statutory sites within West Down Parish (2008)

