

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

Woodford Landscape and Environment Study

Part 1: Natural Features



2015-2017

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Overview

This study was undertaken to provide detailed evidence about the environment, ecology and biodiversity in the countryside in Woodford for the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan.

Native trees, native hedgerows, ponds, rivers, streams, ditches, lane-side verges, unimproved grassland and arable field margins, were identified as key natural features in Woodford, which contribute to the environment, ecological network, and biodiversity. They provide important habitats for wildlife in Woodford and many are listed as Priority Habitats in the [Natural Environment & Rural Communities \(NERC\) Act](#), which incorporates the [UK Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (UKBAP), and in the [Greater Manchester Biodiversity Project](#). It was recognised that these features also make a significant contribution to the aesthetic character of Woodford.

Therefore, on-the-ground surveys of these features in farmland and public places were conducted by a small team of volunteers who are Woodford residents, including two professional biologists.

In summary, these surveys found the following in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area, some of which are also recorded in the [National Biodiversity Network Atlas](#):

- Seventy permanent and seasonal ponds in farmland and recreational land, varying in size and vegetation cover.
- More than thirty different woody species present as trees and in hedgerows. (see Appendix)
- Many kilometres of native hedgerows around farm fields, some of which were species rich, containing four or more different native species in 30 metres, or exceptionally species-rich, with eight to ten different native species in 30 metres.
- Abundant native trees, which are especially associated with hedgerows and field boundaries.
- Many mature and veteran trees, notably oaks, many of which are at least 200 years old, with some specimens older than that, in the range 300 to 400 years old. Mature oaks provide a habitat rich in biodiversity, supporting more life forms than any other native trees, hosting hundreds of species of insect, and supplying many British birds and mammals with an important food source.
- Native herbaceous species in uncultivated arable field margins, including wildflowers, such as the native English bluebell, which is a protected species of international importance, listed in the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#).
- Small areas of native mixed deciduous woodland, including an area of wet woodland.
- Bird sightings reported by locals and the [Manchester Birding Forum](#), which included twenty four red listed, twenty six amber listed and nine protected species, including the near-threatened curlew, listed in [Birds of Conservation Concern](#) and the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#). (See Appendix)
- The common toad, which is a [UKBAP](#) and [Greater Manchester Biodiversity](#) protected amphibian species.

- Dragonflies and damselflies. (See Appendix) [Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#) may be notified if rare species are present, or if there are outstanding assemblages where the total number of species meets or exceeds a certain threshold level based on the location within Great Britain, ranging from 7 species in the Orkneys to 17 species in central southern England.

Introduction

In responses to consultation, it was clear that the landscape and environment were key aspects about Woodford which were treasured by residents. The rural location was the most frequently cited “good thing” about Woodford and reason for choosing Woodford as a place to live. Residents were keen to protect the landscape, environment, rural character, views, and wildlife.

More than three quarters of the land in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area is open farmland with small areas of recreational land (See Appendix 4). The built curtilage takes the form of ribbon development with extensive gaps along roads and lanes, which provide views of the countryside and the Pennine hills. The majority houses in Woodford are adjacent to a field, either at the back or the side of the property, giving the residents views of the countryside from their home. Domestic gardens were excluded from the study, but it is recognised that in Woodford they are larger than average with vegetation that makes a positive contribution to the environment via carbon capture, biodiversity, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors connecting with the adjacent countryside.

Anyone passing through Woodford along the main road in a car does not gain an accurate impression of the character of the place, its deep history, its rural nature, its landscapes, or its wildlife. Those of us who live, work or play here see more. The Landscape and Environment Study was undertaken to explore these special characteristics of Woodford in detail. This document is Part 1: Natural Features. Part 2: History and Character is reported in a separate document.

Geological and Natural History

Woodford is 5 kilometres west of a [geological fault at Poynton](#), where the millstone grit of the Pennines dropped by 200 metres around 300 million years ago. As a result, the aspect is open and flat with height in the range 90 – 95 metres above sea level. The land slopes gently down to the east, affording unobstructed views of the Pennines from many locations in Woodford, which are enjoyed by residents and visitors.

The natural features in Woodford today reflect its history in terms of geology, climate and human activities. A brief look back into deep history gives us a better understanding of Woodford today.

Deep history

The [history of the earth](#) has involved enormous changes over the vast expanses of geological time since it formed 4.5 billion years ago, from the hostile atmosphere and temperatures before life

began over 3.5 billion years ago, including a series of at least five [ice ages and interglacial periods](#), to the first simple life forms, to an enormous increase in the types of life forms which began 545 million years ago known as the “Cambrian Explosion”, to the luxuriant forests of giant ferns in the Carboniferous Period 350 million years ago, whose remains gave us fossil fuels, to the last Ice Age when Britain was covered in ice that was a mile deep, to the current warmer period which began 11,500 years ago, and to the pronounced effects of human habitation which we are experiencing now.

In more detail, there have been major fluctuations in the climate on earth in its 4.5 billion year history. The [early atmosphere](#) was largely carbon dioxide with little or no oxygen. 2.7 billion years ago single celled organisms that were able to use this carbon dioxide and the energy from sunlight to grow by a process known as photosynthesis evolved on earth. The plants we see on earth today have evolved from these organisms and use this process. A by-product of photosynthesis is oxygen and so, with the arrival of photosynthesis on earth, carbon dioxide levels reduced and oxygen levels increased in the atmosphere. Although some simple animals have been found which can survive at very low oxygen levels, it is thought that increasing oxygen levels may have contributed to conditions which allowed the evolution of the great diversity of animal life and eventually humans, who are a very recent addition to life on earth in the massive timescales involved. During the relatively warm Carboniferous Period, 350 million years ago, before significant cooling of the climate and an Ice Age, plants grew and died at a great rate, carbon dioxide levels reduced and atmospheric oxygen levels were the highest the earth has ever experienced to date. Layers of dead plants eventually became coal, oil or gas when compressed under subsequent layers. [Coal measures](#) dating back to the period are found to the east of Woodford in neighbouring Poynton. Coal, oil and natural gas (fossil fuels) represent stores of carbon from plants which lived millions of years ago and burning it for energy releases carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere – an issue for the human contribution to climate change. An international panel of scientists has named the current epoch the [Anthropocene period](#) – the age in which human activity has become the dominant shaping force of the environment and the climate. It is believed that the impact of humanity will be detectable in sediments in rocks and the oceans millions of years in the future as radioactive elements, soot, and modern materials such as concrete and plastics.

Forests, trees, farming and hedgerows

The modern climate first became suitable for tree growth at the end of the last glacial period, about 12,000 years ago. [Trees and plants re-colonised Britain from Europe](#) in waves of different species from around 8200 BC. Birch was the first pioneer, followed by pine and then hazel, elm, oak and alder. Woodland spread over most of the land. It is not certain whether the land was covered by one huge forests, or whether grazing animals created a mosaic of grassland and woodland. During this period, small areas of managed wood are likely to have been created by Mesolithic people. The Woodland Trust lists 43 species of [native UK trees](#), which it defines as those which colonised the land when the glaciers melted after the last ice age and before the UK was disconnected from mainland Europe. The first Bronze Age farmers cleared woodland to make fields, sometimes leaving

strips of woodland to mark the boundaries. According to a [RSPB publication](#), our oldest hedgerows represent these ancient strips of woodland and they are often found on today's parish boundaries. These ancient hedgerows are irreplaceable pieces of living history and are often the best hedgerows for wildlife. The benefits to the ecosystem and wildlife are explained in [Woodwise Hedgerows and Hedgerow Trees](#), published by the Woodland Trust.

The [approximate age of a hedgerow](#) can be estimated using a formula based on the number of species present. Hooper's Law, published by Dr Max Hooper in 1974, states that if the number of species in a 100 metre stretch of hedge is multiplied by 100, then this provides a very rough estimate of the age of the hedgerow. Thus four species in a 100 metre stretch indicates that the hedgerow is 400 years old. Thus, the assessment of the number of species present in hedgerows in Woodford in this study (see Methods below) provides a measure not only of biodiversity and value to wildlife, but also of age and historical importance. Many were found with four or more species in 30 metres and a few had more than 8 species in 30 metres, suggesting they are more than 800 years old.

[When people began farming](#), the tree cover slowly began to give way to pasture and cultivated land. Under Anglo-Saxon kings, the forests still belonged to the landowners and their subjects but William I introduced [Forest Law](#), which claimed the woodlands as the hunting grounds of kings. Reliance on the local lord of the manor was part of the feudal system introduced by William I. Farms were much smaller than they are today and the peasants were tenants who worked a strip of land owned by the lord of the manor. Aerial photography has provided evidence of ancient strip-farming in Cheshire, revealing the undulating [ridge and furrow](#) method used on clay soils, with high strips parallel to furrows, presumably aimed at improving drainage. Since then further land has been cleared of forest for agriculture, fields have become much larger and agricultural methods have become more intensive. Two residents have reported potential photographic evidence taken during the winter of 2017/2018 of ancient strip farming in fields behind Moor Lane and adjacent to Church Lane, respectively.



Field adjacent to Church Lane



Satellite image of field behind Moor Lane

Our surveys of the farmland reported here revealed evidence of this history, with small patches of deciduous woodland and evidence of former hedgerows marked by lines of mature trees, or hawthorn bushes. Mature trees, notably oaks over 200 years are a prevalent and a defining feature of the farmland, particularly around field boundaries and in patches of woodland. At least one notable specimen, the Barr Green Oak alongside Blossoms Lane is around 400 years old, which means it germinated from an acorn when James I was King of England (see Area 6 in this report). This veteran oak illustrates the front cover of this report. These trees are important, not only for their historical and aesthetic value, but also because [mature oaks](#) provide a habitat rich in biodiversity, supporting more life forms than any other native trees, hosting hundreds of species of insect, and supplying many British birds and mammals with an important food source.

Water, ponds, rivers, streams, ditches and floods

Wetness is a characteristic feature of Woodford and a standing joke among long-suffering locals. Seventy seasonal and permanent ponds were found in the Neighbourhood Area, plus numerous ditches and streams, which drain the land ultimately into the River Dean. Fields, footpaths and country lanes are frequently flooded in wet weather. This is no surprise when the history and geology are understood.

The area was covered with glacial sediments as the glaciers of the last Ice Age retreated, forming the Cheshire Plain. Initially the whole of the Cheshire Plain, including Woodford, [was under water](#). The soils of Woodford consist mostly of clay, with pockets of sand, including running sand. Drainage is poor and in many areas the ground becomes water-logged and prone to flooding in wet weather.

Woodford lies on an aquifer consisting of ground water held in porous sandstones laid down 200 million years ago in the Triassic period, sand and marl (a crumbly mixture of clay and limestone). The aquifer is part of a series of deep basins throughout the UK, including the [Cheshire Basin](#), which are important sources of ground water. The base of the Triassic sandstone layer varies from above sea level in outcrops at the surface, such as Alderley Edge, to deeper than 2,500 m below sea level in the centre of the Cheshire Basin. Environmental studies and contamination studies conducted on the former Woodford Aerodrome site indicate that the site lies on an aquifer consisting of permeable, solid sandstone and pebble beds with high capacity for water storage. Above this layers of sand and gravel hold some ground water, while extensive layers of clay are impermeable with very low capacity for water storage. (BAE Systems Woodford Aerodrome Desk Study for Potential Contamination 2011)

Protected habitats and species

United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)

A number of habitats in Woodford were identified as being on the list of UK BAP [Priority Habitats supporting Priority Species](#). These include rivers, streams, ponds, ditches, native hedgerows, native

woodland, mature native trees, rough grassland and arable field margins. Hence the focus on these habitats for this study.

UK BAP was the UK government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It was published in 1994 and created action plans for priority species and habitats in the UK that were most under threat, in order to support their recovery.

The original lists of UK BAP priority species and habitats created between 1995 and 1999 were subsequently reviewed and updated by expert working groups against a set of selection criteria, based on international importance, rapid decline, high risk, and habitats of importance for key species.

The [UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework](#), published in July 2012, has succeeded the UK BAP. Due to devolution and the creation of country-level biodiversity strategies, much of the work is now focussed at a country level.

The UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats remain important and valuable reference sources. They have been used to help draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (see NI species and NI habitats lists), as required under [Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities \(NERC\) Act 2006 \(England\)](#), Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales), Section 2(4) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, and Section 3(1) of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Further information on UKBAP habitats and species can be found in the Appendix.

The UKBAP initiative is supported locally by the [Greater Manchester Biodiversity Project](#).

Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan

[The Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan](#) plays a key part within the UK BAP process by focussing on local priorities and implementing national biodiversity targets. The Biodiversity Project aims to bring together individuals and organisations from all sectors of the community to conserve biodiversity across Greater Manchester.

Methods

The Neighbourhood Area was divided into ten sections in order to create manageable sized areas for detailed study, as shown on the satellite map below.



The survey was restricted to public spaces and farmland. Gardens associated with domestic residences were not included. Natural features, including native hedges, woodland, significant trees, ponds, rivers, streams, ditched, field margins and grass verges, were scrutinised in detail individually on the ground, recorded on data collection sheets, given a unique code number and the location marked on a map. Bird sightings by local residents and bird watching groups and other wildlife sightings were recorded.

Land use

The use to which the land was put at the time of survey was recorded. Categories included:

- Recreational land e.g. Community Centre field, Recreation Ground, Woodford Cricket Ground, Bramhall Cricket Ground
- Improved grassland, where grassland was grazed or mown and treated with fertilisers and pesticides.

- Arable farmland, where it was currently ploughed and bare, or growing a crop other than grass.
- Rough grassland, where it appeared to be rarely or never mowed or grazed, or treated with fertilisers or pesticides
- Deciduous woodland
- Coniferous woodland

Note: that there was variation from year to year in the use of some of the agricultural land for grass or other crops.

Classification of trees

Trees (single specimens and those in hedges and woodland) were scored as native if they appear in the Woodland Trust list of 43 species of native UK trees, which it defines as those which colonised the land when the glaciers melted after the last ice age and before the UK was disconnected from mainland Europe.

Mature native trees are abundant in field boundaries in Woodford and were too numerous to count, but veterans which stood out as having special habitat or aesthetic value were identified and marked on a map.

Classification of woodland

Native woodland was classed as deciduous if it contained only deciduous species, mixed if it contained deciduous and coniferous species, and coniferous if it contained only coniferous species.

Classification of hedgerows

Hedgerows were scored as native if they were comprised of any of the native tree species listed by the Woodland Trust. Using [methodology from DEFRA](#) recommended by the Woodland Trust, a hedgerow was classified as species-rich if it contained four or more woody species in a 30 metre stretch. As well as tree species, woody species such as honeysuckle, briar and ivy (but not bramble) are included in the species count.

Hedgerows were also classified according to whether they contained mature trees.

Field boundaries which included lines of mature trees but no hedgerow were also mapped.

Classification of ponds

Ponds were classified as permanent if present all the year and seasonal if they appear for long periods in wet weather but dry up in dry prolonged dry weather.

Field margins and lane-side verges

Herbaceous species were assessed and wildflowers recorded around field boundaries and in verges, hedgerows and ditches bordering country lanes. However, these are seasonal and fleeting in appearance, so many could have been missed.

Bird sightings

Sightings reported online by [Manchester Birding Forum](#), members of RSPB and the [National Biodiversity Atlas](#) were recorded (see Appendix).

Wildlife sightings

Although information was not actively sought, any wildlife sightings reported by locals were recorded. Sightings reported for Woodford by the National Biodiversity Atlas were also recorded.

The results of the surveys follow.

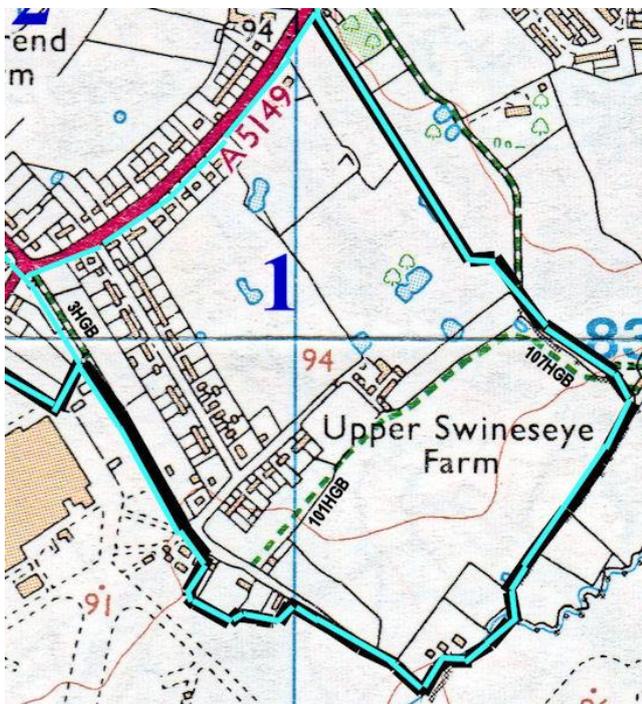
At the end of the surveys all the key natural features were marked on a Key Natural Features Map, which is shown in Appendix 3.

East Woodford, Area 1

(surveyed November 2015 and May 2016)



Area 1 is in the east of the Neighbourhood Area, lying between Chester Road (A5149), the aerodrome site and the outer boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, as shown in OS and satellite images below, bounded by the turquoise line. Bridle Road, Bridle Way and footpaths, 3HGB, 101HGB and 107HGB, cross the area.



Land use

Area 1 is largely agricultural land consisting mostly of improved grassland used for grazing for sheep and cattle. There are three small areas of woodland, one in a wet area, one area of sapling scrub and a long narrow strip of tall trees. The area is prone to flooding in wet weather. Area 1 is very open to the east and south east, affording wonderful views of the Pennines, including Kinder Scout and Lyme Park from the properties along Chester Road, Bridle Way and footpath 101HGB.

Cows grazing in 1F4



Emu at Bridle Way Farm



View across 1F7 to Bridle Way Farm



View from footpath 101HGB to White Nancy



View to Kinder Scout from footpath 101HGB



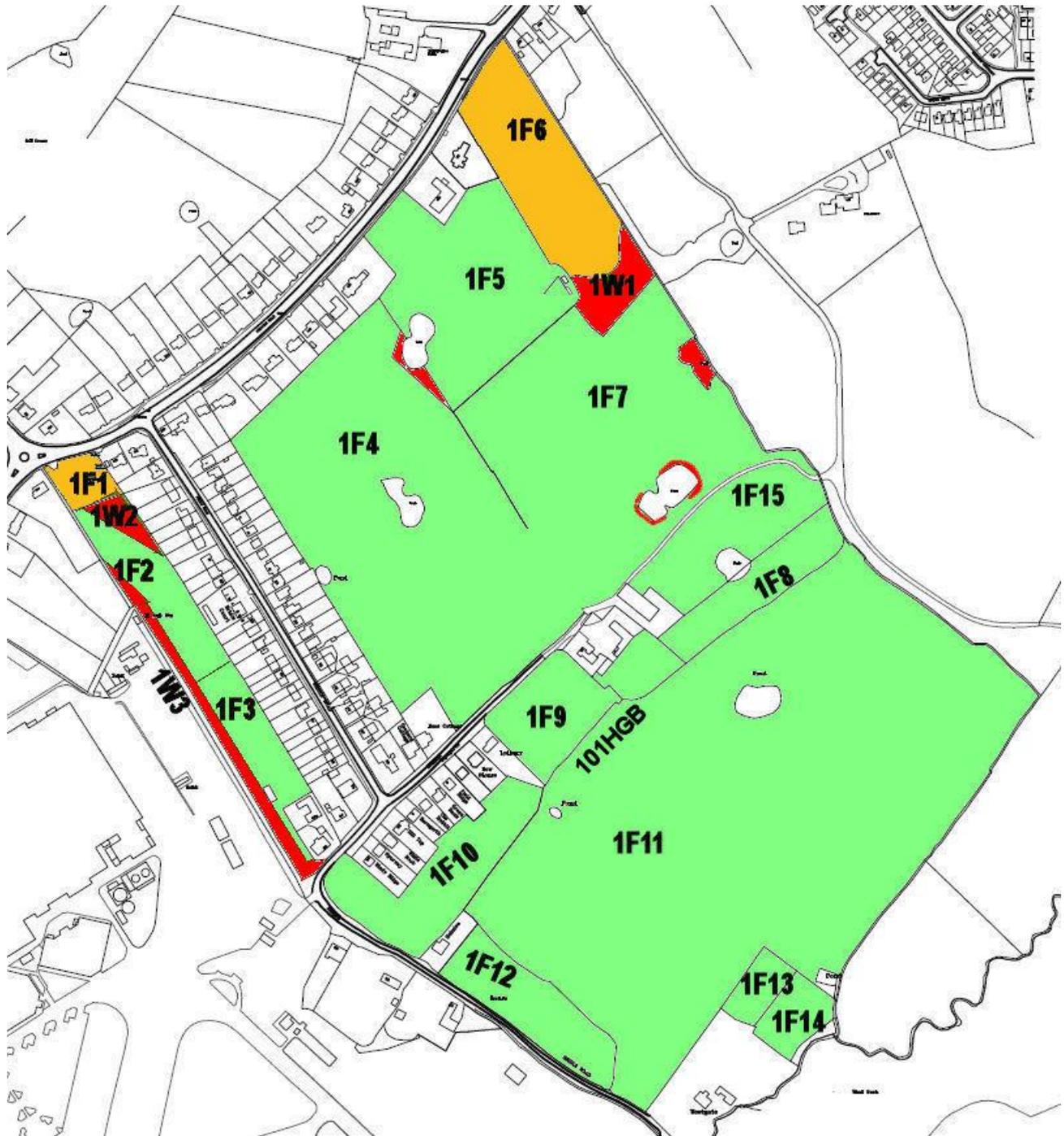
View across 1F4 and 1P5 to Pennines



View across 1F4 and 1P5 to Bridle Way Farm and hills to the south east



Map showing land use in Area 1

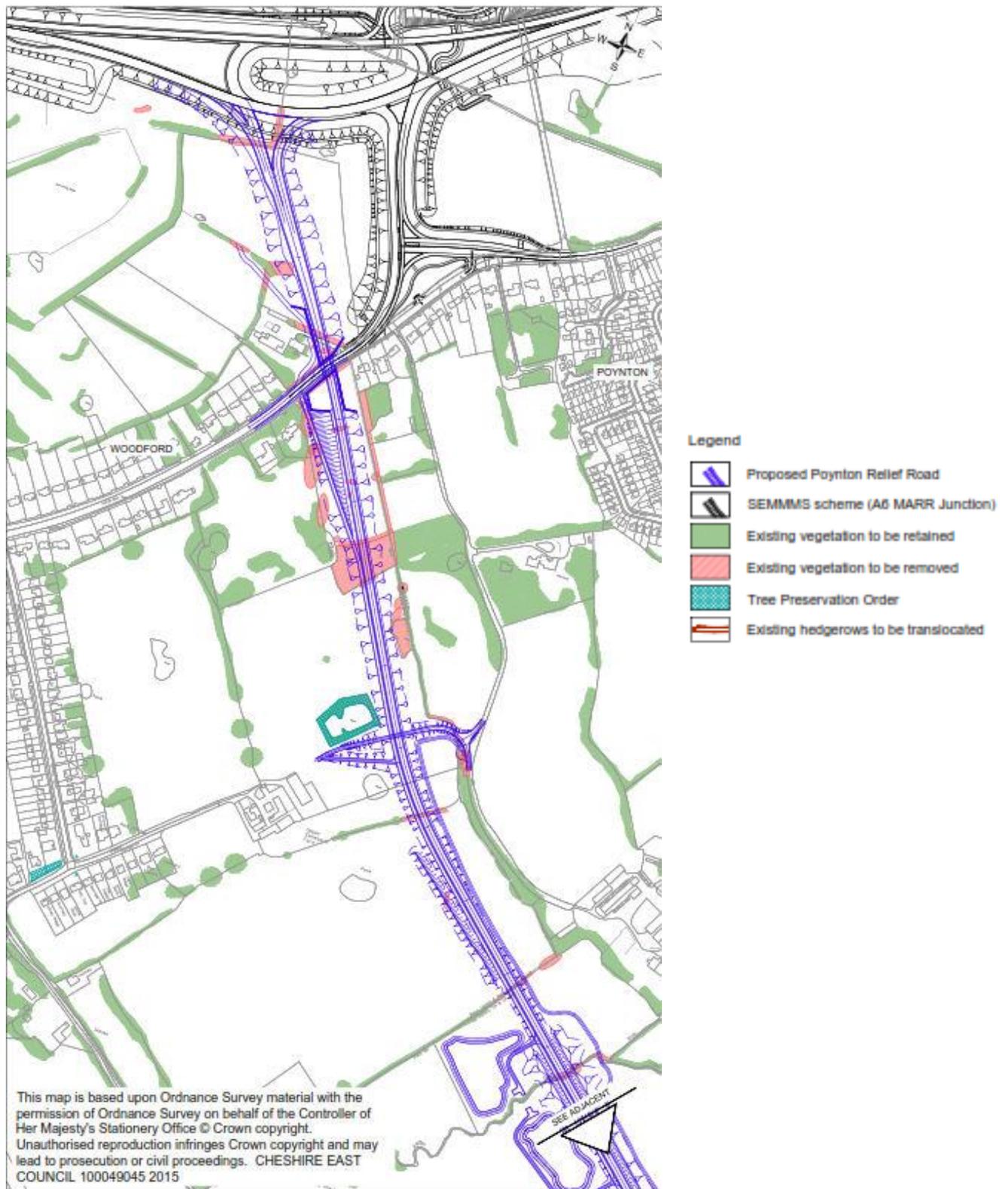


- Improved grassland
- Unmown grassland
- Woodland (deciduous)

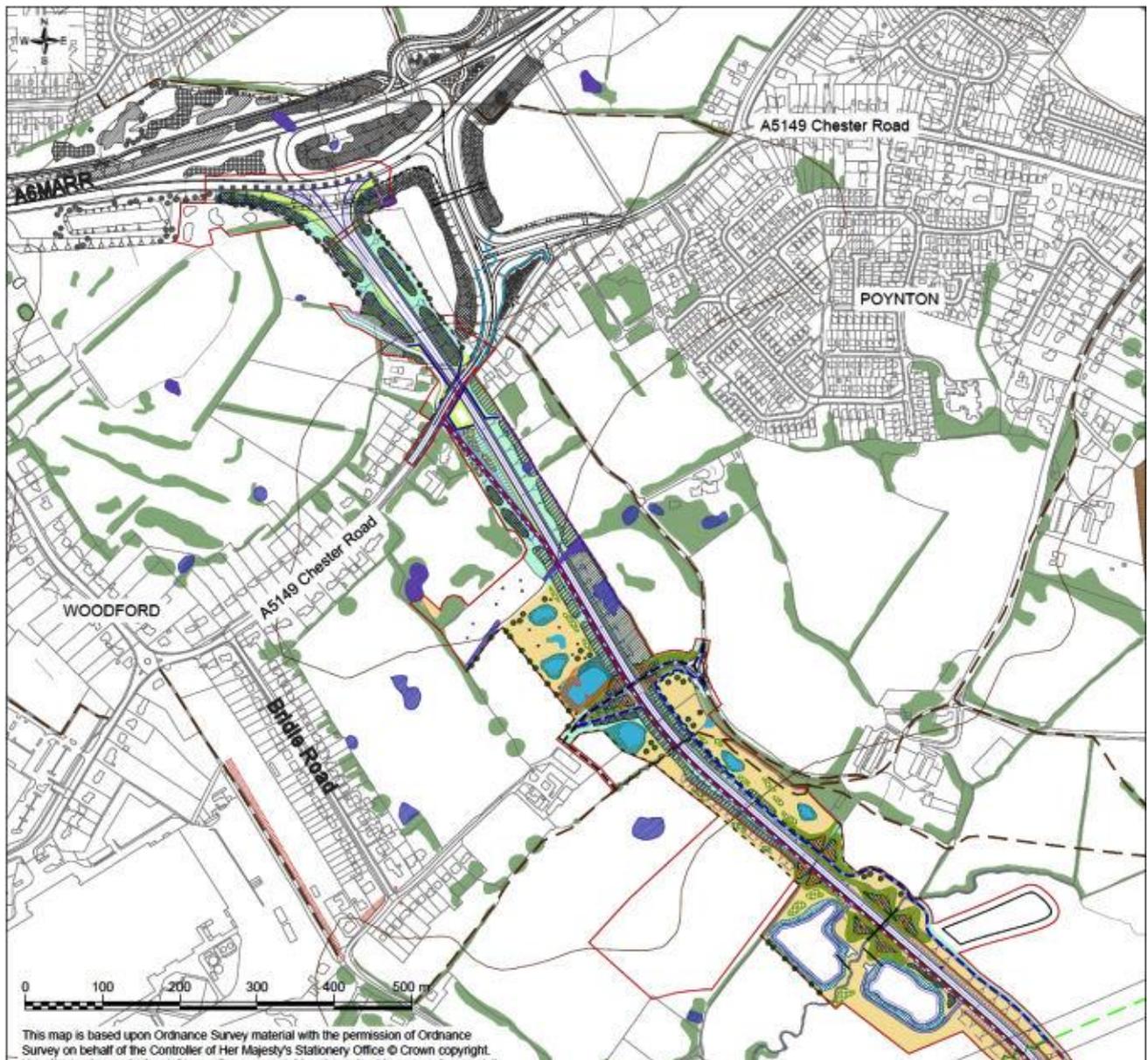
A planning application was submitted in the autumn of 2016 for the Poynton Relief Road which cuts through this area along the north east perimeter and will affect land use and habitats in this area.

Poynton Relief Road

The route and vegetation shown the planning application along the route of the Poynton Relief Road as it passes through Woodford habitat survey areas 2 and 1 is shown below.



The Environmental Statement included in the planning application for the Poynton Relief Road has the following map showing the route of the road through Area 1 and proposed environmental mitigation.



Environmental Masterplan Key

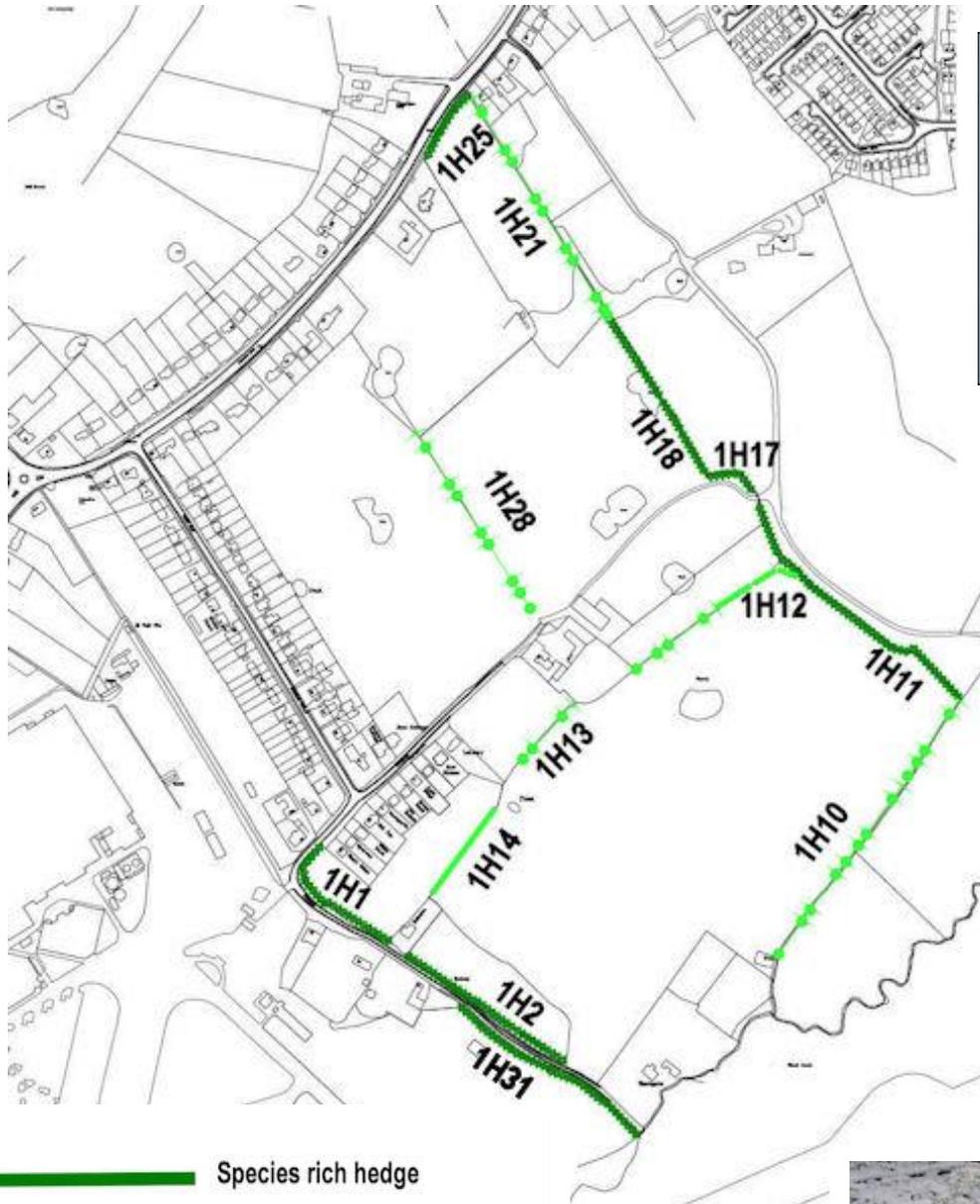
Legend	Significant vegetation to be retained	Non Motorised User Legend	A6 MARR Junction Mitigation Planting Legend - based on planning application DC1653678
Red line boundary	10m contours	Existing footpath to be retained	LE2.1 Native woodland
Tree Preservation Orders	Existing Great Crested Newt pond	Existing bridleway to be retained	LE2.5 Shrubs with intermittent trees
Existing ponds and watercourses	SEMAPMS scheme (A6 MARR Junction)	Existing footpath along road to be retained	LE2.6 Native shrubs
Proposed Poynton Relief Road	LE1.3 Species rich grassland	Proposed footway	LES.1 Individual trees
LE1.1 Amenity grassland	LE2.1A Native woodland	Proposed footway/ cycleway	Great Crested Newt mitigation ponds
LE1.6 Open grassland	LE2.4 Linear belt of trees and shrubs	Proposed bridleway	Combined badger and Great Crested Newt fencing
LE2.1B Native wood bat hopover	LE2.6A Shrubs	Proposed footway/ cycleway within Woodford Aerodrome	Badger tunnel
LE2.5 Shrubs with intermittent trees	LE4.2 Native hedgerows	Proposed footway/ cycleway at A6MARR	
LE2.6B Shrubs: bat hopover	LE4.4 Native hedgerow with trees	Footpath diversion	
LES.1 Individual trees	LE6.4A Marshy grass: attenuation ponds	North Cheshire Way Long Distance Path to be retained	
LE6.1 Waterbody/ associated planting	E3.2 Contained OCN badger fence	Stop up existing footpath	
LE6.4B Marshy grass: wildlife areas	Proposed fence	Stop up existing bridleway	
E3.2 Great Crested Newt (GCN) fence	E3.2 Bat hopover	Stop up proposed footway/ cycleway within aerodrome	
Visual screening bund	E3.2 Mammal tunnels		
E2.1 Attenuation ponds and planting	E3.2 Hedge translocation receptor site		
E3.2 Great Crested Newt tunnel	E3.2 GCN log pile		
E3.2 Hedge to be translocated	Replace Cheshire railings		
E3.2 GCN hibernacula			

Further details and the key to this map can be found [here](#)

Hedgerows

Native hedgerows found in Area 1 are shown in the map below.

Map of hedgerows in Area 1



Buzzards in Area 1



Fox in Area 1

Fences with native trees at intervals along them are a common feature of Area 1. The eastern and western boundaries are marked by species rich native hedgerows with mature trees. Species found in the hedges include alder, ash, briar, crab apple, elder, hawthorn, hazel, holly, hornbeam, ivy, oak, rowan, willow. Larger trees in the hedgerows and fences are commonly oak, ash, sycamore and poplar. Species rich hedgerows (4 or more species in a 30 m stretch) include 1H1, 1H2, 1H11, 1H17, 1H18, and 1H31.

1H2 and 1H31 along Bridle Road



1H11



Typical hedgerow with large trees



Oak tree in hedgerow



Woodland

There is a patch of mixed deciduous wet woodland on the eastern edge of the area (1W1). At the time of survey in November, some of the trees were standing in water. The dominant species is willow with oaks also present, some being very large specimens. There were large burrows in the perimeter of the wood, possibly fox or badger.

1W3 is a long narrow strip of large trees, which is a Tree Preservation Area, growing parallel to footpath 3HGB which leads from Chester Road to Bridle Road. 1W2 is an area of scrub growth on previously tarmacked or concreted land near Chester Road. A small copse of poplar trees surrounds 1P7 and is also a Tree Preservation Area

1W1 showing water around willow trees



1W1 with large oak viewed across 1F7



1W1 (satellite image) 1



1W2 and part of 1W3 (satellite image)



Footpath 3HGB with line of trees (1W3) and fallen branch (November 2015)



Bird sightings in Area 1

The following birds have been seen by local residents in Area 1.

Bullfinch	Moorhen
Buzzard	Nuthatch
Chaffinch	Parakeet (Rose-ringed) (escape)
Curlew	Partridge (Grey)
Duncock	Redwing
Goldcrest	Siskin
Goldfinch	Swallow
Goose, Canada	Song Thrush
Greenfinch	Tit, Long-tailed
Heron (Grey)	Woodpecker (Great Spotted)
Jay	Wren
Kestrel	

Ponds and ditches

Area 1 has 13 ponds. Some are open in the middle of grazed fields, including 1P1, 1P5, and 1P12. Others are surrounded by large trees or have willow trees growing in them, including 1P7 and 1P8. 1P10 is surrounded by willow scrub. Those surveyed were eutrophic (contained algae) with a mud substrate.

1P8 with oak, hawthorn, elder, alder and willow trees



1P7 surrounded by black poplar trees



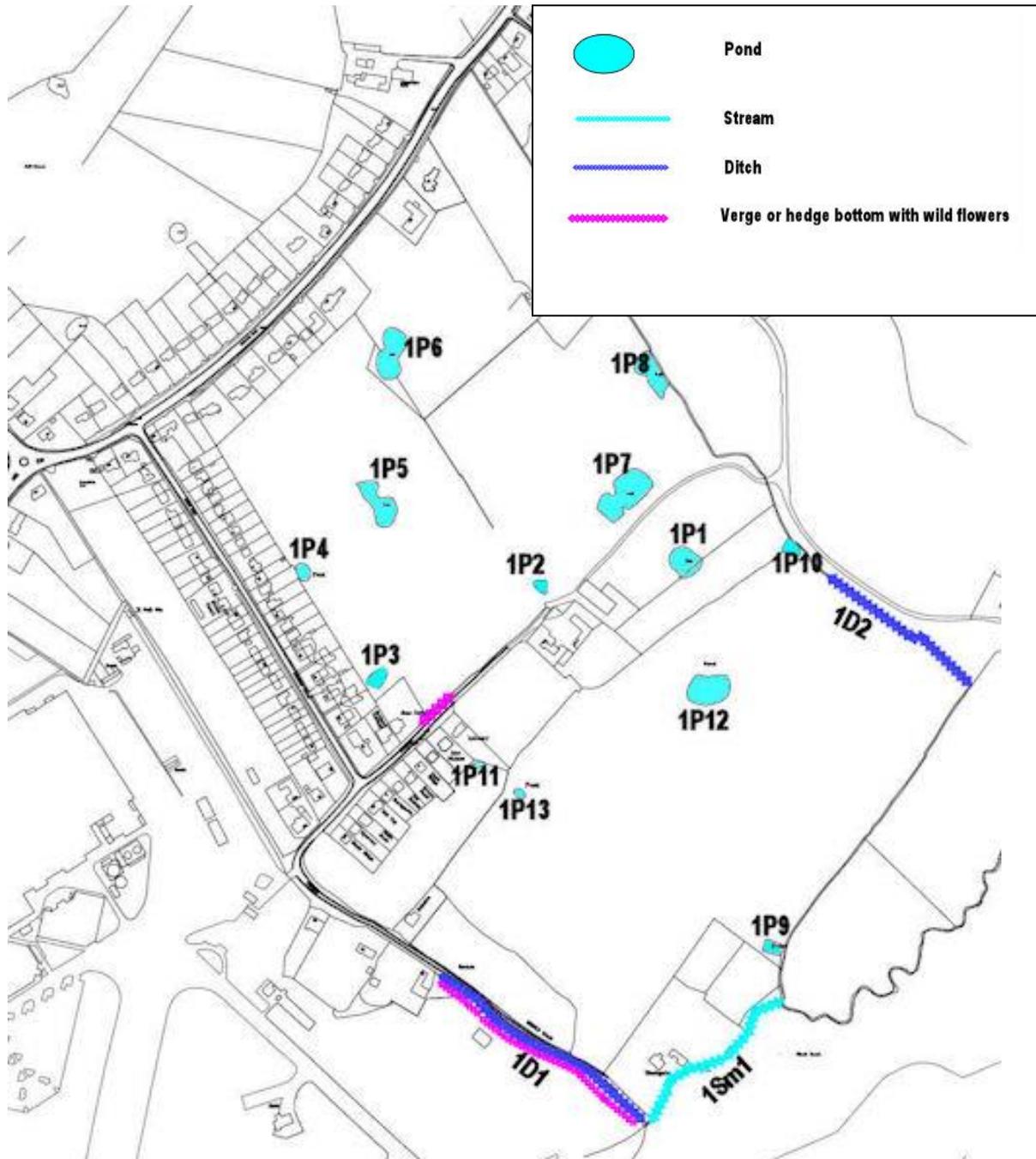
Willow trees around 1P8



1P7 in summer (satellite image)



Map of ponds, ditches and streams in Area 1



Grass verges and field boundaries

Area 1 was surveyed in November when herbaceous species in grass verges and around field margins had died back. The eastern section of Bridle Road, where it becomes a track beside a ditch, and Bridle Way were surveyed again in May and October and found to be rich in herbaceous species. Species found in the grass verge and the ditch bordering the track at the end of Bridle Road included hedge parsley, stitchwort, bluebell, white nettle, willow herb, dandelion, lesser hogweed, celandine, ground elder and ferns. The verges alongside the track at the end of Bridle Way were lush with vegetation including brambles and a patch of catmint.

Verges bordering track at end of Bridle Road



1D1 bordering track at end of Bridle Road



Stand-alone trees

Most of the large trees are to be found in hedgerows, around ponds and in field boundaries. Their locations can be seen easily on satellite image below. Some of the bigger ones have been labelled in the satellite image below. Oak is the most common among the larger specimens. 1S8 is a large oak in the pavement on Chester Road. (See section on Tree Preservation Orders)

1S5, oak on perimeter of 1F7



1S6 in H18, oak with holes potentially suitable for birds and bats



Satellite image showing some of the mature trees in Area 1



Large trees in grass verge along Bridle Road



Oak tree in fence boundary of 1F4



1S4 near Bridle Way Farm



1S9 in 1F4 in winter



Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

The map below is taken from the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council website and shows TPOs as green dots (on Bridle road) and Tree Preservation Area Orders (1W3 and around 1P7) as green blocks.



Invasive or undesirable species

None found on survey.

Poynton Relief Road Environmental Assessment

The data presented here should be cross referenced with data published for the Environmental Assessment for the Poynton Relief Road Planning Application ([here](#)) and comments by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust ([here](#)). CWT note that species rich and marshy grassland are present along the route of the road. In addition, Woodford Aerodrome is adjacent, which is known to provide a habitat for brown hare, curlew, lapwing and skylark.

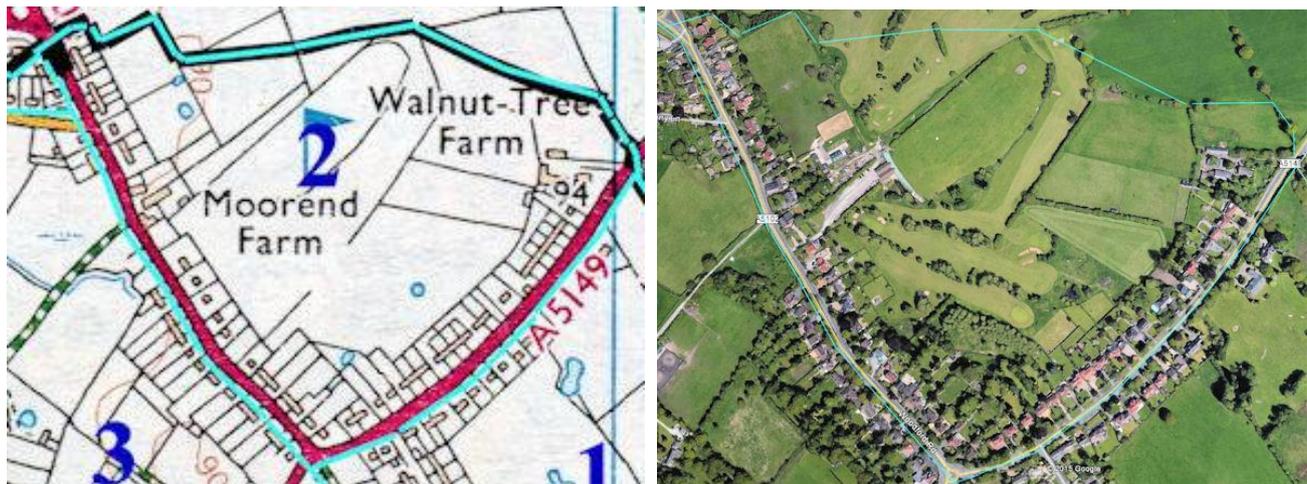
North East Woodford, Area 2

(not surveyed on the ground)



Area 2 is in the north east of the Neighbourhood Area, lying between Woodford Road, Chester Road (A5149) and the A6MARR which forms the outer boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, as shown in OS and satellite images below, bounded by the turquoise line. The A6MARR cut through areas of farmland and Moorend Golf Driving Range (once a farm) which were formerly part of the Parish of Woodford and has necessitated the felling of several large mature native trees along its route near Chester Road.

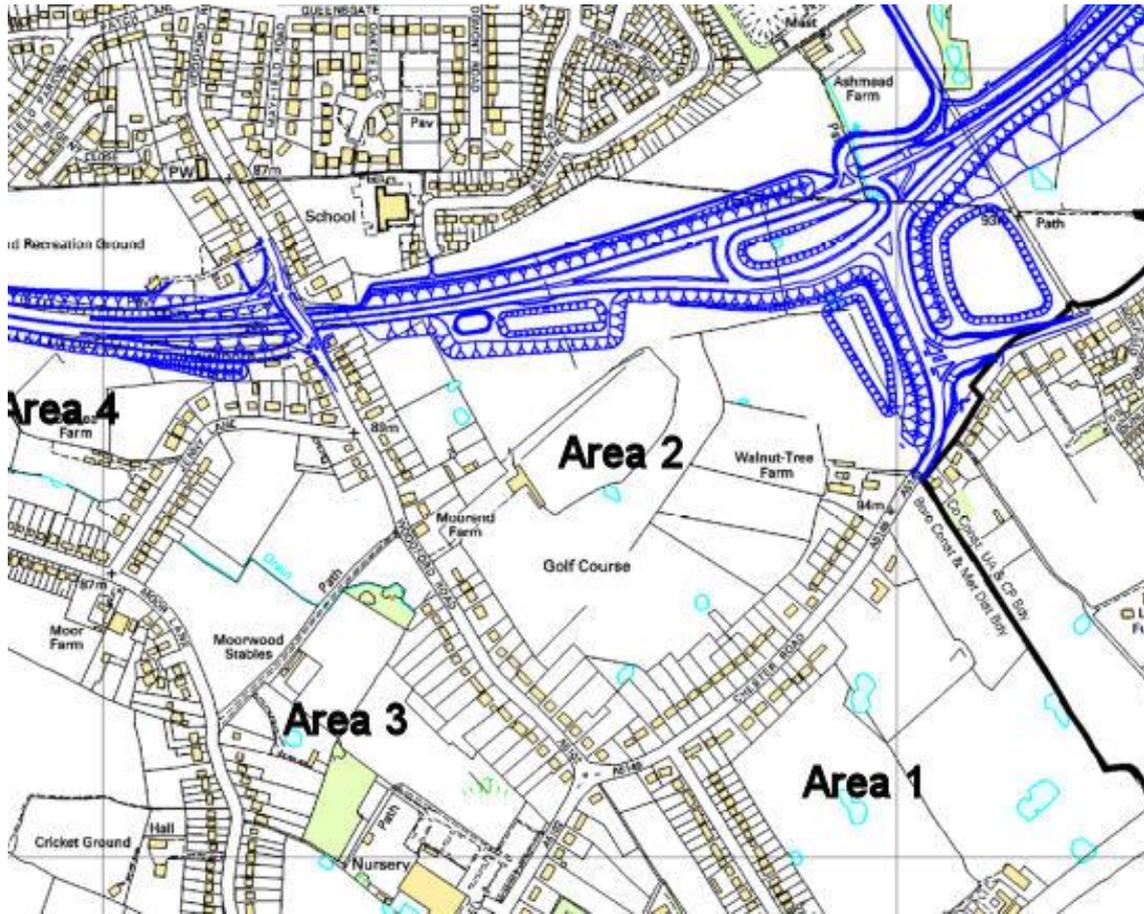
Moorend Golf Driving Range forms much of Area 2. The owner requested that on the ground habitat surveys were not conducted on his property, so this report is restricted to what can be seen and deduced from satellite images.



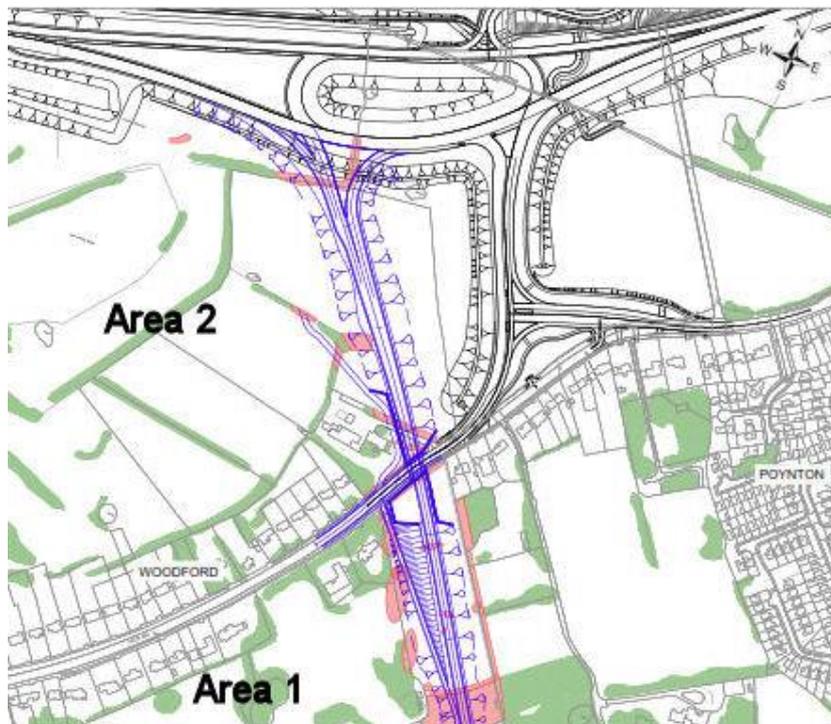
Land use

Much of the area is amenity grassland, with fragments of native hedgerows, mature native trees and areas of planted coniferous woodland. Fragments of farmland remain in the east of the area behind Chester Road but these may be affected in the future by the construction of the Poynton Relief Road. There are several instances in this area where domestic curtilages have been extended by the purchase of additional land behind the properties on Woodford Road and Chester Road. Area 2 is bounded by A6 MARR and intersected by the proposed Poynton Relief Road, as shown in the map below.

Route of A6MARR shown in blue



Route of Poynton Relief Road shown in purple



Map showing land use in Area 2



Hedgerows

Satellite images suggest that there are native hedgerows with flowering hawthorn in Area 2, in the farmland and within Moorend Golf Course. They are shown in the map below. Species cannot be accurately deduced from satellite images so they have been marked as species poor native, although there may be sections which are species rich.

Map of hedgerows in Area 2



Satellite images showing native hedgerows in Area 2





Woodland

An area of coniferous woodland can be seen in Moored Golf Course in satellite images.



Ponds and ditches

5 small ponds are marked on the OS map of Area 2 shown below. On the ground surveys would be needed to ascertain how many of these remain following the changes of use at Moorend Farm and construction of A6 MARR.

Map of ponds in Area 2



Grass verges and field boundaries

These could not be assessed, apart from those bordering Chester Road. There is a mown grass verge bordering Chester road in Area 2.

Stand-alone trees

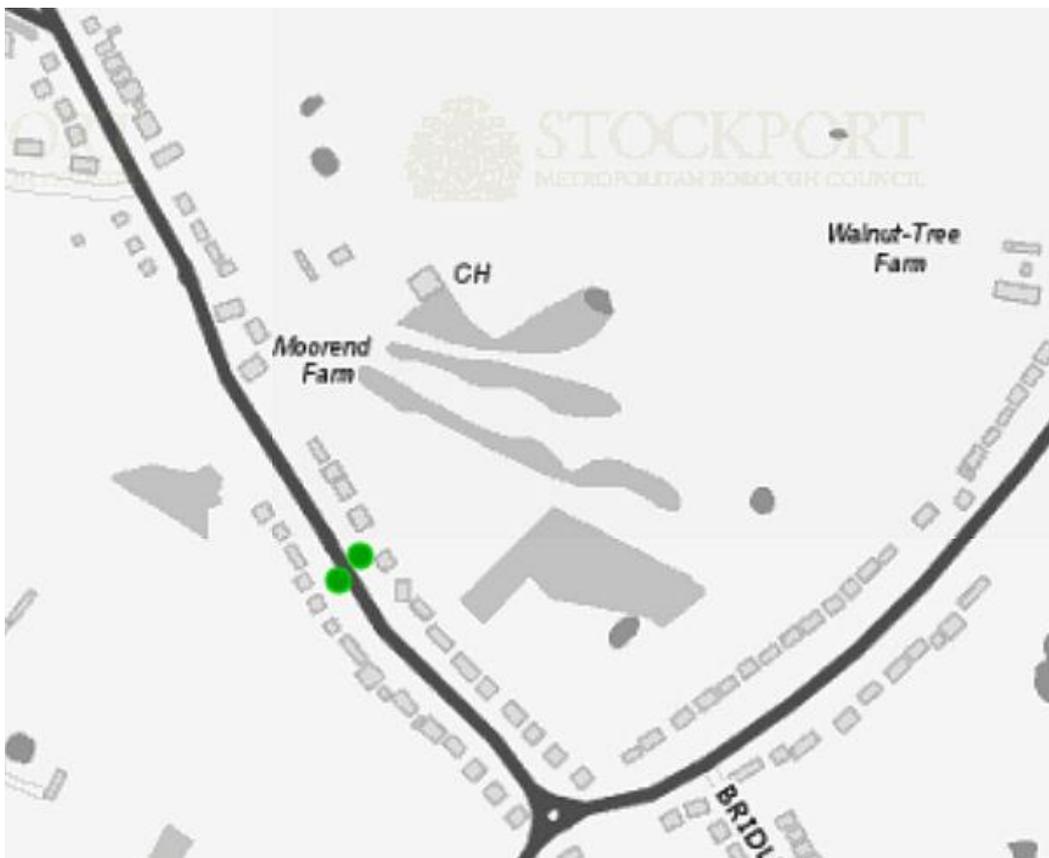
Satellite images suggest that there are mature deciduous and coniferous trees in Area 2. Species could not be identified from satellite images. There are 2 mature oaks in the pavement and grass verge along Chester Road.

Oak trees in grass verge on Chester Road



Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

The map below is taken from the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council website and shows 1 TPOs in Area 2 on the northern side of Woodford round as a green dot. (The one opposite is in habitat survey area 3)



Wildlife sightings

A resident has reported repeated sightings of a barn owl over 10 years in a tree on Chester Road opposite Bridle Road.

Invasive or undesirable species

None found on survey.

Central Woodford, Area 3

(Surveyed in November 2015 and September 2016)



Area 3 is in the centre of the Neighbourhood Area bounded by Jenny Lane, Moor Lane, Chester Road and Woodford Road. Footpaths 11HGB, known to locals as the Cinder Track and 10HGB cross the area.

The main Chester Road through this area could be regarded as the commercial centre of Woodford. Budgens general store, Green Thumb landscape gardeners, Flora Cottage boarding kennels and NottCutts Garden Centre are to be found on the north side of Chester Road, while there is a row of shops on the southern side, including Etre Belle beauty salon, Creations hairdressers and Bathrooms by Design.

The new Redrow development on the Aerodrome development branches off from Chester Road via a new roundabout opposite the garden centre.



Footpath 10HGB is a narrow enclosed path which passes behind the garden centre, follows the line of a ditch for a while and emerges via a very narrow path between houses onto Moor Lane. The Cinder Track, footpath 11HGB, crosses a tiny stream as it passes between fields from Moor Lane to Woodford Road.

No parts of this area are more than one field distant from a public right of way. Where trees, hedges and ponds could not be assessed at close quarters they were viewed using binoculars and a zoom lens on a camera.

Land use

Map showing land use in Area 3



View over hay meadow in 3F3 from Moor Lane

Agricultural fields adjacent to Jenny Lane and the Cinder Track are improved grassland used for grazing and hay production. There is a field to the north east of NottCutts Garden Centre which was being used as a small holding with goats and hens at the time of survey. At the time of survey, there were three areas of rough grassland, which had not been recently mown or grazed. These included a small field to the west of Woodford Road (3F12), a field to the north of the footpath behind the garden centre (3F6 and 3F7 – no longer divided) and a small patch of ground belonging to the garden centre to the south of the car park (3F8). 3F8 has been left to nature and a variety of herbaceous species were found, including willow herb, ragwort, bugle, plantain, birds foot trefoil and thyme. It is surrounded by a mixture of native deciduous trees and non-native deciduous and coniferous species.

Hedgerows

Map of hedgerows and woodland in Area 3



There are several native hedgerows in area 3, including 3H9, 3H10, 3H11, 3H13, 3H14, 3H17, 3H19, 3H20, 3H22, 3H27. Of these the following are species-rich, containing four or more species per 30 m, 3H9, 3H10, 3H13, 3H14, 3H19 and 3H27. Many of these species rich hedges also contained mature trees. Species found included alder, ash, beech, birch, blackthorn, briar, elder, willow, hawthorn, hazel, holly, horse chestnut, ivy, maple, oak, rowan, sycamore, cherry. The most common species were hawthorn, oak, blackthorn and elder.

The Cinder Track (footpath 11HGB) is notable for species-rich hedges on either side.

Woodland

Area 3 contains a few small fragments of mixed woodland containing native deciduous trees and conifers. 3W1 appears to be land belonging to one of the houses on the southern side of Jenny Lane. 3W3 comprises tall mature trees in the grounds of Southfield House. 3W4 comprises mature trees which appear to be in a

large garden belonging to a house on Moor Lane. 3W5 is adjacent to the garden centre and mostly coniferous.

Footpath 10HGB, which passes from Chester Road behind the garden centre to Moor Lane, is bordered in places by tall native trees and passes by a narrow strip of native woodland bordering a ditch.

Satellite images showing 3W1, 3W2, 3W3, 3W4 and 3W5





The Cinder Track: from Moor Lane

from Woodford Road

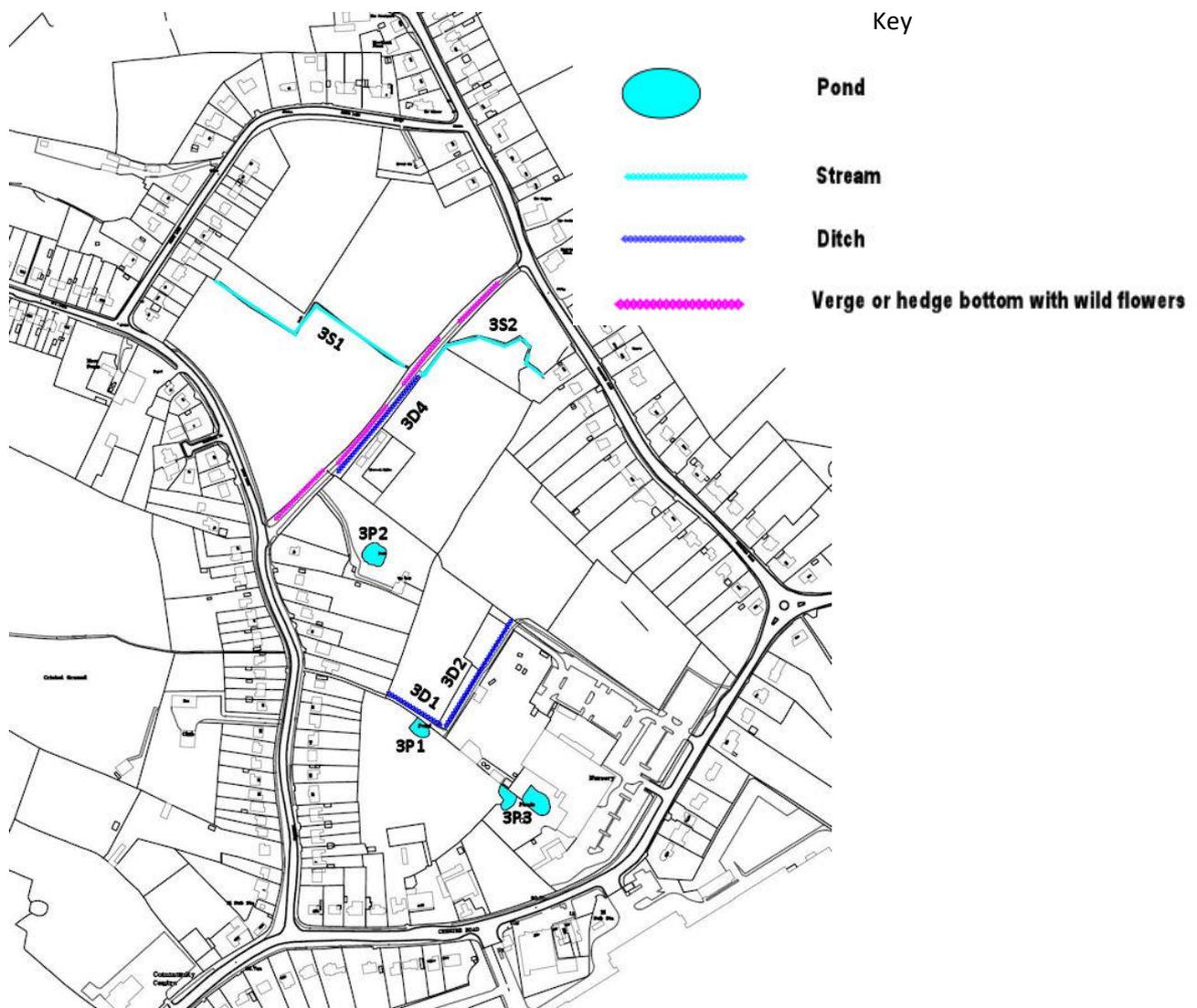


3W1 viewed from Moor Lane



Ponds and ditches

Map of ponds, ditches and streams in Area 3



There are three ponds in the area. 3P1 is in field 3F11 and bordered by flag irises and trees including alder, oak, birch and holly. 3P2 is within domestic curtilage and 3P3 is a double pond within land owned by the garden centre.

A tiny stream (3S1) crosses the field from Jenny Lane and passes under the Cinder Track (footpath 11HGB). A ditch (3D1 and 3D2) follows footpath 10HGB behind the garden centre, running through a narrow strip of woodland and past a pond in field F11.

These water courses will provide habitats and corridors for wildlife.

Grass verges and field boundaries

The Cinder Track (footpath 11HGB) is bounded by ditches and wide verges with a range of herbaceous species, which should be surveyed in the spring and summer. Moor Lane is bordered by a grass verge between the Cinder Track and Jenny Lane.

Stand-alone trees

Mature trees are mostly associated with hedgerows and patches of woodland. As can be seen from the satellite image, few are stand alone specimens. There is a line of individual trees where footpath 10HGB passes by the garden centre car park (ST 2-9), a line of native trees in 3F6, where it was at one time separated from 3F7 (St 10-14)

There are mature oak trees in the pavement of Moor Lane which add to the rural character and provide habitats.

Oak trees in grass verge on Moor Lane



Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

The map below is taken from the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council website and shows TPOs in Area 3. There is a cluster on the northern side of Jenny Lane and one on Woodford Road (opposite a tree with a TPO in Area 2).



Invasive or undesirable species

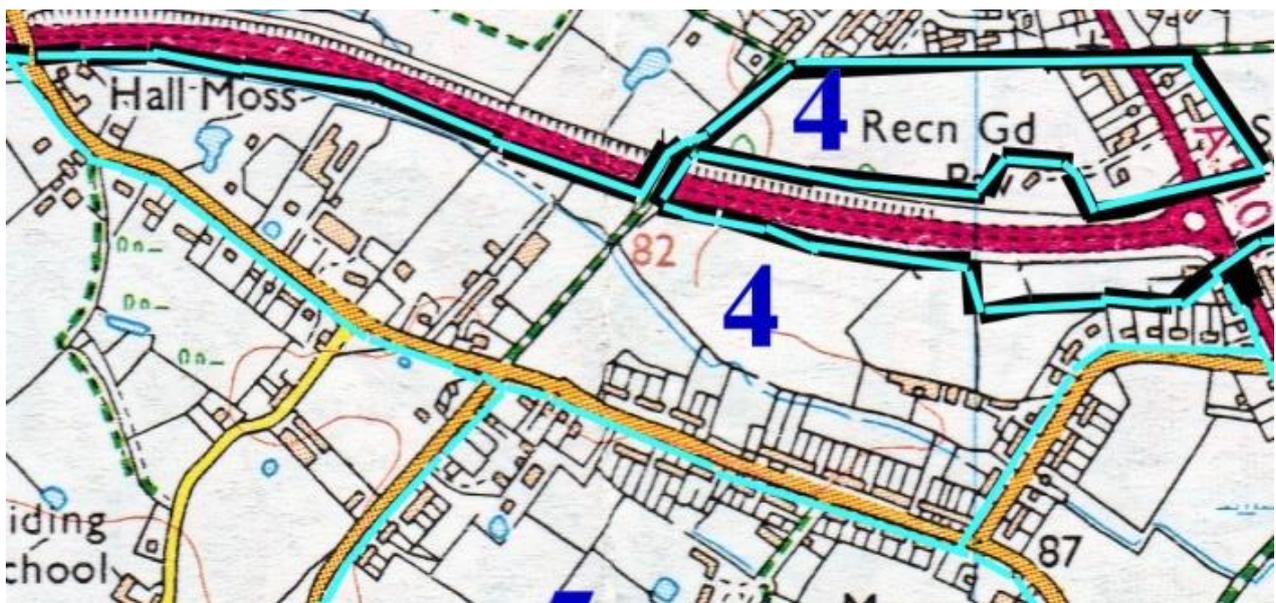
A resident has reported Himalayan Balsam beside the stream near to the Cinder Track (footpath 11HGB).

North Woodford, Area 4

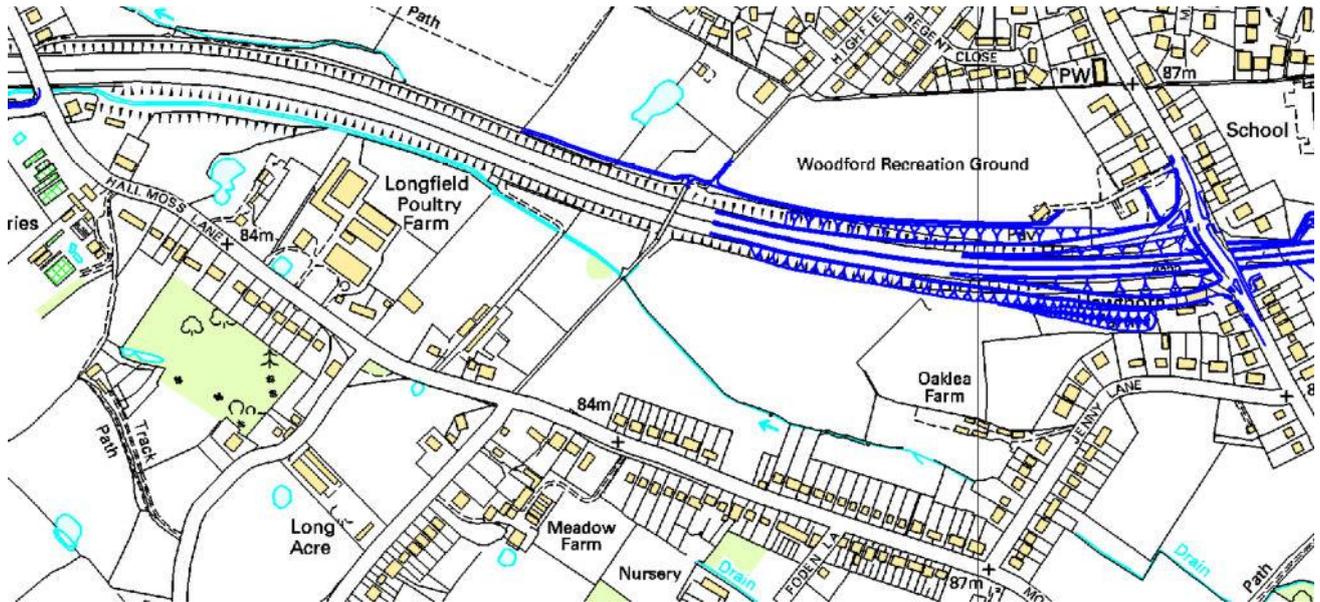
(Surveyed November 2015 and May 2016)



Area 4 is in the north of the Neighbourhood Area, as shown in OS and satellite images below bounded by a turquoise line. It adjoins Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme and lies between Woodford Road, Jenny Lane, Hall Moss Lane and the A555. This area includes Woodford Recreation Ground and is crossed by footpath 16CG, which crosses the A555 via a footbridge. Footpath 13HGB runs along the edge of the recreation ground at the border with Bramhall. At the time of writing in April 2017, there is significant disruption due to the road works associated with the A6MARR. Tracts of land on either side of this road have been consumed by the widened road, including part of the recreation ground. The OS map and satellite image below do not show these recent changes, but the route of the road is shown on the map below.



Changes due to A6MARR construction shown in blue



Land use

Area 4 includes agricultural land to the north west of Jenny Lane, which tapers to a point between the A555 and Hall Moss Lane. Area 4 also includes recreational land in the form of Woodford Recreation Ground, which is separated from much of Woodford by the A555. A skate board park within the recreational ground was removed to make way for the A6MARR.

The farmland is mostly improved grassland, used for grazing (sheep, horses and even llamas) or for silage or hay, crops in the summer. Moorfield Livery Stables on Hall Moss Lane provides stabling, an outdoor menage (in 4F12) and grazing for horses.

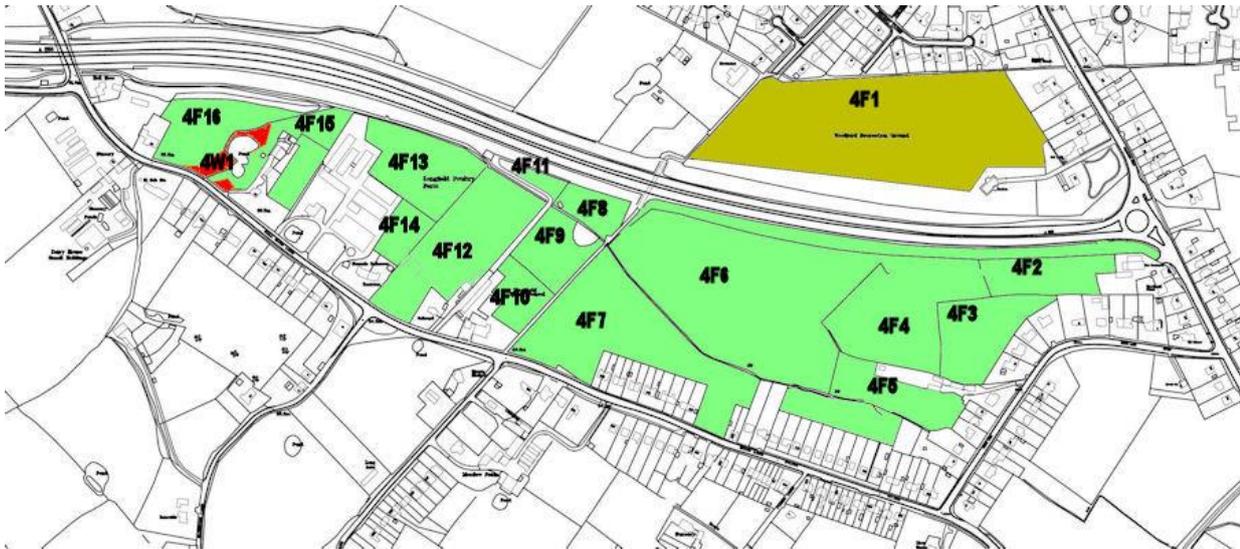
Horses in grazing in 4F8



From Moor Lane across 4F7 and 4F6 to Woodford Road

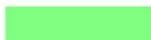


Map showing land use



Llamas grazing in 4F10



-  Improved grassland
-  Amenity grassland
-  Woodland (deciduous)

From 16CG across 4F7 and 4F6 towards Moor Lane



and towards A555



From footbridge over A555 to oaks in 4F4



Woodford Recreation Ground



Hedgerows

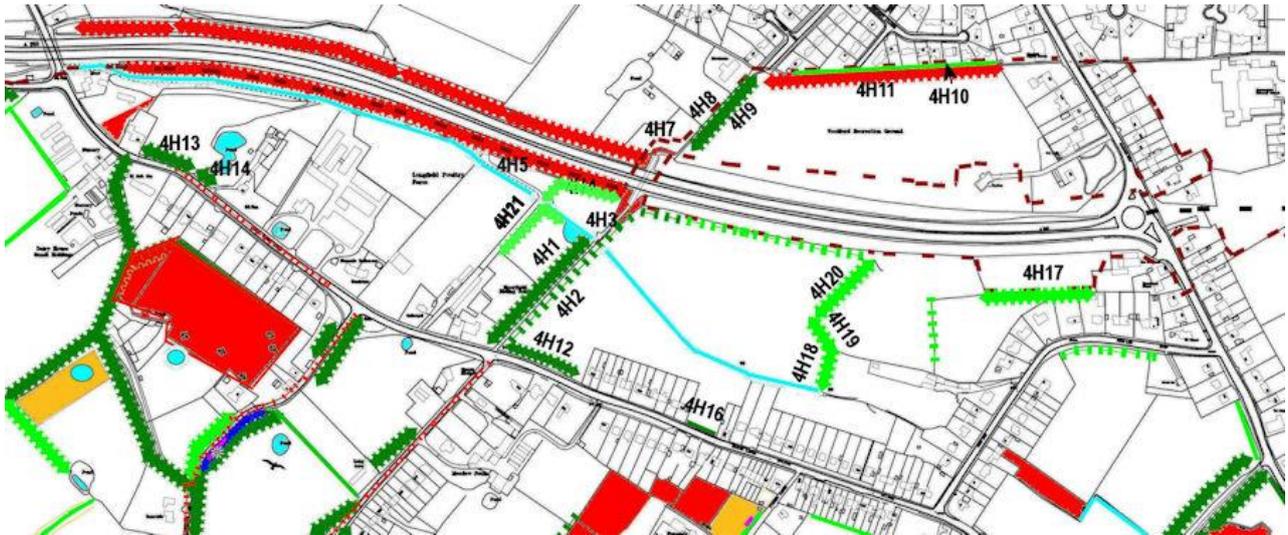
Area 4 is bounded in many places by roads and domestic gardens but there are some native hedges. Surveying was limited to what could be established from public rights of way. A native hedge (4H10) forms the northern boundary with Bramhall, separating the domestic curtilages from the footpath (13HGB) alongside the recreation ground. An intermittent hedge with mixed mature deciduous trees separates this footpath from the recreation field. Footpath 16CG, which runs from Moor Lane to Bramhall and crosses over the A555 via a footbridge, is bounded by species-rich native hedgerows with trees (4H1 and 4H2). Species present include, blackthorn, elder, hawthorn, holly, oak, ash, alder, cherry and ivy. Widening of the road and creation of a cycle path associated with the A6MARR extension have resulted in the loss of small copses of native trees adjacent to the footbridge and lines of native trees which formerly bordered the road. 4H21 is native with trees and may be species rich if examined at close quarters.

Small stretches of species-rich hedgerow border Hall Moss Lane and Moor Lane in the gaps between houses (4H12, 4H13, 4H14 and 4H16). Species present include hawthorn, oak, elder, maple, rowan, sycamore and ivy.

Hedges and trees bordering footpath 16CG



Map showing native hedgerows



Key

-  Native hedge, species poor (< 4)
-  Native hedge with trees, species poor
-  Fence with native trees (< 4 species)
-  Native hedge, species rich (4 or more)
-  Native hedge with trees, species rich
-  Fence with native trees (4 species or more)
-  Line of native trees
-  Tree-lined road or lane

4H21, a typical native hedgerow with trees around 4F9



Mature trees

Mature trees, commonly oaks, are to be found in area 4, notably around the perimeter of the recreation ground, bordering the footpaths, in field boundaries and in the fields between Jenny Lane and footpath 16CG. Several mature oaks are to be found in the fields between the A555 and Moor Lane. Limes trees are present in a small section of the hedge (4H12) bordering Moor Lane.

Mature trees in fields behind Jenny Lane



Willow tree by pond 1 and footpath 16CG



Mature trees around Recreation Ground



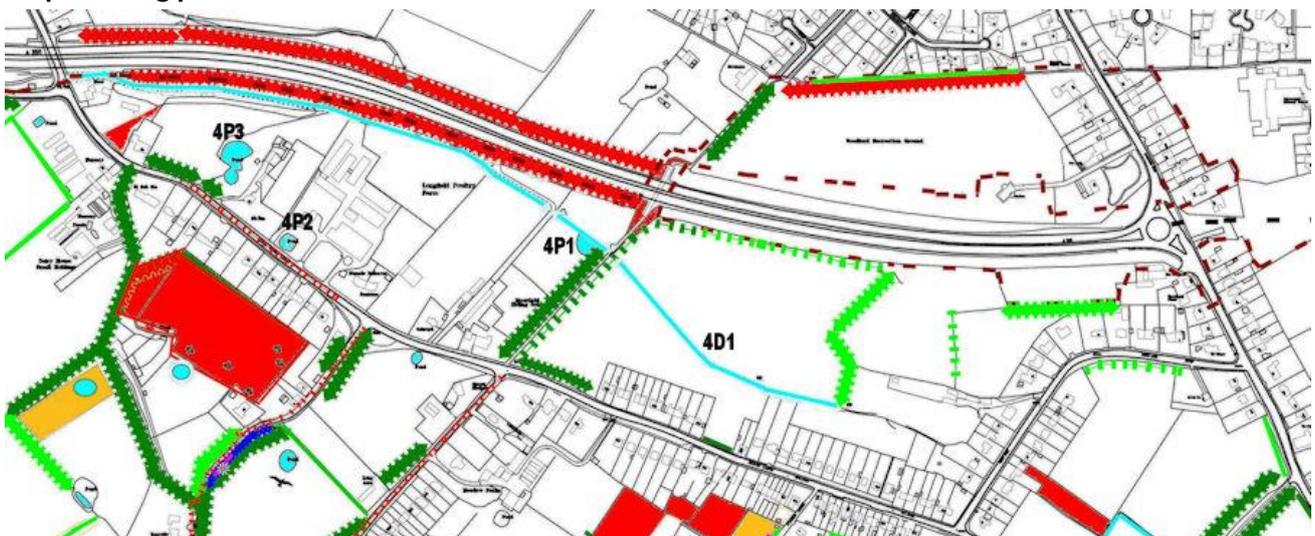
Woodland

There is no woodland in Area 4 but there is a small copse of native trees, adjacent to Longfield Farm on Hall Moss Lane.

Ponds, streams and ditches

There are three ponds in Area 4. 4P1 lies next to footpath 16CG near the footbridge over the A555. A small stream/ditch passes through the area running adjacent to the A555 for a while until it takes a diagonal course across the area, passing under the footpath and across the field towards Jenny Lane. It is open and surrounded by grassland in this location. Two further ponds, 4P2 and 4P3 are located within domestic gardens on Hall Moss Lane.

Map showing ponds and ditches in Area 4



Grass verges and field boundaries

There are no significant grass verges in Area 4. The fields were surveyed from public roads and rights of way because land ownership was not established. A closer survey of the field boundaries and the stream (4D1) which crosses the area in spring and summer would be needed to ascertain herbaceous species present.

Stand-alone trees

There are several stand-alone oak trees in Area 4, shown below.

Satellite image showing mature oak trees in 4F4 and 4F6



Mature oaks in 4F7



Invasive or undesirable species

None were found.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

The map below is taken from the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council website and shows TPOs as green dots and Tree Preservation Area Orders as green blocks. As can be seen there are many trees with TPOs along Moor Lane and a cluster in Jenny Lane.



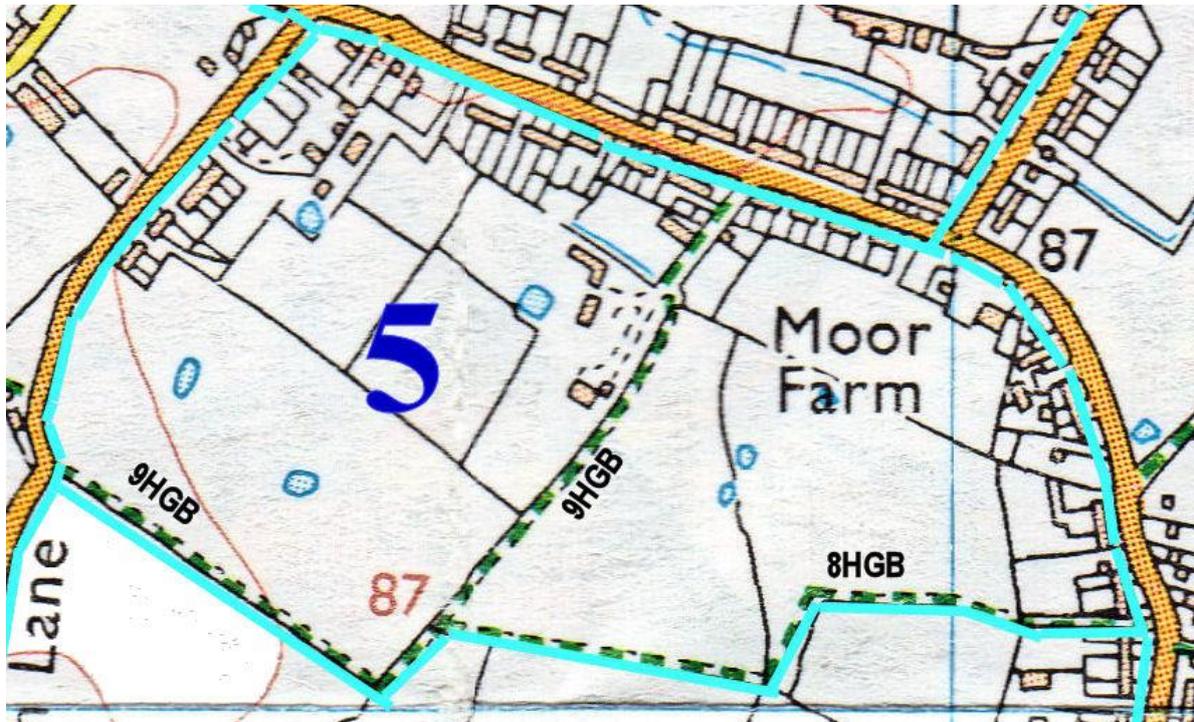
Central Woodford, Area 5

(surveyed, May 2016, August 2016 and September 2017)



Area 5 forms part of the centre of the Neighbourhood Area, lying between Church Lane, Moor Lane, footpath 9HGB, which crosses Bramhall Cricket Club ground from Church Lane, and 8HGB, which runs from Moor Lane, passed Woodford Cricket Club ground and then through fields to join 9HGB. Linear housing development follows Moor Lane and Church Lane around the perimeter of the area with small fields in occasional gaps. Foden Lane is a no through road, which branches off Moor Lane into the area and Woodhall Close is a short cul de sac off Moor Lane. The land in this area is very prone to flooding in wet weather.

Note: the map pre-dates the arrival of Bramhall Cricket Club in this location (see satellite image below)



Satellite image showing Area 5



From Bramhall Cricket Club ground and footpaths 9HGB and 8HGB there are open views of the fields in the centre of Woodford and the distant Pennine Hills.

View from Bramhall Cricket Ground



Views from 9HGB

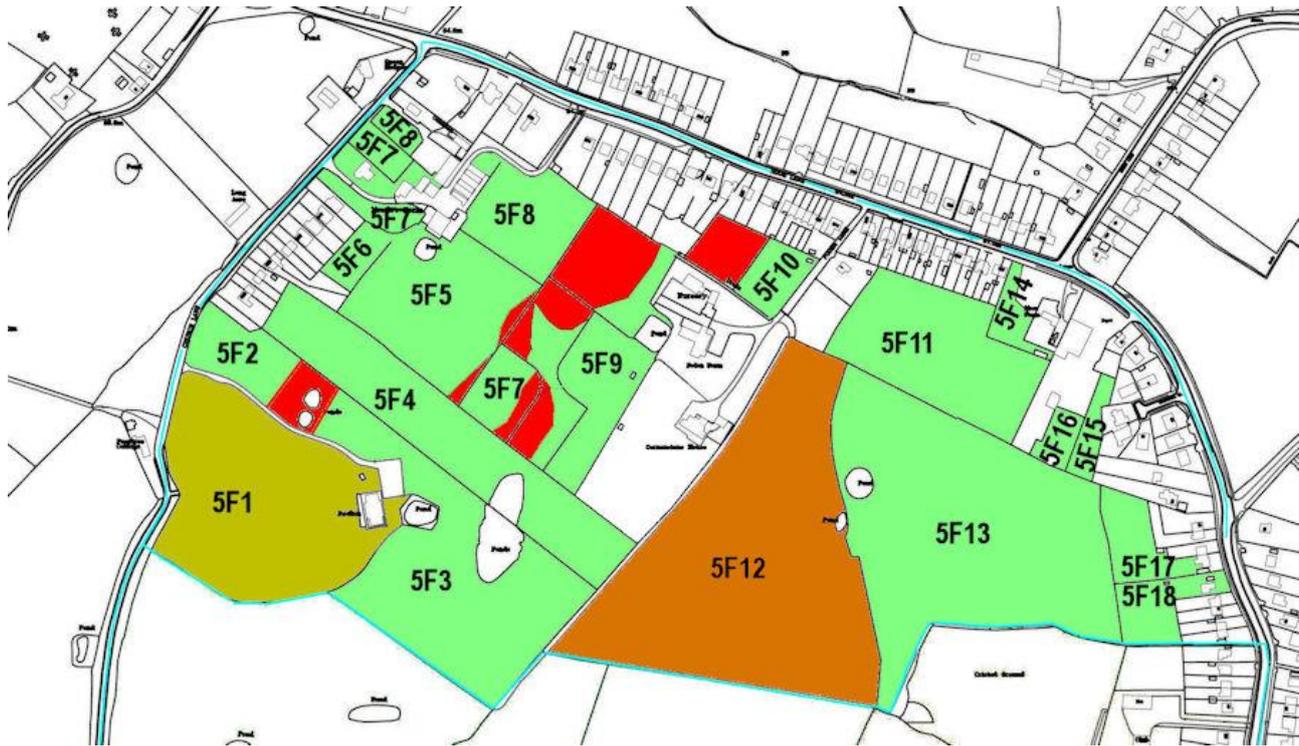


Land use

Area 5 is mixture of domestic curtilage, recreational grassland belonging to Bramhall Cricket Club and agricultural land, belonging to Hill Top Farm and Meadow Farm. In addition, there are business premises with land here, including Huws and Gray (builder's merchants and plumbers) on Moor Lane and Church Lane Garage on Church Lane. On Foden Lane there is land that was once used for a horticultural business and there are houses with very large gardens with woodland at the end of the no through road. The agricultural land is grassland used for grazing for sheep, horses and poultry and hay/haylage/silage. In the past some fields have been used for cereal crops, such as barley and maize. At the time of the autumn survey some fields appear to have been cleared with total herbicide. These were evidently reseeded with grass, which is the crop growing at the time of writing in September 2017.

The area is wet and fields are frequently flooded in wet weather.

Map showing land use in Area 5



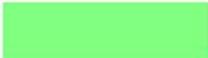
Sheep in 5F3



5F5 with grazing horses and cattle



Key

-  Improved grassland
-  Amenity grassland
-  Bare earth
-  Deciduous woodland

5F11 at the back of houses on Moor Lane



5F12 and 9HGB flooded in the autumn



5F12 in winter



5F13



Willow for biomass in 5F18



5F10 on Foden Lane (former horticultural business)



5F7 Meadow Farm (with sheep and geese)



Hedgerows

Some of the field boundaries are fences or fences with mature trees. Where there are hedges, many are species poor. Species-rich hedgerows in this area include 5H6, 5H7 and 5H11 and 5H13. The hedgerow labelled 5H3, 5H4 and 5H5 is species rich but there are regular gaps in it where it is just fence. Species found include beech, birch, blackthorn, damson, elder, hawthorn, hazel, holly, ivy, oak, rowan, sycamore and willow. The hedgerow along the northern side of field 5F12 is a short section of tall hedge with more than four species but only 20 m in length. Fences with trees include 5H19, 5H20, 5H22, 5H23 and 5H24.

Map of hedgerows in Area 5



Key

- Deciduous woodland or copse
- Coniferous woodland or copse
- Rough grassland, not grazed or mown
- Native hedge, species poor (< 4)
- Native hedge with trees, species poor
- Fence with native trees (< 4 species)
- Native hedge, species rich (4 or more)
- Native hedge with trees, species rich
- Fence with native trees (4 species or more)

5H6 with oak tree



Elderberries in 5H13



5H9 in May with 5F12 behind



5H9, 5H10 with 5F3 and 5W2 behind



5F11 and 5H14 in background



5H3 and 5H4, 5F12 in foreground



Foden Lane, 5H2 on left



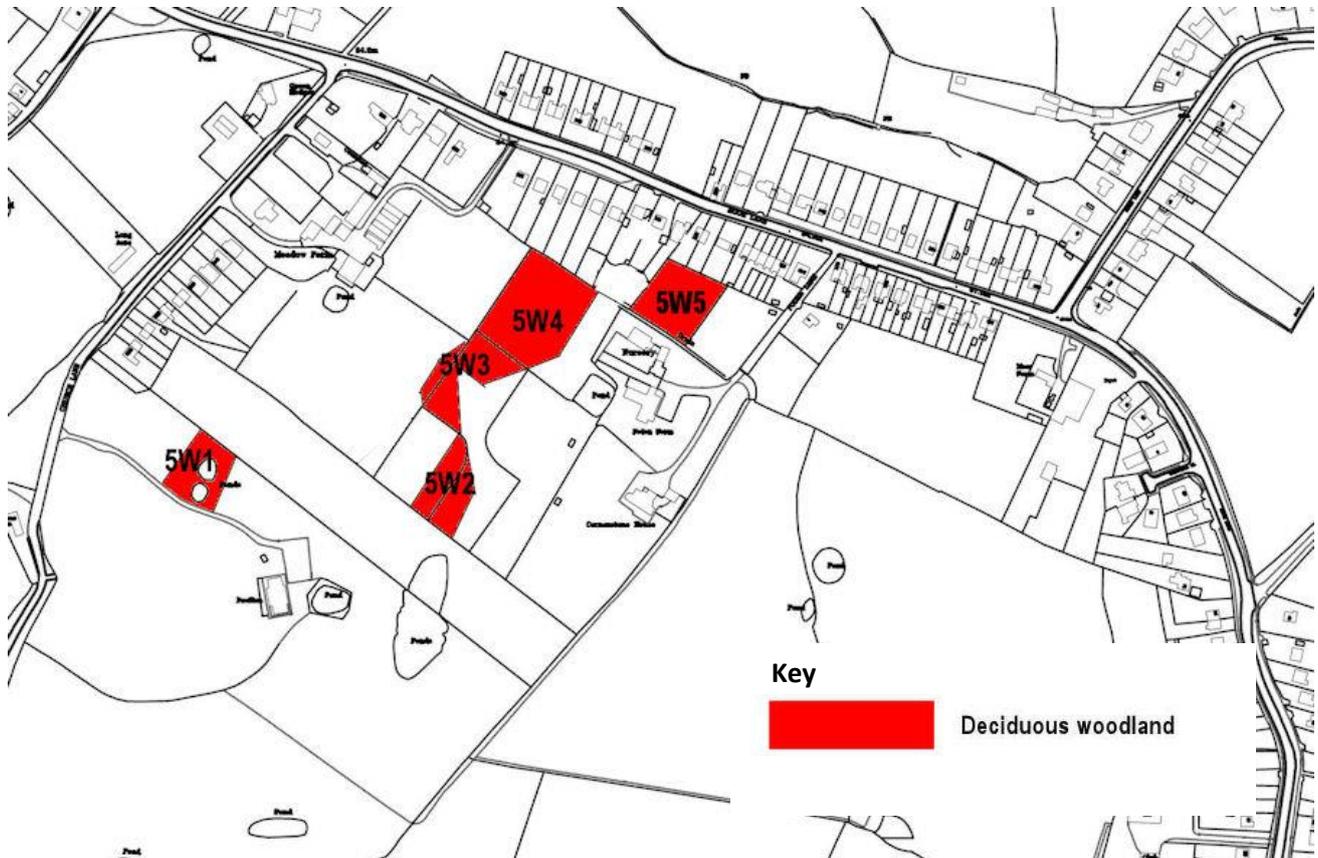
Hawthorn berries in 5H12 in September



Woodland

There are small areas of mixed deciduous woodland in area 5. 5W1 is a small dense wood including alder, willow, elder, blackthorn and oak. 5W2, 5W3, 5W4, and 5W5 were not accessed but viewed using binoculars, camera and satellite images. They are mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland, which may be contiguous and all within domestic curtilage, and which appears to include large clearings, as well as woodland.

Map showing woodland in Area 5



5W1 adjacent to cricket ground



5W2 seen across 5F4



Woodland and trees at the end of Foden Lane



Stand-alone trees

Mature trees are numerous in Area 5 in hedgerows, fences, fields, domestic curtilages and along Moor Lane and Church Lane. Examples are shown in the photographs below. There are three free standing old oaks, 5S1, 5S2 and 5S3 in field 5F5. Two old oaks, 5S4 and 5S5, stand in 5F11.

Oak tree 5S3 in 5F5



Oaks 5S4 and 5S5 in 5F11



Satellite image showing location of stand-alone trees



Trees in gardens along Moor Lane



Oak trees in grass verge on Church Lane



Oak tree in pavement in Moor Lane



Base of oak tree in 5H6



Oak in 5H6



Oak 5S5 in 5F11



Oak by 8HGB (see area 7)



Very tall trees in fence line around woodland 5W2

5H23

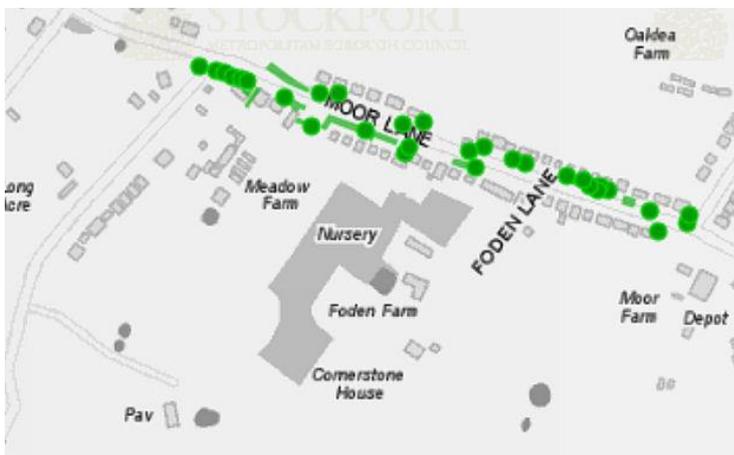


5H24



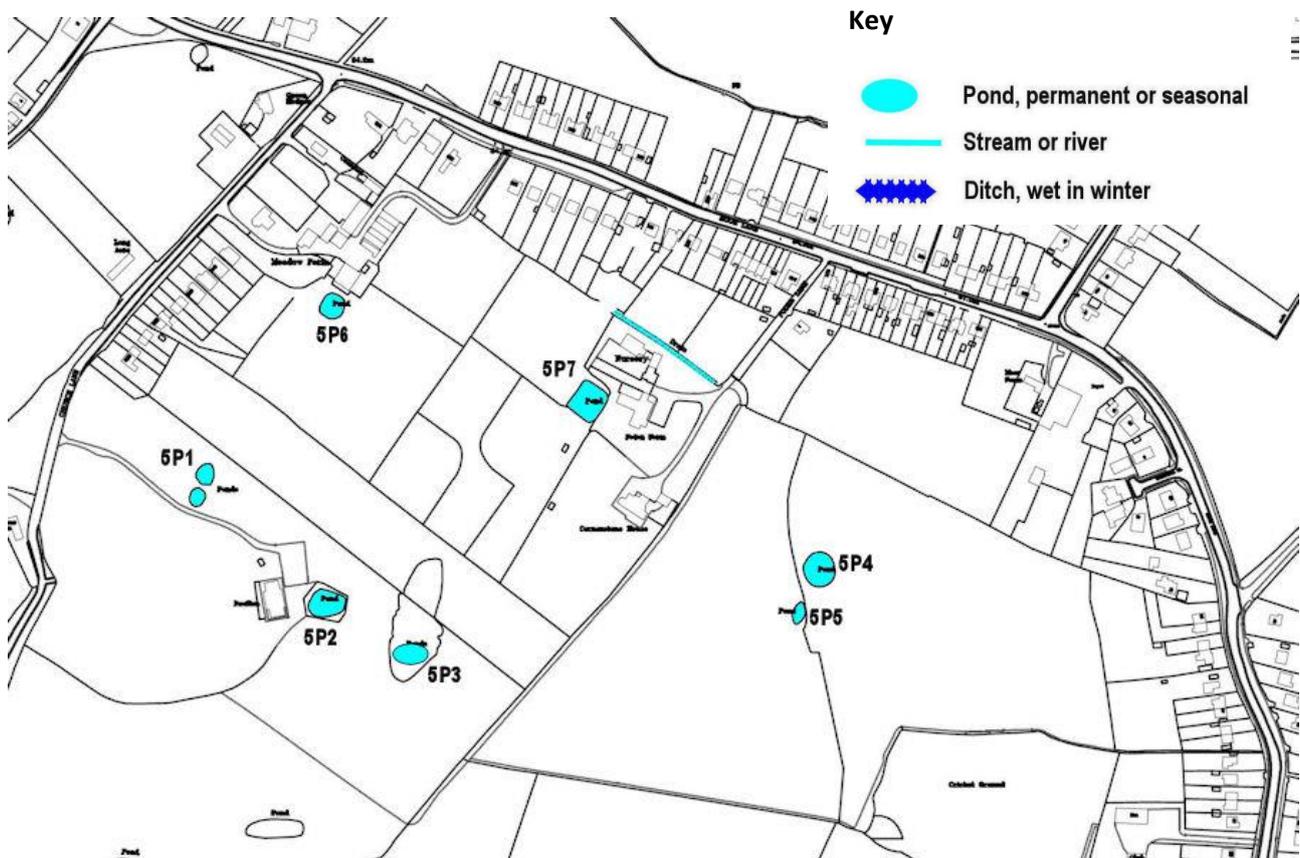
Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

There are many trees with TPOs in Area 5 along Moor Lane.



Ponds, streams and ditches

Map of ponds, streams and ditches in Area 5



There are seven ponds in Area 5. 5P1 is surrounded by a small dense wood, 5W1, adjacent to Bramhall Cricket Club drive. A dragon fly was observed nearby in September. 5P2 is in the field, 5F3, behind the cricket club ground. It is fairly open with some scrub including elder, alder, hawthorn and briar. There are a few bulrushes and a patch of water lilies. A heron, mallard and coots are frequently sighted here. 5P3 is a seasonal flood in an area of marshy ground in 5F3. Gulls are frequent visitors and a swan has been spotted here. 5P4 is in field 5F13. It is fairly open with willow scrub and bulrushes. 5P5 is a very small pond adjacent to hedge 5H5 between 5F12 and 5F13. 5P6 and 5P7 were not surveyed.

5P2 in 5F3 behind cricket ground



Seasonal pond 5P3 with swan



5P4



Grass verges and field boundaries

There are sections of mown grass verge along Moor Lane and a short section around the entrance to the cricket club on Church Lane in this area. Field boundaries support rough grass and some native herbaceous species.

Figwort in fence around 5F10



Wildlife sightings

Birds observed in Area 5 include crow, pigeon, gulls, mallard, coot, magpie, heron and buzzard.

Several species of butterfly were observed in 5H2 in Foden Lane in September 2017, including comma and red admiral.

Red admiral in 5H2



Comma butterfly in 5H2



Heron in 5F3



Mallard on 5P2



Invasive or undesirable species

None observed.

North West Woodford, Area 6
(surveyed September 2015)



Area 6 is in the north west of the Neighbourhood Area, lying between Hall Moss Lane, the road to Total Fitness and part of Church Lane, as shown in OS and satellite images below, bounded by the turquoise line. Blossoms Lane and two footpaths, 28CG and 11CG, cross the area.



Land use

Area 6 is largely agricultural land belonging to local farms and landowners, including Threeways Farm and Barr Green Farm. There is also agricultural land behind Andertons' nursery and land belonging to the properties on Blossoms Lane and Moorfield Livery Stables. It is all improved grassland, either used for grazing for horses, sheep or cattle and/or for hay, haylage or silage crops in the summer, apart from one small unmown, un-grazed area in 6F5 and a small area of mixed woodland (6W1). The area is prone to flooding in wet weather.

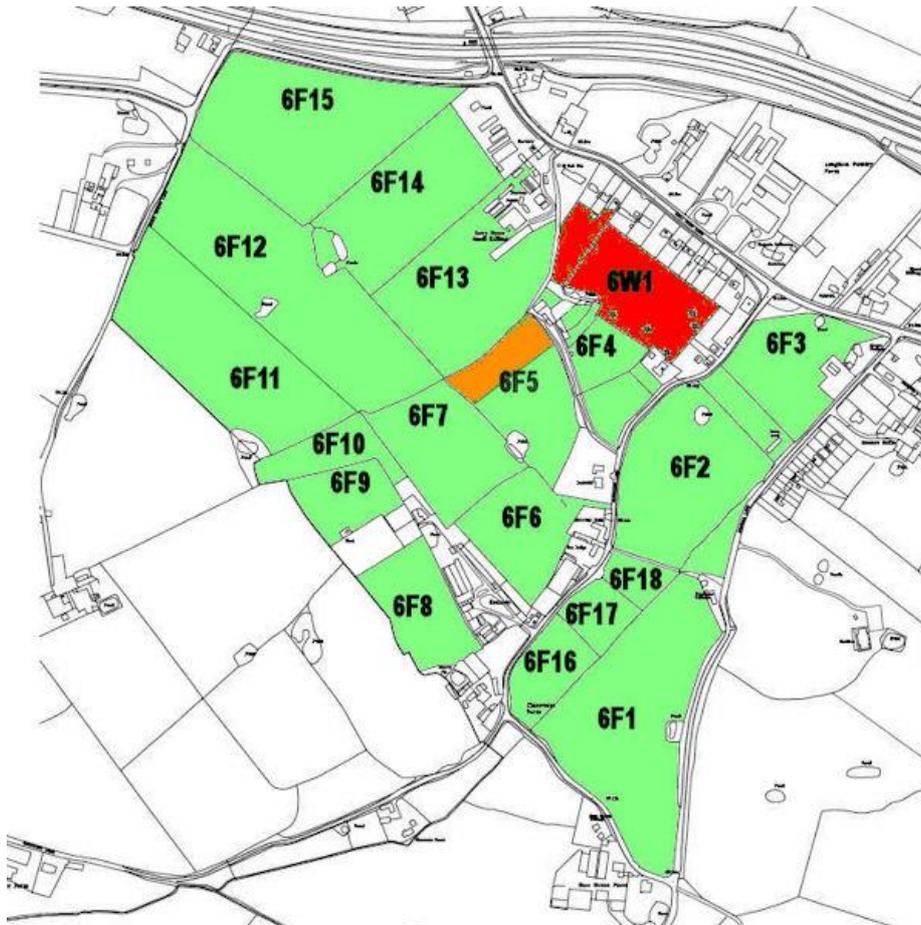
Hay bales in 6F13



Hay making in 6F1



Map showing land use in Area 6



- Improved grassland
- Unmown grassland
- Woodland (deciduous)

Footpath 28CG



6F16, used for horse grazing



Sheep grazing in 6F1



While the farmland between Blossoms Lane and the road to Total Fitness is enclosed by tall hedges, the land between Blossoms Lane and Church Lane is very open, allowing wonderful views across Area 6 and Area 7 to the Pennines, including views of Kinder Scout, Lyme Park and the White Nancy in Bollington. Church Lane and Blossoms Lane attract many recreational users on summer evenings and at weekends.

Views across Area 6 and 7 to White Nancy



and to Kinder Scout



Hedgerows

There are numerous native hedges in the area. Some around the lanes are trimmed short but others, especially field boundaries, are left to grow tall (over 4 metres). A common feature of the hedgerows and field boundaries is the presence of large trees with abundant oaks and occasional ash, poplar and sycamore.

Numerous species rich hedgerows (4 or more species in a 30 m stretch) have been identified, notably those bordering Church Lane and Blossoms Lane and those bordering 6F13 and footpath 28CG. The species rich hedges are 6H1, 6H2, 6H3, 6H4, 6H6, 6H8, 6H12, 6H15, 6H25, 6H26, and 6H27, as shown on the map. 6H1a, 6H2a and 6H3a are particularly rich with 8 -12 species per 30 m. Many others have 6 – 8 species per 30 m.

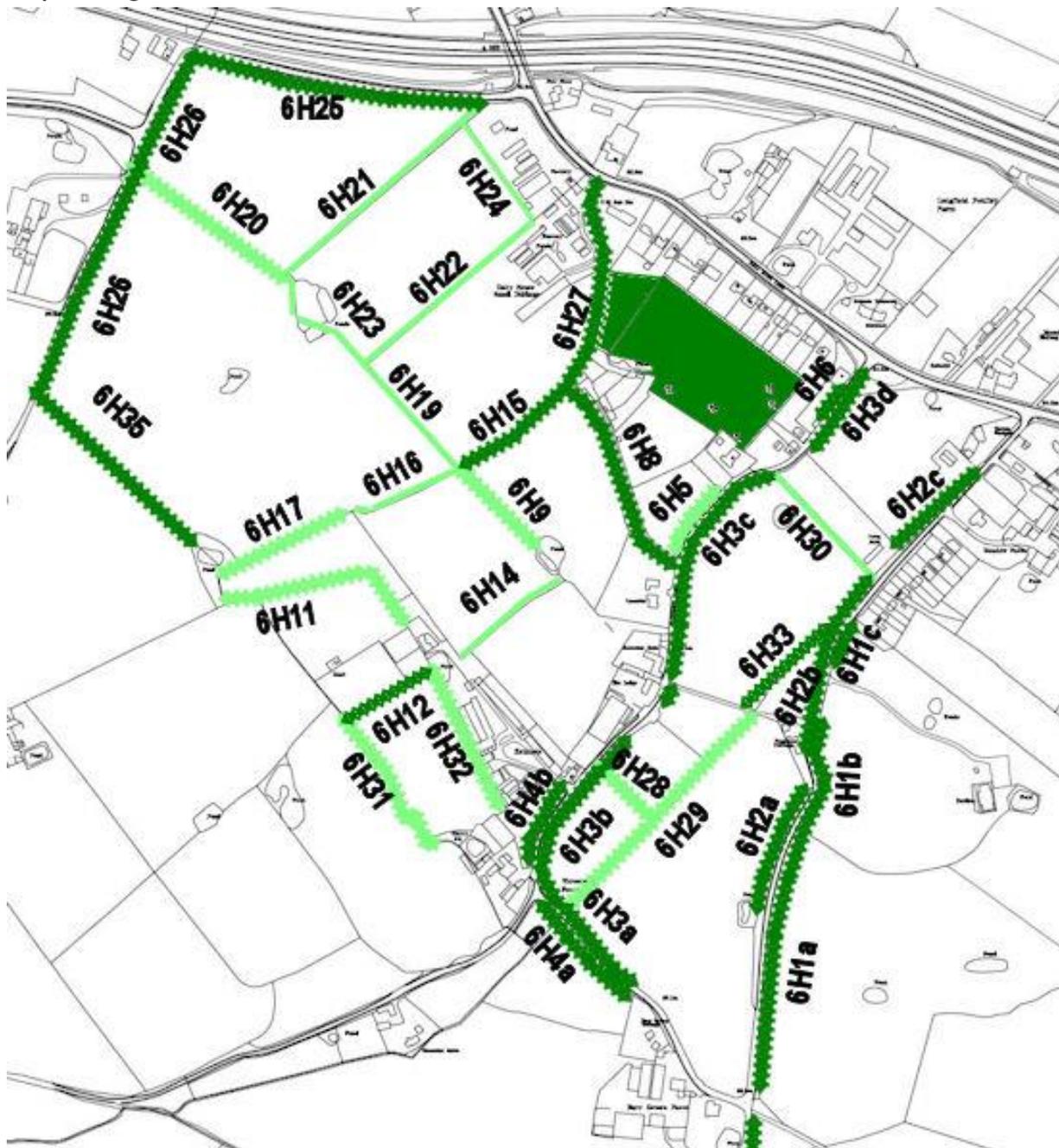
Species found in the hedgerows in Area 6 include ash, birch, blackthorn, briar, chestnut, crab apple, elder, willow, hawthorn, hazel, holly, ivy, maple, oak, rowan, sycamore, yew, and spindle. Hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, hazel and oak are the most abundant species.

Example of species rich hedgerow

Elder, sycamore, holly, hazel, oak in 30 metre stretch of H3



Map of hedgerows in Area 6



-  Species rich hedge
-  Species rich hedge with trees.
-  Species poor hedge
-  Species poor hedge with trees

Kestrel in 6H4a



Examples of hedgerows and field boundaries with large trees

6H15 behind Andertons Nursery



6H1a and 6H2a with mature oaks along Church Lane



Oak trees in 6H1b and 6H2a



6H27 behind Andertons Nursery



Woodland

6W1 viewed across 6F4



Area 6 includes a single patch (approx. 3 acres) of mixed deciduous woodland 6W1 including willow, oak, ash, hawthorn and birch. This is on land behind the houses on Blossoms Lane and was viewed from across a field.

Ponds and ditches

Area 6 has 12 ponds. Some are seasonal floods, including 6P2, 6P8 and 6P9. Those surveyed were eutrophic (contained algae) with a mud substrate. 6P1 is in a field of short grass grazed by horses with a few stunted willows. Dragonflies are found here in the summer. A heron is a frequent sighting here and a kingfisher has been seen. Other bird sightings reported at this pond and in the near vicinity are shown in the table below.

Barn Owl	Jackdaw	Rook
Blackbird	Jay	Siskin
Black-headed Gull	Kestrel	Snipe
Blue Tit	Kingfisher	Song Thrush
Buzzard	Lapwing	Sparrow hawk
Canada Goose	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Starling
Common Gull	Little Owl	Stock Dove
Crow	Magpie	Swallow
Fieldfare	Mallard	Swift
Goldfinch	Mistle Thrush	Tawny Owl
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Moorhen	Teal
Great Tit	Pheasant	Tree Creeper
Green Woodpecker	Pied Wagtail	Wood Pigeon
Grey Heron	Raven	Wren
Herring Gull	Redwing	
House Sparrow	Robin	

Other ponds in Area 6 are variously surrounded by rough grass, willows and bull rushes. 6P3 may be of interest as it is in a small area of unmown, un-grazed grassland which the owners have allowed to naturalise. It contains many bulrushes. 6P2 is now owned by the same people and the field has not been grazed recently. The pond is surrounded by rough grass and sedges. 6P6 and 6P7 were not surveyed. 6P8 has been filled in and now only contains water in very wet weather. 6P9 was dry at the time of survey.

6P1 (heron and kingfisher sightings)



6P3 with grasses, sedges and bulrushes



6P4 in 6F6



6P2 seasonal pond with 6W1 behind



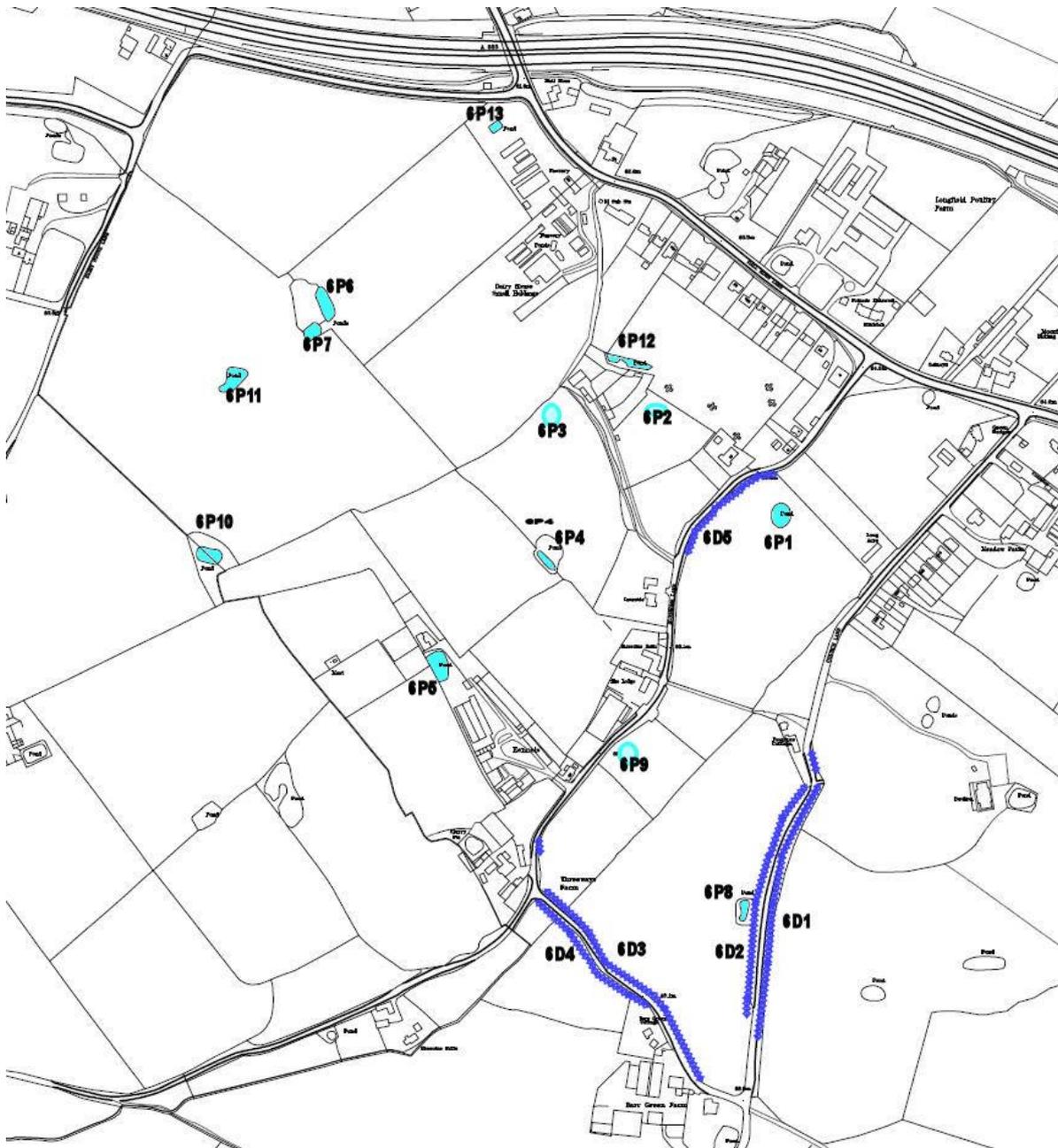
Seasonal pond 6P9 in F17, trees in 6H29



Seasonal flood in 6D2 and 6P8



Map of ponds and ditches in Area 6



Pond



Ditch

Key



Ditch and Verge with cow parsley, Blossoms Lane

Grass verges and field boundaries

Grass verges on Church Lane are mown short in places by the landowner, but inaccessible parts and all the verges along Blossoms Lane are allowed to grow tall over the summer with a variety of grass species and yellow flag irises present. Nettles, goose-grass, willow herb, brambles and convolvulus also grow prolifically here. There are two areas of grass verge at the junction of Blossoms Lane and Moor Lane, mown by the council.

Deep ditches run parallel to parts of Church Lane and Blossoms Lane. These are water filled in winter but dry in summer. The steep banks between the ditches and the base of the hedges here have wild-flowers in summer, including bluebells, stitchwort, meadow sweet, mallow and foxgloves.

Ditch 6D1 and verge with bluebells along 6H1



Yellow iris and foxgloves in ditch 6D3 along Blossoms Lane



Map of grass verges in Area 6



The area was surveyed in the autumn when grasses and wild flowers had largely died back. Some of the field margins in this area are likely to be rich in these species when surveyed in the late spring and summer.

Verges, hedge bases and ditches

-  Grass verge mown
-  Grass verge, hedge base, ditch with wildflowers in summer

Stitchwort in base of 6H3



Stand-alone trees

Most of the large trees are to be found in hedgerows and field boundaries. Their locations can be seen easily on satellite image below. Oak is abundant. 59 mature oaks were counted bordering sections of Church Lane, Blossoms Lane and Hall Moss Lane within Area 6. There are also large specimens of ash, poplar, birch and sycamore.

A particularly large oak specimen (6S1) is located in 6H3 on Blossoms Lane opposite Barr Green Cottage – referred to in this report as the Barr Green Oak. It has a trunk circumference of 510 cm (nearly 17ft) at chest

height which, according to a formula provided by the Woodland Trust, means that it is between 200 and 400 years old, depending on how favourable growth conditions were. As well as providing an excellent habitat, this tree has historical significance. At the oldest estimate this tree would have germinated in 1616 and at the youngest (if conditions are very favourable here) in 1815.

A more accurate measure of the age of a tree can be obtained by counting the annual rings in a cut stump. In order to obtain a measure of growth conditions in this immediate locality, the annual rings and circumference were measured for an oak tree which was felled a few years ago nearby in Area 7, occupying a very similar position to the Barr Green Oak in a bank in a fence line. The circumference of this felled tree was approx. 300 cm and there were approx. 200 annual rings. This indicates that this tree was around 200 years old when felled and had an average growth rate of 1.5 cm per year.

If the Barr Green Oak grew at the same average rate, it will be 330 years old and would have germinated in 1686 when James I was on the throne in Britain. Whatever the precise age there will have been many significant historical milestones in its lifetime.

6S1, the Barr Green Oak in autumn



6S1 trunk circumference nearly 17ft



Assessment of local growth rate using circumference and annual rings of a felled oak



While the Barr Green Oak may be one of the largest in Woodford, there are many mature trees, predominantly oaks, in Area 6, contributing significantly to the character of the landscape. On the basis of the measures taken above, many will be at least 200 years old.

Satellite image showing some of the mature trees along the lanes



All the trees numbered are oaks except 6S16, 6S26 and 6S38 which are sycamores and 6S56 which is an ash. There are many more mature trees in hedgerows bounding the fields, as can be seen in the satellite image above and the photographs below.

6S3 and 6S4, Church Lane



6S7 to 6S15, Church Lane



6S17 and 6S18, Church Lane



6S57 to 6S61, Blossoms Lane



6S34 to 6S37, Hallmoss Lane



6H26, road to Total Fitness



The road to Total Fitness forms part of the northern western boundary of the Neighbourhood Area. This is bounded by a species rich hedgerow, 6H26, including some ash, birch and crab apple trees which have been allowed to grow tall.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

The map below is taken from the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council website and shows TPOs as green dots (6S30, oak at the junction of Church Lane and Blossoms Lane) and Tree Preservation Area Orders (6W1) as green blocks.



Invasive or undesirable species

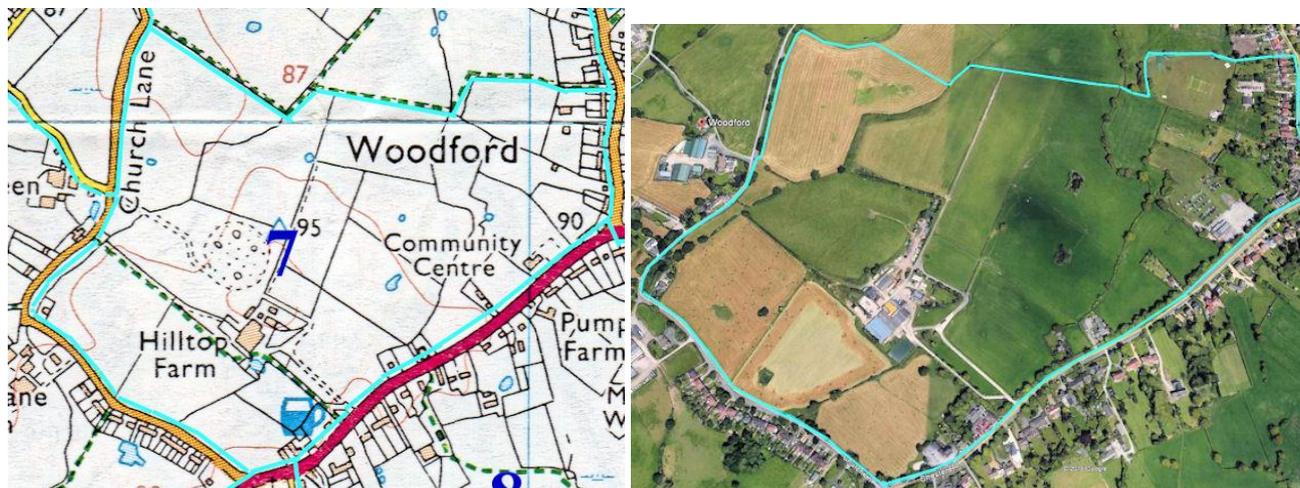
Snow berry (non-native and poisonous) is present in the hedge on Blossoms Lane.

Central Woodford, Area 7

(Surveyed October 2015)



This area is in the centre of the Neighbourhood Area, lying between the southern and central sections of Church Lane, Chester Road, the first part of Moor Lane and footpath 8HGB as shown in OS and satellite images below, bounded by a turquoise line. Footpath 7HGB crosses the area from Church Lane to Chester Road.



Land use

Area 7 includes agricultural land belonging to Barr Green Farm and Hill Top Farm, and recreational land belonging to the Woodford War Memorial Community Centre, Woodford Cricket Club and the Royal British Legion.

The farmland is mostly improved grassland, used for grazing for sheep and cattle and/or for hay, haylage or silage crops in the summer, but also includes some arable land (7F7) which appeared to have been sprayed with a total herbicide at the time of survey in October 2015.

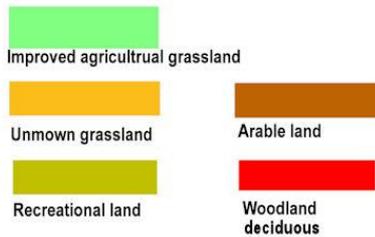
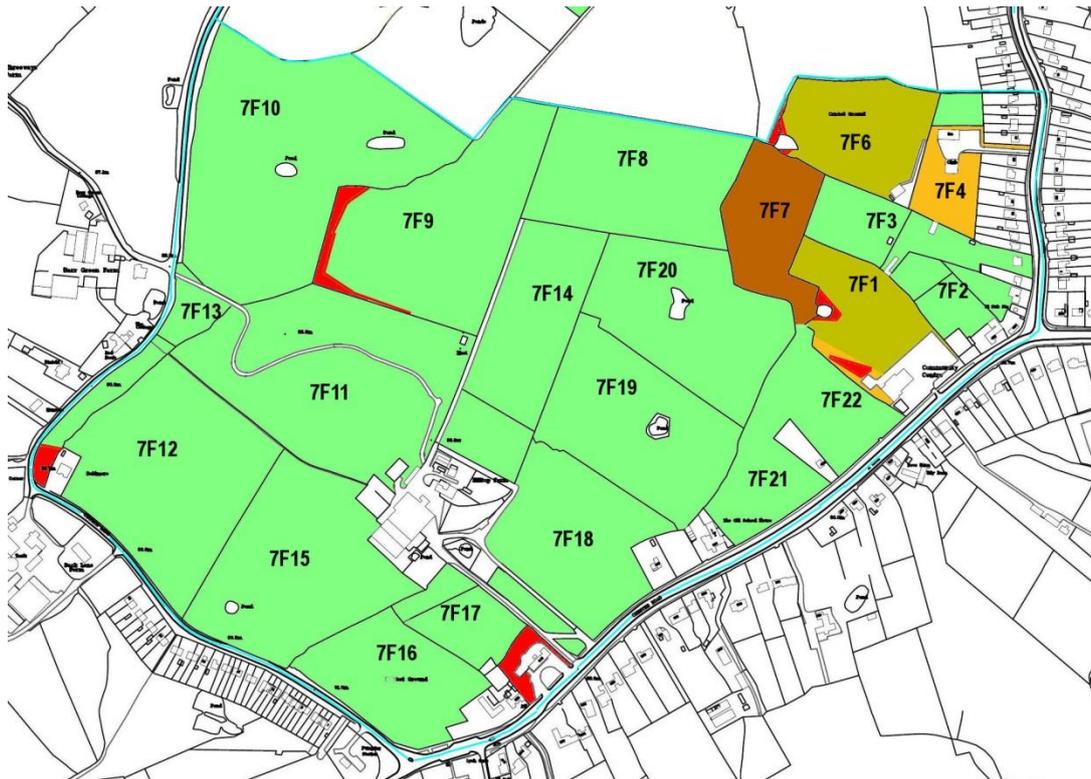
The 4 acre plot (7F1) belonging to Woodford War Memorial Community Centre includes a field of unimproved but regularly mown grassland used for recreation and a seasonal pond within a small area of deciduous native woodland. There is an area of unmown marshy grassland and a small copse of recently planted trees. The plot is bordered by species rich, native hedgerows.

Woodford Cricket Club ground (7F6) falls within this area. The cricket field is regularly mown and is surrounded by species rich native hedgerows. There is a pond surrounded by trees in the western corner.

Property belonging to the Royal British Legion, including a plot of unmown grassland (7F4), and the Scouts are also in Area 7 adjacent to Woodford Cricket Club.

Area 7 is very open with treasured views of the Pennines from many locations, notably Church Lane, footpaths 7HGB and 8HGB fields 7F9 and 7F10. The high point of Woodford falls into this area and there is a trig point at 95 metres above sea level at Hill Top Farm.

Map showing land use



7F13



7F10 with sheep grazing, 7W, Pennines in background



F9 with cattle grazing, Lyme Park in background



7F7 arable (after crop harvest)



7F10 grass grown for hay in summer



7F1 Woodford Community Centre field



7F1 copse with native saplings and unmown grass



7F6 Woodford Cricket Club



7F4 unmown grass behind Royal British Legion

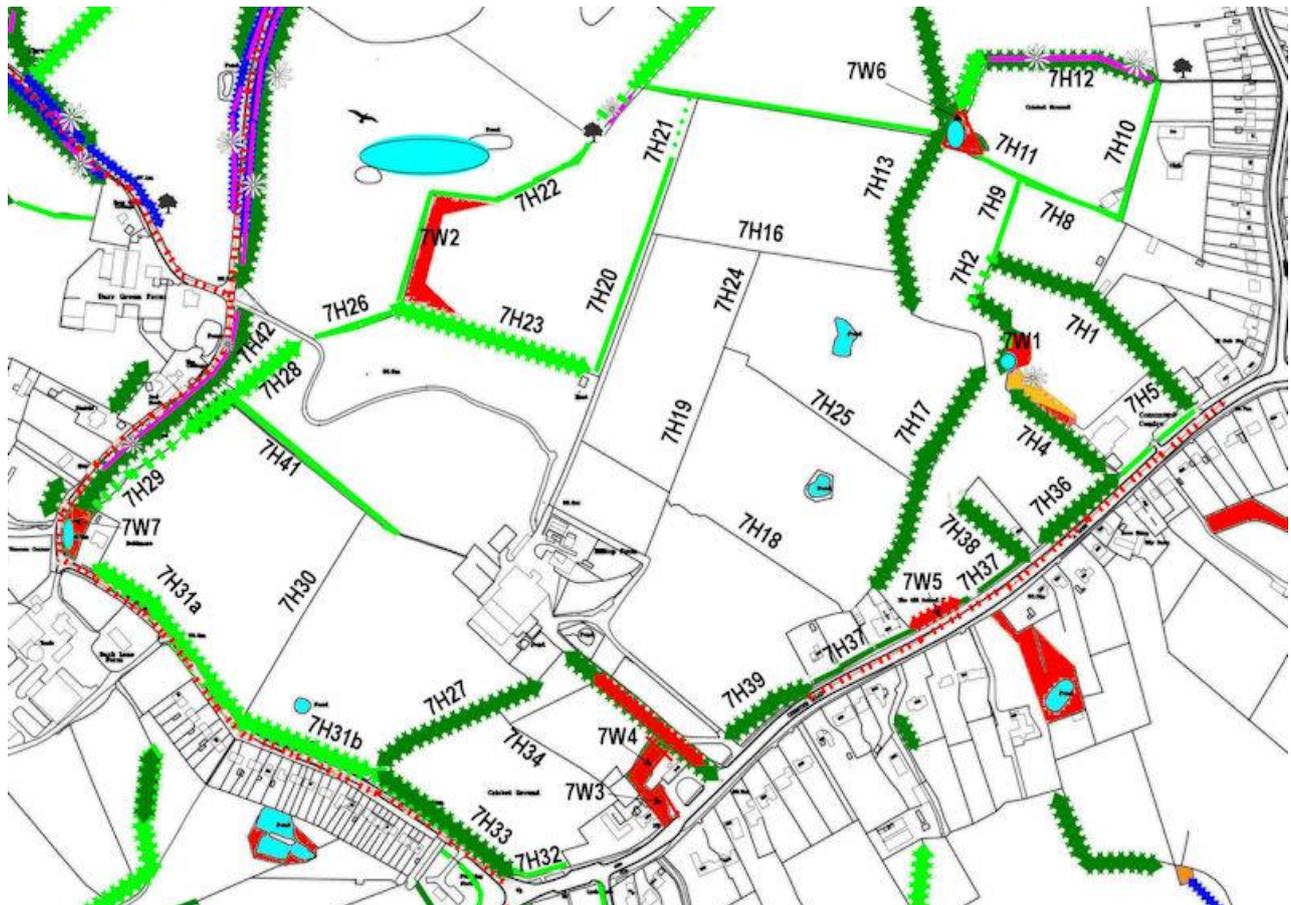


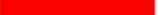
Hedgerows

There are numerous native hedges in Area 7. Some are species poor and predominantly hawthorn. Others are species rich with 4 or more native species per 30 metres as marked on the map. Notably species rich hedgerows with 8 to 10 different species in 30 metres were found at Community Centre field (7H1-3), at

Woodford Cricket Club ground (7H12) and bordering a section of Church Lane opposite Redroofs (7H43). The native species found include ash, blackthorn, briar, elder, hawthorn, hazel, holly, horse chestnut, ivy, maple, oak, rowan, sycamore and willow. Some are trimmed short (1.5 m) but others have been left to grow tall (from 2 - 4 metres). Several field boundaries marked on the OS map at Hill Top Farm were no longer boundaries on the ground.

Map showing native hedgerows and woodland



-  Species rich hedge
-  Species rich hedge with trees.
-  Species poor hedge
-  Species poor hedge with trees
-  Line of trees
-  Native deciduous woodland



Burrow in base of 7H22

Holly, elder, hawthorn, oak in 7H43



7H28



Mature trees

A common feature of the hedgerows and field boundaries is the presence of large trees with abundant oak and some sycamore and ash. As well as providing excellent habitats, these mature trees contribute to the characteristic landscape in Woodford, particularly where they border Church Lane and Chester Road.

7H9 with oak trees



7H31 with oak trees



Typical oak tree in boundary between 7F24 and 7F29



7H42 with mature trees



Woodland

Area 7 contains a few small fragments of native woodland, including small areas at the Community Centre (7W1), the cricket ground, adjacent to Chester Road (7W4 and 7W5) and adjacent to Church Lane (7W7). Species include alder, ash, birch, blackthorn, elder, hawthorn, maple, oak, sycamore, willow and yew. There are two areas of recently planted native woodland. A small copse of saplings (7W3) donated by the Woodland Trust and planted by volunteers on the Community Centre field 7F1, includes hazel, birch, cherry, alder, dogwood and rowan. A larger copse (7W2) on land at Hill Top Farm at the boundary of 7F9 and 7F10 includes ash, alder, birch, elder, and rowan.

7W1 at Community Centre



7W2 at in 7F9 Hill Top Farm



Ponds and ditches

Area 7 has 8 ponds. Two of these are seasonal (7P1 at the back of the Community Centre field and 7P5 in 7F10 in Barr Green Farm) and one was a dry grassy hollow at the time of survey in October (7P6 at Hill Top Farm). All are on a mud substrate.

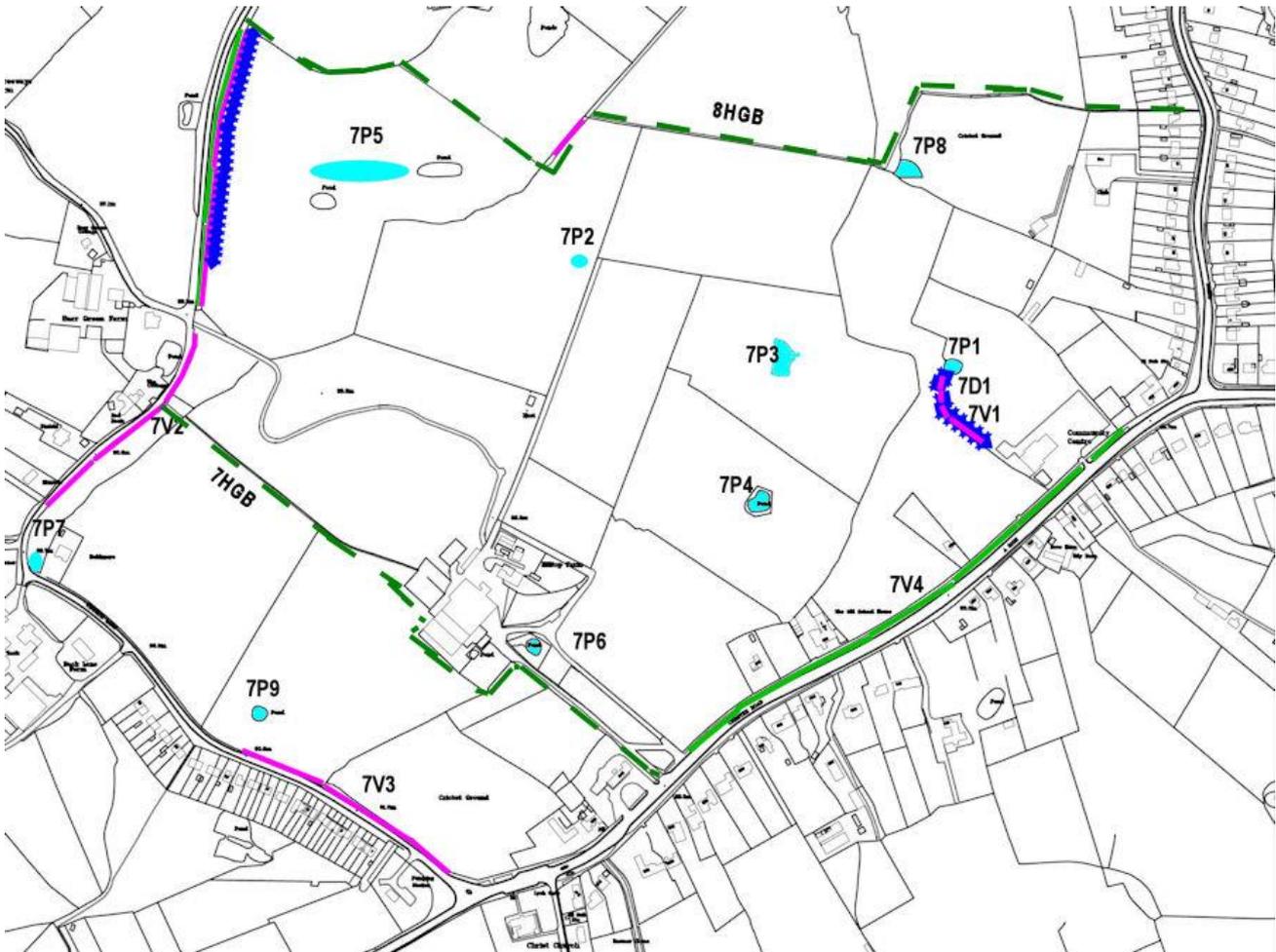
7P1 is seasonal and in a small area of native woodland (7W1). 7P2 was missing. 7P3 is fenced and surrounded by scrub. 7P4 was not visited. 7P5 is a large seasonal flood in grazed grassland. 7P6 was a dry grassy hollow. 7P7 is a shallow pond overgrown with willow scrub in the corner of 7F12 on a sharp bend in Church Lane. 7P8 is surrounded by mature native trees at the back of Woodford Cricket Club (7F6) adjacent to footpath 8HGB.

The seasonal flood, 7P5, is of particular value for birds and sightings on the flood water or the near vicinity reported on the Manchester Birding Forum by bird watchers over the past two years are shown in the table below (<http://www.manchesterbirding.activeboard.com/t34463332/woodford-area/>).

Black Headed Gull	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Pied Wagtail	Skylark
Blackbird	Greenshank	Little Owl	Pink Footed Goose	Song Thrush
Buzzard	Grey Heron	Little Ringed Plover	Pintail	Sparrowhawk
Canada Geese	Greylag Geese	Magpie	Raven	Starling
Collard Dove	Herring Gull	Mallard	Redshank	Stock Dove
Common Gull	Hobby	Meadow Pipit	Redstart	Swallow

Curlew	House Sparrow	Mistle Thrush	Redwing	Swan
Dunlin	Jackdaw	Oystercatcher	Robin	Teal
Fieldfare	Jay	Peregrine	Rook	Wigeon
Goldfinch	Kestrel	Pheasant	Shelduck	Willow Warbler

Map showing ponds, ditches and verges



Verges, hedge bases and ditches

-  Grass verge mown
-  Grass verge, hedge base, ditch with wildflowers in summer
-  Ditches, dry in summer, wet in winter
-  Pond

Swans on 7P5



7P5 seasonal flood attracting birds



7P1 seasonal pond in 7W1 at Community Centre



7P7 pond surrounded by willow scrub



7P3 fenced off in field 7F20



A deep ditch runs along the southern boundary of 7F1 (community centre field) leading to pond 7P1 which flows out into a drain in 7F7. The ditch is water filled in winter but dry in summer with wild-flowers in summer, including red campion, stitchwort, meadow sweet, ladies smock and foxgloves.

Grass verges and field boundaries

The wide grass verges along Chester Road with an overhanging canopy of Chestnut trees are a notable feature of the built landscape. These trees have recently been found by an SMBC arboriculture expert to be affected by Chestnut canker disease but treatment may be possible. SMBC have offered replacement with other native species planted in the grass verge in the event of loss. The grass verges are mown by SMBC. They are likely to be unsuitable for wildflowers due the presence of perennial weeds, as was seen when they were left unmown for a period of several weeks during the spring of 2015 resulting in large numbers of dandelions going up to seed.

There is a grass verge at the southern end of Church Lane with some native wild flowers in the spring and summer. Unfortunately, garden escapes such as the Spanish bluebell also proliferate here.

Wide grass verge in Chester Road



Hedge and verge southern end of Church Lane



Stand-alone trees

These are very rare in Area 7. Most of the large trees are to be found in hedgerows and field boundaries.



Some of the larger trees have been given a number and marked on the satellite image. All those labelled are oaks, apart from S11 and S12 which are ash and sycamore, respectively. One notable old oak tree with a TPO grows beside the board walk section of footpath 8HGB near to Moor Lane (7S14).

There are two stumps of felled trees in Area 7. In one of these, the annual rings are clearly visible. Age can be calculated as there is one ring per year of growth. There are approx. 200 rings giving an age of 200 years. There are many living trees with similar or greater circumference in the area indicating that they are at least this age or older

7S7 Large oak at Cricket Club



7S1 Large oak in 7F9



7S3 in boundary between 7F10 and 7F11



7S9 in 7H43



Cut down tree in fence around 7F14



Close-up of annual rings in tree stump



Invasive or undesirable species

- Spanish bluebell (invasive) in the grass verge 7V3 at the southern end of Church Lane.
- Snowberry (poisonous) found in 7H11.
- Ragwort (poisonous to horses) is quite common.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

The map below is taken from the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council website and shows TPOs as green dots (7S14, very old oak tree in board walk section of footpath 8HGB near Moor Lane) and Tree Preservation Area Orders (7W4, copse behind the car sales forecourt on Chester Road) as green blocks.



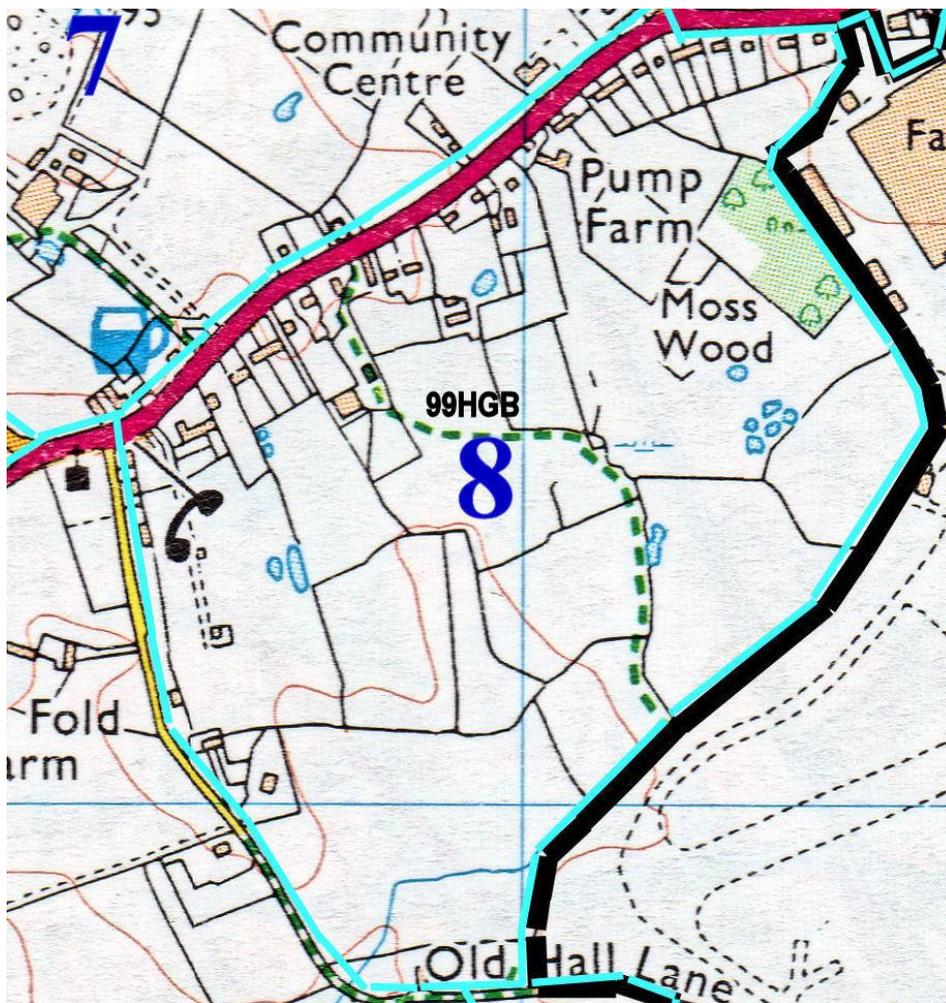
7S14 (very old oak tree) by footpath 8HGB

South Woodford, Area 8

(surveyed in November 2015, May 2016 and August 2016)



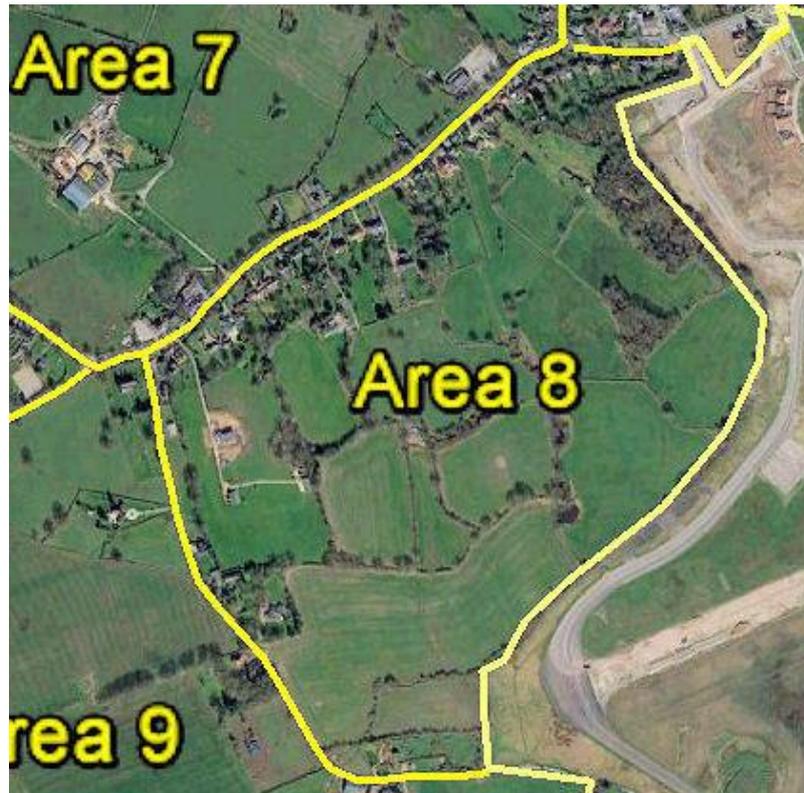
Area 8 forms the south east of the Neighbourhood Area, lying between Old Hall Lane, Chester Road and the former aerodrome site, as shown in the satellite image above and the OS image below, bounded by the turquoise line. Large houses with large gardens line the eastern side of Chester Road and back on to agricultural land. There is an area of mixed deciduous woodland on the northern border with the former aerodrome site. Footpath 99HGB crosses the area and stops at the boundary of the aerodrome site. The conditions associated with the planning permission of the aerodrome site state that footpaths, such as this one, which were truncated by the BAE site, will be reconnected.



View over 8F8 to Croker Hill from footpath 99HGB View to Pennines from Old Hall Lane over 8F20



Satellite image showing Area 8 adjacent to aerodrome site with new housing development



Land use

Area 8 is largely agricultural land, belonging to landowners on Chester Road. The majority of the land is improved grassland. At the time of the surveys, no grazing animals were observed and some fields appeared to have been cleared with total herbicide in autumn, and then re-sown with grass for the following summer. There are areas of woodland adjacent to the part of the former aerodrome site, which is near Chester Road and patches of woodland around ponds. Many fields are divided by tall native hedgerows, which are very frequent and luxuriant in this area, containing numerous mature trees. The area is wet with numerous ponds. The land slopes gently down to the aerodrome site with ditches/streams that run in that direction towards a ditch/stream at the eastern border. 8F11 and 8F23 were not accessed, but hedges and trees were viewed from the adjacent fields using binoculars and using satellite imagery.

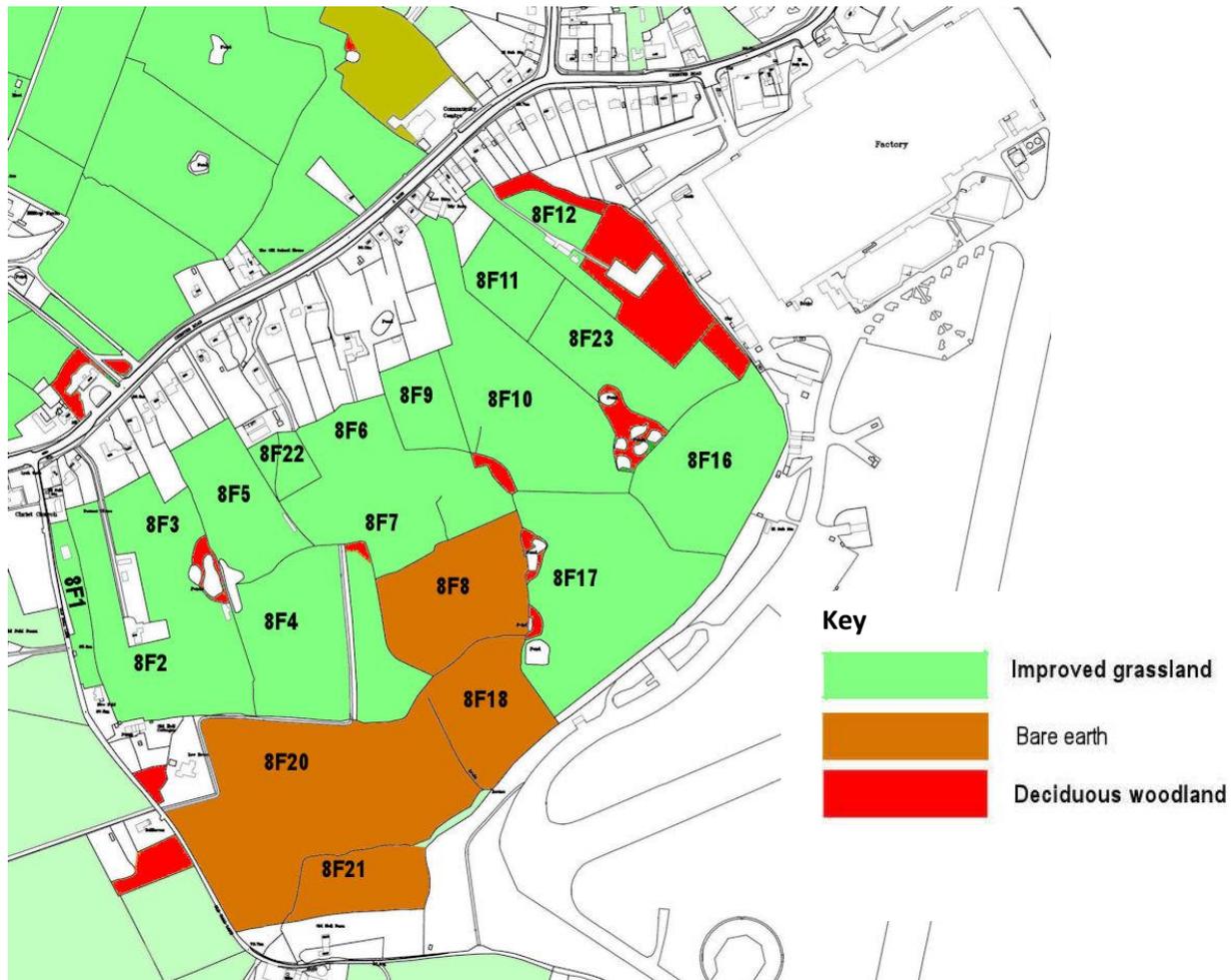
Grassland in 8F17



Bare field 8F18 in autumn



Map showing land use in Area 8



Hedgerows

Species-rich hedgerows are frequent, many with mature trees, and are a notable feature of this area. They include 8H1 and 8H19 plus the following, which are species-rich with trees: 8H3, 8H5, 8H10, 8H11, 8H16, 8H21, 8H23, 8H24, 8H25, 8H26, 8H28, 8H35, 8H39, 8H40, 8H48, 8H64, 8H66, 8H67, 8H68, 8H69, 8H72. Species found here include alder, ash, aspen, blackthorn, briar, elder, hawthorn, hazel, holly, hornbeam, ivy, maple, oak, plum, sycamore and willow.

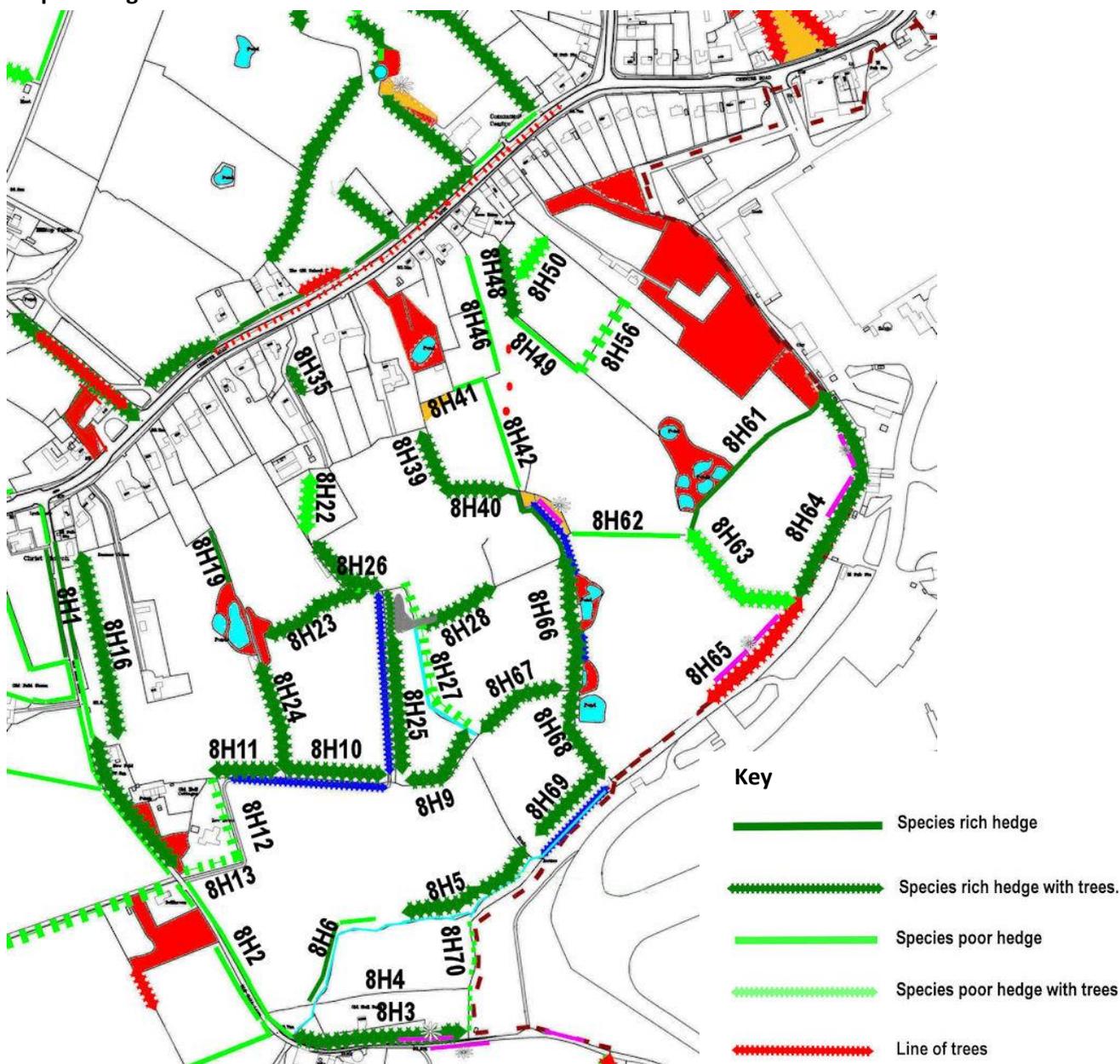
8F7 and 8H26



8F7 and 8H39 and 8H40



Map of hedgerows in Area 8



8H23 from 8F4



8F4 and 8H10



8H11 from 8F2



8H66 from 8F8



8H1 bordering Old Hall Lane



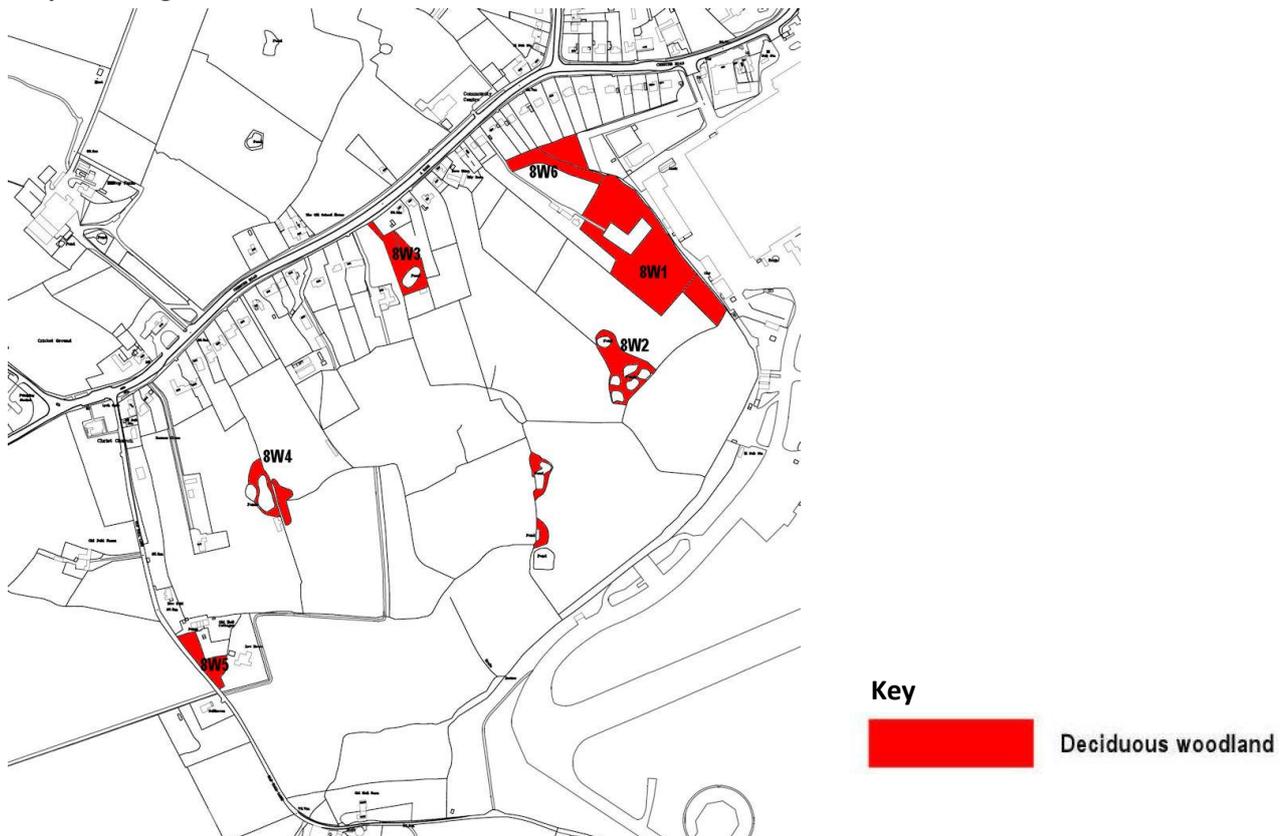
8H5 at aerodrome perimeter from 8F20



Woodland

There are small areas of mixed deciduous woodland in area 8. 8W1 is the largest of these is adjacent to the eastern border with the former aerodrome site, and includes birch, hawthorn, holly, oak and conifers. 8W6 is an area of trees/woodland in the north eastern corner of the site behind the curtilages of houses on Chester Road adjacent to the aerodrome site. The owner of one these houses permitted access. The survey revealed that the trees include elder, hawthorn, holly, ivy and oak. 8W2, 8W3, and 8W4 are small fragments of mixed deciduous woodland surrounding ponds between fields. Species found here include alder, ash, briar, chestnut, elder, holly, maple, oak, rowan, scots pine and willow. 8W5 is within the curtilage of the Old Hall Barn on Old Hall Lane and includes lime and willow.

Map showing woodland in Area 8



8W1



8W2 from 8F9



8W5 from 8F20



8W1



Stand-alone trees

Mature trees are mostly found in the hedgerows. There are very few which stand alone. Mature trees are also found in the pavement on the eastern side of Chester Road, including oak, copper beech and lime.

Satellite image showing stand-alone trees



Oak trees S1 and S2 on footpath 99HGB in 8F7



Memorial to a pet on one of these trees



Copper beech tree in grass verge by Chester Road



Birch tree in grass verge by Chester Road



Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

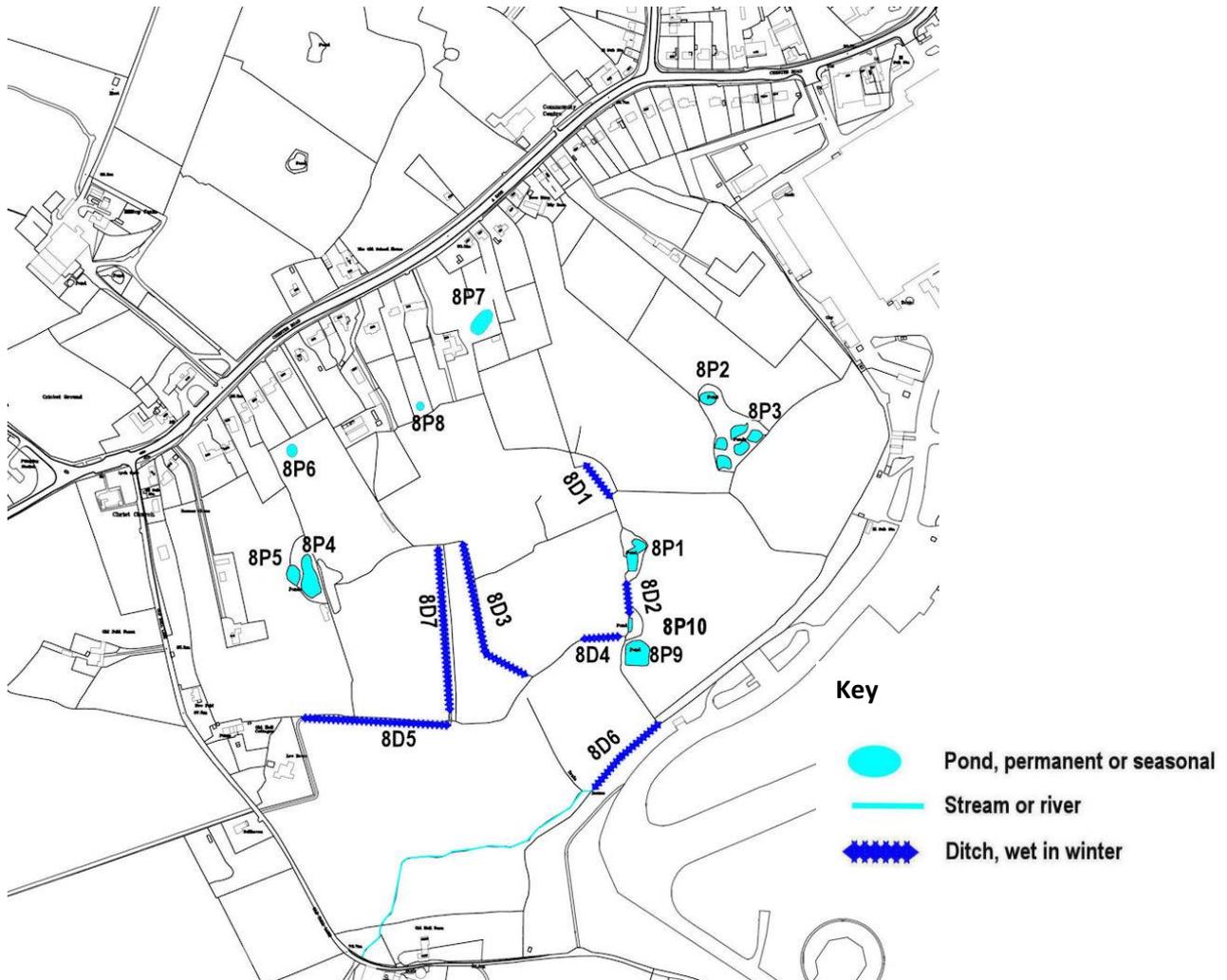
There is one TPO in area 8 as shown below:



Ponds, streams and ditches

There are ten ponds and at least seven ditches/streams in Area 8, which will provide good wildlife habitats. Most of these are surrounded by tall native hedges and mature trees, apart from 8P9 which is open.

Map of ponds, streams and ditches in Area 8



8P1



8P9



8P10



8P4



8P1 is surrounded by large trees and scrub, 8P5 is surrounded by trees including ash, oak, willow, hawthorn, elder. There are sedges and irises around the edges. 8P4 is within a domestic curilage.

Grass verges and field boundaries

There is a narrow mown grass verge on the eastern side of the southern end of Chester Road. At the top end of Old Hall Lane an unmown grass verge supports herbaceous species. In the verge by Old Hall Lane near the end of the former runway, white campion, cow parsley and meadow cranesbill were found in May. Some of the field boundaries had been affected by total herbicide during the autumn survey, but when surveyed again during August some of the grassland fields boundaries supported herbaceous species. Marsh woundwort was found near 8H65 at the border with the former aerodrome site. Areas where wildflowers were found are marked with a pink line on the map of hedges.

Grass verge on Old Hall Lane



Marsh woundwort near 8H65



Bird sightings

The following bird sightings in or near Area 8 have been reported.

Bullfinch	Hobby	Redwing
Chiffchaff	House Sparrow	Skylark
Collard Dove	Jay	Song Thrush
Common Buzzard	Kestrel	Sparrowhawk
Curlew	Lapwing	Starling
Fieldfare	Linnet	Swallow
Goldcrest	Mistle Thrush	Swift
Goldfinch	Nuthatch	Tree Sparrow
Green Woodpecker	Oystercatcher	Wheatear
Grey Heron	Peregrine	
Gulls various	Pied Wagtail	

Invasive or undesirable species

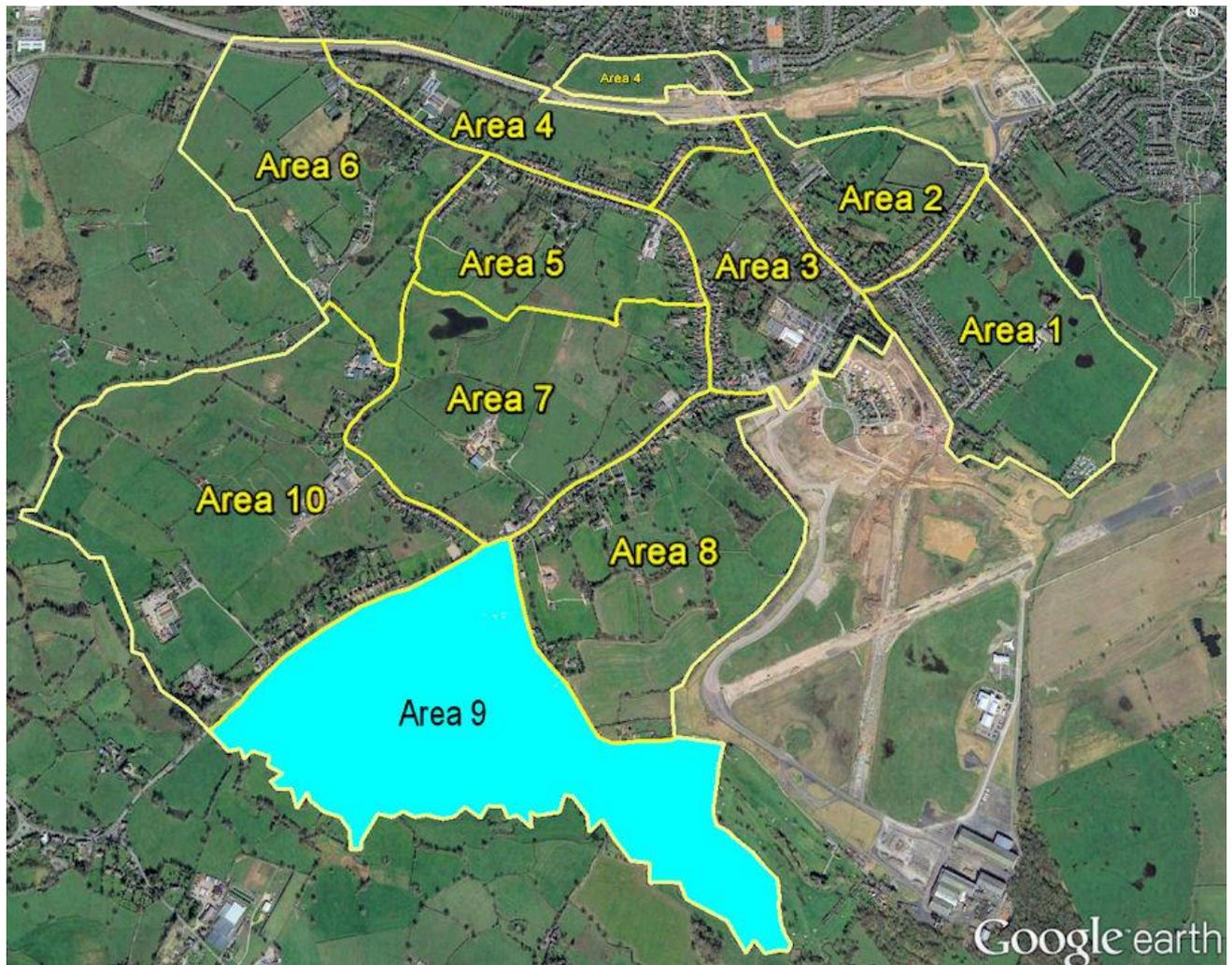
None observed.

Proximity to other areas rich in habitats for wildlife

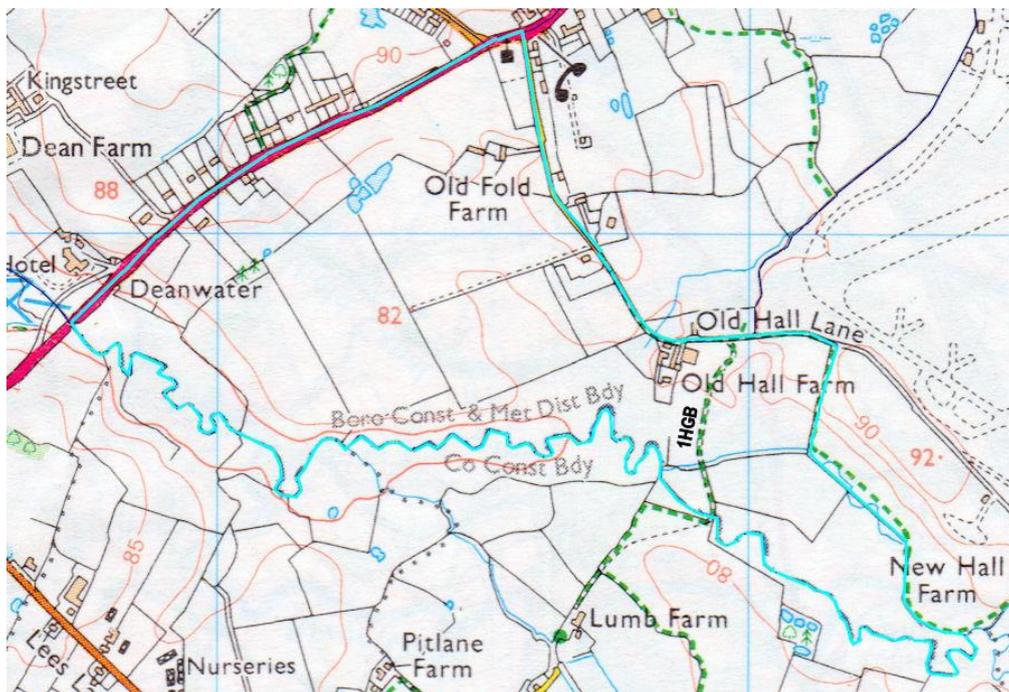
The area adjoins Area 9 and countryside in Cheshire East on the other side of Old Hall Lane, providing good connectivity with habitats outside of the neighbourhood area. It is also adjacent to the former aerodrome site, where reported bird sightings include oyster catchers, curlews and buzzards.

South Woodford, Area 9

(surveyed in May, July and August 2016)



Area 9 forms the south of the Neighbourhood Area, lying between Old Hall Lane, Wilmslow Road and the River Dean, as shown in OS and satellite images below, bounded by the turquoise line. The area is almost triangular in shape coming to a point at the Avro golf course at the bottom of Old Hall Lane. Footpath 1HGB crosses the area into Cheshire East heading to Woodford Lane in Mottram St Andrew. At the bottom of Old Hall Lane, the Avro Golf Course to the south, the former Woodford Aerodrome site to the east and New Hall Farm at the end of the road are outside the Neighbourhood Area, although part of the Parish of Woodford. The River Dean takes a meandering route through farmland and forms the southern boundary. The area adjoins countryside in Cheshire East on the other side of the River Dean, which continues in an arc as far as Wilmslow, Prestbury, Tytherington and Bollington, providing good connectivity with wildlife habitats outside of the neighbourhood area.



View from Wilmslow Road over 9F2 to Pennines



Trees along Wilmslow Road in autumn





The River Dean forms the border between the Woodford Neighbourhood Area and Cheshire East. Mature trees in grass verges, pavements, fields and gardens create a leafy arrival into Woodford.

Arrival into Woodford along Wilmslow Road



The border with Cheshire East on Wilmslow Road



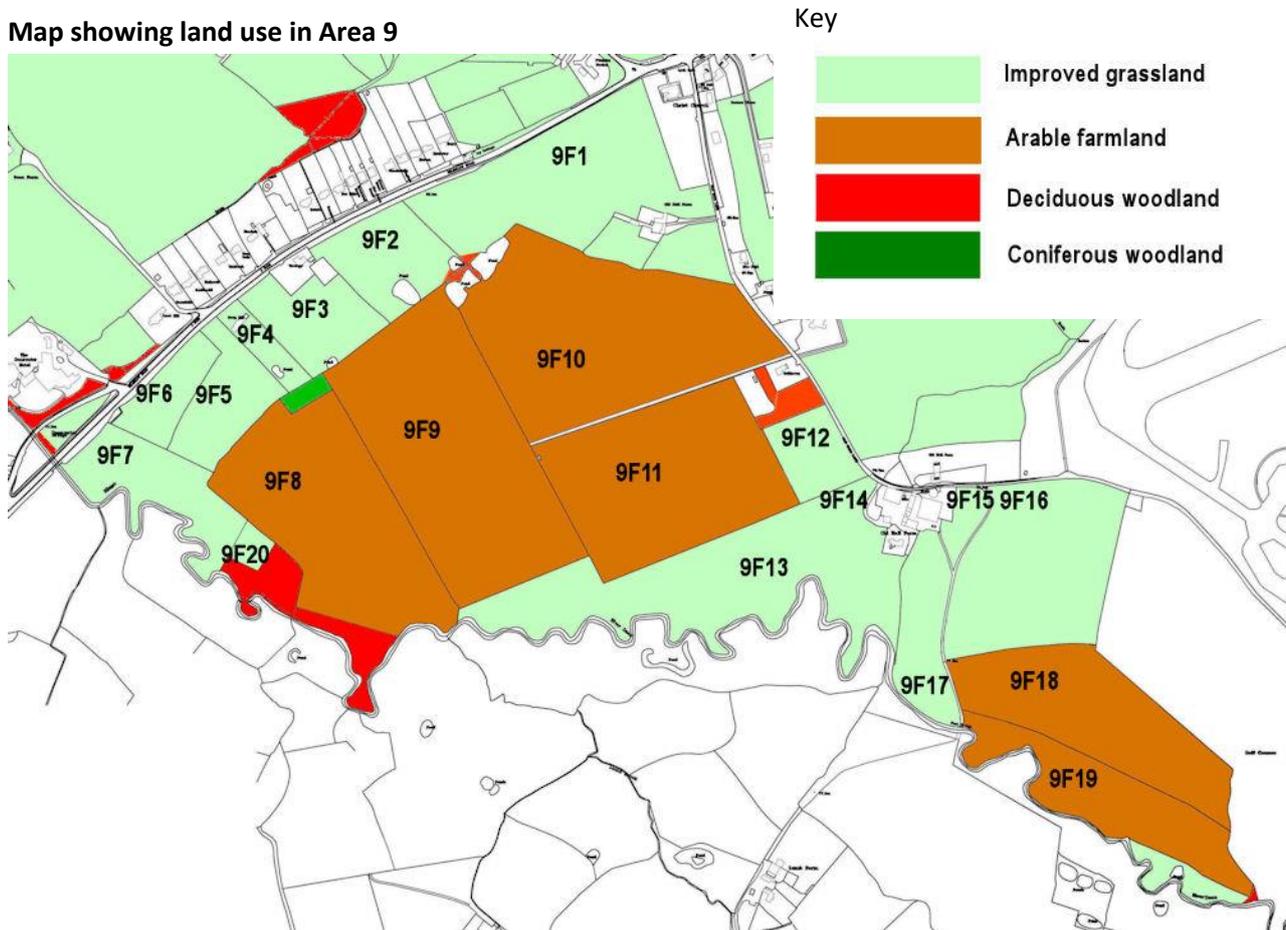
Land use

Area 9 is almost entirely agricultural land, belonging to Old Hall Farm and also landowners who live outside of Woodford. Some of the land is improved grassland, either used for grazing for cattle and/or for hay, haylage or silage crops in the summer. In addition, there are large areas are arable farmland, where crops such as maize and potatoes are grown. There are fragments of woodland around fields running parallel to

Wilmslow Road, around Dellhaven on Old Lane and along the River Dean. They can be seen on the satellite image.

Native hedgerows are luxuriant around the grazing land but sparse or absent around the arable fields. Patches of woodland scrub (predominantly willow) follow the course of the River Dean.

Map showing land use in Area 9



View to White Nancy over 9F2 and 9F10



9F11, Old Hall Farm and the Pennines beyond



At the time of survey (14th July 2016), field 9F10 contained prolific quantities of redshank, possibly weeds growing after a period without cultivation. 9F11 appeared to be marked out into test plots, some with signs reading “no herbicides”.

9F10 with prolific redshank



Redshank in 9F10



9F11 with markers



Corn camomile in 9F11



9F9 with maize crop (The Grange in background)



9F5 grassland and Himalayan Balsam by the river



9F16 used for cattle grazing



9F15 used for cattle grazing and Old Hall Farm



Hay bales in 9F2



9F16 and Old Hall Farm from Avro golf course



Hedgerows

Native hedgerows border many of the fields in Area 9, but species-rich hedgerows are less common here than other parts of Woodford. Species-poor native hedgerows are predominantly hawthorn. Species-rich hedgerows include 9H2, (9H7, 9H8, 9H11, 9H17, 9H18, part of 9H29 and 9H24. Species found include alder, ash, blackthorn, birch, briar, crab apple, elder, hazel, holly, ivy oak, sycamore and willow.

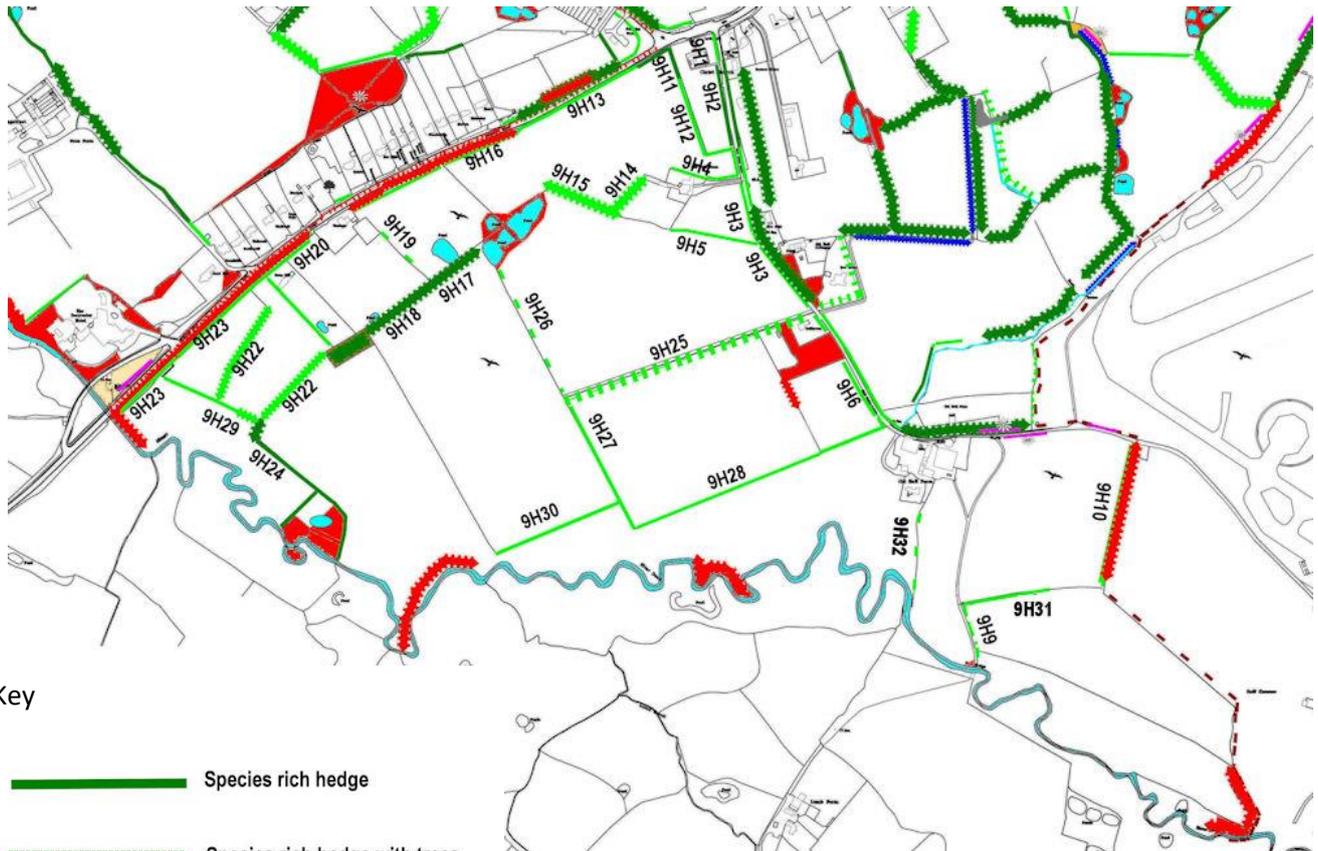
Native hedgerows and trees in Area 9



9H8 between 9F7 and maize crop in 9F8



Map of hedgerows in Area 9



Key

-  Species rich hedge
-  Species rich hedge with trees.
-  Species poor hedge
-  Species poor hedge with trees
-  Line of trees
-  Native deciduous woodland

Mature trees between golf course and 9F18



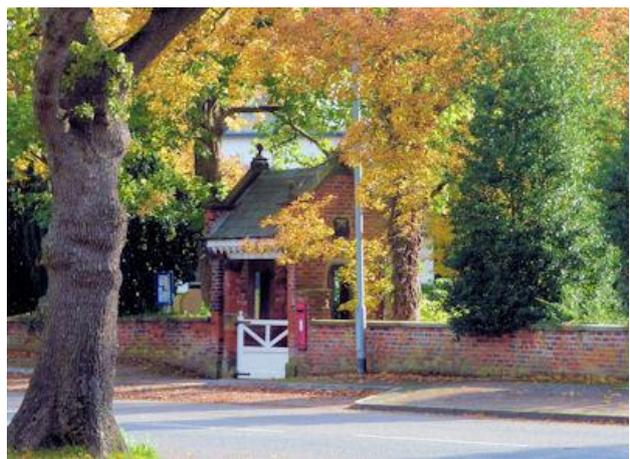
9H25 (fence with mature trees)



9H3 bordering Old Hall Lane



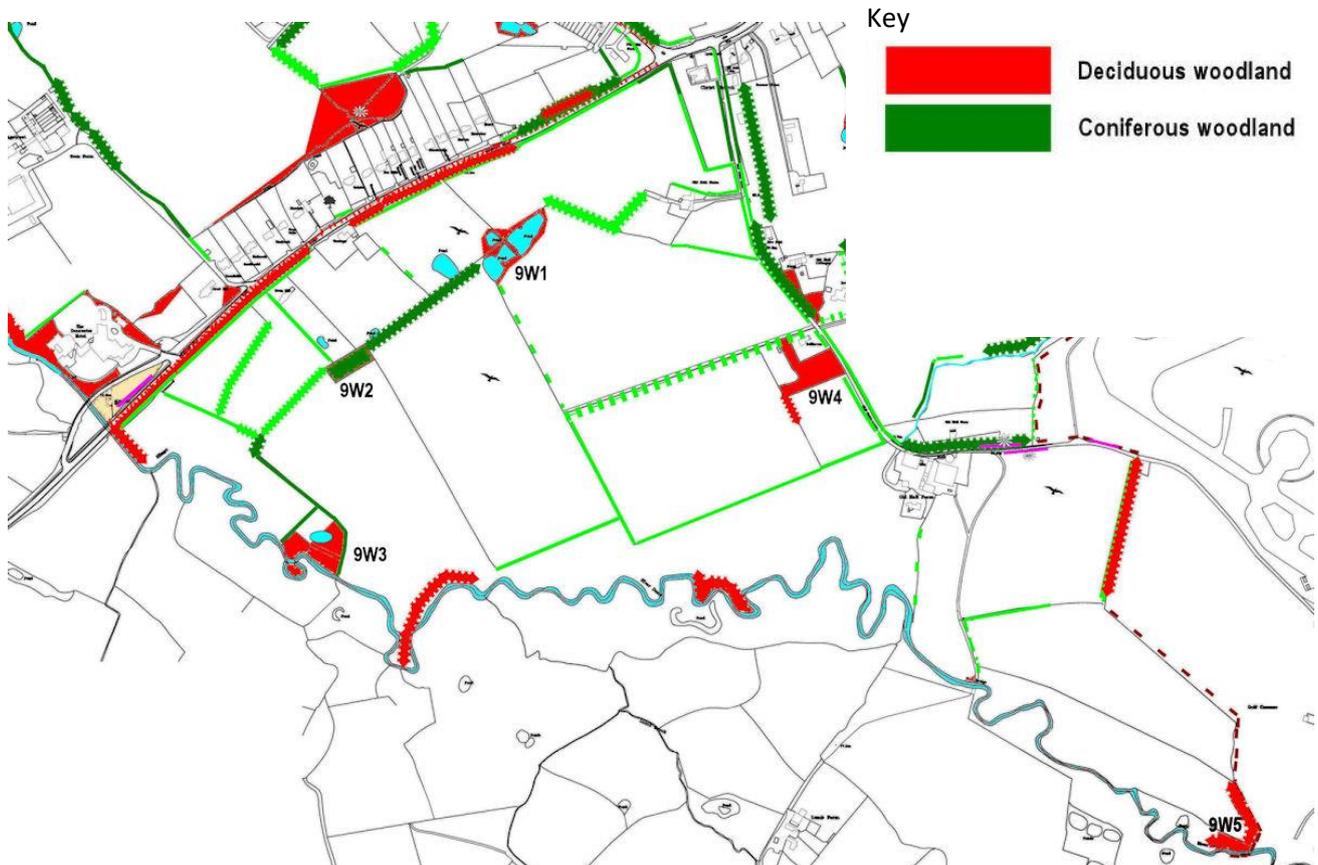
Trees in the Church yard in autumn



Woodland

Area 9 includes small areas of mixed deciduous woodland, including 9W1, 9W3, 9W4 and 9W5. 9W2 is a small area of coniferous woodland, possibly associated with a domestic curtilage. 9W1 is a dense thicket around a complex of ponds and includes alder, hawthorn, oak and willow. 9W5 is in 9F20, an area beside the River Dean which has been fenced off, apparently as a wildlife reserve. Next to the river here there are large beech, alder, rowan and willow trees. Saplings have been planted and there are nest boxes on a barn door and an old tree.

Map showing woodland



9W1 from 9F9



9W1



Stand-alone trees

Mature trees are mostly found in hedgerows and fields in farmland adjacent to Wilmslow Road. Hedgerows with mature trees include 9H16, 9H17, 9H18, 9H19, 9H22, and 9H29. Trees in these hedges include oak and sycamore. 9H25 is a fence with a line of tall, mature beech trees.

Stand-alone trees are infrequent in Area 9, mostly found in the farmland adjacent to Wilmslow Road. They are marked on the satellite map below. 9S1, 9S2, 9S4 and 9S8 are oaks. 9S3 is an ash. 9S5, 9S6 and 9S7 are alders.

Trees on both sides of Wilmslow Road create an avenue for those arriving in Woodford from the south. The grass verge along the southern side of the road includes horse chestnut, maple and whitebeam trees. Oaks and black poplar trees in the pavements and a small field on the northern side of the road in Area 10 contribute to the effect and character of Woodford, particularly when in vibrant autumn hue. A diseased horse chestnut tree was found in the grass verge opposite the entrance to Kingstreet.

The Church yard contains yew, holly, oak, sycamore and lime trees.

Oak tree 9S1 in 9F1 with Church in background



Trees in Church yard by Old Hall Lane



Satellite image showing stand-alone trees



9S3 (ash) and 9S4 (oak) in 9F1



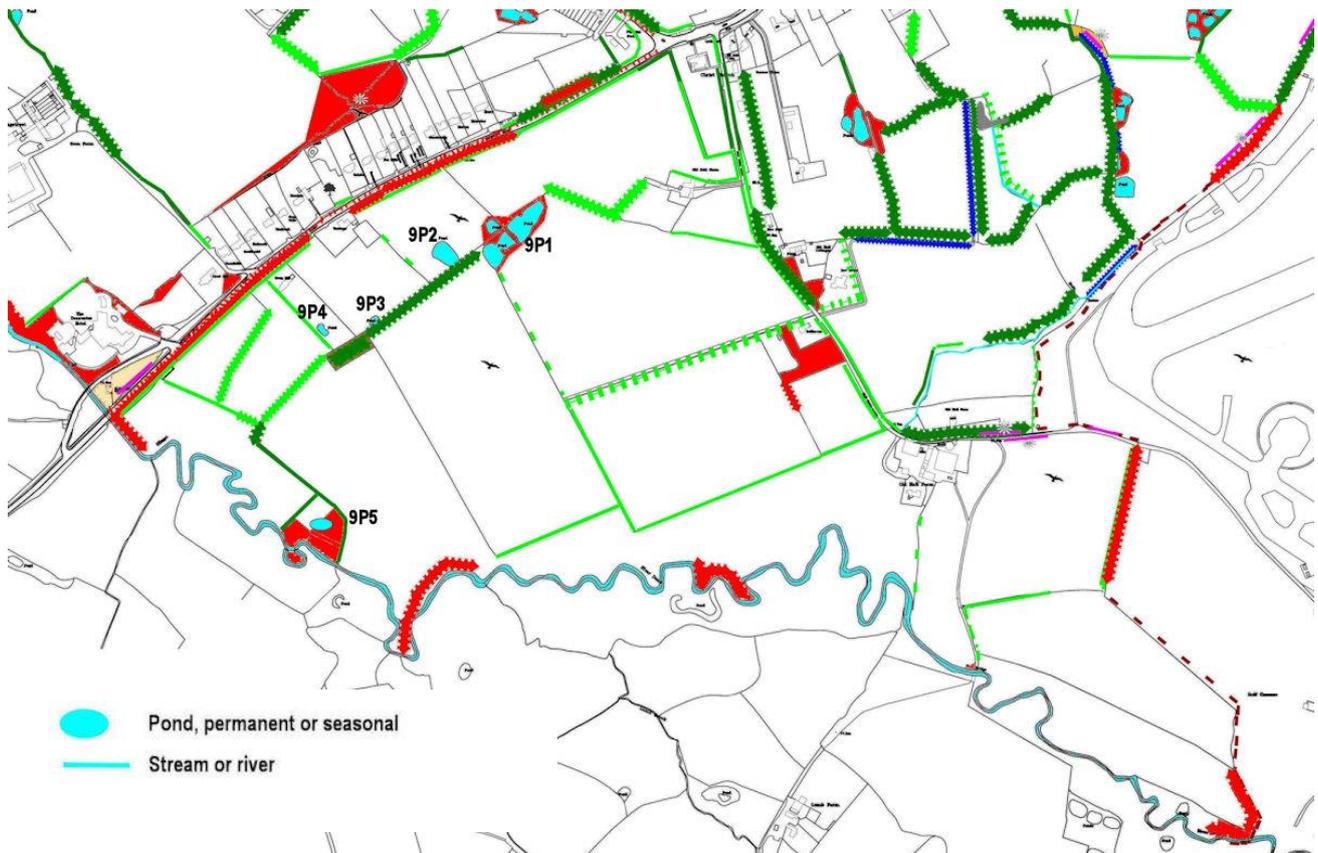
Willow tree at River Dean near 9F7



Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

There are no TPOs or TPAs for Area 9.

Ponds, streams and ditches



There are five ponds in Area 9. 9P1 is a complex of three ponds within woodland. 9P2 is in open grassland. 9P3 and 9P4 were not surveyed as they lie within domestic curtilages. 9P5 is within an area which has been fenced off, apparently as a nature reserve, and includes wood 9W3.

9P1 in 9W1



River Dean near 9F17



One of the landowners has created a fenced off “wildlife reserve” adjacent to the Dean, with native trees and a pond (9F20).

9F20, an area fenced off as “nature reserve”



Bird box in tree in 9F20



9P5 in 9F20, fenced off “nature reserve”



Marsh marigolds in 9P5



The banks of the River Dean are a notable feature of Area 9. These are open in places with herbaceous species including unmown grass, willow herb, ragwort, mallow, convulvulus, thistle and Himalayan balsam. Areas of scrub along the river banks include willow, alder, rowan, ash and birch.

Meandering River Dean near 9F19



Woodland scrub along the banks of the river near 9F7



Grass verges and field boundaries

A wide mown grass verge runs down the southern side of Wilmslow Road with mature trees opposite the entrance to Kingstreet and the Deanwater Hotel. Narrow verges along Old Hall Lane are rarely mown and support herbaceous species.

Grass verges on Old Hall Lane near Old Hall Farm



Bird sightings

Bird sightings in Area 9 reported by resident who lives in Area 10 but frequently walks in Area 9.

Blackbird	Blackcap	Blue Tit
Bullfinch	Buszard	Canada Goose
Chiffchaff	Coal Tit	Crow
Garden Warbler	Goldcrest	Greater Spotted Woodpecker
Grey Wagtail	Hedge Sparrow	Heron
House Martin	Kingfisher	Long-tailed Tit
Magpie	Mallard	Mistle Thrush
Moorhen	Nuthatch	Pied Wagtail
Robin	Siskin	Song Thrush
Starling	Swallow	Swift
Tawny Owl	Treecreeper	Tufted Duck
Wren		

Invasive or undesirable species

Himalayan Balsam is prevalent adjacent to the River Dean.

Proximity to other areas rich in habitats for wildlife

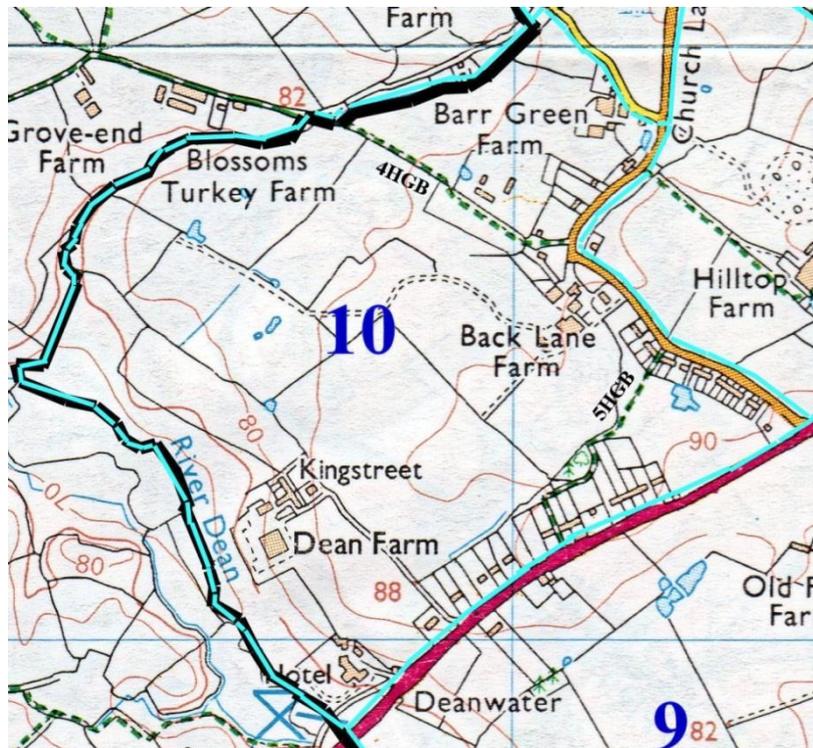
The area adjoins countryside in Cheshire East on the other side of the River Dean, providing good connectivity with habitats outside of the neighbourhood area. The River Dean also provides a corridor into Woodford survey Area 10 and Handforth.

North West Woodford, Area 10

(surveyed September 2015 and spring 2016)



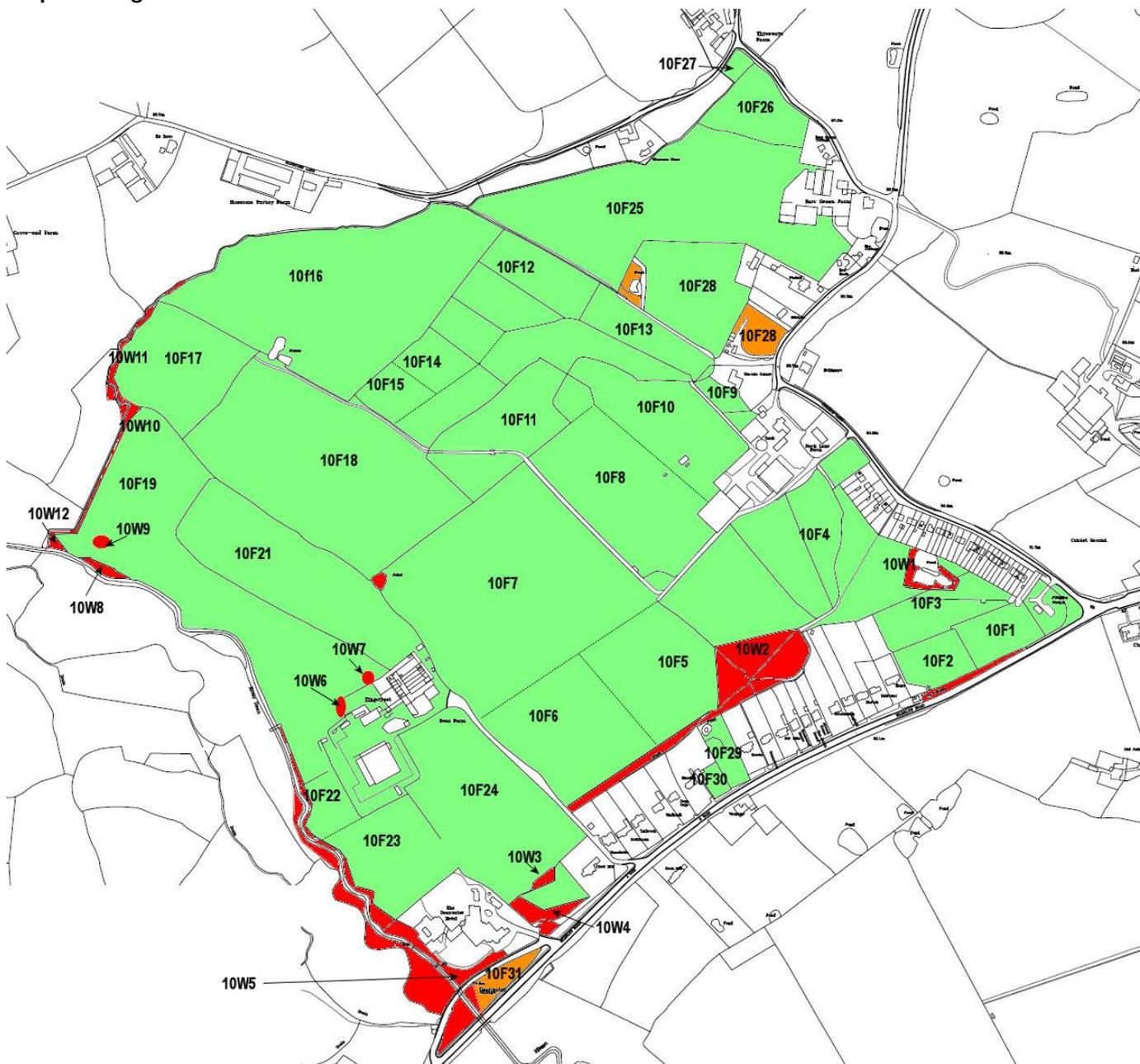
Area 10 forms the south west of the Neighbourhood Area, lying between Blossoms Lane, Church Lane, Wilmslow Road and the River Dean, as shown in OS and satellite images below, bounded by the turquoise line. The western boundary follows a tiny stream which meanders downhill to the River Dean and marks the border with Cheshire East. The road to Kingstreet and two footpaths, 4HGB and 5HGB, cross the area.



Land use

Area 10 is largely agricultural land belonging to local farms and landowners, including Dean Valley Farm, Dean Farm and Barr Green Farm. It is nearly all improved grassland, either used for grazing for horses, sheep or cattle and/or for hay, haylage or silage crops in the summer. There are a few small patches of unmown or infrequently mown grass.

Map showing land use in Area 10



- Improved grassland
- Unmown grassland
- Woodland (deciduous)



10F25

Small areas of mixed deciduous woodland are to be found adjacent to the River Dean, around the Deanwater Hotel, behind the houses along Wilmslow Road and along the banks of a small stream which runs down to the River Dean.

Area 10 is characterised by large fields bounded by native hedgerows with mature trees, mostly oak with some ash and sycamore. Parts of Dean Valley Farm are used for horse grazing and have been subdivided into smaller fields with fences. Open views across fields and to the Pennines can be enjoyed from footpath 4HGB.

View of 10F25 and 10H40b from footpath 4HGB



Hay ready for baling in 10F25



Views to hills across Dean Valley Farm



Wooded stream forming western boundary



10F19 beside River Dean in Dean Farm



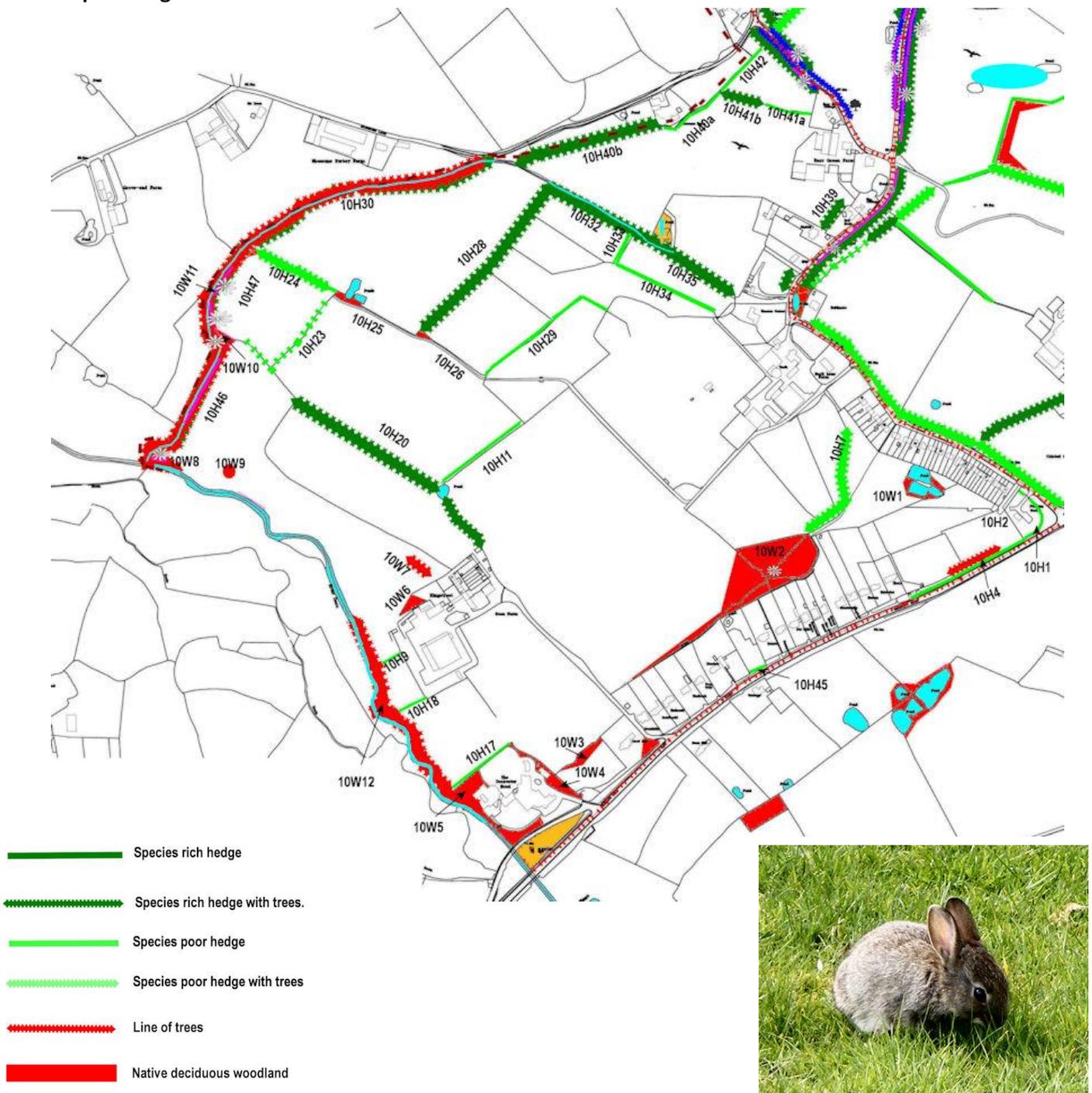
Trees around River Dean in Dean Farm land



Hedgerows

There are numerous native hedges in Area 10, particularly in the west of the area. Species rich hedges include 10H20, 10H28, 10H30, 10H32, 10H35, 10H41b and 10H40b. Two merit special mention, because they are likely to provide excellent habitats for wildlife with eight or more species per 30 metres and close proximity to small streams. One is the tall species-rich native hedgerow, 10H32, alongside footpath 4HGB which runs parallel to a ditch/stream at the boundary of 10F25 and 10F18. Species here included briar, elder, hazel, holly, ivy, oak, rowan, sycamore and willow. The other is the overgrown hedgerow/strip of woodland which follows the little stream at the western boundary, 10H30. Species found here included alder, ash, blackthorn, briar, elder, hawthorn, holly, oak, rowan, sycamore and willow.

Map of hedgerows in Area 10



Examples of hedgerows and field boundaries

10H32 along ditch/stream by footpath 4HGB



10H30 by stream along boundary with Cheshire East



10H20 in Dean Farm



Ditch by 6H4a (Area 6) bordering 10F26



Hollows in base of hedgerow tree in 10H40b



Hedges bordering footpath 4HGB



10H46 (boundary at stream) and 10F19



10H30 with mature trees



The banks of the River Dean



Woodland

Area 10 includes small areas of mixed deciduous woodland. 10W2 is mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland with tall mature trees lying behind the houses on Wilmslow Road and adjacent to footpath 5HGB, which is part of the Fred Perry Way. Species found here included ash, elder, hazel, holly, possibly hornbeam, sycamore, scots pine and rowan. 10W1 is an area of woodland around pond 10P1 in field 10F3 behind the houses at the southern end of Church Lane. There are narrow areas of woodland bordering the River Dean near the Deanwater Hotel and at the boundary with Cheshire East. 10W3 and 10W4 are areas of woodland around the Deanwater Hotel. 10W5 lies between the hotel and the River Dean. All contain tall deciduous trees.

A small copse of large alders, 10W9, is to be found in field 10F19.

10W2 in April



10W5 by River Dean by the Deanwater Hotel



Satellite image showing 10W1 and 10W2 behind properties on Wilmslow Road and Church Lane



Satellite image showing 10W4 and 10W5 around the Deanwater Hotel



Stand-alone trees

Area 10, like much of the farmland in Woodford, is characterised by hedgerows dotted with numerous mature trees. Oak, sycamore and ash are predominant. There are a few stand-alone mature trees in the fields, which can be seen clearly in the satellite image on the next page. The majority of the trees numbered are oaks, except 10S2, which is an ash. Two very tall black poplar trees in the field adjacent to Quinta on Wilmslow Road were lopped in 2017, to remove the canopy. There are several mature oak trees in the pavement alongside Wilmslow Road and Church Lane.

Oak tree in pavement on Wilmslow Road



Oak tree in grass verge on Church Lane



Satellite image showing some of the mature trees in hedgerows and fields



The white arrow in the satellite image above marks an oak tree in neighbouring Cheshire East, which was home to nesting Little Owls in 2015 and 2016. They relocated to an oak tree adjacent to Church Lane in Area 7 to produce offspring in 2017.

Trees along Wilmslow Road in autumn



Hollow tree trunk in 10F2



There is a line of mature black poplar trees in narrow field adjacent to Wilmslow Road, shown in the satellite image below.

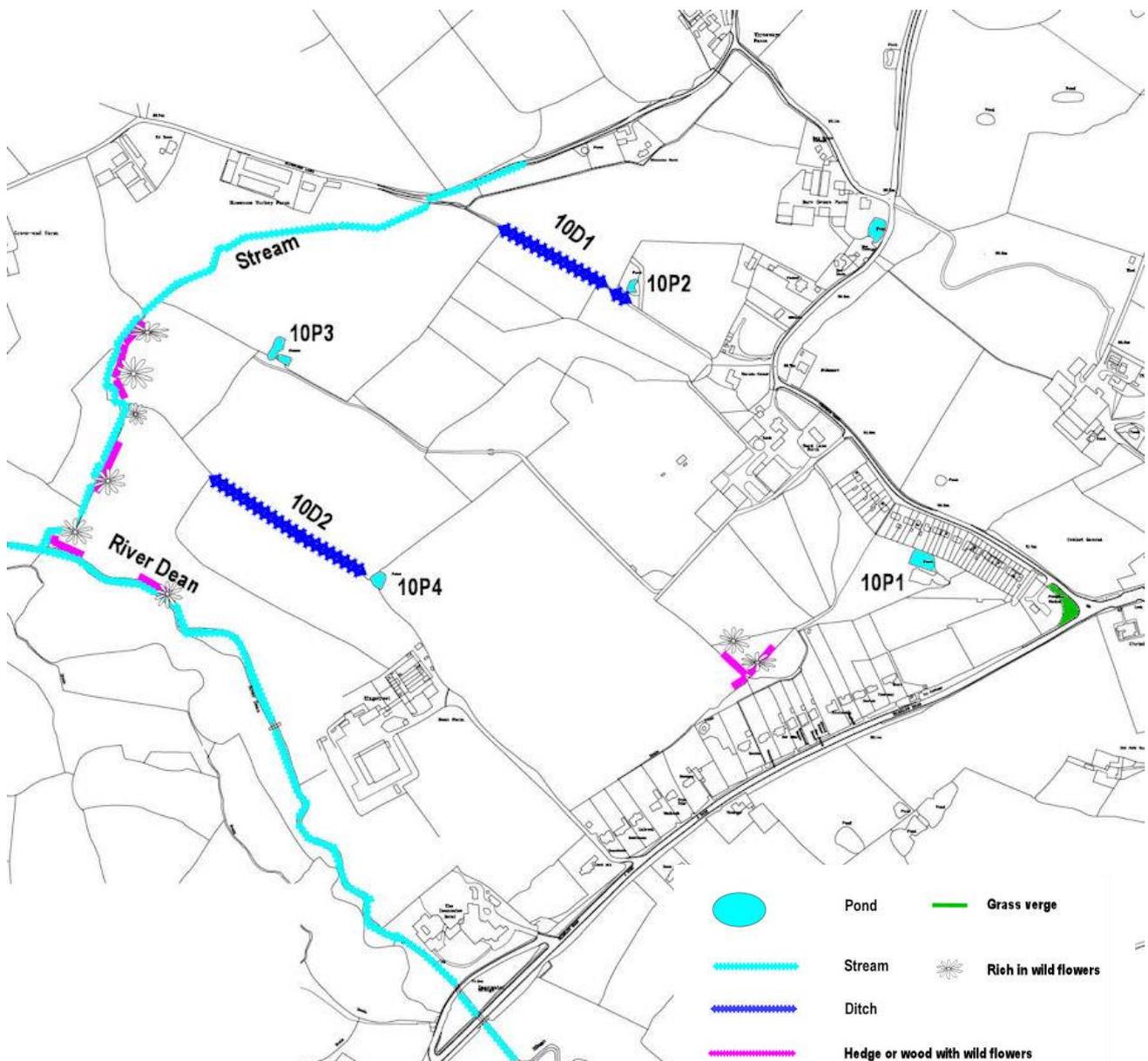


Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

The map below is taken from the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council website and shows TPOs as green dots and Tree Preservation Area Orders as green blocks in the area around the Deanwater Hotel and the entrance to the road leading to Kingstreet.



Ponds and ditches



There are several ponds in the area. 10P1 is close to the back gardens of properties on Church Lane and is partially surrounded by native trees and scrub (10W1). 10P2 is within an area used for hay production, but is immediately surrounded by unmown grassland with willow scrub and bulrushes. Dragon flies have been observed in summer around 10P2. 10P3 and 10P4 are in open agricultural land. 10P3 is used occasionally by anglers. 10P5 is within a domestic garden. Dragon flies and mallard are regularly seen close by and coots have been observed crossing Church Lane. Heron are frequently observed flying over the area.

Area 10 is bounded by the River Dean to the south and a small stream to the west, running down to the river. A stream/ditch runs across Barr Green Farm land from west to east, running adjacent to footpath 4HGB. Another ditch crosses part of the area lower down in Dean Farm land from west to east. All these

waterways are partially bordered by species rich native woodland or hedgerows and will provide good habitats for wildlife.

Dragon fly on pond 10P2



Pond 10P1 in field behind Church Lane



Grass verges and field boundaries

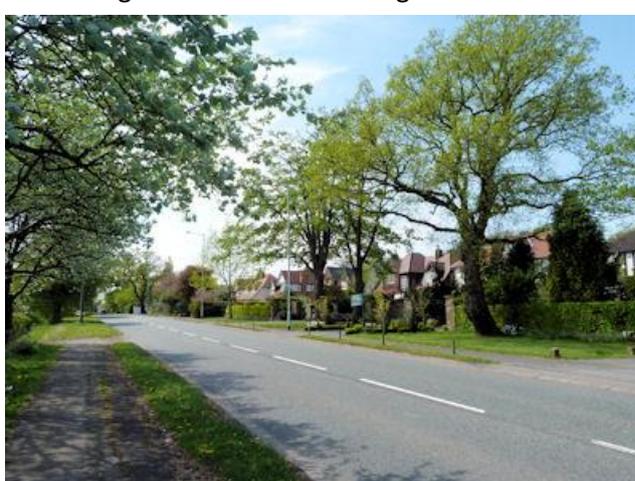
Areas around the farm fields, streams, ditches are the river, which are inaccessible for mowing, support herbaceous growth and wildflowers. A separate section on wildflowers is included later.

Wilmslow Road and Church Lane have mown grass verges in the pavement between access drives.

Bluebells, red campion and stitchwort by stream



Grass verges with trees bordering Wilmslow Road



Wildflowers

Wildflowers are worthy of note in this area. Bluebells, red campion, celandine and stitchwort were observed in spring, growing prolifically in the wooded borders of the stream (10W10) and by the River Dean (10W8). Nettle, willowherb, vetch, dandelion, foxglove, angelica, ragwort, thistle, clover, buttercup, dandelion and hedge parsley are common too. A variety of herbaceous species were also observed along footpath 5HGB and in wood 10W2. Yellow flag irises are found in the ditch by hedge 6H4a along Blossoms Lane at the

boundary of Area 6 and Area 10. See areas marked with a pink line and flower symbol on the ponds and ditches map shown earlier.

Celandine in 10W10



Red campion in 10W11



Wildlife

Area 10 supports a diverse range of wildlife. Moths, butterflies and bees are frequently seen in the summer, no doubt supported by flowering herbaceous species in the field margins and gardens. The mixture of open fields with native hedgerows, large mature trees and wooded areas and streams provides excellent habitats and probably account for the diverse range of birds which are reported. Buzzards frequently circle overhead in groups of two to five. Black-headed gulls and lapwings are commonly seen in the open fields. Curlews have been heard but not seen during the survey. Ducks, geese and coots can be observed on the ponds. Rodents sighted here include a large population of rabbits, squirrels, stoat (rare) and there is abundant evidence of mice and rats. There is evidence that mammals with homes here include bats, fox and badger.

One of the residents on Wilmslow Road has a garden, which backs on to native deciduous and coniferous woodland (10W2), and which he has set up to encourage wildlife. His list of bird sightings encompassed Area 9 and Area 10 and is included in the table below.

Bird sightings

Barn Owl	Garden Warbler	Mallard
Blackbird	Goldcrest	Mistle Thrush
Blackcap	Goldfinch	Nuthatch
Black-headed Gull	Greater Spotted Woodpecker	Pied Wagtail
Blue Tit	Grey Wagtail	Robin
Bullfinch	Hedge Sparrow	Siskin
Buzzard	Heron	Song Thrush
Canada Goose	House Martin	Starling
Chiffchaff	Kestrel	Swallow
Coal Tit	Kingfisher	Swift
Coot	Lapwing	Tawny Owl
Crow	Little Owl	Treecreeper
Curlew	Long-tailed Tit	Tufted Duck
	Magpie	Wren

Photographic evidence of bird life in Area 10

Fledgling thrush, Barr Green Cottage garden



Young kestrel in 10F26



Black-headed gulls in 10F10



Lapwing in 10F10



Goldfinches bathing, Barr Green Cottage garden



Little owl in tree just over the border in Cheshire East



Note that the family of little owls relocated in 2017 to Area 7.

Mallard in Barr Green Cottage garden



Woodpecker in oak tree 6S1in Area 6 (adjacent)



Robin in Barr Green Cottage garden



Buzzard over 10F10



Insects in Area 10

Observed in Barr Green Cottage garden.

Bee on vetch



Honey bee on wall



Peacock butterfly on cherry blossom



White Ermine moth on wall



Invasive or undesirable species

Himalayan Balsam is prevalent adjacent to the River Dean.

Proximity to other areas rich in habitats for wildlife



Area 10 is adjacent to land in Cheshire East which has been noted for richness in wildlife habitats. These include the River Dean, Hall Wood and part of the area known as Handforth East, which has been earmarked for development in the Cheshire East Local Plan. Kingfishers have been observed along the banks of

the River Dean adjacent to Dean Farm land in Area 10. Hall Wood is a remnant of an extensive beech wood, which remains after the construction of the A34 bypass. It contains very tall mature trees and provides a likely habitat for fox and badger.

Hall Wood near the border in Cheshire East in spring and winter



River Dean in Cheshire East



One of many ponds in Handforth East (Cheshire East)



The ponds in Handforth East support crested newt and dragonfly populations. The number of dragonfly species counted amounts to 11, including the four spotted chaser picture below, which exceeds the Local Wildlife Site criteria and would be considered a possible Priority/Key site by the British Dragonfly Society. The site has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust. Kingfisher, barn owl and bats have been observed around these ponds too.

Four spotted chaser dragonfly on pond in Cheshire East in close proximity to Area 10



Appendix 1: UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats

The United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan or (UK BAP) was the UK government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity, opened for signature at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It was published in 1994 and created action plans for priority species and habitats in the UK that were most under threat so as to support their recovery.

The Woodford surveys reported here included the following, which are, or in the case of ponds potentially are, UK BAP Priority Habitats.

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland includes woodland growing on the full range of soil conditions, occurring largely within enclosed landscapes, usually on sites with well-defined boundaries, at relatively low altitudes, although altitude is not a defining feature. The woods tend to be small, less than 20 ha, and often there is evidence of past coppicing. There is no doubt that the area of this priority type of ancient woodland sites has declined in area by clearance, overgrazing and replanting with non-native species, by about 30–40% over the last 50 years.

file:///C:/Users/Admin/Documents/Docs/WNF/Habitat%20Survey/UKBAP_BAPHabitats-30-LowlandMixedDecWood.pdf

Wet Woodland

Wet woodland occurs on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils, usually with alder, birch and willows as the predominant tree species because they are able to extract oxygen from the water saturated habitat, but sometimes including ash, oak, pine and beech on the drier areas. It is found on floodplains, as successional habitat on fens, mires and bogs, along streams and hill-side flushes, and in peaty hollows. http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/UKBAP_BAPHabitats-64-WetWoodland.pdf

Hedgerows

the definition of this priority habitat has been amended from the pre-existing Habitat Action Plan for ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows. All hedgerows consisting predominantly (i.e. 80% or more cover) of at least one woody UK native species are covered by this priority habitat, where each UK country can define the list of woody species native to their respective country. Climbers such as honeysuckle and bramble are recognised as integral to many hedgerows, however they require other woody plants to be present to form a distinct woody boundary feature, as such they are not included in the definition of woody species. The definition is limited to boundary lines of trees or shrubs, and excludes banks or walls without woody shrubs on top of them.

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5706>

Therefore, all native hedgerows are Priority Habitats. Under the Environment Act 1995 it is likely that notification is required before removal of a hedgerow.

<http://adlib.eversite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=18356&id=18358>

Ponds

These are defined as permanent and seasonal standing water bodies up to 2 ha in extent, which meet certain criteria, including supporting rare or protected plant or animal species (including amphibians and dragon flies).

[file:///C:/Users/Admin/Documents/Docs/WNF/Habitat%20Survey/UKBAP_BAPHabitats-42-Ponds%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Admin/Documents/Docs/WNF/Habitat%20Survey/UKBAP_BAPHabitats-42-Ponds%20(1).pdf)

Arable Field Margins

The definition of this priority habitat has been amended from the pre-existing Habitat Action Plan for cereal field margins. Arable field margins are herbaceous strips or blocks around arable fields that are managed specifically to provide benefits for wildlife. The arable field must be in a crop rotation which includes an arable crop, even if in certain years the field is in temporary grass, set-aside or fallow. Arable field margins are usually sited on the outer 2–12m margin of the arable field, although when planted as blocks they occasionally extend further into the field centre. A number of types are list, including: those which within arable fields that are cultivated periodically, but are not sprayed with spring/summer insecticides and not normally sprayed with herbicides (except for the control of injurious weeds or problem grasses; land managed specifically to create habitat for annual arable plants; margins sown to provide seed for wild birds; margins sown with wild flowers or agricultural legumes and managed to allow flowering to provide pollen and nectar resources for invertebrates; margins providing permanent, grass strips with mixtures of tussocky and fine-leaved grasses.

http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/UKBAP_BAPHabitats-02-ArableFieldMargins.pdf

Rivers

This habitat type includes a very wide range of types, encompassing all natural and near-natural running waters in the UK (i.e. with features and processes that resemble those in 'natural' systems). These range from torrential mountain streams to meandering lowland rivers.

http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/UKBAP_BAPHabitats-45-Rivers2011.pdf

Appendix 2: Wildlife

Biodiversity data from WNF Environment and Landscape Study (1), Cheshire Wildlife Trust report (2) and National Biodiversity Network Atlas (3)

Table of bat species, which are all UKBAP Priority Species (4), sighted in Woodford Neighbourhood Area

Pipistrelle
Soprano Pipistrelle
Noctule
Brown Long Eared

Table of dragonflies and damselflies sighted in Woodford Neighbourhood Area

Azure Damsel
Blue Tailed Damsel
Brown Aeshna
Common Darter
Brown Bodied Chaser
Four Spotted Chaser

Table of native and naturalised woody plant species found in hedgerows and as specimen trees in Woodford Neighbourhood Area

Alder	Holly
Ash	Hornbeam
Aspen	Lime
Beech	Maple
Birch	Oak (several species)
Black Poplar	Plum
Blackthorn	Poplar
Cherry	Rowan
Chestnut	Scots Pine
Crab Apple	Spindle
Damson	Sycamore
Dogwood	Whitebeam
Elder	Willow (several species)
Hawthorn	Yew
Hazel	Ivy

Table of bird sightings in Woodford Neighbourhood Area

Common Name	BOCC4 Listing	Protected status
Barn Owl		P
Blackcap		
Blackbird		
Black-Headed Gull		
Blue Tit		
Brambling		P
Bullfinch		
Buzzard		
Canada Goose		
Chaffinch		
Chiffchaff		
Coal Tit		
Collard Dove		
Common Gull		
Cormorant		
Coot		
Crow		
Dab Chick		
Curlew		
Dunlin		
Dunnock		
Fieldfare		P
Goldcrest		
Golden Plover		
Goldfinch		
Great Crested Grebe		
Great Spotted Woodpecker		
Great Tit		
Green Plover		
Green Sandpiper		
Green Woodpecker		
Greenfinch		
Greenshank		P

Common Name	BOCC4 Listing	Protected status
Grey Heron		
Grey Wagtail		
Greylag Goose		
Herring Gull		
Hobby		
House Sparrow		
House Martin		
Jackdaw		
Jay		
Kestrel		
Kingfisher		P
Lapwing		P
Lesser Black-backed Gull		
Lesser Redpoll		
Linnet		
Little Grebe		
Little Owl		P
Little Ringed Plover		
Long Tailed Tit		
Magpie		
Mallard		
Meadow Pipit		
Mistle Thrush		
Moorhen		
Mute Swan		
Nuthatch		
Oystercatcher		
Partridge (grey)		
Peregrine		P
Pheasant		
Pied Wagtail		
Pink Footed Goose		
Pintail		

Common Name	BOCC4 Listing	Protected status
Raven		
Redshank		
Redstart		
Redwing		P
Reed Bunting		
Robin		
Rook		
Sand Martin		
Shelduck		
Siskin		
Skylark		
Snipe		
Song Thrush		
Sparrowhawk		
Spotted Flycatcher		
Starling		
Stock Dove		
Stonechat		
Swallow		
Swift		
Tawny Owl		
Teal		
Tree Creeper		
Tree Sparrow		
Waxwing		
Wheatear		
Whinchat		
Whitethroat		
Wigeon		
Willow Warbler		
Wood Pigeon		
Wren		
Yellow Wagtail		

Red and amber shading = Birds of Conservation Concern (5); P = Protected Species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (6)

Additional species reported in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area

Twenty six species of bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) are listed by the National Biodiversity Network Atlas. (3)

Wild flowering plants found during the WNF landscape and environment surveys include English bluebell, red campion, white campion, ragged robin, stitchwort, foxglove, speedwell, daisy, creeping

buttercup, meadow buttercup, herb robert, dandelion, angelica, lesser hogweed, figwort, marsh woundwort, snakes head fritillary, celandine, ladies smock, thistle, hedge parsley, yellow flag iris, bindweed, mallow, rosebay willow herb, lesser willow herb, greater willow herb, red shank, corn camomile, marsh marigold. (1)

Invertebrate sightings include several species of bee, including honey bee, red-tailed bumble bee, white-tailed bumble bee; butterflies, including peacock, tortoiseshell, red admiral, painted lady, meadow brown, large white, small white, common blue, comma; and moths, including white ermine, elephant hawk moth, burnet.

Amphibians found include frog, common toad, smooth newt, greater crested newt. (1, 2)

Ten species of fish are listed by the National Biodiversity Network Atlas. (3)

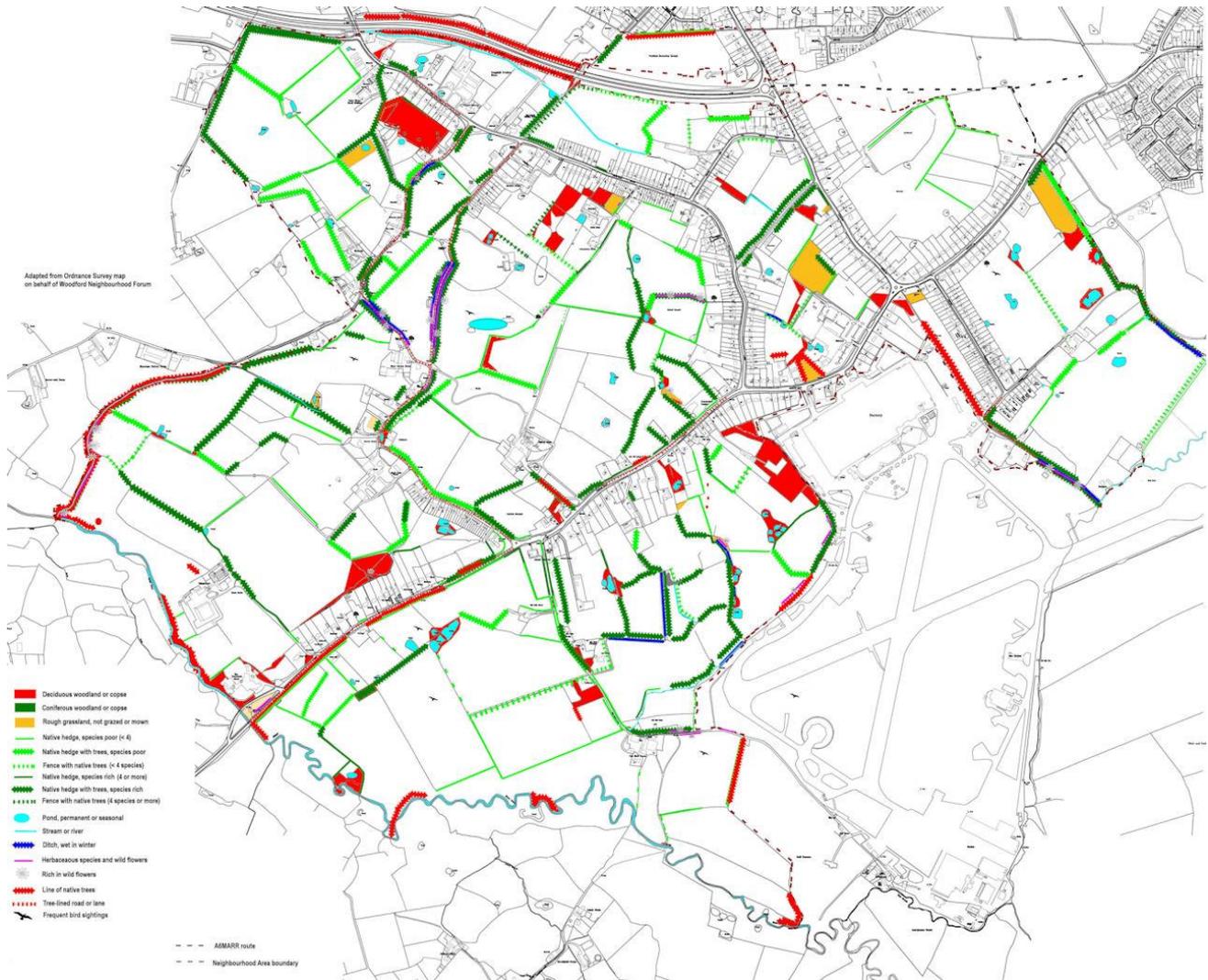
Mammals reported by CWT and local residents include brown hare, badger, fox, rabbit, rat, mole, mouse, shrew and stoat. (1, 2)

Supporting References for Appendix

1. WNF04: WNF Landscape and Environment studies 2015 -2017.
<http://woodfordnf.co.uk/neighbourhood-plan/landscape-and-environment/>
2. Cheshire Wildlife Trust Protecting and Enhancing Woodford's Natural Environment Report.
<http://woodfordnf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CWT-report-for-WNF-Protecting-and-Enhancing-Woodfords-Natural-Environment-Jan-2018.pdf>
3. National Biodiversity Network Atlas. <https://nbnatlas.org/>
4. UK Biodiversity Action Plan – Priority Species.
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605093420/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>
5. Birds of Conservation Concern 4. JNCC, RSPB, BTO. http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/BoCC_tcm9-217852.pdf
6. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, SCHEDULE 1 Birds which are Protected by Special Penalties.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/1>

Appendix 3: Natural Features Map

Map of Key Natural Features in Woodford Neighbourhood Area

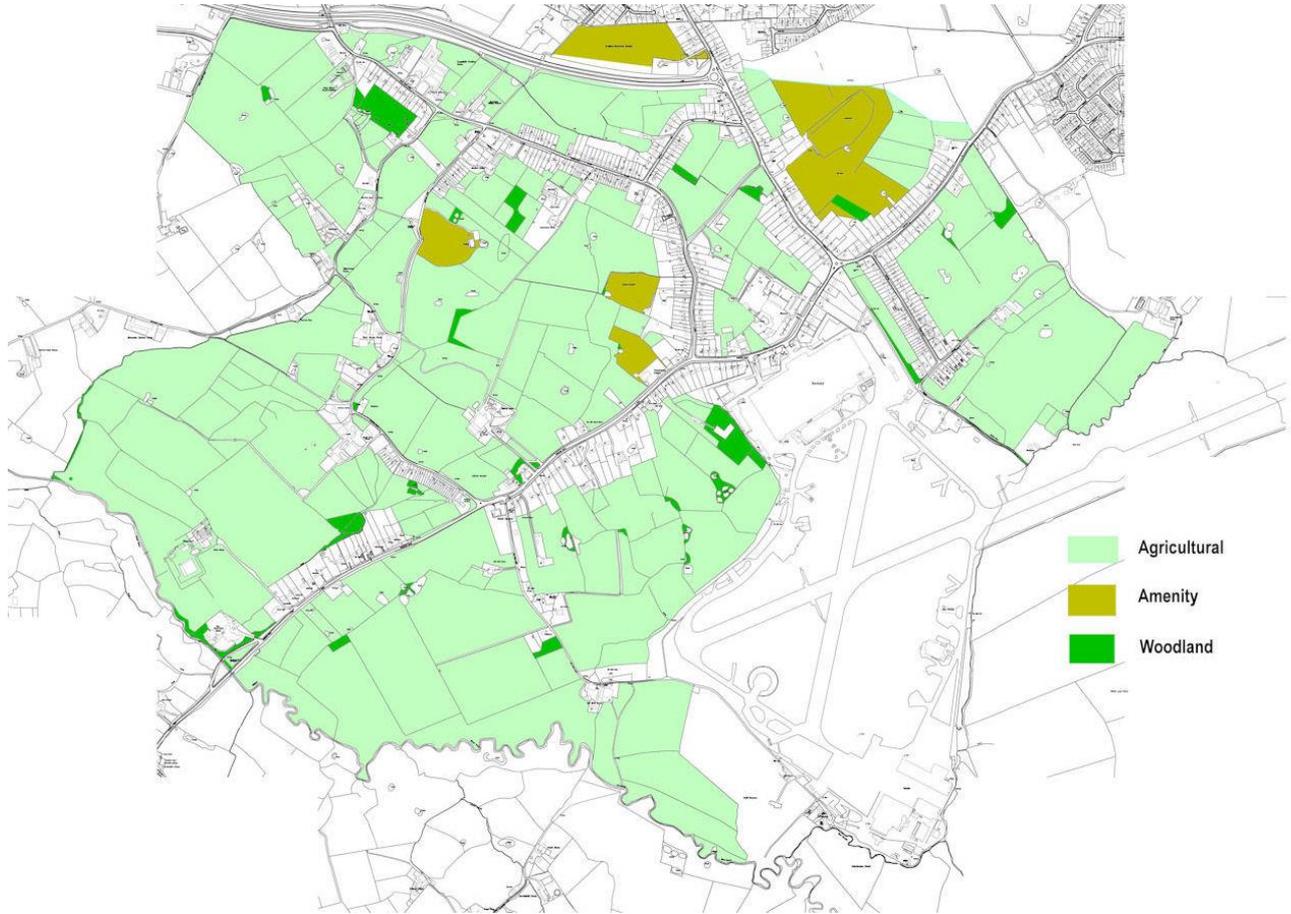


A larger map can be viewed [here](#).

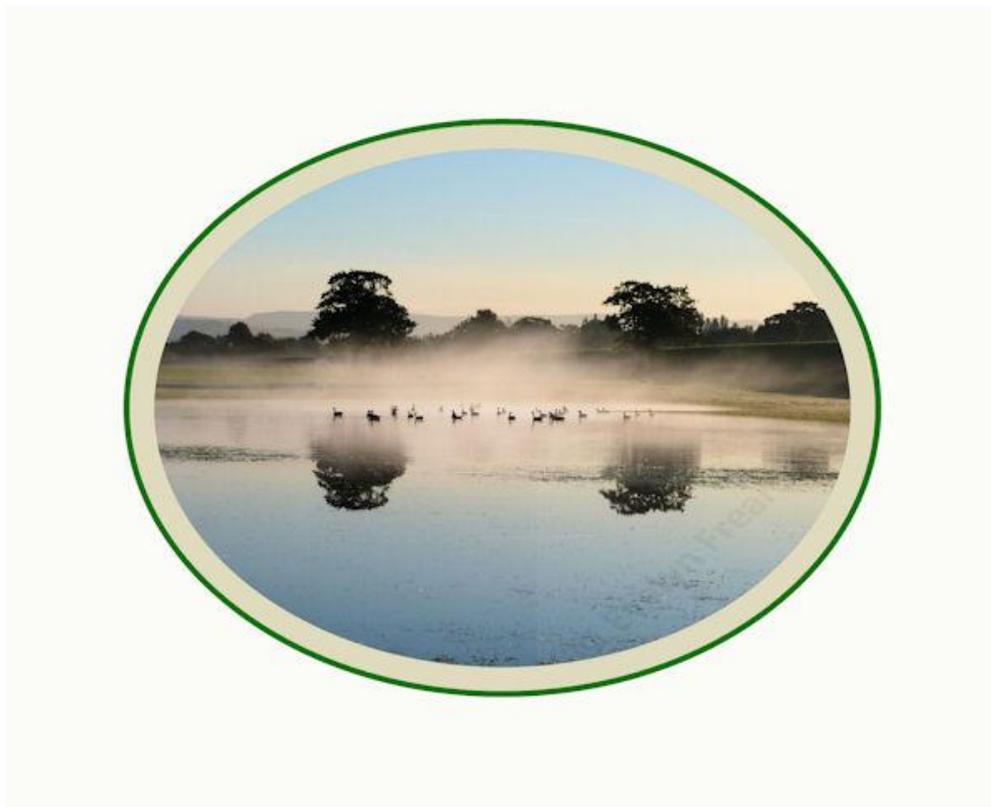
Key to map			
	Deciduous woodland or copse		Pond, permanent or seasonal
	Coniferous woodland or copse		Stream or river
	Rough grassland, not grazed or mown		Ditch, wet in winter
	Native hedge, species poor (< 4)		Herbaceous species and wild flowers
	Native hedge with trees, species poor		Rich in wild flowers
	Fence with native trees (< 4 species)		Line of native trees
	Native hedge, species rich (4 or more)		Tree-lined road or lane
	Native hedge with trees, species rich		Frequent bird sightings
	Fence with native trees (4 species or more)		

Appendix 4

Map of land use in Woodford



A larger map can be viewed [here](#).



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

2018