



**GATEWEN FORMER COLLIERY SITE
WREXHAM
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT 2013**

**(Report Ref: 4378.001)
March 2014
Version 1.0**

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SUMMARY

TEP was commissioned by Bloor Homes North West to produce an ecological assessment of the site of the second phase of a residential development at the former Gatewen colliery near Wrexham.

A development licence for great crested newts is already in place for the entire site and therefore the implications of the presence of this species are not considered in this report.

The site is on the margins of a built area and is therefore not considered to be important as a corridor for wildlife.

The habitats on site are generally of poor quality in terms of diversity and their loss will not significantly impact protected species or those listed in Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006.

There are no significant implications for protected species or habitats with regard to the proposed development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TEP was commissioned by Bloor Homes North West to undertake an Ecological Assessment of a site at Gatewen Former Colliery, Wrexham, in February 2013. This report will inform planning for the second phase of a residential development. The aims of this report are:

- to describe the habitats present on the site;
- to identify whether there are any features of conservation value such as legally protected species (in particular: bats, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, badger *Meles meles* and otter *Lutra lutra*) or habitats of biodiversity importance; and
- to advise of further surveys or mitigation requirements that may be needed prior to development of the site.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The survey site comprises the second phase of a housing development on the site of a former colliery (Figure 1).

2.2 The southern portion of the original development site has now either been completed or construction is in progress. There is also an area of housing located to the northwest and west, separated from the site by a stream running through woodland. There are fields used for horse grazing to the southwest and to the east in a belt of woodland beyond which is agricultural land.

2.3 The approximate central grid reference is: SJ 312 519.

Figure 1: Site location and surrounding landscape



3.0 METHODS

Desktop Study

- 3.1 Information regarding historic species records, protected sites, land allocation and relevant policies was requested/gathered from the sources listed in Table 1. The desktop study information is presented at Appendix 1.

Table 1: Ecological information and consultations

CONSULTEE/SOURCE OF INFORMATION	NATURE OF INFORMATION
MAGIC Map	Maps showing legally protected areas/protected sites
Google Maps	Satellite imagery
Cofnod	Protected species and sites records

Habitats and Flora

- 3.2 The Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out by TEP ecologist Mark Ambrose (Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) Level 3) on the 11 February 2014. The survey, carried out in accordance with standard JNCC Phase 1 habitat survey methods (JNCC 2010), gives an overview of key habitats present and the likely occurrence of any species of conservation concern. Findings from fieldwork were recorded (Appendix 2) and mapped in Phase 1 habitat survey format (Drawing G4378.001). Habitats of Principal Importance under Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (hereafter S.42) were also identified.

Invasive Species

- 3.3 Species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were identified and noted, if present, on the Phase 1 habitat map of the survey area.

Fauna

- 3.4 During the Phase 1 habitat survey, the habitats present were assessed for their potential to support species of conservation concern, particularly statutorily protected species, as well as S.42 species and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) priority species.

- 3.5 Water courses were assessed for their potential to support water voles and otters, and searched for any field signs of these that may have been present.

- 3.6 Trees, as well as natural and man-made structures, were assessed for their potential to support roosting or hibernating bats.

Limitations

- 3.7 The survey was undertaken outside the optimum period for Phase 1 habitat surveys, which is between late April and September. There are therefore limitations to the survey as many plants are not visible at this time of year, including some invasive species listed on Schedule 9. Many animal species are also less active, so signs that indicate their presence are less obvious. However, due to the limited habitats present, this is not considered to impose a significant constraint to the survey and will not have affected the conclusions reached in this report.

- 3.8 There had been rain prior to the survey and this made the identification of mammal field signs (such as tracks and droppings) difficult; however the surveyor was still

able to assess the site on the basis of more permanent signs such as burrows and other digging activity.

4.0 RESULTS

Desktop Study

4.1 A summary of the results of the desktop study are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Desktop study results summary

Source	Protected/important species records, protected sites and S.42 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance within 1km of the site	Metres from site/grid reference	Direction from site
MAGIC map Cofnod Protected sites information	SSSI Gatewen Marsh Example of southern mesotrophic mire.	100m	Southeast
S.42 Habitats of Principal Importance	Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Hedgerows	On site On site	
Local Wildlife Sites	Moss Valley New Broughton Meadow Berse Drelincourt Afon Gwenfro Higher Berse Marsh	Adjacent 1000m 1000m 900m 800m	North West South South West South West
Cofnod Protected and S.42 Species	Protected Species Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Not given	South
	Section 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended) Bat species <i>Chiroptera sp.</i> Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	200m 300m 50m	West North Northeast
	Protection of Badgers Act 1992 Badger <i>Meles meles</i>	Within 1km	
	Section 42 Species Common toad <i>Bufo bufo</i> House sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i> Yellow hammer <i>Emberiza citronella</i> Reed bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniculus</i> Kestrel <i>Falco tinnuncullus</i> Redwing <i>Turdus Illacus</i> Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	900m Not given Not given Not given Not given Not given Not given	Northeast South South South South South South

	Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i> Stoat <i>Mustela erminea</i>	500m 700m	South Southeast
	LBAP Smooth newt <i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i> N.B. A complete list may be found in Appendix 1.	900m	Northeast

Connectivity with the wider landscape

- 4.2 The site has a small area of grassland, broad leaved trees and hedgerows to the west but otherwise the landscape in this direction is dominated by residential housing. The site lies adjacent to a corridor following the Moss Valley from north to south along the eastern boundary of the site. This feature comprises running water, two large ponds (north of the site) and areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland.

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Habitats and Flora

- 4.3 The following habitats are present within the site; individual species are recorded in Target notes in Appendix 2:

- Semi-natural broadleaved woodland with frequent pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* with abundant sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*.
- Continuous scrub dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus*.
- Scattered scrub comprising immature pedunculate oak and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.
- Species poor semi-improved grassland with abundant cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*.
- Tall ruderal herb with abundant cock's foot and Rosebay willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium*.
- Species-poor native hedgerow.
- Bare ground.

Invasive species

- 4.4 No invasive species were recorded.

Fauna

Amphibians

- 4.5 Whilst there are ponds within and adjacent to the development area, there is a current licence in place with great crested newts (GCN) being excluded from the site by an amphibian fence. This species is outside the scope of this ecological assessment.

Bats

- 4.6 No features that would indicate the possible presence of roosting or hibernating bats were recorded inside the development boundary. There may be some limited potential for foraging along treelines and hedgerows in the northwest of the site.

Badger

- 4.7 There is one record of badger within 1km of the site. Possible field signs were observed where a wide mammal trail led to a hole in an amphibian fence, consistent with the size of a badger. There were also possible snuffle holes in the field beyond this.

Reptiles

- 4.8 There are no records of reptiles within 1km of the site and no reptiles were recorded during the site survey. The areas of tall ruderal growth and modified grassland may provide basking opportunities for reptiles but are generally of poor quality.

Water vole and Otter

- 4.9 There are no records of otter or water vole within 1km of the site. No signs of otter or water vole were observed and there is limited potential in terms of suitable habitat as the ditch to the north of the site is heavily shaded and contains very little vegetation.

Birds

- 4.10 There is a record of fieldfare to the south of the site. The trees, scrub and hedgerow provide some opportunities for bird foraging, sheltering and nesting. The grassland is heavily trafficked by dog walkers and this disturbance makes its use by ground nesting birds unlikely.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Protected sites

- 5.1 There is a SSSI approximately 100m from the southern boundary of the site. There is a raised area of land between the site and the SSSI which will provide a buffer and therefore it is unlikely that the marsh will be affected by any activities within the proposed development site. Therefore it is unlikely that there will be implications for protected sites as a result of this development.

Schedule 9 Invasive species

- 5.2 No invasive species were observed, however, the constraint regarding the timing of the survey must be considered.

Protected species

Amphibians

- 5.3 The site is already subject to a NRW development licence for GCN and therefore there are no further implications for this species as a result of the proposed development.

Bats

- 5.4 The site is on the margins of a built up area and provides only poor foraging habitat for bats. None of the trees observed contained features that would encourage the presence of bats. Although there may be a small loss of commuting and foraging habitat, the availability of much larger and better quality habitat nearby (especially to

the north), means that this loss is unlikely to impact on the local bat population. There are no implications for bats with regard to the proposed development.

Badger

- 5.5 The western section of the site may provide some foraging opportunities for badgers but this is limited and any badgers in the area will still have access to high quality habitat, especially to the north of the site. No setts were identified within or close to the site, however given that there is some evidence of badger activity, it is possible that they may be affected by the development if they were to construct a sett in the near vicinity.

Reptiles

- 5.6 There are no implications in relation to reptiles with regard to the proposed development.

Water vole and Otter

- 5.7 There are no implications for otter or water vole with regard to the proposed development.

Birds

- 5.8 The woodland and scrub provide shelter, feeding and nesting opportunities for birds. Disturbing breeding birds during the nesting period (March to August inclusive) is an offence. If work is undertaken outside this period, there are no implications for the proposed work with regard to breeding birds. If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be required by a suitably qualified ecologist a maximum of 24 hours in advance of any site works.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Any vegetation clearance (including hedges and trees) should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March - August inclusive) in order to ensure that nesting birds (in hedges/trees and grasslands) are not disturbed. If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist will need to check for evidence of nesting birds a maximum of 24 hours in advance of any works. If a nesting bird is found, a buffer zone will need to be implemented around the nest, the size of which is dependent on the species, and the ecologist will monitor the nest regularly to confirm when any young have fledged and advise the contractors when works can continue in that area.
- 6.2 A badger survey should be carried out on the site and the immediate surrounding area to ensure no setts have been constructed in areas likely to be affected by the development.
- 6.1 RAMs should be implemented during works to avoid accidental spillages of chemicals, oil or fuel into the water courses bordering the site. This should include storage of machinery and materials away from waterbodies and placing drip trays under storage containers to capture any spillages.
- 6.2 Measures to enhance the habitat for wildlife should be considered such as planting native plant species, installing bird and bat boxes, and creating or enhancing wildlife corridors.

7.0 REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

ENGLISH NATURE (2001) *Bat mitigation guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

HUTSON, A. M. (1993) *Action plan for conservation of bats in the United Kingdom*, The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (2010) *Phase 1 Habitat Survey*. JNCC. Peterborough

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (2005) '*Planning Policy Statement 9: Geological and Biological Conservation*' HMSO, Norwich

TUCKER GM & HEATH MF (1994) *Birds in Europe: Their Conservation Status*, Birdlife
ANON (1994) *Biodiversity – The UK Action Plan*, London HMSO
International, Cambridge

STACE, C. A. (2010) *Flora of the British Isles*, 3rd ed. Cambridge University Press

APPENDIX1: Desktop Study Information

Desk Based Ecology Assessment
Former Gatewen Colliery
Wrexham
Approximate Central Grid Reference: SJ 312 519

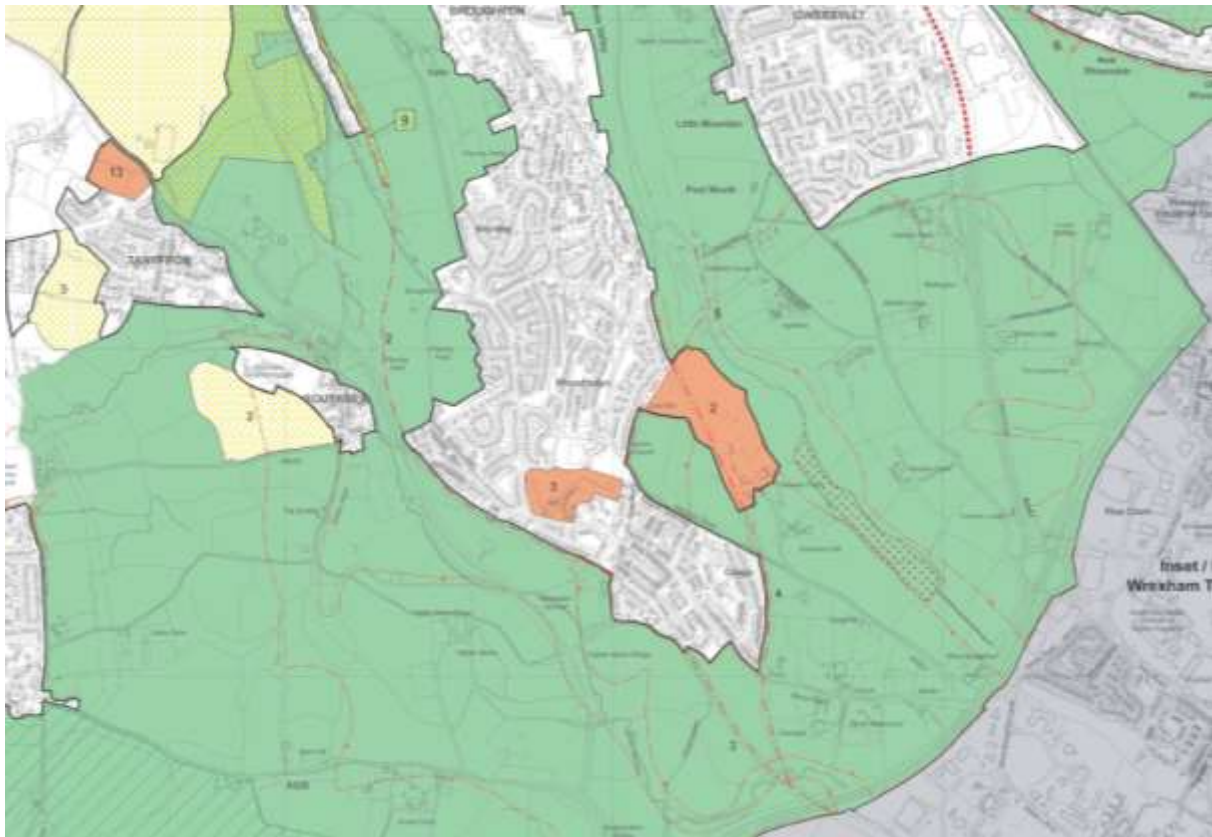
Contents

- Site location plan
- Extract from local plan
- Extracts of relevant planning policies
- Local site designations
- Local species records
- National site designations

Site location plan



Extract of Wrexham Borough County Council Unitary Development Plan (adopted Feb 2005) and supporting key



Inset Plan Notation / Nodiadau Map Mewnosiad

	County Boundary / Ffin y Sir
	Settlement Limit / Ffin Anheddiad - PS1
	District Shopping Centre / Canolfan Siopa Cylch - S5
	Commercial Offices / Swyddfeydd Masnachol - E7
	Green Barrier / Ffin Gwyrdd - EC1
	Special Landscape Area / Ardal Tirlun Arbennig - EC5
	Biodiversity Conservation / Cadwraeth Bioamrywiaeth - EC6
	Conservation Area / Ardal Cadwraeth - EC7, EC8
	Development and Flood Risk / Datblygiad a Perygl Llif - EC12
	Land Reclamation / Adfer Tir - EC16
	Housing / Tai - H1
	Traffic Management / Rheoli Ffyrdd - T7
	Walking/Cycling Route / Lwybr Cerdded/Beicio - T10
	Protection of Mineral Resources / Diogelu Adnoddau Mwynau - MW9
	Minerals Buffer Zone / Cylchfeydd Rhagod Mwynau - MW11

Extracts of relevant planning policies and supplementary planning guidance

Green Barriers

Policy EC1 Within Green Barriers, development will only be granted planning permission if it is for agriculture, forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and other uses of land which maintain the openness of the Green Barrier and do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it.

Hedgerows, Trees and Woodland

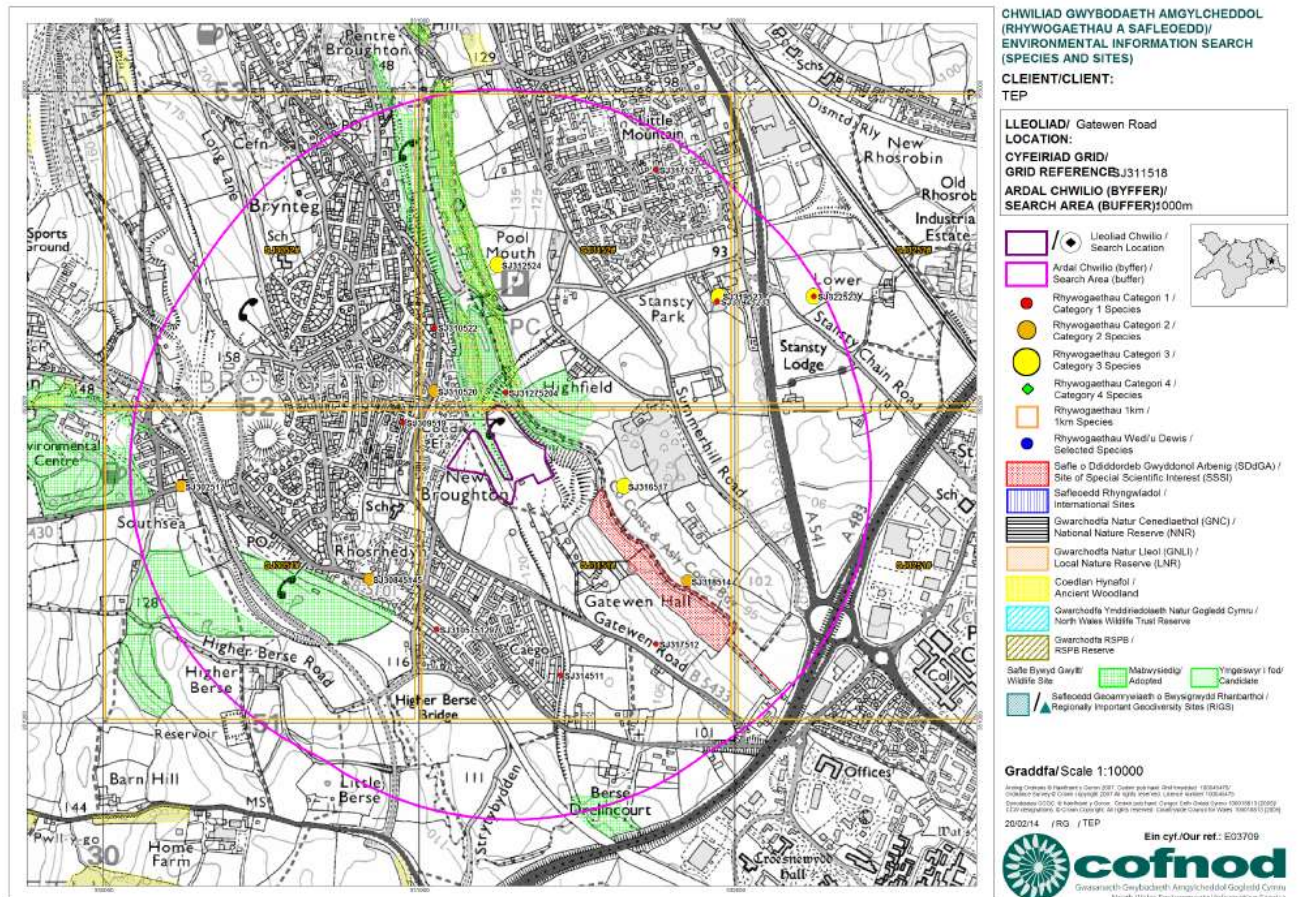
Policy EC4 Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape. Development which results in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted.

Biodiversity Conservation

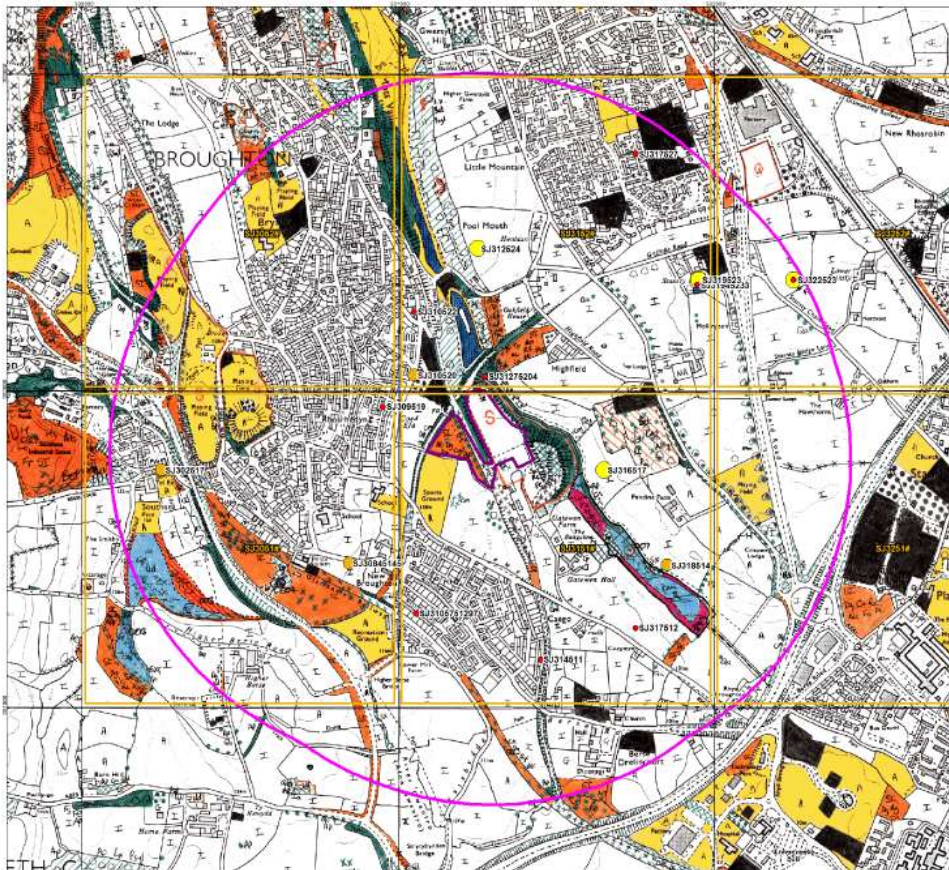
Policy EC6 Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where such development is permitted, damage should be kept to a minimum, and compensatory measures should be provided. Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported.

Map provided by COFNOD of site designations and species records within 1km

Maps not to be put into public domain



**Map provided by COFNOD of phase 1 habitat's within
1km**



CHWILIAD GWYBODAETH AMGYLCHEDDOL
(AROLWG CYNEFIN CYFNOD 1/
ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SEARCH
(PHASE 1 HABITATS))

CLEIENT/CLIENT:
TEP

LLEOLIAD/ Gatenwen Road

LOCATION:

CYFEIRIAD GRID/
GRID REFERENCE: SJ311518

ARDAL CHWILIO (BYFFER)

SEARCH AREA (BUFFER): 1000m

- New/ Or Lleoliad Chwilio/ Search Location
- Ardal Chwilio (byffer)/ Search Area (buffer)
- Rhywogaethau Categori 1/ Category 1 Species
- Rhywogaethau Categori 2/ Category 2 Species
- Rhywogaethau Categori 3/ Category 3 Species
- Rhywogaethau Categori 4/ Category 4 Species
- Rhywogaethau 1km/ 1km Species
- Rhywogaethau Wed'u Dawis/ Selected Species



Graddfa/ Scale 1:10000

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Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - A Technique for Environmental Audit			
A. Woodland and Scrub 1 Broad-leaved 1 Semi-natural 2 Plantation 3 Coniferous 1 Semi-natural 2 Plantation 3 Mixed 1 Semi-natural 2 Plantation 2 Totals 1 Dense/Continuous 2 Scattered 3 Partially/Scattered Trees 1 Broad-leaved 2 Coniferous 3 Mixed 4 Recently-felled Woodland 1 Broad-leaved 2 Coniferous 3 Mixed		B. Grassland and Marsh 1 Acid Grassland 1 Unimproved 2 Semi-improved 2 Neutral Grassland 1 Unimproved 2 Semi-improved 3 Calcareous Grassland 1 Unimproved 2 Semi-improved 4 Improved Grassland 5 Marsh/Marshy Grassland 6 Poor Semi-improved Grassland	
C. Tall Herb and Fern 1 Bracken 1 Continuous 2 Scattered		D. Heathland 1 Dry Dwarf Shrub Heath 1 Acid 2 Basic 2 Wet Dwarf Shrub Heath 3 Lichen/Sphagnum Heath 4 Heathland Heath Dwarf Heath 5 Dry Heathland Grassland Heath 6 Wet Heathland Grassland Heath	
E. Mire 1 Bog 1 Sphagnum Bog 2 Blanket Bog 3 Raised Bog 4 Wet Heathland Bog 5 Dry Heathland Bog 6 Heath and Spring 1 Acid/Neutral Heath 2 Basic Heath 3 Bryophyte-dominated Spring 7 Fen 1 Valley Fen 2 Basin Fen 3 Flood Plain Fen 4 Salt		F. Swamp, Marginal and Inundation 1 Swamp 2 Marginal and Inundation 1 Marginal Vegetation 2 Inundation Vegetation	
G. Open Water 1 Standing Water 1 Eutrophic 2 Mesotrophic 3 Oligotrophic 4 Oxytrophic 5 Acid 6 Basic 2 Running Water 1 Eutrophic 2 Mesotrophic 3 Oligotrophic 4 Oxytrophic 5 Hard Trufa 6 Brackish		H. Coastal 1 Inter-tidal 1 Mud/Sand 2 Shingle/Cobbles 3 Boulder/Rocks 2 Saltmarsh 1 Saltmarsh/Trove Interface 2 Scattered Plants 3 Dense Continuous 3 Steep Slope High Tide 4 Rocky Slope High Tide 5 Shallow Vegetation 6 Sand Dune 1 Dune Slack 2 Dune Grassland 3 Dune Heath 4 Dune Scrub 5 Open Dune 6 Maritime Cliff and Slope 1 Hard Cliff 2 Soft Cliff 3 Grown/Ledge Vegetation 4 Coastal Grassland 5 Coastal Heathland	
I. Rock Exposure and Waste 1 Natural 1 Inland Cliff 1 Acid/Neutral 2 Basic 1 Acid/Neutral 2 Basic 3 Limestone Pavement 4 Other Exposure 1 Acid/Neutral 2 Basic 2 Artificial 1 Quarry 2 Spoil 3 Mine 4 Rubble Tip		J. Miscellaneous 1 Cultivated/Disturbed Land 1 Arable 2 Amenity Grassland 3 Epheumal Short Perennial 4 Introduced Shrub 5 Garden 2 Boundaries (Mapping optional) 1 Inland Hedge 2 Species-rich 3 Species-poor 2 Hedgerow 1 Species-rich 2 Species-poor 3 Hedgerow and Trees 1 Species-rich 2 Species-poor 4 Fences 5 Wall 6 Dry Stone 7 Boundary Removed 8 Earth Bank 3 Built-up Area 4 Urban Site 5 Sea Wall 6 Buildings 7 Bare Ground 8 Other Habitat	

Extract of species data provided by COFNOD within 1km

Colnod Environmental Information Search

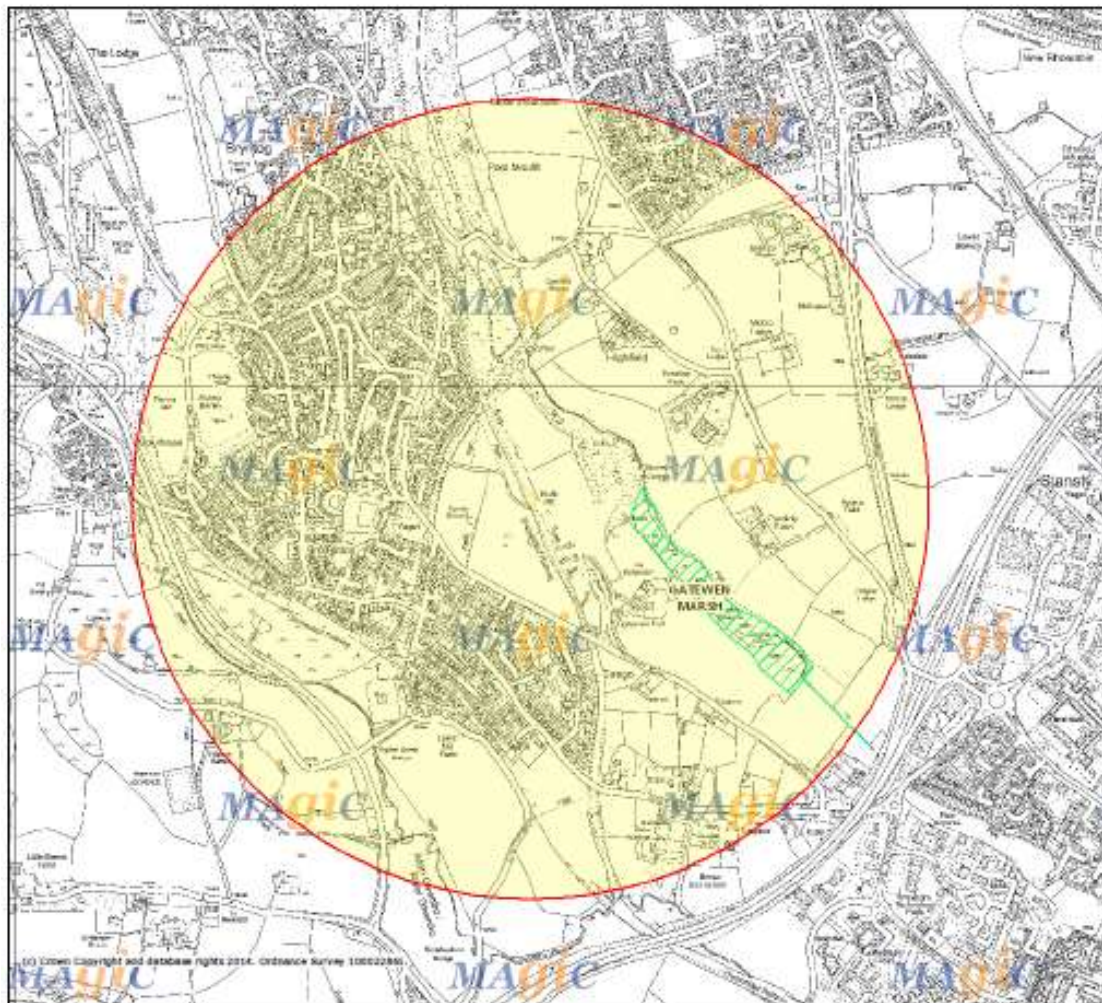
Please read Important Notices and Notices before interacting the following information.

- PUBLIC VERSION -

[illegible]

[illegible]

Magic Map 1km search zone for designated wildlife sites - Map



Legend

-  National Nature Reserves (Wales)
-  National Parks (England)
-  Ramsar Sites (Wales)
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Wales)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (Wales)
-  Special Protection Areas (Wales)
-  Biosphere Reserves (Wales)

Projection = UTM
 zone = 32Q
 datum = EPSG:31466
 units = metres
 projection = UTM

Map produced by MAGIC on 28 February, 2014.
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Magic Map 1km search zone for designated wildlife sites - Report

Site Check Results	
Site Check Report Report generated on Fri Feb 28 2014 You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: SJ312517 The following features have been found in your search area:	
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Wales) - points	
Name	GATEWEN MARSH
SSSI Code	31WDL
First Notified	28/01/1986
Last Notified	Null
Confirmation Date	24/10/1986
Eastings	331846
Northings	351422
Cartesian Area (Ha)	4.55
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Wales)	
Name	GATEWEN MARSH
SSSI Code	31WDL
First Notified	28/01/1986
Last Notified	Null
Confirmation Date	24/10/1986
Eastings	331846
Northings	351422
Cartesian Area (Ha)	4.55

APPENDIX 2: Target Notes Report

Target Notes Report

GATEWEN

Target Note GATEWENT001

Semi-natural Broadleaved Woodland

<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	A
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	A
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder	F
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	F
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	F
<i>Populus sp.</i>	Poplar species	F
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak	F
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble	F
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	O
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	O
<i>Prunus sp.</i>	Cherry species	O
<i>Quercus sp.</i>	Oak species	O

Target Note GATEWENT002

Tall Ruderal Herb

<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb	A
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	A
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	F
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	F

Target Note GATEWENT003

Scattered and Continuous Scrub

<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble	A
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	F
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak	F
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	O
<i>Rosa sp.</i>	Rose species	O

Target Note GATEWENT004

Species Poor Semi-improved Grassland

<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	A
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	F
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	F
<i>Poa sp.</i>	Meadow-grass species	O

Target Note GATEWENT005

Standing Water

Target Note GATEWENT006

Bare Ground

Target Note GATEWENT007

Species Poor Intact Hedgerow

Crataegus monogyna

Hawthorn

D

Target Note GATEWENT008

Continuous Scrub

Rubus fruticosus agg.

Bramble

D

Crataegus monogyna

Hawthorn

O

Target Note GATEWENT009

Possible Badger Trail

Target Note GATEWENT010

Possible signs of Badger Foraging

DRAWING G4378.001: PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP