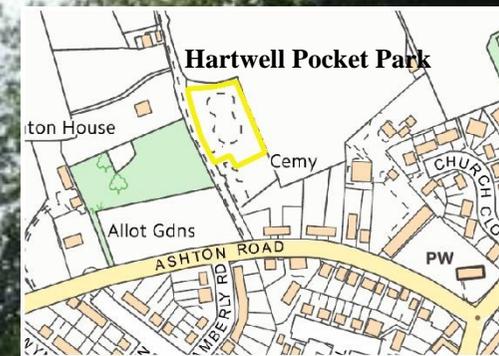


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**Wildlife Trust for
Beds, Cambs
& Northants**



Hartwell Pocket Park

Potential Wildlife Site (PWS)

2023 Survey Report

Grid Reference: SP 783 505

Size: 0.31 ha

WT Site Number: S1562

Site Assessment

Thank you for inviting us to visit Hartwell Pocket Park again this year. There is a good mixture of scrub, trees, grassland and planted areas including a fruiting thicket, developing meadow, butterfly bank and hedgerows. The meadow in particular has improved its plant diversity with Yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) now performing particularly well. Northamptonshire, like most other counties, has a Local Wildlife Site system which recognises particularly wildlife rich habitats at the county level. Sites are assessed against a set of criteria by local experts. Hartwell Pocket Park is a good site for local wildlife and although it does not meet the criteria for Local Wildlife Site identification, we would hope that with the continuation of current management it would in time. We would, therefore, describe it as a Potential Wildlife Site within the Local Wildlife Site System at the moment.

Site Description



Medlar (*Mespilus germanica*) growing well in the fruiting thicket.

The thick fruiting thicket continues to provide a variety of fruiting shrubs and trees including Field-rose (*Rosa arvensis*), Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*), Willows (*Salix* sp.), a Medlar (*Mespilus germanica*) and Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*). A strip of rough grassland remains around the edge and has been extended towards the path. It still includes a patch of Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) on the south-westerly corner of the thicket. A thick hawthorn

(*Crataegus monogyna*) hedge has been well maintained and continues to act as a boundary between the park and the cemetery.

The central meadow area in the Pocket Park has changed the most since our previous visit. It still contains a similar variety of grasses including frequent Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and some Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*). The introduction of Yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), however, has reduced the vigour of the grasses significantly as it is parasitic on the grasses. As a result wildflowers are increasing through this section of the site with frequent Meadow Cranesbill

(*Geranium pratense*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) as well as occasional Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*).

The wildflower beds which had been created not long before our previous visit, have now become part of the meadow with patches of Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Common Knapweed, Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Yellow-rattle and Meadow Cranesbill all doing well.

The area around the willow tee-pee and circle of stumps was similar to when it was previously surveyed. It continues to be a rough grassland containing frequent Cock's-foot, False Oat-grass and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Whilst not as botanically diverse as other sections of the Pocket Park, it has a good structure for both small mammals and insects. There is also a newly created bug hotel closer to the edge of the Park which is a very welcome addition.



Newly replaced circle of logs

The north-west section of the park continues to be a more botanically species rich area. It continues to contain patches of Lady's Bedstraw, Common Knapweed and Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) among taller grasses and occasional Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), which is often found in more botanically diverse areas.

The small woodland copse and hedgerow in the north-eastern corner of the Pocket Park also remain similar to our previous visit with Cherry, Dogwood, Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Field Maple and Wayfaring-tree (*Viburnum lantana*).



Bee and Butterfly Bank

There is bee and butterfly bank which offers a good habitat for its namesake species, as well as other invertebrates. This is rich in Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*). Another bed next to it is planted with typical garden plants which are also beneficial to wildlife and is doing well.

The edges of the Pocket Park remain as during the last survey. They contain a good variety of trees and shrubs, including Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field maple (*Acer campestre*) along with

blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*). There are frequent bird boxes present, which look to have been well used. The mixture of Bramble and Rose in the northwest corner of the Pocket Park was a particularly sunny and sheltered spot and was alive with butterflies and bees as well as other insects during our visit.

Interesting species

Neutral grassland plants of interest are: Yellow-rattle, Common Knapweed, Lady's Bedstraw, Meadow Crane's-bill, Meadow Vetchling, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and Yellow Oat-grass. There is also a good variety of trees and shrubs around and within the Pocket Park.

Insect activity was also present with a variety of butterflies, bees and hoverflies.

Habitat

There are about 750 Local Wildlife Sites in Northamptonshire that are recognised to be important for wildlife within the county. By maintaining a network of these sites and other wildlife habitats, the Wildlife Trust aims to encourage and support landowners in managing their land in a way that will be sympathetic to wildlife without compromising their own aspirations for the sites. Local Wildlife Sites have no statutory designation and therefore have no

associated obligations. They also do not confer any new rights of access. Whilst Hartwell Pocket Park does not yet meet the criteria for identification as a Local Wildlife Site, it contains a range of habitats of value to wildlife especially the meadows, scrub and trees. The meadow areas in particular have improved for wildlife since our last visit.

Management Recommendations

As the fruiting thicket has now grown into a dense habitat, it might benefit from some management. A small area could be coppiced every few years on rotation to encourage different stages of growth and allow light levels to increase, which in turn would encourage understory growth. It is a present a good dense nesting habitat and provides a range of nuts, fruits and flowers for foraging wildlife, which is also of value.



New Bug Hotel

The central meadow area has increased its diversity well since our last visit, with Yellow-rattle now abundant and Meadow Crane's-bill increasing. Continued yearly cutting, with the collection of the clippings, will increase and maintain this diversity. Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) is evident throughout the site and will need to have its seed heads removed after flowering to keep in check. It is still a beneficial plant for various invertebrates but can take over if allowed. Cleavers (*Galium aparine*) have significantly reduced in the park with efforts of the local scout group and maintaining this effort will continue to benefit the site.

The north-west corner of the grassland continues to do well, and we would recommend the management to cut and clear it in early summer (around July) to reduce the dominance of grass species and continue to allow more herb species to develop continues.

Species list

Taxon Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	Abundance	Indicator
Butterflies and Moths	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	Ringlet	Y	
Butterflies and Moths	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	Meadow Brown	Y	
Butterflies and Moths	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	Large White	Y	
Butterflies and Moths	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	Red Admiral	Y	
Vascular Plants	<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	O	AnW
Vascular Plants	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	LF	a
Vascular Plants	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail	F	
Vascular Plants	<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser Burdock	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass	F-LA	
Vascular Plants	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-Ladies	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's-purse	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	O	n, c
Vascular Plants	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	O	AnW
Vascular Plants	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	F	
Vascular Plants	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Wild Teasel	R	

Vascular Plants	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Festuca arundinacea</i>	Tall Fescue	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	R	f
Vascular Plants	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw	LF	c, n, a
Vascular Plants	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Geranium pratense</i>	Meadow Crane's-bill	LF	n
Vascular Plants	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Wall Barley	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Iris	R	f
Vascular Plants	<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling	LF	n
Vascular Plants	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy	R	n, c
Vascular Plants	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	LF	a, c, n
Vascular Plants	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Mespilus germanica</i>	Medlar	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass	LF	

Vascular Plants	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Prunus domestica</i>	Wild Plum	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	F	
Vascular Plants	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle	LA	N, C
Vascular Plants	<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field-rose	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Rubus caesius</i>	Dewberry	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble	LA	
Vascular Plants	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	R	n
Vascular Plants	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Salix</i> sp.	Willow sp.	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Salix alba</i>	White Willow	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Champion	R	a
Vascular Plants	<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black Bryony	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	Feverfew	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	F	
Vascular Plants	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wych Elm	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	LF	
Vascular Plants	<i>Veronica arvensis</i>	Wall Speedwell	R	
Vascular Plants	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell	O	
Vascular Plants	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring-tree	R	AnW
Vascular Plants	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder-rose	R	

A (a) – Strong (standard) acidic grassland indicator

C (c) – Strong (standard) calcareous grassland indicator
N (n) – Strong (standard) neutral grassland indicator
F (f) – Strong (standard) fen, swamp and marsh indicator
AnW – Ancient woodland indicator

D-Dominant, A-Abundant, F-Frequent, O-Occasional, R-Rare
(Y-Present, L-Locally) * - Present across multiple areas

For further advice on managing this site or for additional information on Local Wildlife Sites see www.wildlifebcn.org/wildlife-sites-northamptonshire or contact Gavin Bennett.



**Wildlife Trust for
Beds, Cambs
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**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

The Local Wildlife Sites project is supported by funding from West Northamptonshire Council.

LWS Funding Opportunities

Countryside Stewardship; Environmental Stewardship funding for farmers, woodland owners, foresters and land managers to make environmental improvements to their land.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-get-paid-for-environmental-land-management>

Catchment Sensitive Farming; training, advice and grant support for farmers and land managers to reduce water and air pollution from agriculture.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution>

Nene – Peter Brown, 07342 080983, peter.brown@naturalengland.org.uk

Ouse – Simon Bateman, 07768 873942, simon.bateman@naturalengland.org.uk

Cherwell – Jonathan Newman, 07768 842655,

jonathan.newman@naturalengland.org.uk

HS2 Woodland Fund; funding to create native woodland or restore plantations on ancient woodland sites within 25 miles of the HS2 route.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hs2-woodland-fund>

Farming for the Future; working with farmers and landowners in the Nene Valley from Northampton to Peterborough to help restore and create meadow and wetland habitats as well as undertake vital infrastructural improvements to tackle diffuse pollution & aid water quality. <https://www.wildlifebcn.org/farming-future>

Woodland Trust tree planting; trees, grants and funding schemes from 30 trees to 300,000, plus expert advisers who can help you put the right trees in the right place to achieve your goals. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/large-scale-planting/>