

Westerleigh Parish Biodiversity Action Plan



Introduction

Biodiversity is the whole variety of life on Earth, all species of plants and animals, their genetic variation and the habitats and ecosystems they are part of. It includes not just the rare or the threatened but also the wildlife that is familiar to us in the places where we live and work. Biodiversity is important for its own sake, along with the many benefits we derive from the natural environment – products like food, fibre, wood, and water; services like pollination, nutrient cycling, soil formation, water purification, flood defence and opportunities for reflection and recreation – all are critical for our wellbeing and survival.

All public authorities, including South Gloucestershire Council, parish and town councils have a legal duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity while carrying out their activities (section 40 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006).

Biodiversity Audit

A major step to knowing what you can do for local wildlife is to know what you have already got. This document will help you with this but it is just a start. Ultimately the protection and enhancement of the local natural environment requires the interest and enthusiasm of the local community.

Designated sites for nature conservation

Internationally important wildlife sites (i.e Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protected Areas (SPAs)): None

Nationally important wildlife sites (i.e Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserve): None

Locally important wildlife sites (i.e Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) :

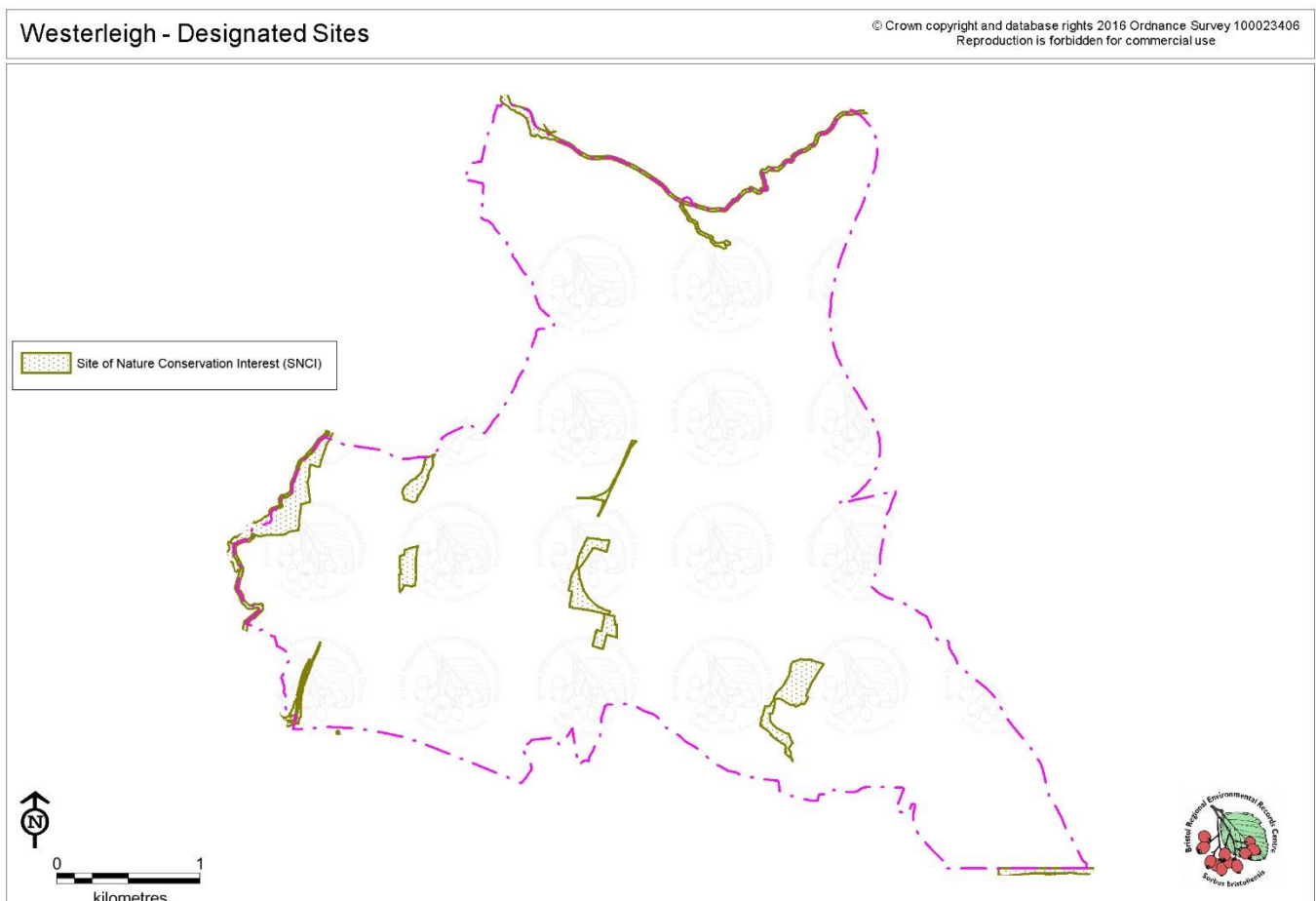
- Cuckoo Lane/ A432, Wick Wick road verge, neutral grassland
- Fields south of Rockwell Wood
- Hotwater Brake
- Blackberry Brake
- Branch pool wood, Henfield





- Martin Croft Brake, Ramhill
- Disused railway, Ramhill, woodland and hedgerows
- Dewshill Wood
- Fields near Cliff Farm, calcareous grassland
- Disused railway east of Coalpit Heath, leading to Frog Lane
- River Frome (part of) b

Please see map and/or contact Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC)
<http://www.brerc.org.uk/index.htm> for further information.





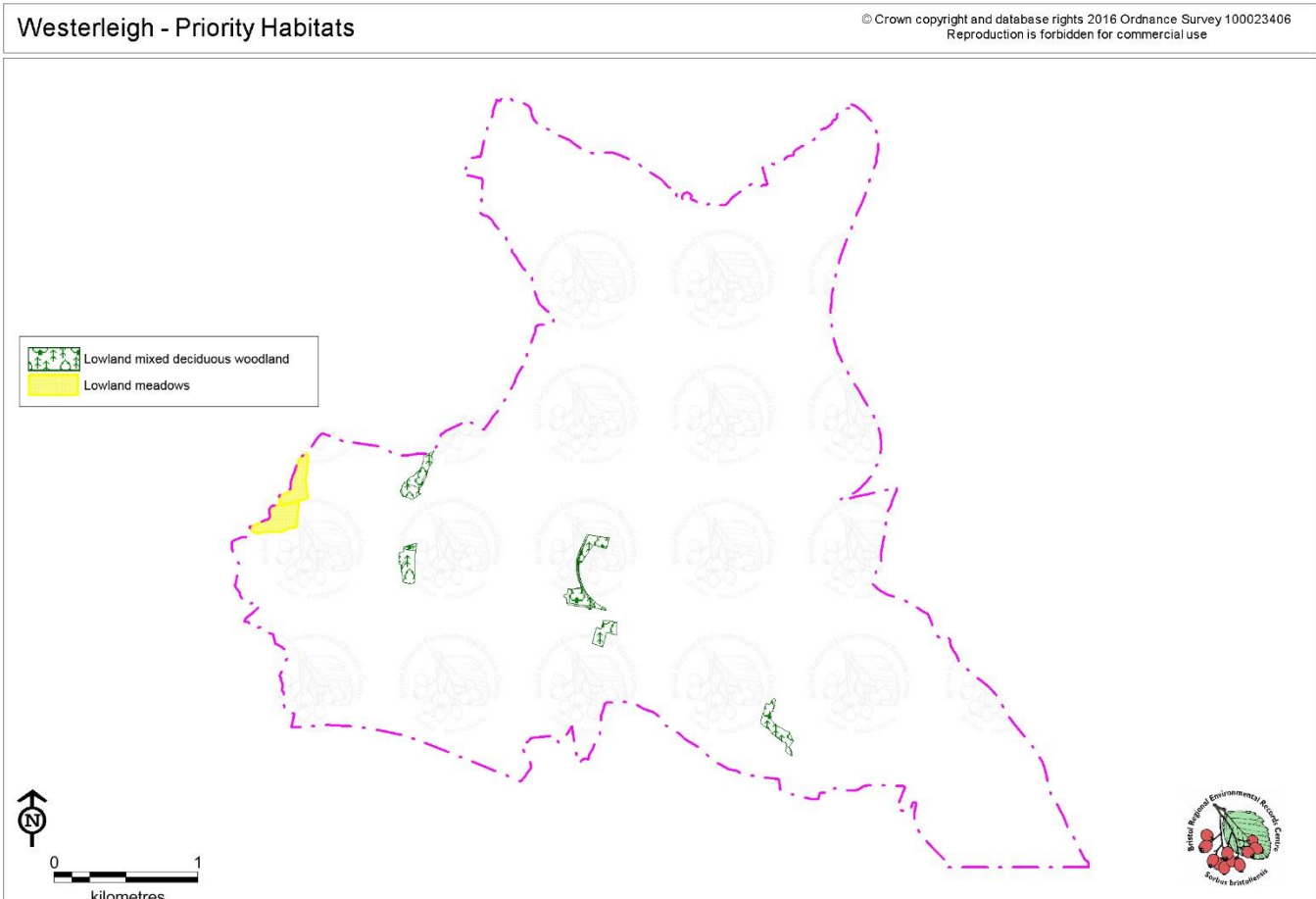
Other sites

Other sites important for wildlife include Protected Roadside Nature Reserve at Wick Wick and Says Court Solar Farm. Sites that could be enhanced for biodiversity include churchyard, school grounds and the new sections of the Bristol – Bath Railway Path (Coxgrove Hill to Westerleigh).

Habitats of Principle Importance (Section 41 NERC Act 2006) - the most important habitats for wildlife and a focus for conservation action

The following priority habitats have been recorded in the parish. Please see priority habitat map for further information. Please note that not all priority habitat has been mapped.

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland Meadows





Species of Principle Importance (Section 41 NERC Act 2006) – the most important species for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

The following priority species have been recorded in the parish. This list was compiled by BRERC (2016). European protected species are not included.

Blood-vein	Ghost Moth	Shaded Broad-bar
Bullfinch	Grass Snake	Skylark
Cinnabar	Grey Partridge	Slow-worm
Common Toad	Hedgehog	Song Thrush
Corn Bunting	Herring Gull	Spotted Flycatcher
Corn Buttercup	House Sparrow	Starling
Cornflower	Lapwing	Turtle Dove
Cuckoo	Lesser Redpoll	White-clawed Crayfish
Dunnock	Linnet	Yellowhammer
Eel	Reed Bunting	

Further information on sites, habitats and species <http://www.brerc.org.uk/i-maps/index.html> are available from BRERC. National priority habitat inventories and designations are also available to view online at MAGIC <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

Biodiversity Action

How local conservation projects can contribute... taken from DEFRA's, A simple guide to Biodiversity 2020 and progress update (July 2013).

Biodiversity 2020 deliberately avoids setting specific targets and actions for local areas because Government believes that local people and organisations are best placed to decide how to implement the strategy in the most appropriate way for their area or situation. However, local projects are particularly likely to be making a key contribution to the strategy if they involve:

1. Improving the quality of existing habitats so they are able to better support biodiversity;
 - On sites where condition is unknown survey work (with landowner permission) could be commissioned from a knowledgeable resident, student, local conservation group or professional with management recommendations included for future action if necessary.





2. Creating new areas of priority habitat;

- Investigate ways to increase tree cover to increase woodland / street trees/ orchards. There may be patches of amenity land available.

3. Identifying and managing ways for habitats to be linked together to create new networks for wildlife;

- Use ecological network and opportunity maps to identify areas for enhancement.
- Investigate any key corridors such as hedgerows and the river corridor – identify any key gaps.

4. Managing biodiversity at the scale of whole natural systems and landscapes;

- Consider linking to local and national projects such as the B-Lines project which has a specific aspiration for a wildflower route through your parish.

5. Engaging people in new ways that increases the number of people who understand and value nature;

- Consider putting on events / recording/ volunteering opportunities e.g. via schools(s).

This Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is just the beginning and should be read in conjunction with the updated **South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan** (2016 - 2026) which provides the strategic overview. It is by no means exhaustive and as a community, you may have more ideas for action that you would like to take forward in coming years. It is intended that this BAP is shared, updated and monitored by the local authority, by parishes, the Biodiversity Action Group (BAG) and any other interested parties.

