

# Habitat Survey Summary

An overview of areas of Burton Ridge, Long Leys

Produced for LLRA & NPAG by Jon Davies

Version 3.0 29 July 2019

This habitat summary has been produced as supporting evidence for the Long Leys Neighbourhood Plan being developed to cover the 2021-2040 period. It is also planned to produce a similar summary for the other areas of Long Leys, including surrounding farmland and the Long Leys Road allotments.

## **The purposes of the survey were:**

1. To identify habitat areas of the Burton Ridge deserving of greater protection in the Neighbourhood Plan
2. To identify actions that could improve the habitat and increase biodiversity
3. To identify possible actions that LLRA could take the lead on, in co-operation with landowners and/or the Long Leys community, to improve habitats and allow greater community engagement and enjoyment.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to Caroline Steel (CS) for invaluable assistance with the habitat summary, background, features of interest and advice on potential habitat improvements. Thanks also to Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership for access to historical ecological surveys (see Appendix A) and species lists. The possible LLRA approach was written by Jon Davies of LLRA.

## Introduction

The Burton Ridge in Long Leys covers around 34 Hectares and is one of the key features that defines the “Green Look” of Long Leys.

Each area of the Burton Ridge has been classified by:

- **Habitat:** Brief description of habitat
- **Background:** Brief history and current status
- **Features of Interest:** Features of habitat identified as noteworthy
- **Potential Action to Improve Habitat:** Actions suggested to enhance existing habitat to improve biodiversity
- **Possible LLRA Approach:** Initial suggestion, for discussion and review by NPAG and the Long Leys community, for actions that could be taken

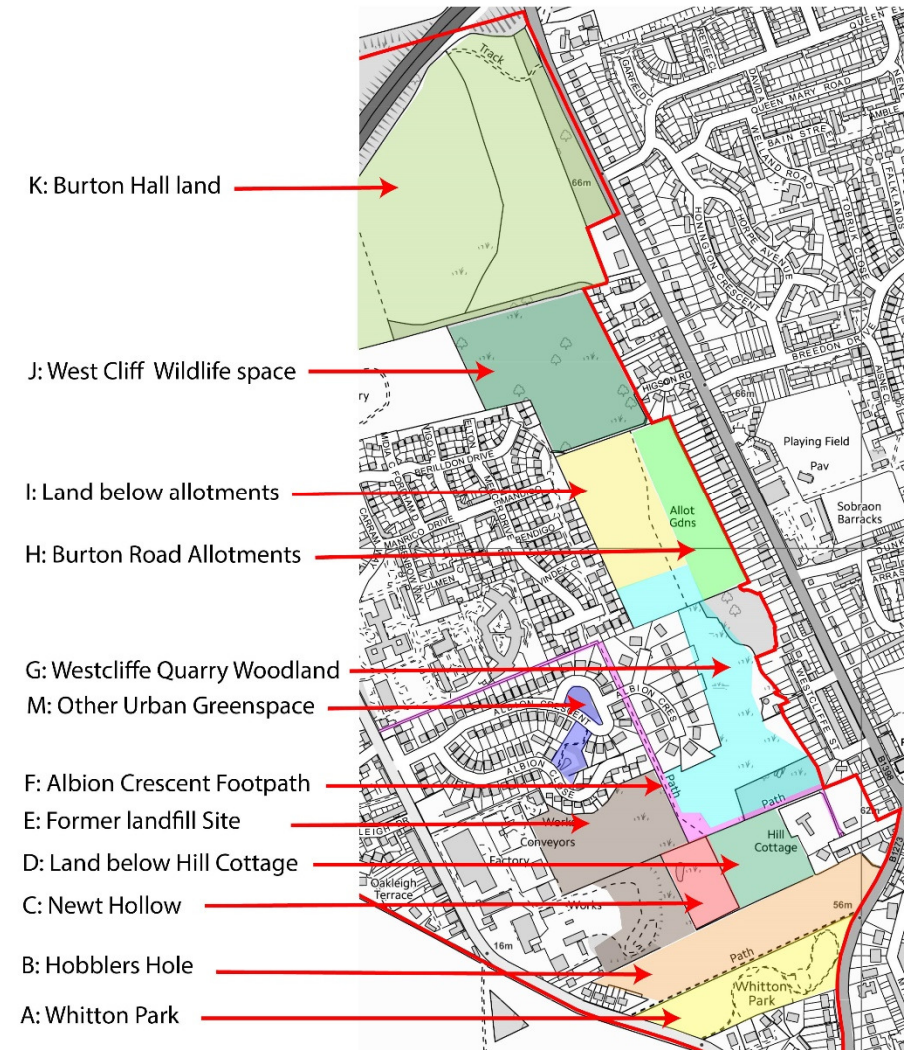
The report currently covers the following areas of Burton Ridge, Long Leys (lettering used to identify specific habitat areas, approx. area in brackets):

- A: Whitton Park (2.1 Hectares)
- B: Hobblers Hole (2.9 hectares)
- C: Newt Hollow (0.8 hectares)
- D: Land below Hill Cottage (1.2 hectares)
- E: Former Landfill Site (3.5 hectares)
- F: Albion Crescent Footpath (0.4 hectares)
- G: Westcliffe Quarry Woodland (4 hectares)
- H: Burton Road Allotments (1.7 hectares)
- I: Land below allotments (2.9 hectares)
- J: West Cliff wildlife space - land to North of Higson Steps (4 hectares)
- K: Burton Hall land south of A46 (10 hectares)
- L: Homes & Gardens in Long Leys\*
- M: Other Urban Greenspace in Long Leys\* (upwards of 0.4 hectares)

TOTAL: Approx. 33.7 Hectares (excludes homes and gardens)

\* Includes habitat across Long Leys outside of Burton Ridge

## Burton Ridge Habitat Areas



## **Proposed Habitat Areas Deserving Greater Protection in the Neighbourhood Plan**

Based on the habitat survey, NPAG would provisionally propose the following areas:

- Hobblers Hole (Ancient grassland with springs & ephemeral pond)
- Newt Hollow (Ancient grassland, scrub and pond)
- West Cliff wildlife space – land to North of Higson Steps (Ancient grassland)
- Burton Hall (TBC following further ecological survey).

## **Summary of Potential Habitat Improvements**

Detail is provided under each specific area. Broadly these consist of working with landowners to re-introduce annual mowing or grazing animals to maintain key grassland areas. Some areas would also benefit from more regular cutting back of brambles. Other potential improvements include:

- The re-instatement of the Hobblers Hole ephemeral pond
- Providing better access to the Newt Hollow pond to allow educational use.

## **Possible LLRA Approaches to Explore Further with Community**

As well as encouraging and supporting key habitat improvement work above, there are other opportunities that require discussion and support from landowners and the community. These include:

- Introducing a “community trail” which would link a number of habitat areas together (grassland and woodland).  
Variants suggested include: jogging / cycling / nature / woodland trails
- Providing extra habitats (eg bird/bat boxes) in some locations
- Establishing a footpath suitable for all year use from Albion Crescent to Whitton Park and ensuring long term viability of footpath to Yarborough Road
- Upgrading the play equipment at Whitton Park
- Considering the viability of community solar panels on land not planned for other uses.

**Specific detail on each habitat is provided in the following pages.**

## A: Whitton Park - approx. 2.1 Hectares

### Habitat

Maintained lawns plus mature trees to north and east boundaries. Mature hedges to north and south boundaries.

### Background

Pubic park with fenced off children's play area.

### Features of Interest

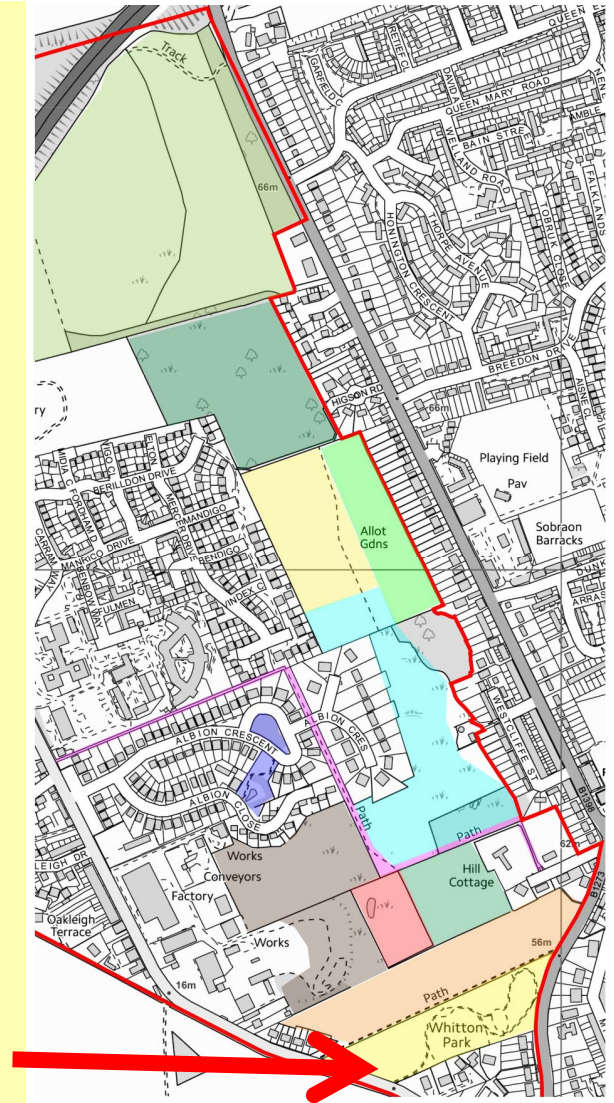
- N/A

### Potential Actions to Improve Habitat

- None proposed

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner

- Possible upgrade to play equipment.





## B: Hobblers Hole - approx. 2.9 Hectares

### Habitat

Overgrown grassland developing to scrub.

Further environmental survey planned 2019/20 LWT/CoLC.

### Background

Historically, Hobblers Hole was enclosed for grazing with a stockproof fence and was used by West Common horses during the fallow period. Probably last grazed in late 90s and since then has grown in a not particularly interesting way. Aggressive common plants such as thistle, nettle and bramble swamping other plants. A variety of bird life present.



### Features of Interest

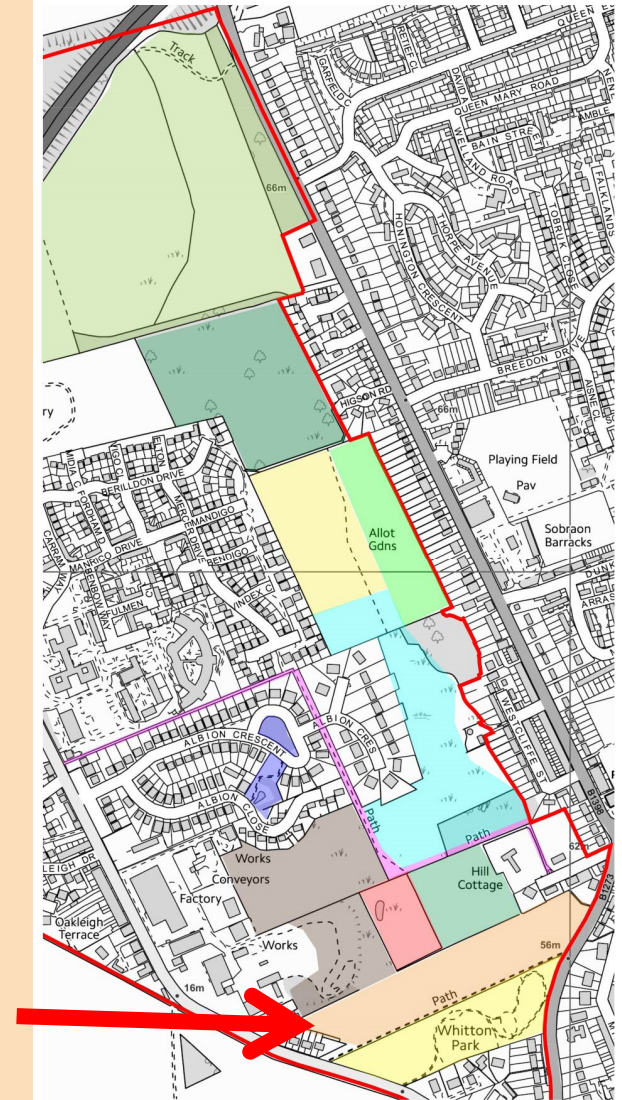
- Small area of now overgrown ancient grassland and anthills at Yarborough Road end
- Ephemeral pond area by path leading to Newt Hollow, now covered in Great Hairy Willow Herb

### Potential actions to Improve Habitat

- Ideally area needs grazing and/or mowing with cuttings removed to reduce fertility
- Pond could be dug out, possibly with mini digger having preserved important plants beforehand such as Purple Loosestrife. The rare Great Crested Newt was last recorded there in 2013.

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner

- Explore how grazing / cutting could be re-instated with City of Lincoln Council (may take 5 years)
- Explore community support for clearing pond area (with mechanical support from council)
- Explore the cutting of a 2-metre wide strip to the west side of path (away from pond area) to help access. Longer term a semi-permeable surface (limestone chippings?) could help with winter use. Consider raised wooden section of path to avoid flooded area of seasonal pond or divert around it.







View to east from footpath (Hobblers Hole)



View to south from Newt Hollow to Whitton Park path (Hobblers Hole)



Flooded pond area during Winter (Hobblers Hole)



Pond area during Summer. Vegetation needs up-rooting otherwise there will be no open water (Hobblers Hole)



## C: Newt Hollow - approx. 0.8 Hectares

### Habitat

Overgrown grassland with pond and wetland vegetation.

Ecological survey planned 2019/2020.

### Background

Owned by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. Was previously maintained using Lincoln Conservation Volunteers. Appears to have seen little management in recent years. Pond area was inaccessible due to growth and needs cutting back.



### Features of Interest

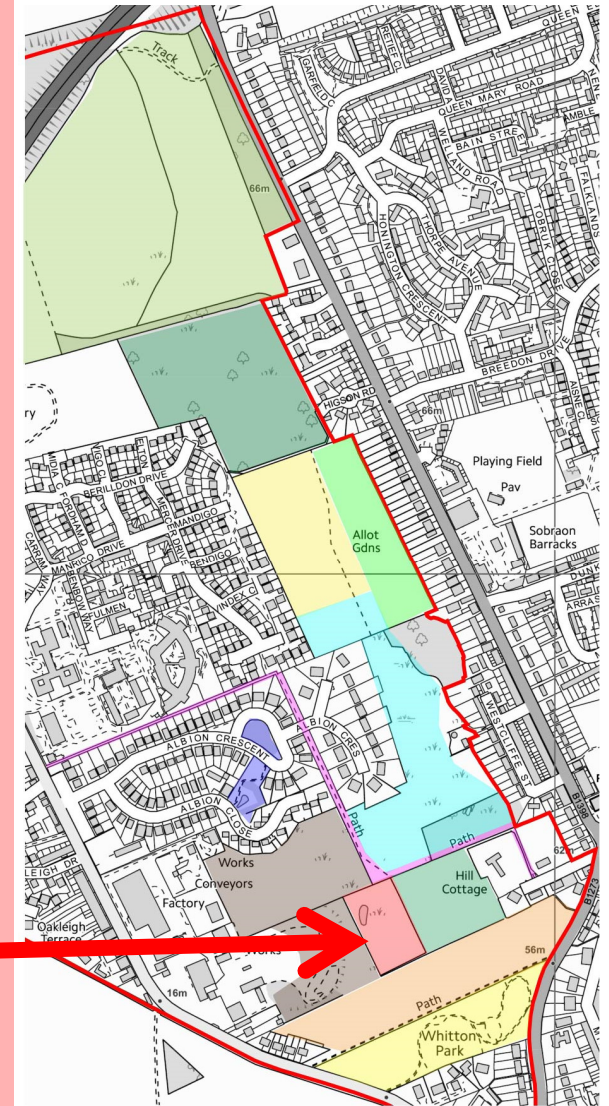
- Pond area (used to have dipping platform, which may well now have disintegrated)

### Potential Actions to Improve Habitat

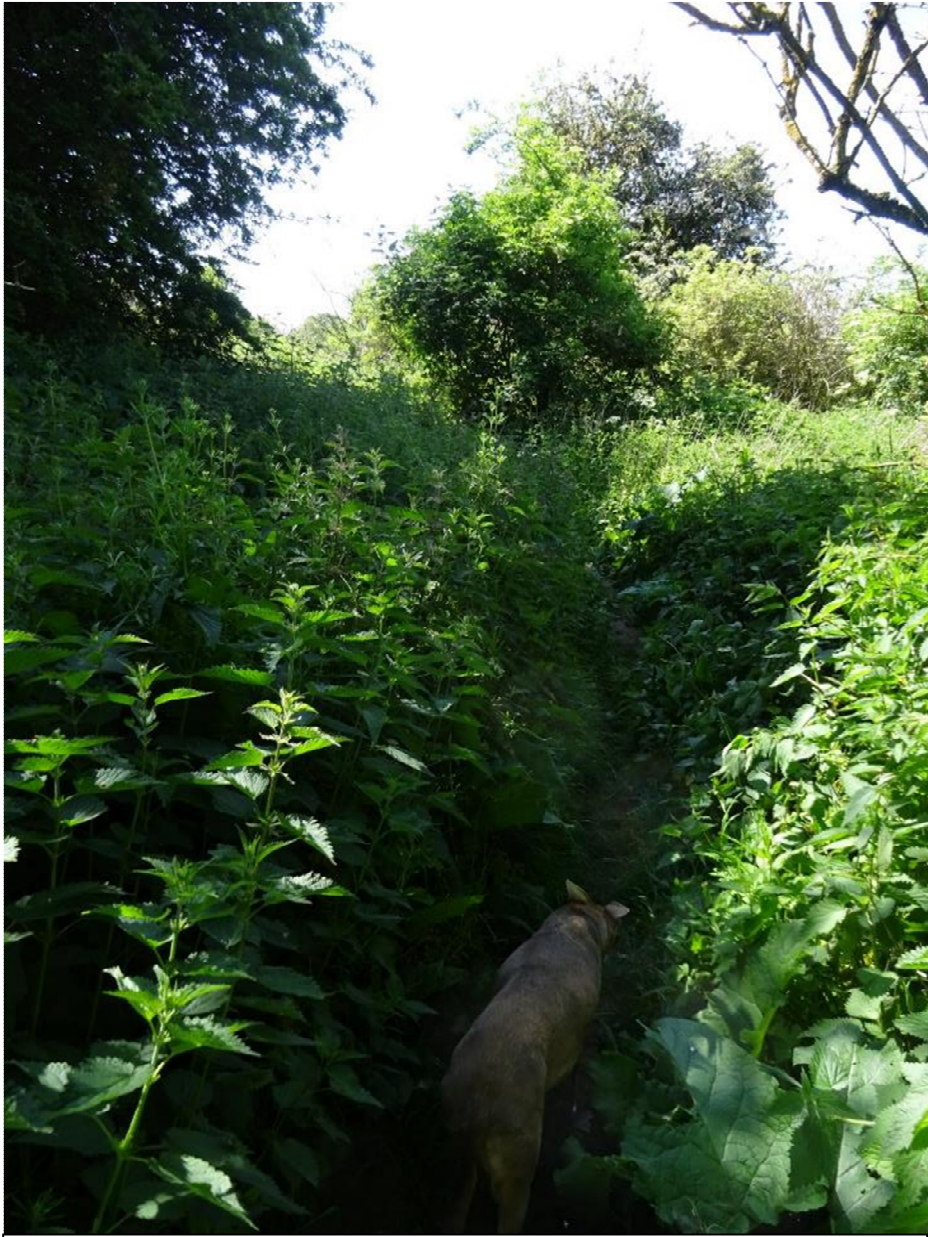
- Needs grazing / cutting back with vegetation removed or composted
- CS to ask for site management history from LWT

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner (LWT) and conservation groups

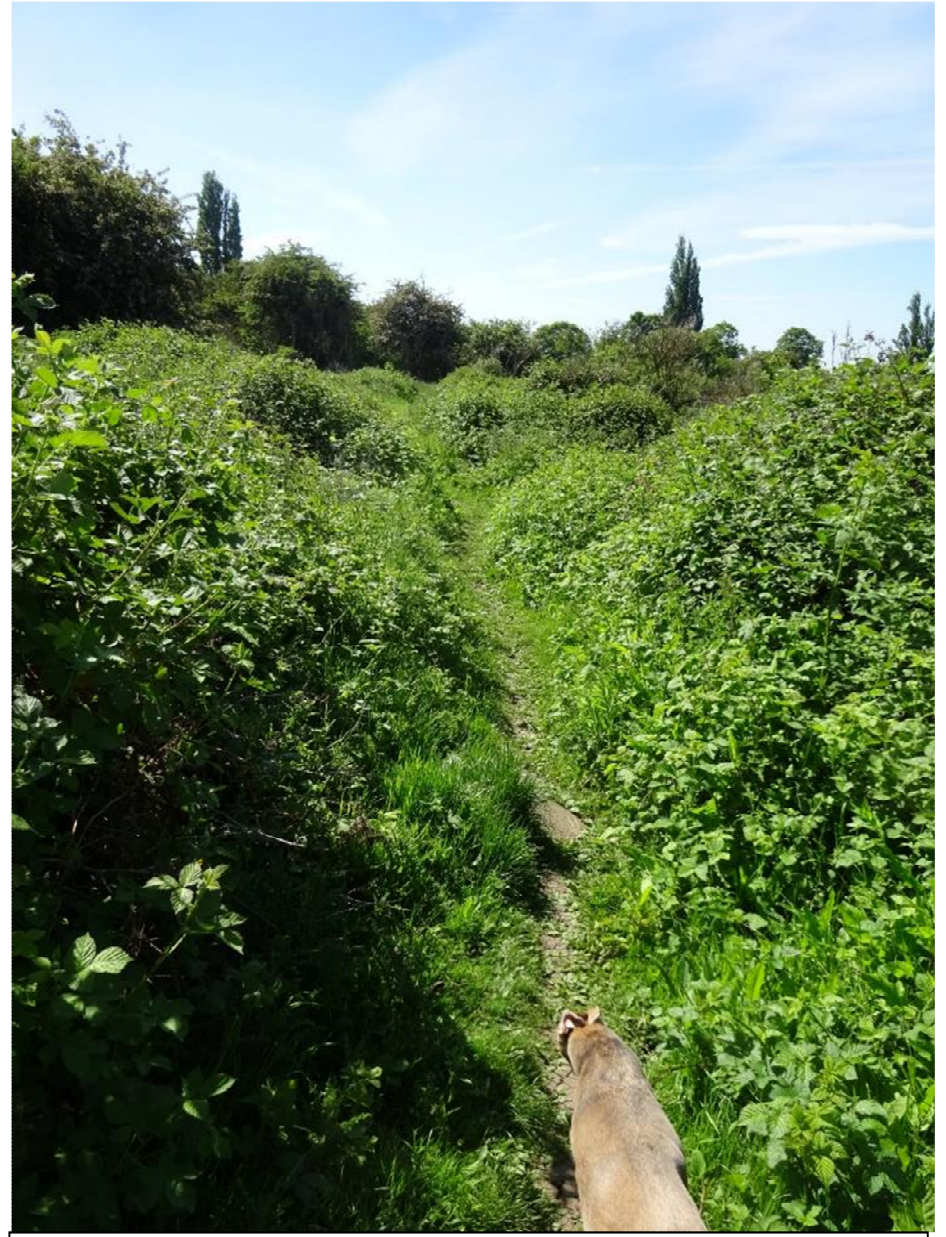
- Support improving access to pond and investigate potential for educational use
- Explore the cutting of a 2-metre wide strip through the site to help access (avoiding anthills)
- Explore prospect of a permeable surface suitable for winter walking/cycling (limestone chippings?)







Path to Whitton Park (Newt Hollow)



Path to Whitton Park (Newt Hollow)



## D: Land Below Hill Cottage - approx. 1.2 Hectares

### Habitat

Overgrown grassland and scrub.

### Background

Was originally grazed by horses. Since then the area has become overgrown and will develop into scrub and potentially into woodland.

### Features of Interest

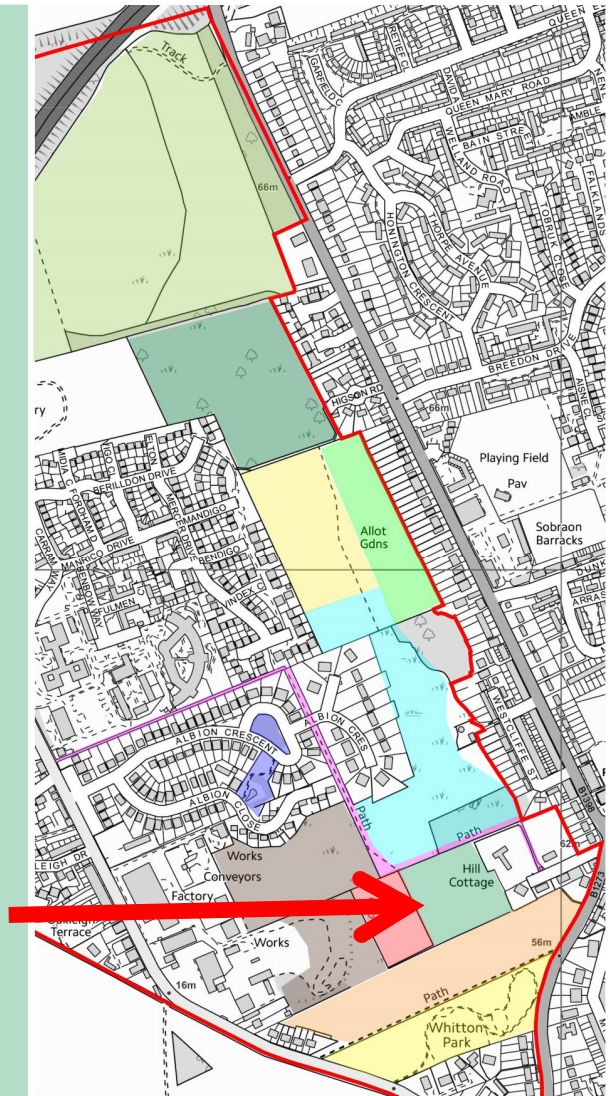
- N/A

### Potential Actions to Improve Habitat

- None proposed

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner

- No actions proposed



## E: Former Landfill Site - approx. 3.5 Hectares

### Habitat

Recent grassland with some woodland.

### Background

Site of clay extraction for Albion Brick Works, was a pond and then filled with building waste in the 1960s and then covered with soil. Monitoring of this land still takes place, but little methane detected. Potentially contaminated land. The north east corner of the site has developing woodland.



### Features of Interest

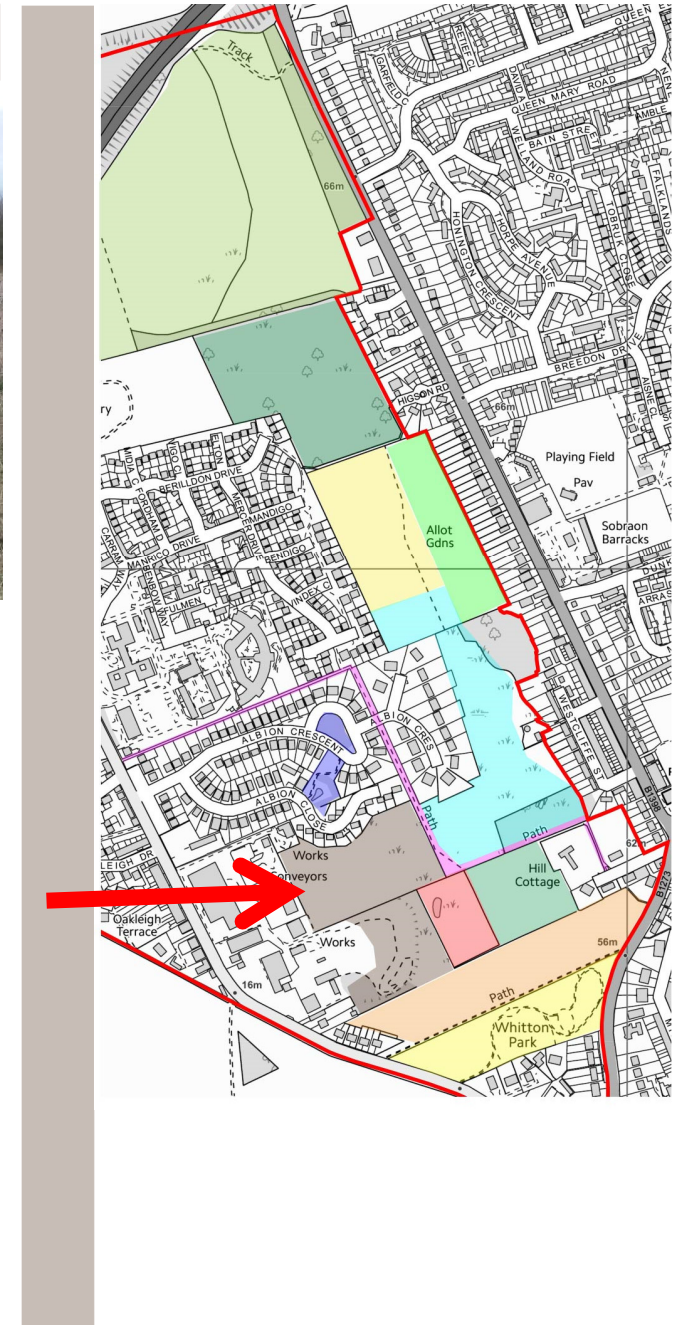
- N/A

### Potential Actions to Improve Habitat

- None proposed

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner

- No actions proposed





## F: Albion Crescent Footpath - approx. 0.4 Hectares

### Habitat

Path with trees either side and small area of grassland.

### Background

Footpath which leads from Long Leys Road with a right turn over Albion Crescent and then a sharp left turn up to Yarborough Road roundabout.

### Features of Interest

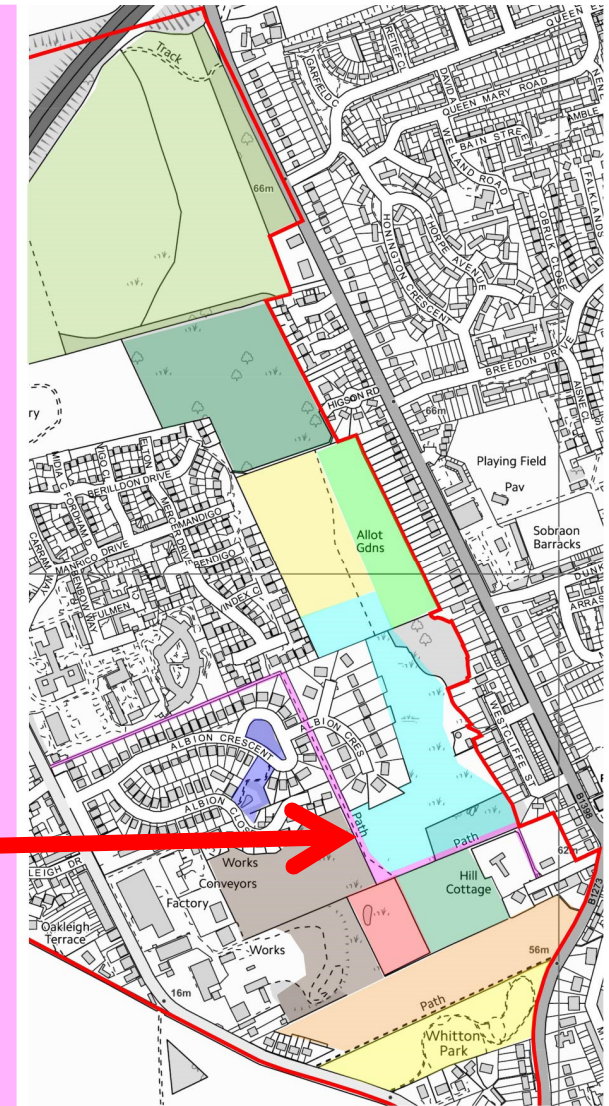
- N/A

### Potential Actions to Improve Habitat

- None proposed

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner

- Concern over stability of landowner-diverted footpath by Mill Cottage. Ensure footpath access continues to be available on uphill section.
- Explore improved surface for path running from Albion Crescent to proposed new footpath through Newt Hollow, to allow use in winter and wet weather.







Albion Crescent footpath to Yarborough Road



Landslip by footpath Albion Crescent /Yarborough Road



Albion Crescent footpath to Yarborough Road



## G: Westcliffe Quarry Woodlands – approx. 4 hectares

### Habitat

Woodlands circa 50-100 years old.

### Background

Abandoned quarry used for clay extraction for Westcliffe Brick Works which had ceased activity in the early 20th Century (by 1930). Part owned by City of Lincoln Council and part by individual landowners. There are small areas of standing water at the low points of the quarry, potentially from springs. The quarry has steep side to the east. Evidence of a former hedge runs across the site and there are remnant wildflowers in places. Some of the more unusual trees (cherry plumb) appear to have grown up before the surrounding woodland developed.



### Features of Interest

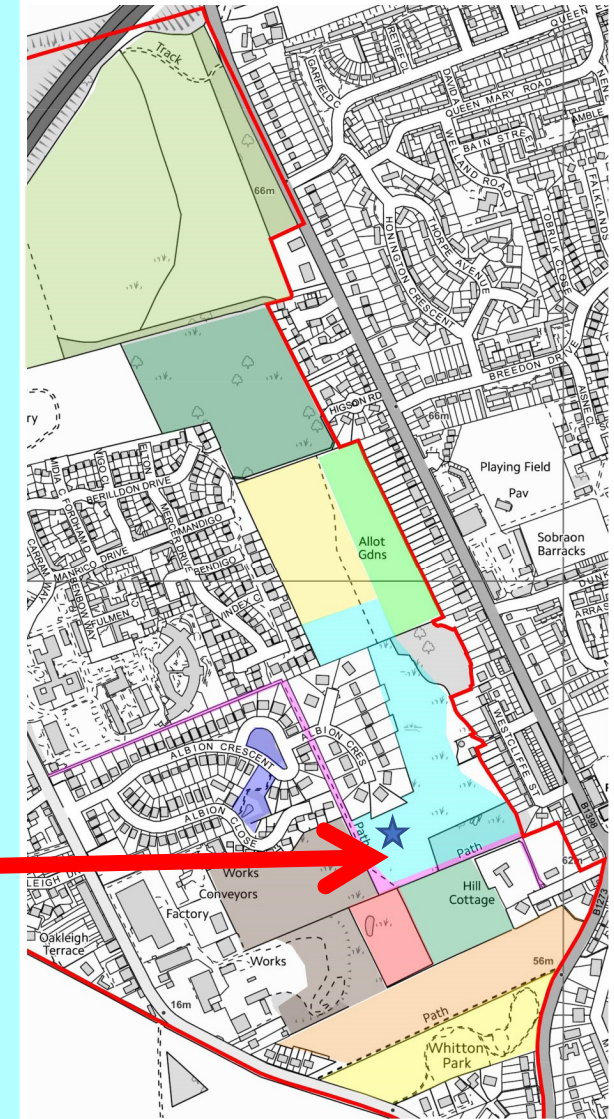
- A variety of tree habitats to support birdlife.

### Potential Actions to Improve Habitat

- Consider keeping brambles at bay in areas to encourage remnant wildflowers.

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner

- A jogging/cycling trail through the woodlands to meet up with the Higson Steps would provide greater access to the surrounding areas.
- A suggestion for “developing a community woodland” has been received at the location marked with a blue star. Further details have been requested on proposed activities.







Rotting fallen tree, Westcliffe Quarry



Westcliffe Quarry



Water gathering in hollow at bottom of Westcliffe Quarry



Westcliffe Quarry







View of South end of allotments









View from allotments of land below



Land below allotments



Land below allotments



Land below allotments, view from Higson Steps to south







West Cliff wildlife area – land north of Higson Steps



West Cliff wildlife area – land north of Higson Steps









Burton Hall – viewed from Long Leys cemetery location, showing horses grazing on grass slope with woodland at top of slope



## L: Homes & Gardens in Long Leys \*

### Habitat

Small areas of grass, native and non-native plants, trees and shrubs. Some ponds.

Buildings with roof eaves.

### Background

Homes and gardens offer a variety of habitats for wildlife.

### Features of Interest

- None identified

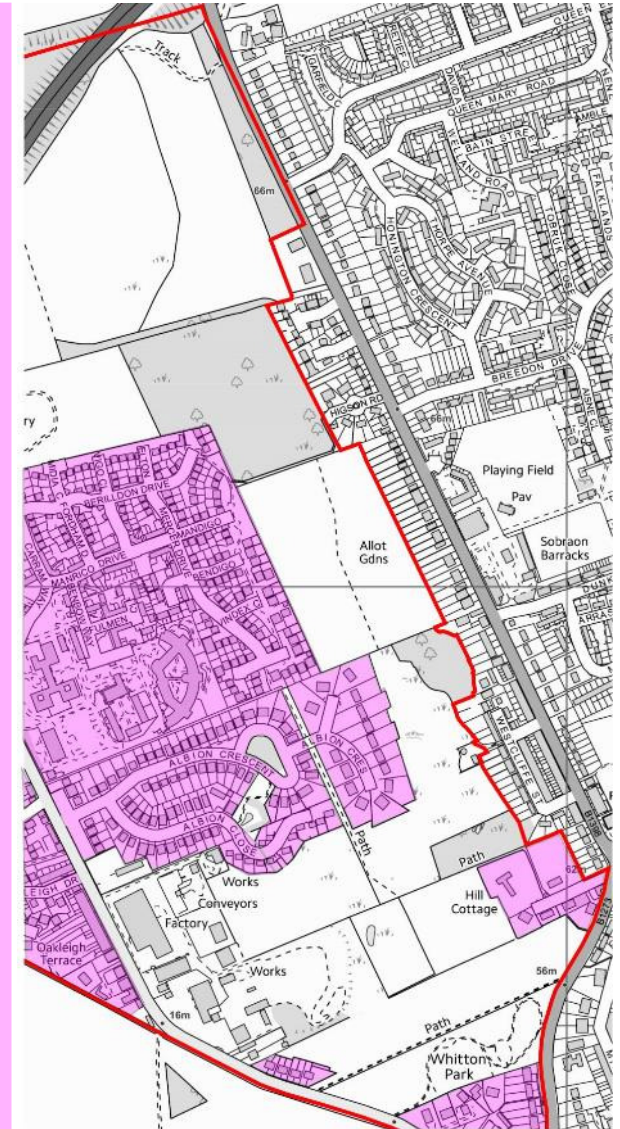
### Potential Actions to Improve Habitat

- Potential for encouraging more House Martins, Swallows and Swifts. The proximity to the common and a good supply of insect food make this a prime area as already shown by adoption of Mitchell Drive area by House Martins.

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner

- Encourage community to offer support to insects and nesting birds, including the nesting under eaves.
- Within the Long Leys Neighbourhood Plan, any new houses should be encouraged to build wild-life friendly features and seek to achieve a biodiversity net gain on the site.

\* includes all homes in Long Leys including those outside of Burton Ridge





## M: Other Urban Greenspace \* - approx. 0.4 Hectares

### Habitat

Small areas of grass and trees.

### Background

Small areas for wildlife in amongst homes in Long Leys.

### Features of Interest

- None identified

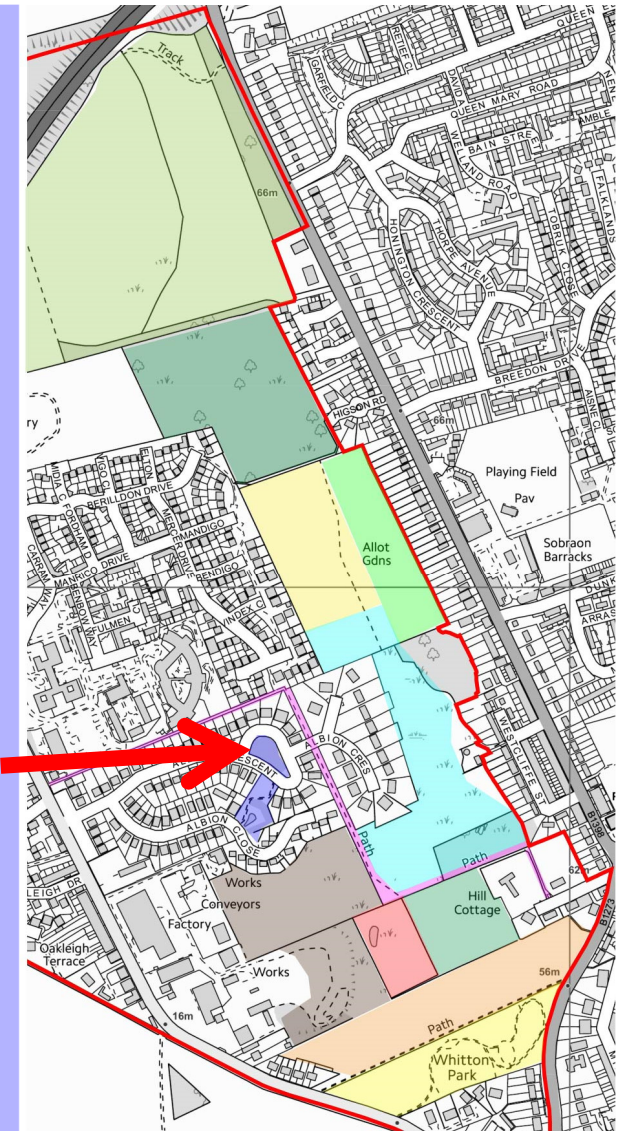
### Potential Actions to Improve Habitat

- None proposed

### Possible LLRA Approach working with the landowner

- Identify, survey and capture photography of areas with a view to providing guidance on how wildlife can be supported / protected.
- Already identified: Albion Close Greenspace and pond, Green in Albion Crescent, area in front of 204 Long Leys Road, area on Maidment Drive, area on Manrico Drive, Grass area on Carram Way

\* includes other urban greenspace in Long Leys outside of Burton Ridge







Overflow pond Albion Close



Green at Albion Crescent



Outside 204 Long Leys Road



Carram Way



Manrico Drive



Maidment Drive

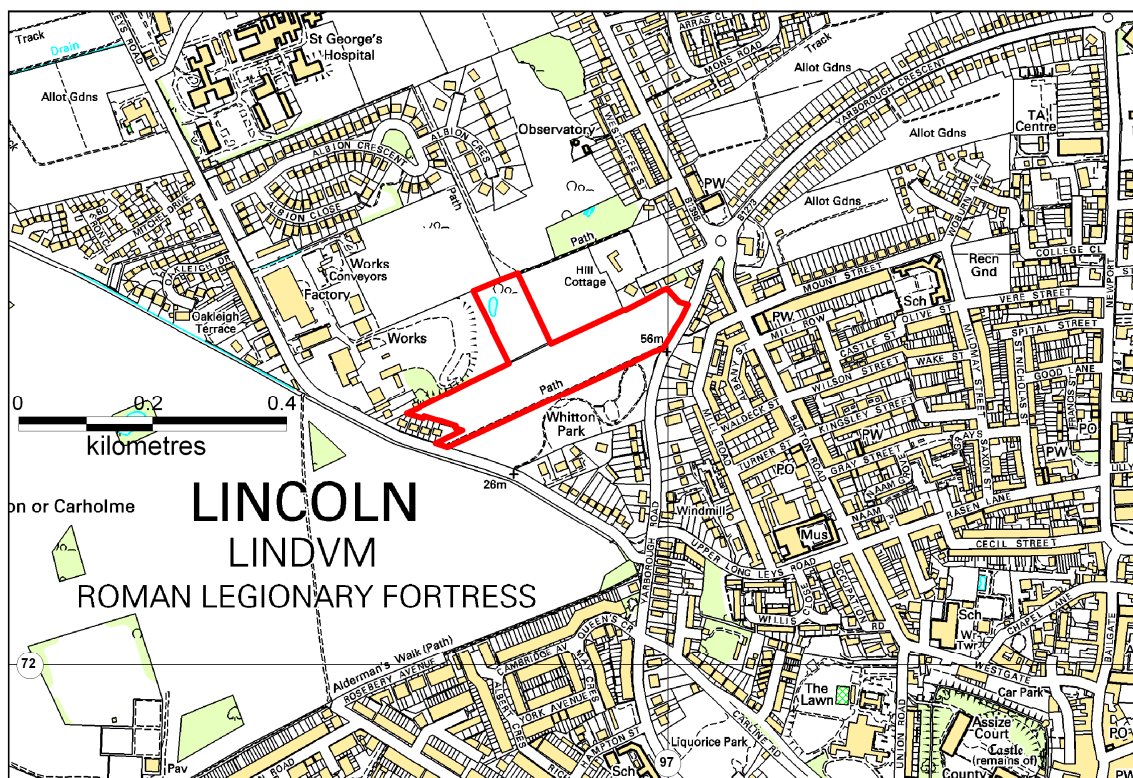


# Appendix A: Ecological Survey Data

See information on following pages for:

- LWS: Hobblers Hole and Newt Hollow
- LWS: West Cliff, Burton Road (Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership Last updated 2 February 2012)
- LWS: Burton Hall (Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership Last updated 7 September 2011)

## Hobblers Hole and Newt Hollow



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**Grid ref:** SK968724 **Survey:** 7, 8 September 2004, 9 August 2006  
**Area:** 3.8 ha **Surveyor:** J.Fraser, C.Steel

**Main habitat:** Standing water, marsh/fen  
**Additional habitat:** Neutral grassland, dense/scattered scrub  
**Additional features:** Abundant nectar sources, varied sward height, seasonally wet/damp areas

This site comprises two adjacent areas: Hobblers Hole is a strip of land aligned south-west to north-east; while Newt Hollow is a rectangular extension to the north-west.

Hobblers Hole occupies a fairly steep slope running down from Yarborough Road on its east side to Long Leys Road and West Common to the south-west. Species-rich neutral grassland covers a small area at the top of the slope, including lady's bedstraw, red fescue, black medick and well-established large anthills. Below this, the majority of the site supports tall-herb vegetation dominated by creeping thistle, great willowherb, common nettle, and in places hedge bindweed. There is scattered hawthorn and elder scrub.

Two thirds of the way down the slope, close to the northern hedge, is the site of a pond where one female great crested newt was found during a survey in 2001. The pond was dry throughout 2004, when there was no sign of tritid bur-marigold (a species seen in the 1990s, but not recently). It is not known when the pond last held water throughout the newt breeding season: it was dry in summer 2003.

The south-eastern boundary of the site is a species-poor hedge bordering Whitton Park, while the north-western boundary is a dense, unmanaged hedgerow.

Newt Hollow had received little management in the years before 2004, and was then almost impenetrable. The majority of the site had a dense cover of very vigorous bramble and common nettle, with hawthorn, elder and dog-rose. Where bramble and nettles had been cleared, a few grassland plants such as lesser stitchwort persisted. Since 2004 there has been quite a lot of scrub clearance.

In the north-western corner of the site there is a hummocky depression occupied by a small pond, which was used for educational purposes in the past: there are remnants of a pond-dipping platform. The 2004 visit revealed deep shade and a danger that the pond would become overgrown. Scrub clearance has been carried out since then, and although



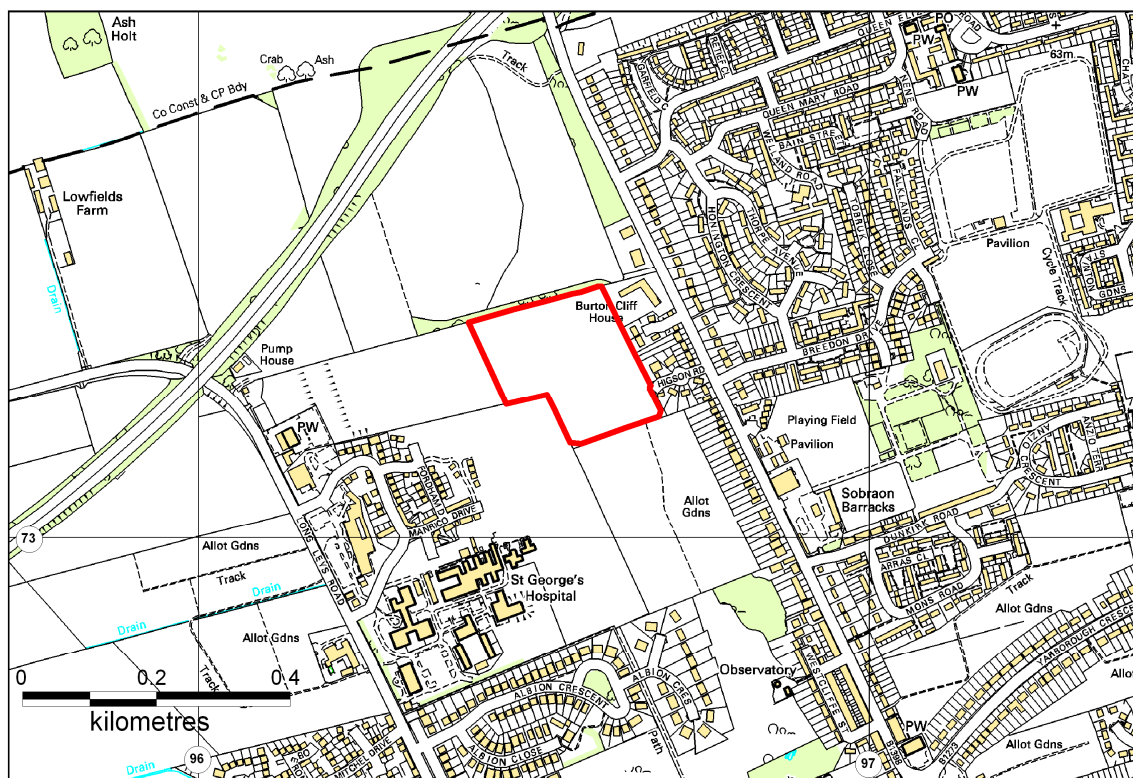
the 2006 visit occurred during a very dry time, there was still some shallow water and a very small deeper area that had apparently been dug out quite recently.

The wetland vegetation is rich, including significant amounts of gypsywort, water-plantain, purple loosestrife, water mint and sweet-grass. Other species include lesser spearwort, greater bird's-foot-trefoil, ragged robin, meadowsweet, common valerian and common duckweed. The diversity of plants, topography and wetness suggest high potential for invertebrates and amphibians; indeed, several smooth newts were seen here in 2004, and great crested newts may have been present in the past.

**Criteria passed: Sw2, Mos2**

**Recommended as a Local Wildlife Site: 9 November 2007**

## West Cliff, Burton Road



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**Grid ref:** SK965732

**Area:** 3.9 ha

**Survey:** 28 June 2004, 26 October 2006

**Surveyor:** J.Fraser

**Main habitats:** Neutral grassland, scattered scrub

**Additional features:** Anthills

This important pasture slopes markedly towards the west-south-west, with flatter ground at the foot. The structurally-diverse vegetation is typical of that produced by horse-grazing, namely plenty of thistles, scrub and coarse grassland, but also large numbers of colourful species typical of good quality grassland, such as lady's bedstraw, common knapweed, yellow rattle and common bird's-foot trefoil. Meadow barley and yellow oat-grass are very common, and a further feature of note is the best array of large anthills in Lincoln, many of which are covered in lady's bedstraw.

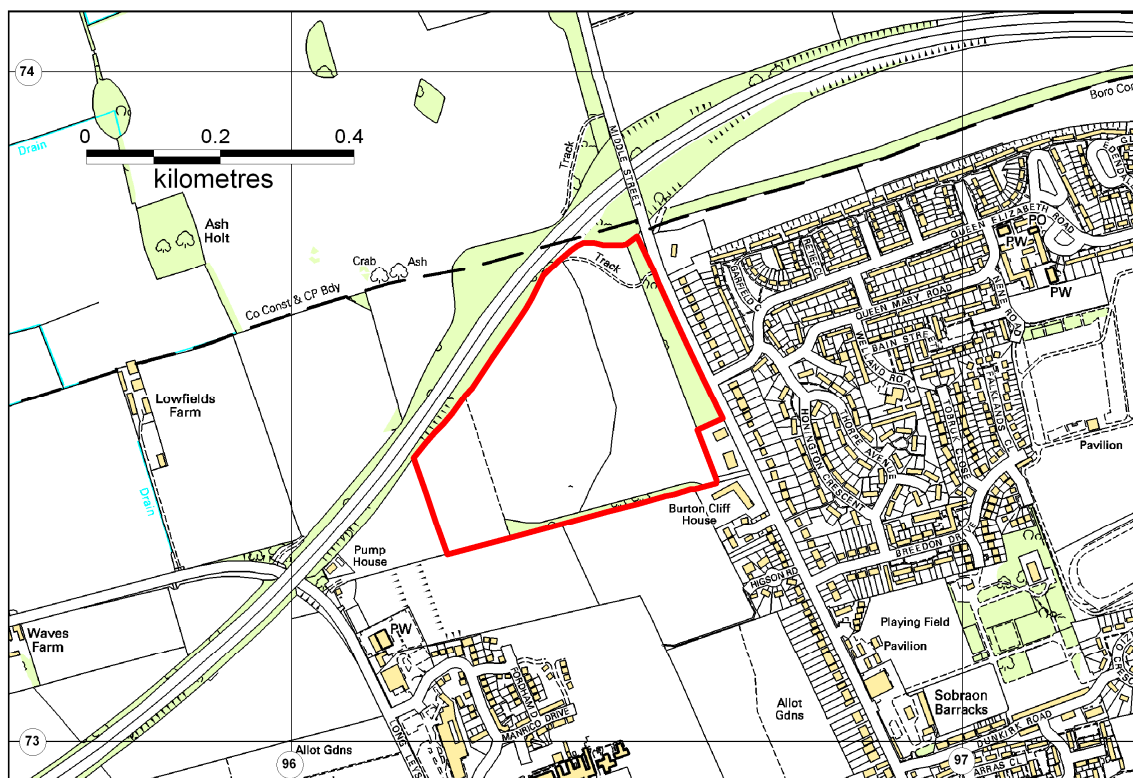
It was evident during 2004 that the site was then somewhat under-grazed. The 2006 visit revealed a further decline in grazing pressure that is having an adverse affect on the grassland habitat and its flora and fauna.

**Criterion passed:** NG1

**Recommended as a Local Wildlife Site:** 9 November 2007



# Burton Hall



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**Grid ref:** SK964735  
**Area:** 13.1 ha

**Survey:** 9 August 2006  
**Surveyor:** J.Fraser

**Main habitat:** Neutral grassland, scattered scrub  
**Additional habitat:** Woodland, species-rich & poor hedgerows  
**Additional features:** Veteran trees, standing/fallen dead wood, bare ground, hummocky ground

This is a large field with partially wooded edges on a west-south-west facing slope between 20 m and 65 m above sea level. The site is adjacent to: Middle Street to the east; the A46 verge to the north-west; arable land to the west; and grassland to the south.

Horses currently graze about half the site, to the west of a temporary electric-tape fence. Here the sward is mostly very short (except for large areas of creeping thistle) and there is little of botanical interest. Similarly poor grassland occurs in a rectangular area in the centre of the site, which appears to have been grazed until perhaps 2005. An old field boundary crosses the grazed land; this is marked by a few remnant hedge shrubs on a small bank.

Upslope, grazing has clearly been inadequate for some time, and much of the land supports a mixture of coarse grassland and developing scrub. Typical species here include false oat-grass, Yorkshire-fog, thistles, nettle, rosebay willowherb, hawthorn, sycamore and dog-rose. In the south-eastern quarter there is much bare ground due to motorcycle scrambling, although the slumping soil helps to maintain a more open sward than elsewhere. Here there is much bird's-foot-trefoil, as well as smaller amounts of lady's bedstraw, common knapweed, cat's-ear, sheep's sorrel, red fescue and common bent.

Woodland fringes to the east and south add considerable diversity to the site. Inside the eastern boundary is a 50 m wide strip of tall beech, ash and sycamore trees over plentiful holly and elder. Ivy carpets the woodland floor, with some sweet violet, hedge woundwort, wood avens and wild arum. The slightly narrower southern boundary strip is less densely occupied by trees, but there are many old specimens of ash and oak, with a high proportion that are dead or dying. Several large oaks scattered through the grassland also include moribund or deceased specimens. Young sycamore looks poised to take over from ash along the southern edge.

A well-established thick hedge follows the south-western edge of the site.

**Criteria passed: Mos1(NG1, CG1)**  
**Recommended as a Local Wildlife Site: 9 November 2007**