

Grassy Patch

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November 2021

This ecology report is based on a summary of my observations made on the site from regular visits over the past 25 years; these being almost daily over the past five years and formed part of the ALRA submission to the Planning Enquiry. It covers all sightings made up to November 2021 and includes a number of species of insect that are of significance in a county and national context. These are listed in Annex 1 and some are illustrated too. Annex 2 lists all species that have been seen on the site with an assessment of their status.

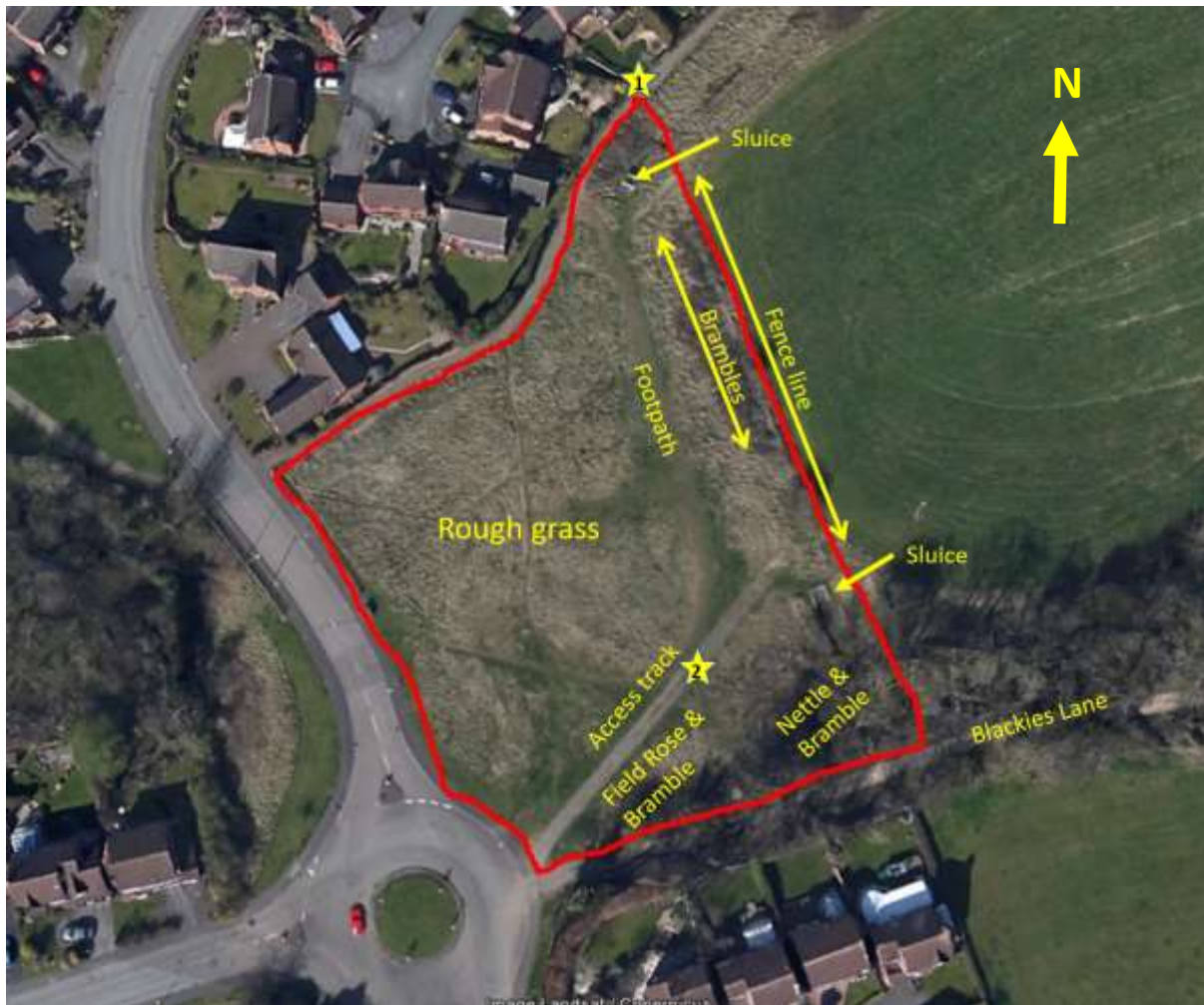


Image from Google Earth showing survey site and position of the two photographs.

Introduction

Aston Lodge Park is a well-defined estate of mixed housing being somewhat triangular in outline and bounded to the west by the London-Manchester railway line, to the south by the B5027 Uttoxeter Road and to the north and east by the farmland of Aston Lodge Farm. It covers some 50 hectares and lies at an average height of 110m above sea level. Within the estate there is little evidence of the former farmland on which it is built except for two streams which are lined with Alders and a few mature Pedunculate Oaks.



Photograph 1. Looking towards the entrance to the estate from the surfaced path

On approaching the closely-built estate one sees, to the east, an open vista of farmland with an area of rough grassland between it and the estate ring-road. This area of grassland with scrub has never been built on and supports a wealth of wildlife which is easily accessible to residents. It is a valuable natural resource that is not found elsewhere on the estate or on the surrounding, intensely managed farmland.



Photograph 2 Looking across the site towards the estate from Blackies Lane

The site consists largely of an area of rough grassland and naturally regenerating **Hawthorn** *Crataegus monogyna* with several other small trees. To the south-east of the site is Blackies Lane which is bordered by mature trees that include **Wych Elm** *Ulmus glabra*, **Field Maple** *Acer*

campestre, **Alder** *Alnus glutinosa*, **Ash** *Fraxinus excelsior* and **Hazel** *Corylus avellana*. Running along the site side of Blackies Lane is a 3m-wide expanse of **Bramble** *Rubus fruticosus* and **Field Rose** *Rosa campestre*. To the north is a surfaced public footpath connecting the housing estate to the wider countryside (from where photograph 1 is taken). To the east is a wire fence separating the site from farmland, this is bordered by a stretch of **Bramble** up to 8m deep in parts. Two streams are culverted under the area, one of which can be seen in photograph 1. A number of tracks cross the site and there is an overgrown metalled access track from the roundabout to allow farm vehicles to enter the adjacent field and for Severn Trent to access, on a regular basis, the sluices on the two streams that flow under the site.

Main habitats

Bramble and fence line



There is a wire fence separating the site from the farmland to the east. Growing along this fence line are four individual **Hawthorns** and a stretch of **Bramble** c.43m long and up to 8m in depth in parts. This is an important habitat for the site's breeding summer migrant birds which include **Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*, **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* and **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* as well as for the site's resident species including **Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*, **Blackbird** *Turdus merula*, and **Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*. Its flowers also provide an important nectar source for many insects like bumblebees and hoverflies, while the fruits are an important food source for autumn migrant species like **Blackcap** and **Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* fattening up for their journey south. The **Hawthorn** berries are a good food source for wintering species like **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* and **Redwing** *Turdus iliacus* that visit the site as well as for the resident **Blackbirds** *Turdus merula*. In addition, there are a lot of **Creeping Thistles** *Cirsium arvense* that provide an important nectar source for butterflies and other insects. In 2020, 70 **Small Tortoiseshells** *Aglais urticae* were counted along this stretch. It is here that the nationally scarce parasite fly *Nowickia ferox* was found – at its only location in Staffordshire.

Grassland

Photograph 1 shows the bulk of the site consisting of an area of grass of varying height, the main species being **False-oat Grass** *Arrhenatherum elatius*, **Cock's-foot Grass** *Dactylis glomerata*, **Perennial Rye Grass** *Lolium perenne* and **Yorkshire-fog** *Holcus lanatus*. Amongst the grasses are a number of plants including **Hairy Tare** *Vicia hirsutum* and **Smooth Tare** *Vicia tetraspermum*, **Creeping Thistle**, **Hogweed** *Heracleum sphondylium* and **Nettle** *Urtica dioica*. Scattered across this area are eight small **Hawthorns**, three small **Pedunculate Oaks** *Quercus robur* and several **Wild Plums** *Prunus domestica*. A footpath and access track separate the grassy area from the brambles and the fence line and the grass either side of this track is mown regularly by Severn Trent to allow vehicle access to the sluices. This provides a lower sward habitat suitable for some of the grasshoppers as well as for a range of low-growing plants like **Black Medick** *Medicago lupulina*, **Red Clover** *Trifolium pratense* and **White Clover** *Trifolium repens*. A small area of **Hard Rush** *Juncus*

inflexus can be found adjacent to this path, marking the damper part of the site. The grassland provides food for the larvae of a number of the site's grassland butterflies including **Meadow Brown** *Maniola jurtina*, **Ringlet** *Aphantopus hyperantus*, **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes sylvanus*, **Small Skipper** *Thymelicus sylvestris* and the scarce **Essex Skipper** *Thymelicus lineola*. It also hosts a scarce grass-feeding moth *Ochsenheimeria urella* which is classed as "Nationally Scarce" as well as the scarce **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper** *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, **Roesel's Bush Cricket** *Metrioptera roeselii*, **Long-winged Cone-head** *Conocephalus fuscus* and the rare **Slender-horned Leatherbug** *Ceraleptus lividus* which is found nowhere else in the county and may be at its northern limit in the UK. There are also a number of day-flying grassland moth species found here as noted in annex 2. The discrete patch of **Nettles** growing in the NW corner, where the metalled path meets the ring-road, provides food for the larvae of the **Peacock** butterfly *Aglais io* and **Small Tortoiseshell** while the **Creeping Thistles** provide nectar for butterflies like the **Painted Lady** *Vanessa cardui* as well as food for their larvae.

Bramble and Field Rose



Running alongside Blackies Lane is a 20m stretch of **Field Rose** *Rosa arvensis* and Bramble up to 3m deep giving way to a 25m stretch of **Bramble** with **Nettle** and **Creeping Thistle** up to 5m deep. It is separated from the grassland by the overgrown metalled access track. The flowers of the two species provide an important nectar source for many insects like bumblebees and hoverflies while the hips of the rose and berries of the bramble are important food sources for wintering and migrating birds that visit the site. The thin soils and bare ground around the access track are used by **Bird's-foot Trefoil** *Lotus corniculatus* (foodplant of the **Common Blue** butterfly) and **Creeping Cinquefoil** *Potentilla reptans* while also being attractive to sunning grasshoppers.

Blackies Lane hedge

The adjacent hedgerow of Blackies Lane with its **Wych Elm** supports one of our rarer butterflies; **White-letter Hairstreak** *Strymonidia w-album*; a declining and Section 41-listed species in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2016. These can occasionally be seen visiting thistles on the site for nectar. This is its only regular site in the area. Where this hedge borders the site are a number of trees including **Hazel**, **Ash**, **Alder** and **Field Maple**.

In Summary

The two annexes list all the species that I have seen within the boundaries of the site. That includes 90 plants and trees, 21 butterflies, seven bumblebees, four grasshoppers and two crickets and 40 birds. Some are seen regularly, and some are seasonal visitors while others have been seen only occasionally. Many more species of insect occur here that have not yet been identified but which add to the biodiversity of the site. The lists do not include species merely flying over like gulls. The site is, therefore, rich and varied. Many of the butterflies that visit our gardens do not breed there but require areas such as this in which to lay their eggs. Many residents on the estate visit the site but, even for those that do not, it is nevertheless important to them in providing a source of butterflies and other insects that visit their gardens. Whilst there is adjacent farmland, it is heavily managed for silage or for grazing and is of low ecological value. Rough grassland like this is a valuable habitat that is disappearing from our ever intensely farmed land, increasing housing development and overzealous road verge maintenance.

While this is only a small area, in the context of the estate and the surrounding farmland, it is the only area of rough grassland and, as such, provides a valuable habitat for many species, especially for our grassland butterflies. It also acts as a corridor for species moving from farmland across the estate and beyond to the Trent and Mersey Canal and the River Trent.

More importantly, it provides an area where residents can walk or exercise their dogs without disturbing grazing cattle, pick blackberries and wild plums, and observe wildlife and wildflowers. It is the only site within the whole estate where residents, and particularly their children, can get close to nature in a safe environment without the need to use a car and thus helping to build a low carbon environment. The link between wildlife, well-being and mental health is well known and never has this been more strongly recognised than during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, when residents have been restricted to moving a very short distance from their homes. The site has even acted as an emergency helicopter landing pad for the Staffordshire Air Ambulance.

The site has great educational value and organised nature walks led by Dave Emley have been well attended. While there are rare and scarce species here, access issues are not a problem. It is important that residents can get close to, and appreciate, the commoner species without disturbing them, thereby getting a better understanding of the natural world. The site has featured regularly in the Residents' Facebook page with photographs showing people what they can go and see on the site. It also provides a pleasing aspect of open countryside as one enters a rather densely-packed estate.

In conclusion, the area has considerable wildlife, educational and recreational importance, as well as being visually important and part of a wildlife corridor. It brings the countryside into the estate benefiting resident's health and mental well-being. It is a valuable open space and needs to be preserved for future generations. Aston Lodge Park has very few green spaces; this small grassy patch is extremely popular and important for residents, as well as supporting a wide range of flora and fauna, including some rare species.

Annex 1

Species of significance on the site

Essex Skipper *Thymelicus lineola* a species spreading across the county and which is now quite common on the site; numbers at times equalling those of the Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*.

White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrrium w-album* this scarce and nationally declining Section 41-listed species in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2016 continues to be seen on the

site in low numbers. Its larvae feed on Wych Elm *Ulmus glabra* which grows in Blackies Lane. It visits the site to nectar on the thistles. I have not found it elsewhere on the estate.

Ochsenheimeria urella this moth of rough grassland continues to be found on the site. It is classed as Nationally Scarce and is currently found only at two other sites in the county.

Dock Bug *Coreus marginatus* a plant bug that is spreading northwards across Staffordshire. This site represents the most northerly record for it in the county. It was first seen on 17/08/2019.

Bishop's Mitre Shieldbug *Aelia acuminata* a scarce plant bug in the county associated with rough grassland. It is at its northern limit in the county here.

Slender-horned Leatherbug *Ceraleptus lividus* one was swept from long grass on 26/06/2020. This is the ONLY county record and a nationally significant one too as it is largely restricted to SE England.

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper *Chorthippus albomarginatus* a scarce species that is only found in the south-east in the county. This site is the most northerly one for it by some distance. It was seen in both 2019 and 2020.

Long-winged Conehead *Conocephalus fuscus* a scarce cricket of rough grassland that occurs in the south and east of the county. This is its most northerly site in the county. Both males and females have been found and nymphs were found in 2019 and 2020 implying that they breed here.

Roesel's Bush-cricket *Metrioptera roeselii* a scarce species in the county that is spreading northwards. A nymph was found on 26/06/2020 which means that it must breed here and would have been present last year at least. At least six males were heard in 2020 and two females were seen.

Chrysotoxum festivum an uncommon hoverfly that is increasing in the county. First noted on 14/06/2019.

Chrysotoxum verralli a scarce Staffordshire hoverfly found at only seven other sites. Recorded on 14/07/2019.

Sericomyia superbiens a rare and declining Staffordshire hoverfly now only recorded at four other sites in the county. Recorded on 17/08/2019.

Nowickia ferox a scarce national species of Tachinid fly recorded on 15/8/20 and the only record for the county.

Thanatophilus sinuatus A scarce carrion feeding beetle in the county found on the access track 17/08/2019. Recorded at only three other sites in Staffordshire.

Some rare or scarce species found on the site

All photographs have been taken on the site.



White-letter Hairstreak



Ochsenheimeria urella



Long-winged Cone-head



Roesel's Bush-cricket



Lesser Marsh Grasshopper



Thanatophilus sinuatus



Dock Bug



Slender-horned Leatherbug



Bishop's Mitre Shieldbug



Arctophila superbiens



Nowickia ferox

Annex 2

Flowering Plants

Ranunculaceae

Ficaria verna **Lesser Celandine** grows adjacent to Blackies Lane.

Ranunculus acris **Meadow Buttercup** scattered plants across the site.

Ranunculus bulbosus **Bulbous Buttercup** scattered plants across the site.

Ranunculus repens **Creeping Buttercup** scattered plants across the site.

Urticaceae

Urtica dioica **Common Nettle** common along the fence line and adjacent to Blackies Lane and also by the metalled footpath where it meets the main road.

Caryophyllaceae

Cerastium fontanum **Common Mouse-ear** scattered across the site.

Silene dioica **Red Campion** a few plants grow towards metalled footpath.

Stellaria holostea **Greater Stitchwort** grows adjacent to Blackies Lane.

Stellaria media **Common Chickweed** scattered across the site.

Polygonaceae

Persicaria maculosa **Redshank** alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Polygonum aviculare **Knotgrass** alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Rumex obtusifolius **Broad-leaved Dock** scattered across the site.

Rumex acetosa **Common Sorrel** a few plants scattered across the site.

Hypericaceae

Hypericum perforatum **Perforate St. John's-wort** grows near the sluice by Blackies Lane

Brassicaceae

Alliaria petiolata **Garlic Mustard** grows adjacent to Blackies Lane.

Cardamine hirsuta **Hairy Bitter-cress** grows along the sides of the two streams.

Capsella bursa-pastoris **Shepherd's Purse** grows alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Rosaceae

Geum urbanum **Wood Avens** grows adjacent to Blackies Lane.

Potentilla reptans **Creeping Cinquefoil** grows commonly alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Rosa arvensis **Field Rose** grows adjacent to Blackies Lane. A large expanse mixed with bramble.

Rubus fruticosus **Bramble** large expanses grow along the fence line and adjacent to Blackies Lane where it is mixed with Field Rose.

Fabaceae

Lathyrus pratensis **Meadow Vetchling** grows sparingly amongst grasses in centre of the site.

Lotus corniculatus **Bird's-foot Trefoil** grows alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane and along the path across the site.

Medicago lupulina **Black Medick** common across the site where the grass is shorter.

Trifolium pratense **Red Clover** common across the site where the grass is shorter.

Trifolium repens **White Clover** common across the site where the grass is shorter.

Trifolium hybridum **Alsike Clover** a small patch alongside the footpath across the site in 2017.

Trifolium medium **Zig-zag Clover** a small patch alongside the footpath across the site in 2017.

Trifolium dubium **Lesser Trefoil** common across the site, especially in barer areas.

Vicia hirsuta **Hairy Tare** grows commonly amongst grasses.

Vicia sativa **Common Vetch** grows sparingly amongst grasses in centre of the site.

Vicia sepium **Bush Vetch** grows commonly amongst grasses in centre of the site.

Vicia tetraspermum **Smooth Tare** grows fairly commonly amongst grasses.

Onagraceae

Chamerion angustifolium **Rosebay Willowherb** a few plants grow in centre of site.

Epilobium hirsutum **Great Willowherb** common near the two streams.

Epilobium obscurum **Short-fruited-leaved Willowherb** scattered plants grow amongst the Bramble and Nettle by Blackies Lane.

Euphorbiaceae

Euphorbia helioscopia **Sun Spurge** grows by the entrance to Blackies Lane.

Euphorbia peplus **Petty Spurge** an occasional plant grows alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Mercurialis perennis **Dog's Mercury** grows beneath the hedgerow towards Blackies Lane.

Geraniaceae

Geranium molle **Dove's-foot Cranesbill** spreading along the metaled access track.

Geranium robertianum **Herb Robert** scattered across the site; more often towards Blackies Lane.

Araliaceae

Hedera helix **Ivy** grows adjacent to Blackies Lane.

Apiaceae

Angelica sylvestris **Wild Angelica** not uncommon on the site. An important late-flowering species for insects.

Anthriscus sylvestris **Cow Parsley** common across the site.

Heracleum sphondylium **Hogweed** common across the site.

Convolvulaceae

Calystegia sepium **Hedge Bindweed** grows adjacent to Blackies Lane, spreading through the Bramble and Field Rose.

Lamiaceae

Prunella vulgaris **Selfheal** a few plants grow alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Plantaginaceae

Plantago lanceolata **Ribwort Plantain** scattered, especially on barer areas.

Plantago major **Greater Plantain** scattered across the site, especially on barer areas.

Veronicaceae

Veronica persica **Common Field-speedwell** a few plants grow alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Rubiaceae

Galium aparine **Cleavers** scattered across site.

Caprifoliaceae

Lonicera periclymenum **Honeysuckle** grows in the hedgerow adjacent to Blackies Lane.

Asteraceae

Artemisia vulgaris **Mugwort** grows in the border by Blackies Lane.

Bellis perennis **Daisy** common in trampled areas of the site.

Centaurea nigra **Common Knapweed** a few plants grow in centre of site.

Cirsium arvense **Creeping Thistle** very common, especially in centre of site and along the fence line.

Cirsium vulgare **Spear Thistle** common, especially in the centre of site.

Crepis capillaris **Smooth Hawks-beard** couple of plants found alongside the footpath across the site in 2019.

Hypochaeris radicata **Common Cat's-ear** a few plants grow alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Lapsana communis **Nipplewort** grows by stream adjacent to Blackies Lane and alongside the metalled path.

Leucanthemum vulgare **Oxeye Daisy** grows alongside Saddler Avenue and by culvert by Blackies Lane.

Matricaria discoidea **Pineapple-weed** common in trampled areas of the site.

Scorzoneroidea autumnalis **Autumn Hawkbit** grows alongside the access track to the sluice by Blackies Lane.

Senecio vulgaris **Groundsel** common in trampled areas of the site.

Sonchus asper **Prickly Sow-thistle** grows by the metalled footpath.

Taraxacum officinale **Dandelion** common in barer areas.

Tussilago farfara **Colt's-foot** grows towards Blackies Lane side of the site.

Juncaceae

Juncus inflexus **Hard Rush** small patches grow in the damper areas, especially by the footpath across the site.

Cyperaceae

Carex hirta **Hairy Sedge** scattered across the site.

Poaceae

Agrostis stolonifera **Creeping Bent** very common across the site.

Alopecurus pratensis **Meadow Foxtail** not uncommon across the site.

Anthoxanthum odoratum **Sweet Vernal Grass** not uncommon in the spring.

Arrhenatherum elatius **False Oat-grass** very common across the site. One of the major species.

Brachypodium sylvaticum **False Brome** grows along the stream by Blackies Lane.

Cynosurus cristatus **Crested Dog's-tail** not uncommon in the spring.

Dactylis glomerata **Cock's-foot Grass** very common across the site.

Elytrigia repens **Common Couch** scattered across the site.

Festuca rubra **Red Fescue** very common across the site.

Holcus lanatus **Yorkshire Fog** very common across the site.

Lolium perenne **Perennial Rye-grass** very common across the site.

Poa annua **Annual Meadow-grass** common across the site.

Poa pratensis **Smooth Meadow-grass** scattered towards the fence line.

Poa trivialis **Rough Meadow-grass** scattered towards the fence line.

Phleum pratense **Timothy** not uncommon across the site.

Alliaceae

Allium ursinum **Ramsons** grows along the stream by Blackies Lane. There is more further upstream.

Trees and Shrubs

Acer campestre **Field Maple** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane.

Aesculus hippocastanum **Horse-chestnut** one young plant near the fence line.

Alnus glutinosa **Alder** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane and by the stream.

Corylus avellana **Hazel** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane.

Crataegus monogyna **Hawthorn** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane and there are several along the fence line and in middle of the site.

Fraxinus excelsior **Ash** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane.

Quercus robur **Pedunculate Oak** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane and there are several small trees on the site.

Prunus domestica **Wild Plum** several grow where the site abuts Saddler Avenue: near the roundabout.

Prunus spinosa **Blackthorn** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane.

Sambucus nigra **Elder** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane.

Ulmus glabra **Wych Elm** grows in the hedge lining Blackies Lane.

Insects

All species mentioned are found annually on the site unless specific dates are given.

Lepidoptera - Butterflies

Hesperiidae

Ochlodes sylvanus **Large Skipper** a common grassland species here.

Thymelicus lineola **Essex Skipper** an uncommon, though increasing, species in the county that is found regularly here.

Thymelicus sylvestris **Small Skipper** a common grassland species here.

Pieridae

Anthocharis cardamines **Orange-tip** a common species in the spring.

Gonepteryx rhamni **Brimstone** one or two sightings per year.

Pieris brassicae **Large White** a common species.

Pieris rapae **Small White** a common species.

Pieris napi **Green-veined White** a common species.

Nymphalidae

Aglais io **Peacock** a common species here. Larvae are seen every year on nettles.

Aglais urticae **Small Tortoiseshell** a common species, over 70 being seen in August 2020. Eggs and larvae seen most years.

Aphantopus hyperantus **Ringlet** a common grassland species here.

Maniola jurtina **Meadow Brown** a common to very common grassland species here.

Parage aegeria **Speckled Wood** a common species in the spring and autumn.

Polygonia c-album **Comma** a common species here.

Pyronia tithonus **Gatekeeper** a common grassland species here.

Vanessa atalanta **Red Admiral** a migrant species that is common here some years and less so in others. Attracted to the thistles especially.

Vanessa cardui **Painted Lady** a migrant species that is common here some years and less so in others. Attracted to the thistles especially.

Lycaenidae

Celastrina agriolus **Holly Blue** a common species in spring and autumn.

Lycaena phlaeas **Small Copper** a common species.

Polyommatus icarus **Common Blue** a common species here, larvae feeding on Bird's-foot Trefoil.

Satyrrium w-album **White-letter Hairstreak** a rare and declining species in the county. The larvae feed on nearby Wych Elms and the adults comes to thistles and bramble flowers on the site for nectar. A few are seen every year.

Lepidoptera - Moths

Ochsenheimeria urella a species of long grass and grass tussocks. It breeds on site, is classified as "Nationally Scarce" and is currently found only at two other sites in the county.

Zygaena filipendulae **Six-spot Burnet** not uncommon on the site and breeds here too.

Zygaena lonicerae **Narrow-bordered Five-Spot Burnet** not uncommon on the site and breeds here too.

Emmelina monodactyla **Common Plume** occasional records. A common species.

Agapeta hamana a common thistle-feeding species.

Aphelia paleana **Timothy Tortrix** a common grassland species.

Anthophila fabriciana **Nettle-tap** a common nettle-feeding moth.

Chrysoteuchia culmella a **Grass Moth** common species.

Scotopteryx chenopodiata **Shaded Broad-bar** a day-flying species occasionally seen on the site and which probably breeds here too.

Odezia atrata **Chimney Sweeper** a rare day-flying species here. One was seen in 2018.

Chiasmia clathrata **Latticed Heath** a day-flyer. Seen on 17/7/20.

Callistege mi **Mother Shipton** a day-flying species occasionally seen on the site and which probably breeds here too.

Autographa gamma **Silver Y** frequently seen, especially in late summer and autumn.

Heteroptera/Homoptera - True Bugs

Coreus marginatus **Dock Bug** often seen resting on Bramble and in tall grass. It is at its northernmost limit in Staffordshire here.

Ceraleptus lividus **Slender-horned Leatherbug** one was swept from long grass on 26/6/20. It is **the only record** in Staffordshire and a significant national record too.

Dolycoris baccarum **Sloe Shieldbug** a common species in long grass and resting on bramble leaves etc.

Aelia acuminata **Bishop's Mitre Shieldbug** common here in long grass but uncommon in Staffordshire.

Piezodorus lituratus **Gorse Shieldbug** one was swept from clover on 15/09/2019.

Heterogaster urticae **Nettle Groundbug** a nymph was found on nettle on 18/08/2019.

Leptopterna dolabrata **Meadow Plant Bug** very common in the long grass.

Cixius nervosus swept from long grass.

Notostira elongata swept from grass. Common here.

Diptera – True flies

Tipulidae – Crane flies

Ctenophora pectinicornis One in Blackies Lane hedge 19/5/2019. Scarce species on rotting wood.

Stratiomyidae - Soldierflies

Chloromyia formosa **Broad Centurion** not uncommon here on Hogweed flowers.

Syrphidae - Hoverflies

Platycheirus albimanus a common species.

Chrysoxum bicinctum one seen on 17/08/2019

Chrysoxum festivum scarce species in the county. One seen on 14/06/2019

Chrysotoxum verralli scarce species in the county. One seen on 14/07/2019.

Episyrphus balteatus a very common resident species but also a migrant.

Eupeodes corollae a common species.

Eupeodes luniger a common species.

Leucozona lucorum a common species.

Scaeva pyrastris a not uncommon species on bramble and rose flowers. A migrant too.

Sphaerophoria scripta an uncommon species here.

Syrphus ribesii a common species.

Syrphus vitripennis a common species.

Xanthogramma pedissequum an uncommon species on the site with one on 22/06/2020.

Cheilosia illustrata a not uncommon species. Likes Hogweed flowers and lays its eggs in the stems.
Rhingia campestris an uncommon species.
Chrysogaster solstitialis an uncommon species on the site.
Eristalis arbustorum common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.
Eristalis intricarius common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.
Eristalis nemorum common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.
Eristalis pertinax very common here on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.
Eristalis tenax very common here on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.
Helophilus hybridus an uncommon species. One seen on 01/09/2019, one 08/07/2020.
Helophilus pendulus a common species.
Helophilus trivittatus one on 20/8/2020 and 25/8/2020. A scarce species in Staffordshire.
Merodon equestris common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.
Sericomyia superbiens scarce species in the county. Several seen in 2019.
Volucella pellucens an uncommon species on the site.
Syrirta pipiens a common species here.
Xylota segnis an uncommon species here, seen on Bramble and Field Rose leaves.

Conopidae – Big-headed Flies

Conops quadrifasciatus uncommon, noted in 2019 and 2020.
Physocephala rufipes uncommon here, seen in 2019 and 2020.
Sicus ferrugineus uncommon here; one on 1/8/2019

Tephritidae – Picture-winged Flies

Xyphosia miliaria found here on thistle flowers.

Sepsidae

Sepsis cynipsea common on flowers here.

Sciomyzidae – Snail-eating Flies

Coremacera marginata Small numbers found by sweeping grass.

Tachinidae - Parasite Flies

Eriothrix rufomaculata a common species, visits thistle flowers.
Nowickia ferox one record. 15/8/2020; a first county record and scarce national species.
Tachina fera an uncommon species here; often seen on umbels.

Muscidae

Graphomya maculata common here, especially on Hogweed flowers.
Mesembrina meridiana a common species here.

Scathophagidae - Dung Flies

Scathophaga stercoraria common species here.

Coleoptera - Beetles

Thanatophilus sinuatus a scarce county carrion feeder found on the access track 17/08/2019.
Recorded at only three other sites in Staffordshire.
Coccinella 7-punctata **7-Spot Ladybird** common on the site and breeds here too.
Coccinella 2-punctata **2-spot Ladybird** common on the site and breeds here too.
Harmonia axyridis **Harlequin Ladybird** common on the site and breeds here too.
Cantharis livida **Soldier Beetle** very common on the site.
Cassida rubiginosa **Thistle Tortoise Beetle** swept from long grass in 2020.
Pyrochroa serraticornis **Red-headed Cardinal Beetle** one or two seen annually.
Oedemera nobilis **Thick-legged Flower Beetle** very common, especially on Hogweed flowers.

Orthoptera - Grasshoppers and Crickets

Omocestus viridulus **Common Green Grasshopper** common in the shorter grass.

Chorthippus albomarginatus **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper** common here in the rough grass. First seen 05/08/2019. Nymphs have been seen so it must breed here. This site is the most northerly one for it in the county by some distance

Chorthippus brunneus **Field Grasshopper** uncommon, generally found in the longer grass. Breeds here.

Conocephalus fuscus **Long-winged Cone-head Cricket** found in the rough grass. It is rare here but must breed as a nymph and adult male and female have been seen. This is its most northerly site in the county.

Metrioptera roeselii **Roesel's Bush Cricket** a male nymph was swept from rough grass on 26/06/2020 so it must have bred here and been present in 2019 at least. Females were also found in 2020. At least six males were heard 'singing' in July 2020. It is a scarce but spreading species in the county.

Odonata - Dragonflies

Enallagma cyathigerum **Common Blue Damselfly** several were seen flying across the site 2016.

Calopteryx splendens **Banded Demoiselle** every year one or two are seen flying across the site.

Lestes sponsa **Common Emerald Damselfly** one on 2/07/2020

Sympetrum striolatum **Common Darter** one was seen resting on the access path to the sluice in 2019.

Hymenoptera – Bees, Wasps, Ants

Bumblebees

Bombus hortorum **Garden Bumblebee** common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.

Bombus hypnorum **Tree Bumblebee** common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.

Bombus lapidarius **Red-tailed Bumblebee** common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.

Bombus lucorum **White-tailed Bumblebee** common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.

Bombus pascuorum **Common Carder Bee** common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.

Bombus pratorum **Early Bumblebee** common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.

Bombus terrestris **Buff-tailed Bumblebee** common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.

Apis mellifera **Honeybee** common on Bramble and Field Rose flowers.

Sawflies

Tenthredo temula one on Hogweed flowers in 2020.

Ichneumons

Ichneumon sarcitorius one 24/8/2020.

Wasps

Vespula germanica **German Wasp** common.

Vespula vulgaris **Common Wasp** common.

Birds

The list comprises birds that actually use the site for feeding and nesting rather than simply flying over.

Columba palumbus **Wood Pigeon** common visitor to the site.

Streptopelia decaocto **Collared Dove** common visitor to site.

Dendrocopos major **Great Spotted Woodpecker** common visitor to trees along Blackies Lane.

Pica pica **Magpie** breeds locally and feeds in the trees and shrubs on the site.

Corvus corone **Carrion Crow** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Corvus frugilegus **Rook** there is a small rookery in Blackies Lane close to the site.

Periparus ater **Coal Tit** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Poecile montana **Willow Tit** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on site. An uncommon and declining species.

Cyanistes caeruleus **Blue Tit** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Parus major **Great Tit** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Aegithalos caudatus **Long-tailed Tit** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Phylloscopus trochilus **Willow Warbler** visits trees and shrubs on the site annually on passage.

Phylloscopus collybita **Chiffchaff** breeds on the site annually and visits trees and shrubs on passage.

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus **Sedge Warbler** one sang from the fence line in 2019.

Sylvia atricapilla **Blackcap** breeds annually in the brambles along the fence line.

Sylvia borin **Garden Warbler** recorded annually, usually from the brambles along the fence line.

Sylvia curruca **Lesser Whitethroat** often seen along the fence line. Breeds nearby.

Sylvia communis **Common Whitethroat** breeds annually in the brambles along the fence line.

Regulus regulus **Goldcrest** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on site.

Troglodytes troglodytes **Wren** breeds on the site. Brambles are important as a nest site.

Sitta europaea **Nuthatch** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Certhia familiaris **Treecreeper** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Sturnus vulgaris **Starling** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Turdus merula **Blackbird** breeds on site. Brambles are important as a nesting site.

Turdus pilaris **Fieldfare** feeds on hawthorn berries in the winter.

Turdus iliacus **Redwing** feeds on hawthorn berries in the winter.

Turdus philomelos **Song Thrush** occasionally breeds on the site, feeds on the Hawthorn berries in the winter.

Erithacus rubecula **Robin** breeds on site. Brambles important as a nesting site.

Passer domesticus **House Sparrow** breeds on the housing estate and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Passer montanus **Tree Sparrow** there are occasional winter records from along the fence line. It is now a scarce species in the area.

Prunella modularis **Dunnock** one or two pairs breed on the site annually.

Motacilla cinerea **Grey Wagtail** they are regularly seen along the two streams and occasionally visit the site to feed.

Motacilla alba **Pied Wagtail** occasionally recorded on the site.

Fringilla coelebs **Chaffinch** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Pyrrhula pyrrhula **Bullfinch** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Chloris chloris **Greenfinch** breeds locally and feeds in trees and shrubs on the site.

Acanthis cabaret **Lesser Redpoll** occasionally seen in the winter months when they generally feed on Alder catkins or the seeds of Willowherb.

Carduelis carduelis **Goldfinch** common breeder locally. Visits the site for seeds of thistles and Alder catkins.

Spinus spinus **Siskin** a winter visitor to the site when it feeds on Alder catkins.

Emberiza citrinella **Yellowhammer** there are occasional winter records from the fence line.

Emberiza schoeniclus **Reed Bunting** occasional winter records from the fence line and stream side.