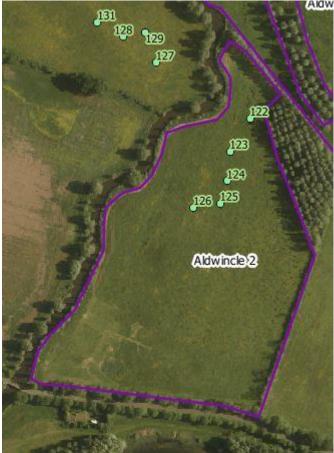
Site Visit Assessment Form – Aldwincle Field 2, Northamptonshire



Site Name	Grid Ref	County			
Aldwincle Field 2	TL017817	Northamptonshire			
River	Ownership	Designation Size (ha)			
Nene	Lillford Estate	None	6.43		
	(Society of				
	Merchant				
	Ventures)				
Date	Meeting with	Managed by			
22 June 2017	Matt Johnson and	Tim Hankins			
	Tim Hankins. Plus				
	Pete Stroh (BSBI).				
	David Gowing,				
	Emma Rothero				
	and Irina				
	Tatarenko				
Management and History					
Agri environment agreement					
Fields went into Countryside Stewardship in early 1990's under an arable reversion					
scheme. Had 2 lots of 10 year blocks of CS and are now in the 5 <sup>th</sup> year of an HLS					

agreement. Treated the same as Field 1.

### **Current management**

Cut and aftermath grazed every other year, otherwise is grazed (aftermath grazing till November, aiming for about 2 inches of grass to be left). If cut, gets mown 15<sup>th</sup> July onwards, and grazed till November. If grazed cattle are put on after 15<sup>th</sup> May till November. Don't cut for hay among the trees.

#### Restoration

### Technique used/Dates

Initially left land to regenerate naturally then took hay bales from adjacent meadow. Hay was cut (mid-July) and stored, then spread in October of the same year. Greened up quite quickly, and sheep were grazed. Topped with a tractor to control docks. For two years in a row put hay on from adjacent field, letting sheep spread it around. Since then field has been cut and aftermath grazed every other year, otherwise is grazed (aftermath grazing till November, aiming for about 2 inches of grass to be left). Same treatment as for Field 1

Hydrology	Meadows grow well through the summer
Flooding regime	which suggests some GW irrigation. The site
Water management	does flood regularly, but water doesn't sit long
Soil-water levels (indicated by	enough on site to result in grass kill. Controlled
auger hole/any other data)	river levels on the Nene might help. Ditches all
	around the site tend to be the main drainage
	path. Landowner thinks water moves off quite
	quickly.

# **Historical information**

This field was historically a meadow, but was then ploughed and cropped. The landowner took over the farm in 1982 (ish) and tried to crop it for a couple of years (spring rape/wheat) but flooding was a problem.

# **Current site interest**

The soil in this field is sandy and well-drained soil, resulting in a different vegetation community compared to Aldwincle 1. MG6a - *Loliuin perenne-Cynosurus cristatus*, typical sub-community, and *Filipendula ulmaria* sub-community scored highly in MAVIS. Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* itself wasn't recorded on the quadrats, but other the species combinations showed significant similarity to this particular subcommunity.

On average, species richness is much higher compared to field 1 (16.8 species per 1 sq m). The field is dominated by crested dog's-tail grass *Cynosurus cristatus* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, along with some other small grasses. Autumn hawkbut *Leonthodon autumnalis* and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* are widely spread across the field, similarly to field 1. Meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris* and lesser trefoil *Trifolium dubium* mofre typically found in fields with dryer soils, were recorded on the field 2.

Ellenberg values suggest this field has lower nutrients and lower wetness than the other two fields.

Surveyed in 2015 by Wildlife Trust (Matt Johnson) and 2008 (Wildlife Trust) but after the hay cut **Phosphorus levels** Not known Soil profiles Soil profile from Quadrat 132 A horizon 0-20 cm sandy loam B horizon 20-40 cm – sandy clay, amount of clay increases down profile 40-60 cm - similar to above, colour changes from light to bright brown 60-100 cm– silty sand, saturated, very coarse sand C horizon 100-120 cm sand with gravel Water at 120 cm Site manager aspirations/objectives Deliver agri environment agreement **Management recommendations** This field has good potential to become a more species rich meadow, although towards a dry rather than wet meadow (MG4a or even MG5). The donor site is wetter than this field, so not all species found on the donor site will grow successfully here. An additional source of propagules from a slightly drier donor site might help to transform this field into more flowery meadow. An annual hay cut and aftermath grazing would also bring more diversity, compared to alternately grazed and hay cut sites.

	Aldwincle			
	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	
Ellenberg F (moisture tolerance)	5.8	5.44	5.72	
Ellenberg N (fertility)	5.6	4.96	5.56	

Ellenberg R (Reaction)	6.4	6.12	6.04
Species/quadrat (mean and range /1 m x 1 m)	10.7	16.3	13.5
NVC (top 2 MAVIS subcommunities)	MG15a MG4c	MG6a MG6d	MG4b MG4v2