

Site Visit Assessment Form – Aldwinckle Field 2, Northamptonshire




Site Name Aldwinckle Field 2	Grid Ref TL017817	County Northamptonshire	
River Nene	Ownership Lillford Estate (Society of Merchant Ventures)	Designation None	Size (ha) 6.43
Date 22 June 2017	Meeting with Matt Johnson and Tim Hankins. Plus Pete Stroh (BSBI). David Gowing, Emma Rothero and Irina Tatarenko	Managed by Tim Hankins	
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 th 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 th July onwards, and grazed till November. If grazed cattle are put on after 15 th 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 which suggests some GW irrigation. The site does flood regularly, but water doesn't sit long enough on site to result in grass kill. Controlled 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.
Flooding regime Water management Soil-water levels (indicated by auger hole/any other data)	
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	
<p>The soil in this field is sandy and well-drained soil, resulting in a different vegetation community compared to Aldwinckle 1. MG6a - <i>Lolium perenne</i>-<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>, typical sub-community, and <i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> sub-community scored highly in MAVIS. Meadowsweet <i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> itself wasn't recorded on the quadrats, but other the species combinations showed significant similarity to this particular subcommunity.</p> <p>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 <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> and Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i>, along with some other small grasses. Autumn hawkbit <i>Leonthodon autumnalis</i> and ribwort plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> are widely spread across the field, similarly to field 1. Meadow buttercup <i>Ranunculus acris</i> and lesser trefoil <i>Trifolium dubium</i> more typically found in fields with dryer soils, were recorded on the field 2.</p> <p>Ellenberg values suggest this field has lower nutrients and lower wetness than the other two fields.</p>	

Surveyed in 2015 by Wildlife Trust (Matt Johnson) and 2008 (Wildlife Trust) but after the hay cut

Phosphorus levels | Not known

Soil profiles

	<p>Soil profile from Quadrat 132</p> <p><i>A horizon</i> 0-20 cm sandy loam</p> <p><i>B horizon</i> 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</p> <p><i>C horizon</i> 100-120 cm sand with gravel</p> <p>Water at 120 cm</p>
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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.

Aldwinckle			
	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