

Wonersh and Shamley Green Invertebrate survey 2021

Pantheon Output

- 4.11 The Specific Assemblage Type (SAT) for bark & sapwood decay is represented by 24 qualifying saproxylic species across the sites, of which 6 have a conservation designation. In total, three SATs were found to be in Favourable condition by SSSI standards. This is a moderate result. Exceptional sites might expect to have in excess of six SATs in Favourable condition. However, the result suggests that the complex of sites are of local importance. Note that taken as individual compartments Favourable condition may not be applicable. The status applies to all compartments combined. Time and budgetary constraints did not allow for more complex analysis of individual sites.
- 4.12 The combination of mixed broadleaved woodland and open grown oaks on and around the greens provides a range of conditions to support a saproxylic fauna of at least local interest. These habitats are represented by the Favourable status of the SATs bark & sapwood decay A212 (saproxylic species) and scrub edge F001 (woodland edge species). The latter SAT was contributed to from Wonersh woods, scrub and trees fringing The Platt and Lordshill, and the small copse at Shamley Green.
- 4.13 Rich flower resource F002 is largely made up of pollinators such as bees and hoverflies. The bulk of the species contributing to the Favourable status were recorded at the herb-rich grassland of The Platt and to a lesser extent the recent wildflower bund plantings.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- 4.14 The complex of sites within Wonersh Parish support a rich and diverse range of invertebrates and are clearly of at least local importance. The continued relaxation of mowing regimes will enhance the biodiversity of the sites.
- 4.15 The most significant area of grassland is situated at The Platt in Wonersh. The grassland is fairly herb-rich with wet and dry areas and sheltered by trees and scrub at the periphery. Ideal management would be to cut and collect arisings late in the season, e.g. October, ideally leaving a proportion uncut in any one year.
- 4.16 Wonersh Green grassland is botanically species poor and dominated by coarse grasses. The recently created bunds have been planted with corn field wildflower mix which is aesthetically pleasing and of some benefit to pollinators but is overall of poor quality for invertebrates. A more appropriate planting would emulate species present at The Platt, such as knapweed, bird's foot trefoil and similar. Surrey Botanical Society has provided a species list for The Platt. Simply cutting and collecting arisings from the grassland is unlikely to significantly improve the botanical diversity of the sward to create the desired would flower meadow. Plug planting may be successful to some degree, but vigorous grass growth throughout the growing season will likely

suppress less vigorous herbs. Wild-flower meadow creation is most successful from a clean slate, i.e. bare ground sown with the desired seed mix, or temporarily strewn with arisings from The Platt. This might be achieved by soil inversion or rotovation. Other sources advise herbicide application, but this is not always the best approach for a number of reasons. An alternative to these methods is to introduce Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor* to suppress grasses.

- 4.17 Shamley Green Duck Pond Green is cut in the middle of the season to facilitate a village event, and this is not ideal. If this should continue the mowing pattern should be carefully planned to push animals, e.g. developing grasshopper nymphs etc, towards the refuge areas that will remain uncut until later in the season. The green itself is quite damp and rushes *Juncus* sp. dominate in some areas. The pond and ditch edges also exhibit wetland vegetation, which in turn support different invertebrates adapted to these plants and conditions. However, the pond itself is a dedicated duck pond, so will always remain ecologically limited. The open grown Pedunculate Oak trees are a feature of interest and supported a number of saproxylic invertebrates, some notable. Other trees, such as non-native Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* have little value for invertebrates, the most prominent species being the recently established leaf mining micro moth *Cameraria ohridella*. Any future tree plantings would ideally be Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* and flowering rosaceous shrubs such as Whitebeam *Sorbus aria* and Hawthorn *Craetagus monogyna*. Any tree maintenance should take the saproxylic fauna into consideration and processes such as 'dead-wooding' trees discouraged. The Copse has a small stream running through it, which would benefit from being kept semi-open. Future management should seek to remove any non-native species, such as Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and discourage practices such as dumping garden waste.
- 4.18 Lordshill is partially left uncut, whilst the western side of the road is largely tended for amenity value. The best part of the uncut area is the south-east grassland block with frequent Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* agg., Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and Germander Speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*. Management should aim to encourage these plants into areas dominated by coarse grasses and similar via late season cut and collect mowing and possibly trialling some post cut strewing of arisings from the more diverse areas into the less diverse areas.
- 4.19 The woodland at Wonersh Common has seen some management intervention in recent years, with evidence of thinning particularly in the southern half. In general, the woodland would benefit from a more developed understorey, removal of non-native species such as Sycamore, ride widening to allow more light in and glade creation to create sheltered microclimates for invertebrates and increase woodland edge habitat. Standing and fallen dead / dying trees should be retained in situ wherever it is safe to do so and brash / timber arising from management activities should be stacked and allowed to naturally break down where practicable. Of course some of the larger timbers generated by management works will no doubt be required for firewood, but ideally a

proportion will be left. Any larger trees, such as the oaks on the southern boundary should be maintained as open grown examples by preventing encroachment of developing trees and shrubs at the woodland edge causing die back of the crown and lower limbs. Ideally the woodland will be surveyed for examples of trees that would benefit from being gradually halo-released from surrounding vegetation to promote open growth, as opposed to densely clustered trees all competing for light.

If a new management plan is introduced best practice would be to resurvey in 3-years

The white admiral was found on the Platt. The *Lonicera* there should be preserved and could be added to