

Site reference: Ufd309

Site name: Carver Barracks, Wimbish

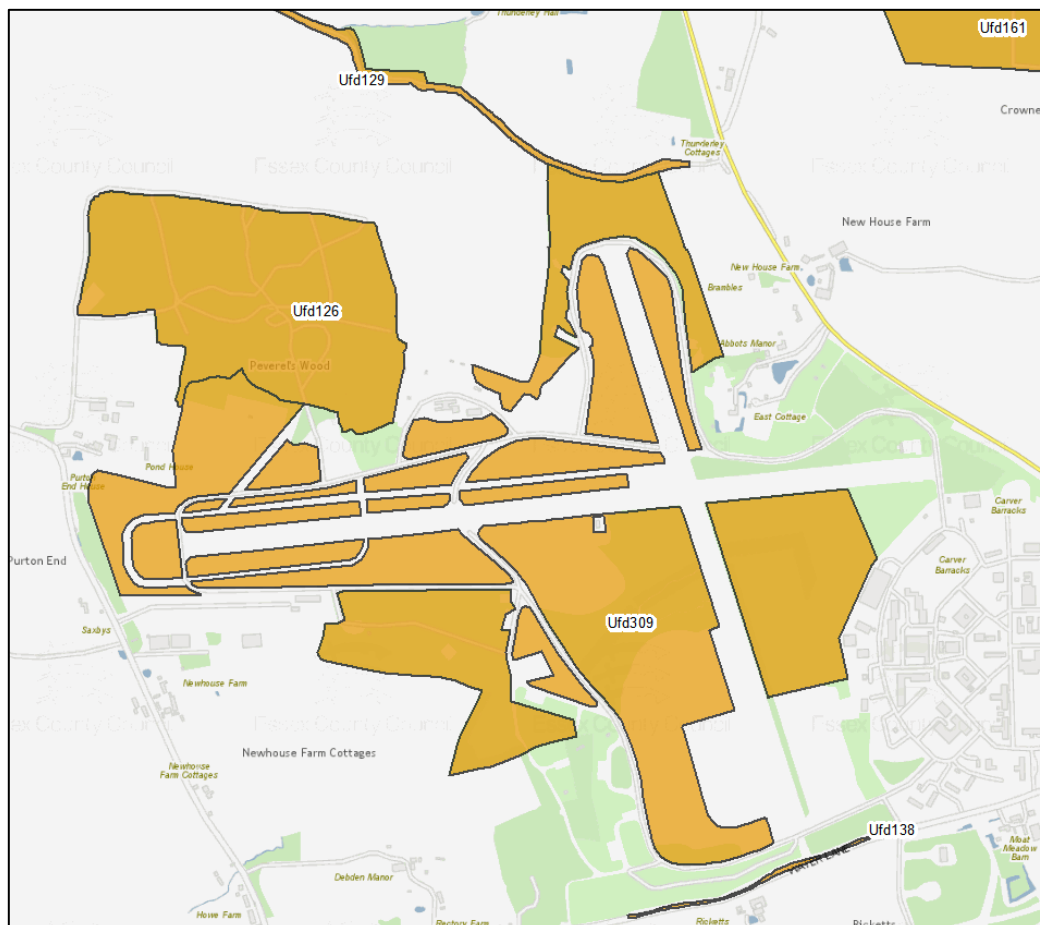
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TL559349

Site area: 63.8ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC9 – Lowland Meadows

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site comprises the open grassland parts of the Carver Barracks, which amounts to the largest grassland site in the District. Operational use of the site since its creation in the 1930s means that there is an open mosaic component to the site, with small-scale and irregular physical disturbance creating pockets of varied topography and exposed substrates.

The grassland habitat includes chalk grassland indicators such as Stemless Thistle (*Cirsium acaule*) and Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) alongside other calcicoles such as Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*) and Hairy Violet (*Viola hirsuta*). The sward is composed of Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Smaller Cat's-tail (*Phleum bertolonii*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and meadow-grass (*Poa* sp.). Other species present include Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Viper's Bugloss (*Echium vulgare*), Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), Perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), Common Centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Common Cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) and Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*).

Scrub is scattered through parts of the grassland, including Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), rose (*Rosa* agg.), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), willow (*Salix* sp.) and Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*).

Site Selection Rationale

HC9 - Although chalk grassland indicators are present, the site is on chalky boulder clay and so cannot be considered as true Lowland Calcareous Grassland. It is better considered as a base-rich sub-community of the MG5 circumneutral hay meadow community, which qualifies it as Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat.

Priority Habitats

Lowland Meadows

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and operated by the Ministry of Defence, but it is opened for public access when not in operational use.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

The site is not managed for nature conservation outcomes and its management is not sufficient to prevent successional pressures on the grassland, leading to the spread of scrub. Coarse grasses such as Tall Fescue (*Schedonorus arundinacea*) and False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) are dominant in places, as are tall ruderals such as thistles (*Cirsium* sp.). Operation use of the site has led to physical disturbance in some places.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 2021

Site Reviewed: -