

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

43. River Avon (North & South Glen)



Grid Ref. NS 295560 674064

Area 34.4 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved and mixed woodland Scrub Grassland.
Species	42 locally notable plant species.
Connectivity	Significant part of the River Avon woodland corridor.
Community	River Avon Heritage Trail runs through site.

Description

This extensive site is dominated by mainly broadleaved (semi-natural and plantation) woodland growing within the steep gorge descending down to the River Avon. The site also supports areas of mixed woodland plantation, scrub and marshy grassland.

The site includes a significant area of semi-improved neutral grassland at its southern end.

The River Avon Heritage Trail runs through the site and Muiravonside Country Park is just to the north.

Nature Conservation Summary

The site supports a wide variety of habitats including extensive long-established broadleaved woodland.

The woodland is structurally diverse with many mature trees and a good proportion of standing and lying deadwood.

A high number of plant species have been recorded (183), including 42 notable species (9 of them locally rare). The site supports badger and is likely to also be important for bats, otter, woodland birds and invertebrates.

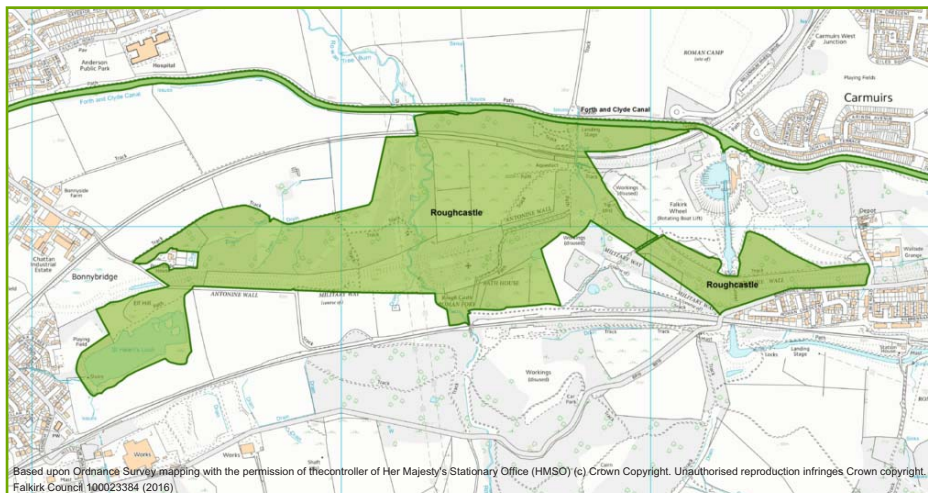
The site is part of an important riparian woodland habitat corridor running along the River Avon and linking with the wooded glens of several smaller watercourses and with Muiravonside Country Park to the north.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Clear some dense areas of beech regeneration and establish native species such as oak to reduce dominance of beech.
- Control invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan balsam.
- In places clear dense scrub from electricity wayleaves to provide open glades of benefit to invertebrates.

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44. Roughcastle



Grid Ref. NS 284343 679965

Area 74.8 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved semi-natural woodland Parkland Scrub Acid and neutral grassland Marshy grassland Valley mire Standing and running water Heath Swamp.
Species	Good species diversity.
Connectivity	Core part of an extensive habitat network.
Community	Well used public open space.

Description

Roughcastle is a very extensive site situated between the Forth & Clyde canal and the Edinburgh-Glasgow railway line, to the west of Falkirk and east of Bonnybridge.

Although dominated by broadleaved woodland, the site also supports a range of other habitats including grassland, running and open water, heath, mire and scrub.

The site has high amenity value, particularly associated with the historic interest of the Antonine Wall.

Nature Conservation Summary

The extent of semi-natural woodland at this site, particularly given its urban fringe setting, is of local importance.

The site supports a diverse mix of habitat types including locally rare open water, heath and swamp. Some of the unimproved grassland habitats are also of note. The woodland itself is very diverse ranging from mature oaks in a parkland setting to dense developing birch scrub and areas of wet woodland.

The site has high plant species diversity. It is also likely to be important for bats, breeding birds and invertebrates.

The woodlands form an almost continuous band of habitat from Tamfourhill in the east and covering around 2km, creating an important habitat corridor.

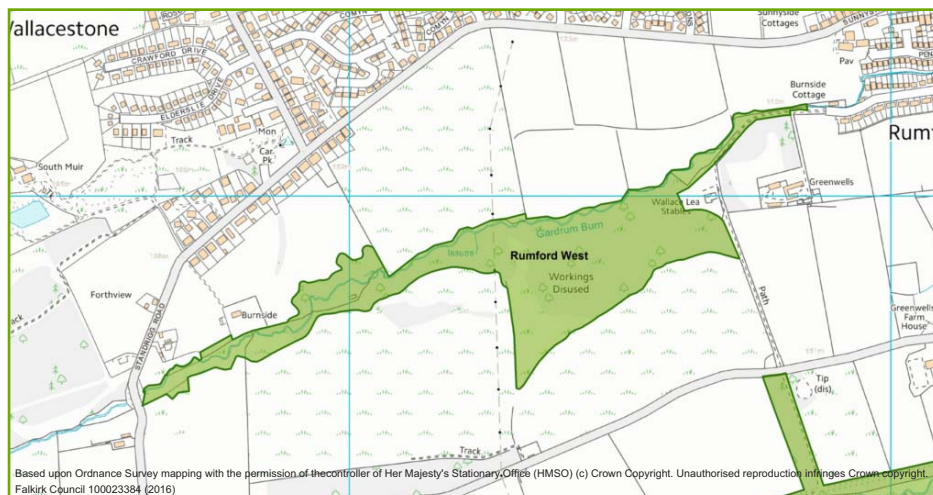
The site also serves to connect wildlife corridors along the canal and railway lines, creating an extensive habitat network.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Woodland management to favour native species and encourage ground flora and structural diversity.
- Improve water quality of St Helen's Loch by reducing enriched run-off.
- Manage grazing at Elf Hill to reduce trampling pressure around the loch and damage to the heath area.
- Scrub control in areas of grassland, wet heath and mire.
- Grazing management to allow woodland regeneration and maintain grasslands.

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45. Rumford West



Grid Ref. NS 292315 676864

Area 12.3 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Scrub and woodland Unimproved grassland Heath Swamp Species-rich hedge with trees.
Species	High plant diversity.
Connectivity	Important habitat corridor along Gardrum Burn.
Community	Limited recreational use.

Description

Rumford West consists of a mosaic of scrub and grassland habitats associated with the Gardrum Burn and a disused quarry south of the burn.

There are also rarer woodland elements occurring on steep slopes along the burn. A few small ridges with relic heath or acid grassland, local marshy flushes, patches of open bracken and some swamp at an old reservoir also occur.

The site forms a key element of the wildlife corridor running along the Gardrum Burn

Nature Conservation Summary

The site, although limited in extent, supports a range of different habitat types including locally rare swamp, heath and species-rich hedgerow.

The areas of unimproved relic acid grassland are also of note and support a good range of acidic species. Species diversity is high with 174 plant species recorded. This includes locally rare purple osier. The scrub habitat is also likely to be particularly valuable for breeding birds.

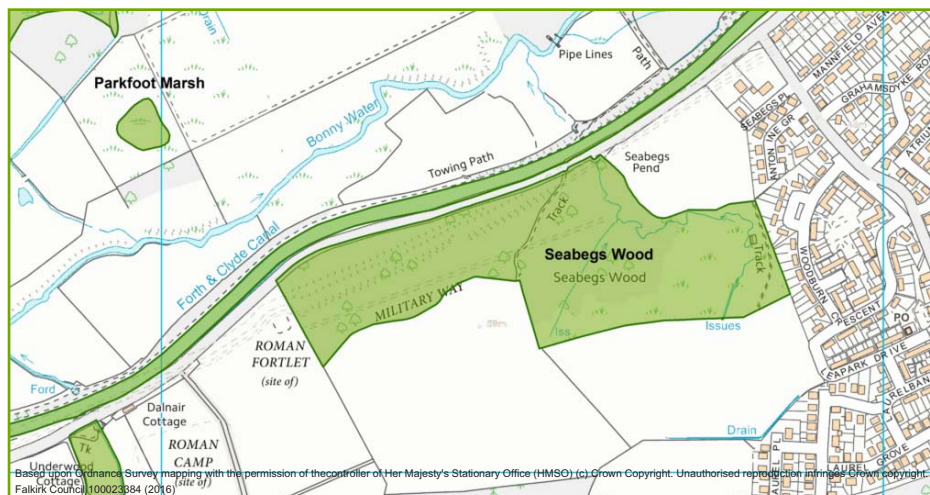
This site is important for the role it plays in the habitat corridor along the Gardrum Burn; a habitat corridor which is particularly important due to the relatively built-up areas and improved agricultural fields through which it passes. This corridor links the upper Slamannan Plateau in the west to the lowlands (including the open habitats of Rumford East SINC) to the east.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Selective scrub removal to maintain areas of relic grassland.
- Introduce a grazing regime to manage the relic grassland areas.
- Control Japanese Knotweed (to the east of the site).

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46. Seabegs Wood



Grid Ref. NS 281534 679291

Area 10.3 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved woodland Scrub Unimproved grassland Heath Basin mire Parkland Running water.
Species	High plant species diversity. Abundant bluebells.
Connectivity	Key site on the Forth & Clyde canal wildlife corridor.
Community	Historically important site with public access.

Description

The eastern half of Seabegs Wood is dominated by broadleaved semi-natural woodland. To the east and south of this woodland are small areas of grassland, mire and heath although these are diminishing in size as the woodland habitat develops. The western half of the site sits on the Antonine wall, with the earthworks associated with the wall clearly visible. Here the habitat is primarily parkland with maturing oak trees, however strips of semi-natural woodland provide boundaries to the north and south.

Nature Conservation Summary

Although small in scale, this site supports a very diverse range of habitats. This includes locally rare basin mire and heath.

Even the areas of close cropped grass on the Antonine Wall provide added diversity and wildlife value.

The maturing oaks are of ecological interest in themselves.

The species diversity is high - 136 higher plants and 34 mosses and lichens, with several species of local interest. Potentially important for badger, bats, woodland birds and invertebrates. Abundant bluebell in the spring.

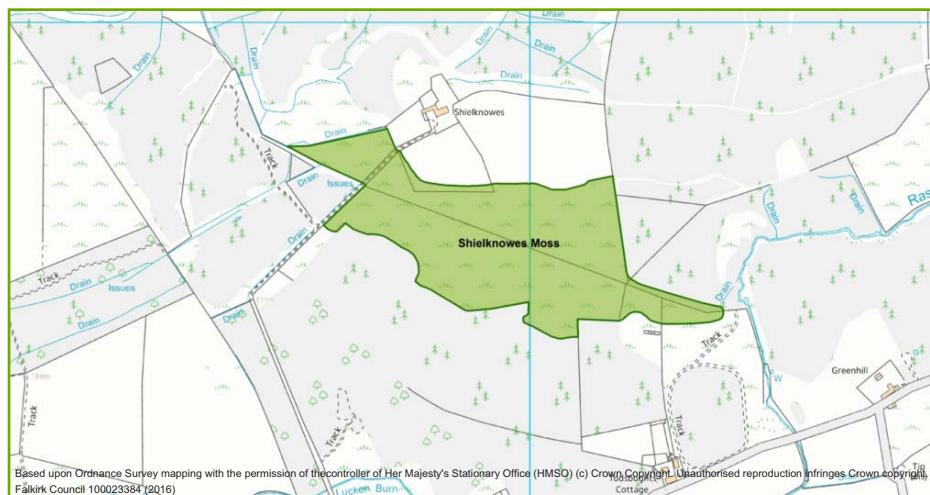
The site exhibits abundant natural regeneration with oak and hazel doing well. It provides a valuable stepping stone on the wildlife corridor of the Forth and Clyde canal.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Preserve some of the more open habitats (grassland, mire and heath) by controlling scrub and bracken to create varied woodland glades.
- Block drains within the basin mire to retain high water levels.
- Manage grass cutting regime to benefit bluebell and other biodiversity.

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47. Shielknowes Moss



Grid Ref. NS 282891 672609

Area 12.7 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Raised Bog Basin Mire Marshy grassland.
Species	White beaked sedge (locally rare), bumblebees.
Connectivity	One of a series of bog sites on the Slamannan Plateau.
Community	Little or no recreational use.

Description

Shielknowes is a large area of raised bog and lagg fen, situated in a shallow valley on the Slamannan Plateau. It is surrounded by commercial forestry and agricultural fields.

Part of the eastern section of the bog has been lost to commercial forestry and is not therefore included within the wildlife site boundary.

Nature Conservation Summary

The nationally rare raised bog habitat has an intact surface and typical marginal lagg areas. There is high quality and diverse bog vegetation and structure.

Habitat diversity is enhanced by the locally rare basin mire and the presence of marshy grassland and pockets of neutral and acid grassland.

Total species diversity is high with a good range of sphagnum (12 species). Species of note include white-beaked sedge (not previously recorded in the Falkirk area), marsh arrow-grass, blushing bog moss and white cushion moss. Good numbers of bumblebees have been noted from the site.

The site is one of a series of bog sites across the Slamannan Plateau.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Block drainage ditches to raise the water level of the bog.
- Prevent further scrub encroachment.
- Fence to allow management of grazing levels.
- Avoid impacts from further forestry on or next to the site.

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48. Skipperton Glen



Grid Ref. NS 280882 678512

Area 7 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved semi-natural woodland Scrub Grassland Standing and running water.
Species	High plant species diversity.
Connectivity	Important wildlife corridor.
Community	Limited accessibility.

Description

Skipperton Glen is a linear corridor about 1km long through which the Skipperton Burn flows. The steep, narrow valley is wooded on both sides and supports a range of habitats including broadleaved woodland, grassland, bracken, scrub and standing and running water. There are also areas of scrubby woodland on the embankments where two railway lines cross the site.

The surrounding land is primarily improved agriculture.

Nature Conservation Summary

Although dominated by broadleaved woodland the sites habitat diversity is enhanced significantly by the presence of a range of grassland types, scrub, pond and running water.

The northern half of the site is listed as ancient woodland and despite past disturbance and some grazing semi-natural conditions prevail.

Species diversity is high, with a total of 148 species of plant recorded.

Badger has been recorded on site and a good range of woodland mammals, birds and amphibians are likely to occur.

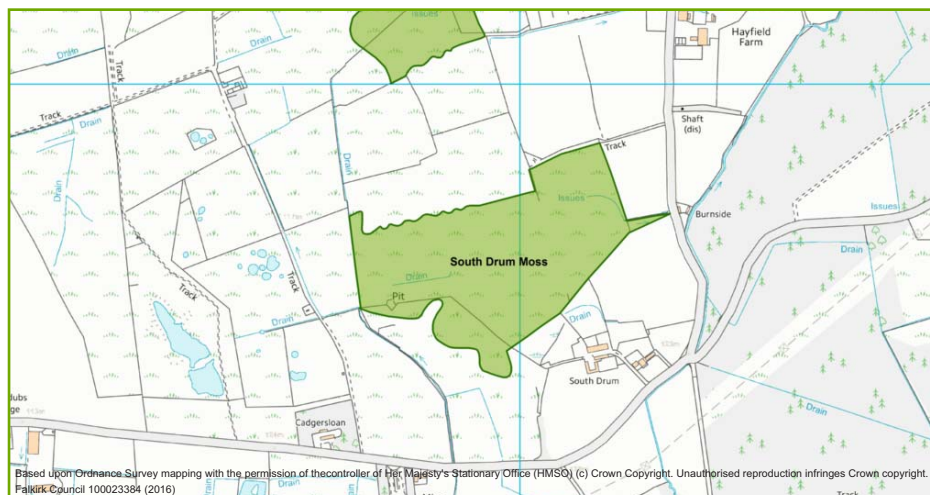
The site plays an important habitat corridor role, linking the Forth and Clyde canal and two railway corridors, as well as following the Skipperton Burn corridor.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Selective scrub clearance to maintain open grassland areas.
- Woodland management to encourage a diverse age structure and ensure successful regeneration of native tree species.
- Avoid disturbance by heavy grazing or dumping.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

49. South Drum Moss



Grid Ref. NS 282931 677727

Area 11.6 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)

Raised bog
Wet heath
Basin mire
Grassland.

Species

Hen Harrier. Typical bog species including sphagnum.

Connectivity

Linked to South Drum Claypit SINC and Wester Drum Wildlife Site.

Community

Little or no recreational access.

Description

This peatland site consists of a relic low dome area of relatively intact raised bog, with similar mire vegetation on the gentle slopes around the raised bog.

To the north of the site acidic grassland drains into the mire. To the west the site includes an area of heath vegetation with patches of acid grassland.

The surrounding landuse is improved agricultural to the east and south.

South Drum Claypit SINC is immediately adjacent to the west, with other designated sites nearby to the north and west.

Nature Conservation Summary

The nationally rare raised bog habitat appears intact and supports a good range of typical raised bog species including characteristic sphagnum mosses.

Habitat diversity is enhanced by the presence of locally rare basin mire and heath as well as areas of acid grassland.

The site supports large patches of bog asphodel and is known to have been used by juvenile hen harrier.

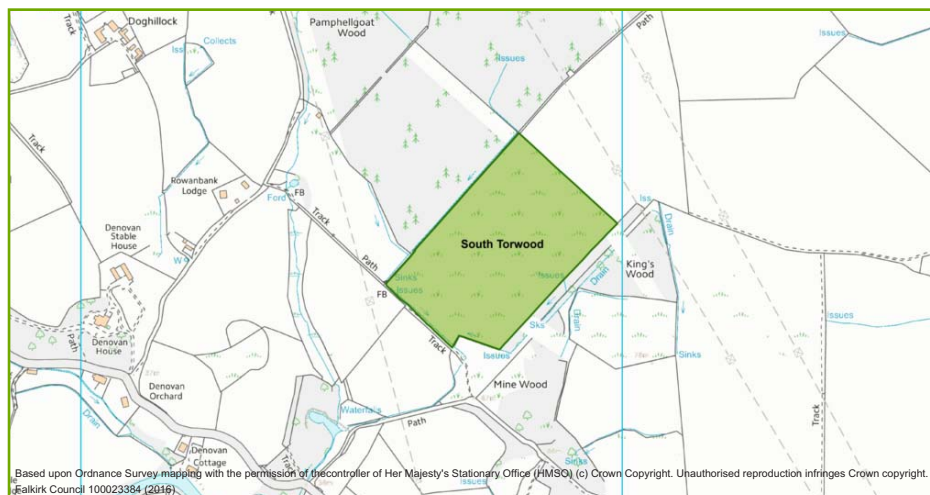
This site is connected to the South Drum Claypit SINC (to the west) which connects to Wester Drum a little further north, thus creating a significant area of high quality habitat.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Monitor scrub to ensure it does not spread to the detriment of the site.
- Ensure future grazing regimes do not damage the site.
- Block drains to maintain and increase water levels within the bog.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

50. South Torwood



Grid Ref. NS 282776 683505

Area 8.7 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Unimproved acid grassland Semi-improved neutral grassland Marshy grassland Heath Scrub Basin mire.
Species	High species diversity.
Connectivity	Part of a wider mosaic of grassland and woodland sites.
Community	Little or no recreational use.

Description

This site comprises a relic area of relatively unimproved acid grassland with wet heath, lying on the upper slopes of the low hillside to the east of Denny.

There are several strips of more neutral rush grassland, where pipelines have previously been laid. To the north lies the extensive conifer plantation of Torwood, while to the southeast the site is bounded by broadleaved woodland.

Nature Conservation Summary

Areas of unimproved acid grassland and heath of this sort are locally rare.

Habitat diversity is enhanced by the range of grassland, heath, scrub and mire habitats present. The species diversity of the site is high.

The small area of mire vegetation exhibits good species diversity, including many species of local interest such as marsh lousewort, fen bedstraw, bristle club-rush, flea sedge and few-flowered spikerush.

While the species richness of the grassland may have deteriorated as a result of limited grazing, overall it is still considered to be of high interest.

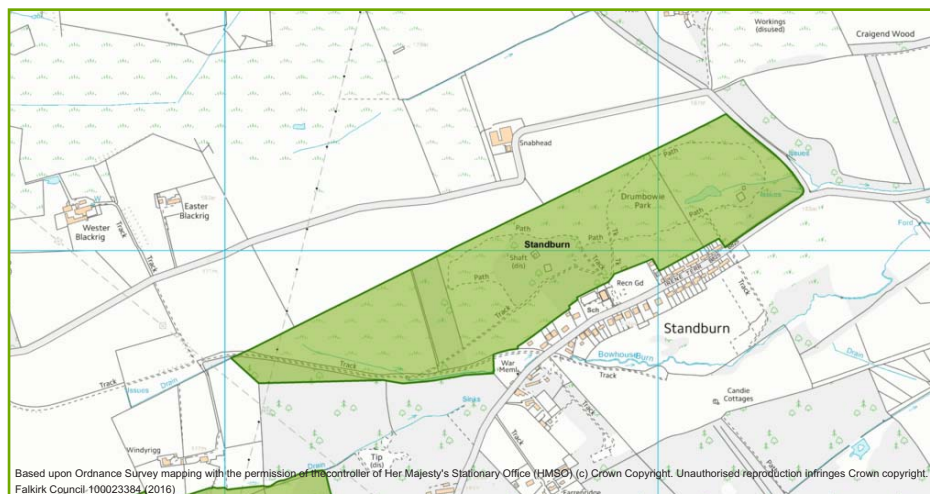
This site sits within a wider mosaic of local woodland and mire sites adding to its nature conservation value.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Introduce a grazing regime to maintain the habitat quality and diversity.
- Control scrub.
- Protect mire habitat from drainage.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

51. Standburn



Grid Ref. NS 292720 674965

Area 29.6 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved woodland Scrub Unimproved acid and neutral grassland Ponds Swamp Spoil.
Species	Great crested newt. High plant diversity.
Connectivity	Part of a wider habitat network.
Community	Well used with an extensive path network. Active community management group.

Description

This site contains a mix of grassland and woodland/scrub habitats on a south facing hillside and more level southerly areas.

The habitats have developed over agricultural areas and an extensive area of mine spoil, and several areas of spoil material and barer ground still exist.

The grassland is very variable ranging from neutral through to acidic with differing drainage conditions. There are a few distinct marshy depressions and a number of ponds with associated swamp vegetation.

The site is managed by a local community group for recreation and conservation.

The site is largely surrounded by farmland with forestry plantation to the southwest and the village of Standburn along its southern edge.

The site connects to areas of forestry and tree belts within the wider countryside to form a quite extensive habitat network within the agricultural landscape. It may also be part of a network of ponds and wetlands linking this great crested newt site to others near Muiravonside and Avonglen.

Nature Conservation Summary

This extensive site exhibits high habitat diversity and includes locally rare swamp habitat.

The various unimproved grassland habitats are also of note.

Species diversity is high, with over 120 plant species recorded. This includes locally rare species and the LBAP priority species whorled caraway.

Nationally rare great crested newts have also been recorded breeding within the largest pond on the site.

The mix of habitats is likely to be of value for breeding birds and invertebrates.

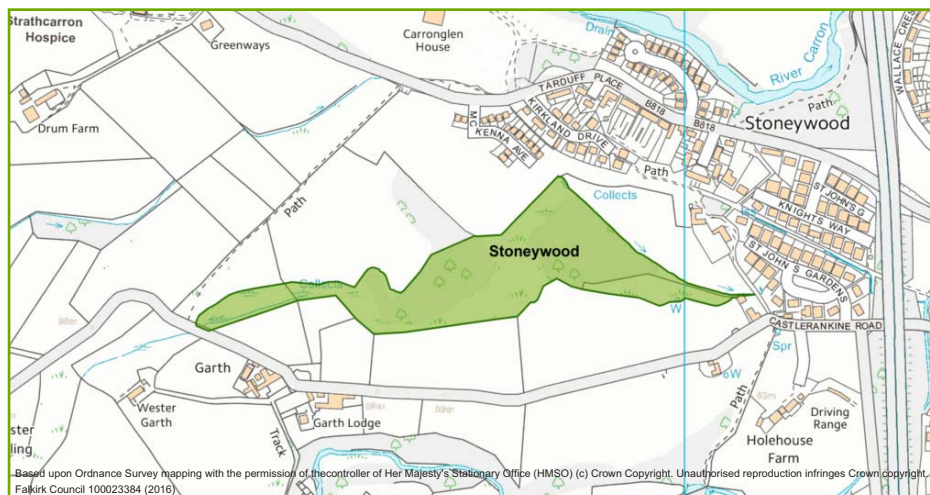
The site forms part of a wider network of woodland habitats and may form an important part of a network of habitat used by great crested newts.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Retain areas of quality grassland.
- Develop a suitable grassland management regime.
- On-going pond management and additional pond creation for newts.
- Retain 'sanctuary' areas where disturbance is limited.
- Control invasive species like Himalayan balsam.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

52. Stoneywood



Grid Ref. NS 279722 682594

Area 5.2 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Scrub and woodland Neutral grassland Marshy grassland Swamp Running water.
Species	Good plant diversity.
Connectivity	Localised wildlife corridor along burn.
Community	Access difficult.

Description

The site is centred around a small valley, much disturbed by past mine workings but now showing habitat recovery and development.

The site supports a mosaic of habitats including scrub, woodland, marsh, small watercourses/ditches and grasslands.

A SUDs pond has been created in the north tip of the site as part of a recent neighbouring development.

Much of the surrounding landscape is agricultural, however recent residential development has taken place to the immediate centre north of the site.

Nature Conservation Summary

This site supports a diverse range of habitats, including locally rare swamp. The marshy willow carr is also of high local interest.

The species diversity is quite high (146 plants recorded). These include a number of locally rare plants such as common hawkweed and marsh horsetail.

The range of habitats present is likely to be of value to breeding birds.

A lack of intensive management and a long period of recovery has allowed relatively semi-natural habitat to develop.

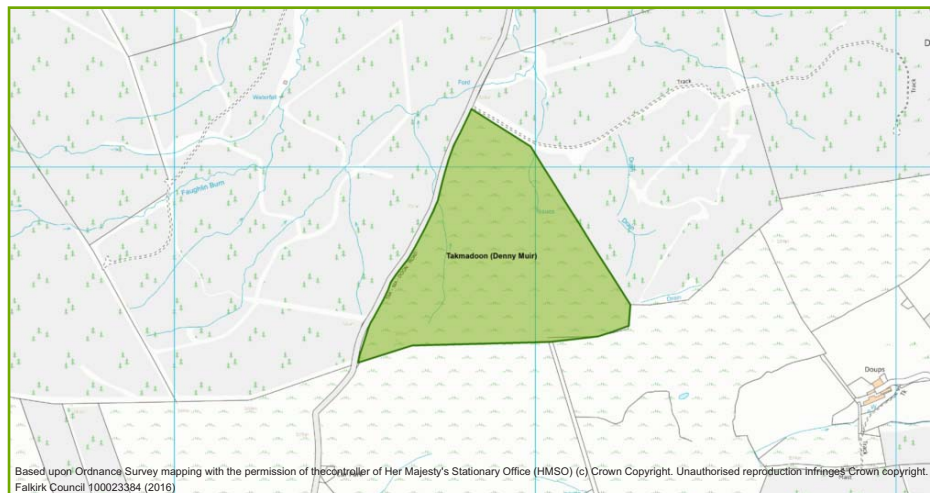
The site, located along a small valley creates a local stretch of habitat corridor and is important in the context of other local wooded valleys along the River Carron and the Castlerankine burn.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Assess wildlife value of the SUDs pond and enhance if possible.
- Manage grazing to avoid poaching of wetter areas.
- Continue grazing of grasslands to inhibit scrub development.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

53. Takmadoon (Denny Muir)



Grid Ref. NS 273895 681745

Area 28 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Valley mire Acidic grassland Neutral grassland Marsh and flushes Heath.
Species	High species diversity.
Connectivity	Part of an extensive area of grass moorland along the Kilsyth Hills
Community	Open access.

Description

This site supports a large and very complex mosaic of vegetation, much of it best described as acidic grassland dominated mire. Other vegetation types include acidic grassland on rocky outcrops/ridges, rush dominated marsh, neutral grassland, wet heath and short sedge dominated flushes.

The site occupies a steep north facing slope, the southern boundary running along the summit ridge of the Kilsyth Hills.

The surrounding land supports extensive commercial forestry plantation with some rough grazing to the south and east.

Nature Conservation Summary

This is an extensive and diverse site supporting a range of semi-natural habitats such as the locally rare mire and heath vegetation.

The site has high species diversity with notably species rich areas. The flush habitats are of particular note with very high species diversity and local rarities including: dioecious sedge, marsh arrowgrass, flea sedge, fen bedstraw, few-flowered spikerush, knotted pearlwort, plus mosses such as rigid bogmoss, thick-nerved applemoss, tree moss and giant spearmoss.

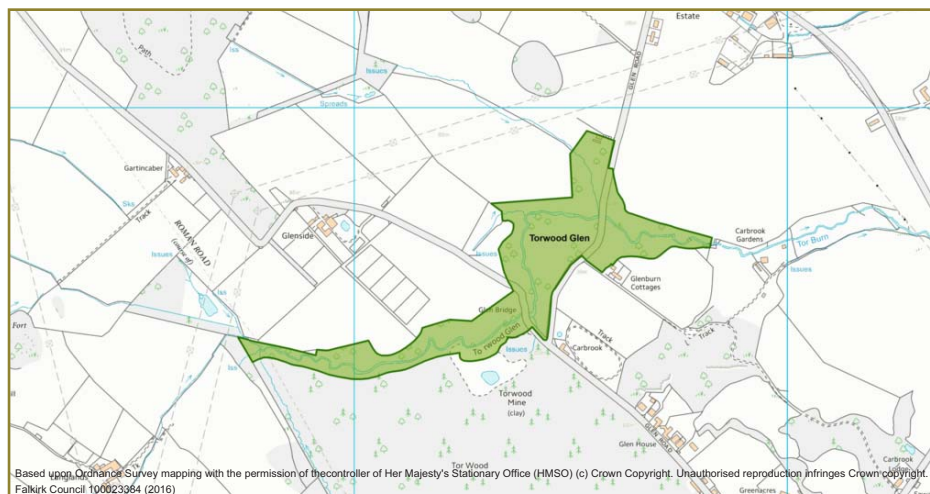
The site forms part of a larger mosaic of grass moorland, mire and woodland habitats associated with the nearby Denny Muir SSSI and the Kilsyth hills.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Manage grazing to maintain and improve habitat quality and species diversity.
- Retain poor drainage.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

54. Torwood Glen



Grid Ref. NS 283389 685629

Area 12.4 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved woodland Semi-natural conifer wood Running water.
Species	Purple hairstreak. High plant diversity.
Connectivity	Part of the Tor Burn wildlife corridor.
Community	Difficult to access.

Description

This site is dominated by broadleaved semi-natural woodland, associated with the steep sided valley of the Tor Burn. There are a few open glades and some localised flushes. The burn runs west-east through the site with occasional marshy areas immediately next to it. The surrounding landscape is primarily improved agriculture, with the dense conifer plantation of Torwood to the south. Although the northern side of the glen is within the Stirling Council area, the site should be viewed as one ecological unit.

Nature Conservation Summary

Although the site is dominated by semi-natural oak-birch woodland, the habitat diversity is enhanced by small areas of semi-natural conifer woodland, open glades with grass and bracken, scrub, neutral grassland, running water and marshy areas associated with the burn. The semi-natural conifer woodland is locally rare and the extent of long-established semi-natural broadleaved woodland is also of local importance.

Species diversity is high, with 167 plant species recorded including several local rarities such as Brown's four-tooth moss. Purple hairstreak butterfly has also been recorded.

The site is likely to be important for woodland birds, mammals and invertebrates, particularly in association with the extensive Torwood plantation.

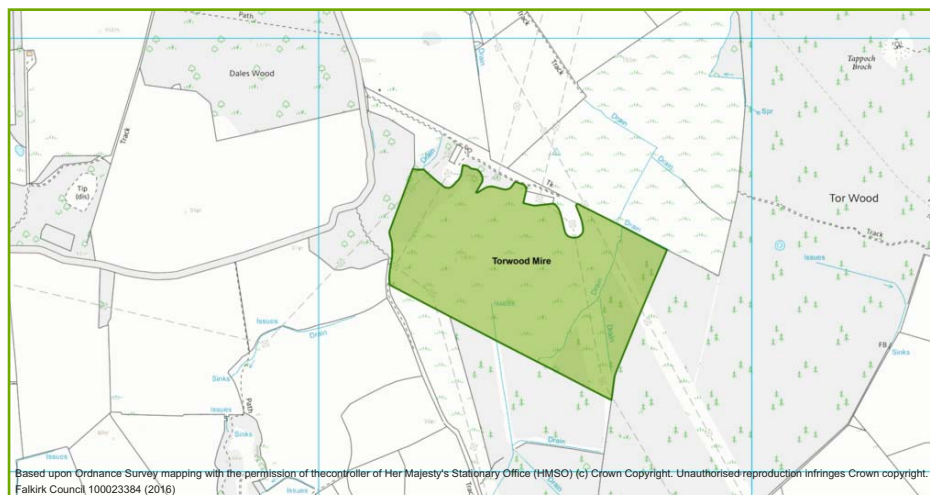
The semi-natural broadleaved woodland of Torwood Glen represents a remnant of the woodland that would have occupied much of Tor wood prior to the commercial forestry plantation. The site is an important element of the wildlife corridor along the Tor Burn and is close to Plean Country Park to the north.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Favour planting of broadleaved woodland in any felled areas adjacent to the glen to the south.
- Encourage rhododendron control to the east of the site (with native tree planting in cleared gaps).
- Take opportunities for broadleaved planting to extend the corridor to the west towards Dales Wood.
- Avoid encroachment from the quarry or from other development at the quarry site.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

55. Torwood Mire



Grid Ref. NS 282470 684472

Area 19.8 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)

Raised and modified bog
Basin mire
Heath
Unimproved grassland
Woodland and scrub.

Species

Average species diversity.
Round-leaved sundew (LBAP priority).

Connectivity

Links to Dales wood and Torwood.

Community

Limited access.

Description

Torwood mire occurs on the low hills to the north of Denny near Torwood.

The site supports acidic vegetation, dominated by raised bog habitat. In addition to raised bog there are areas of basin mire, modified bog, heath and grassland.

Until recently the site also included areas of forestry over peat. Some of these areas may have been felled in an attempt to reinstate peat bog vegetation as part of mitigation works associated with the substation construction.

Changes in the overall area and types of semi-natural habitat will have occurred as a result of the substation development but have not yet been mapped in detail.

The site is surrounded by forestry, agriculture and the substation to the north.

Nature Conservation Summary

This site supports a good range of habitats including nationally rare raised bog and locally rare heath and basin mire habitats.

Although the site has suffered disturbance it remains a good example of varied mire vegetation.

Although the species diversity is not particularly high it does include a good range of typical bog and fen species. The locally rare chickweed wintergreen has also been recorded.

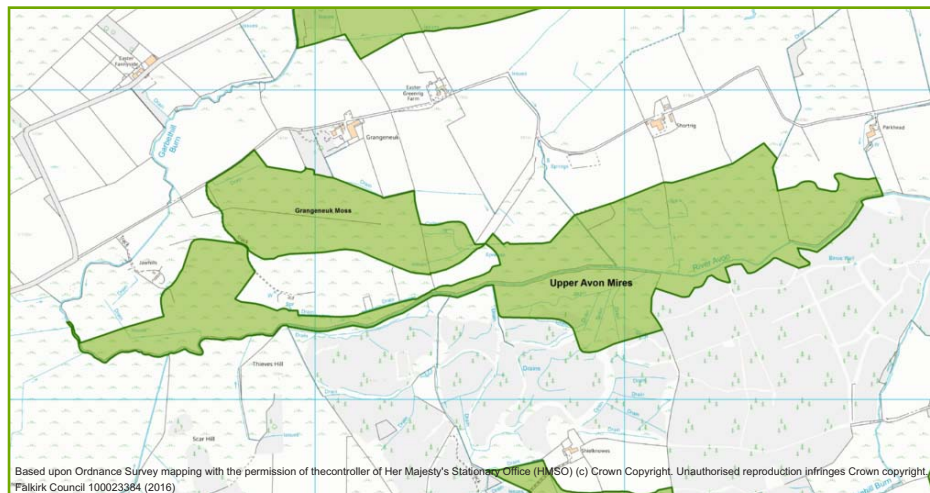
The site is relatively isolated in terms of other bog sites; however it does lie next to Torwood and Dales Wood.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Revise wildlife site boundary following completion of construction and bog management associated with the substation expansion.
- Implement bog management plan associated with substation development.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

56. Upper Avon Mires



Grid Ref. NS 282749 673425

Area 52.8 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Raised and modified bog Basin mire Heath Marshy and unimproved grassland Running water, swamp & flood plain.
Species	Locally rare and LBAP species present.
Connectivity	Connected to the River Avon corridor and Grangeneuk Wildlife Site.
Community	Little or no recreational access.

Description

This site is a complex area of wetlands, mainly to the north side of the channelled River Avon.

The wetlands have developed on a low lying floodplain, formerly fed by the meandering river channel.

The eastern part of the site comprises mainly basin mire, raised bog and heath on steep slopes. In the western part of the site, as well as the rich and complicated mosaic of wetland habitats, there are a few mineral ridges supporting acid grassland and heath.

The site is surrounded by semi-improved pasture and conifer plantation to the southeast.

Nature Conservation Summary

This large, complex site supports a high diversity of habitats including nationally rare raised bog and locally rare basin mire, swamp, and heath.

Species diversity is likely to be high (assisted by the wide range of habitats present) and includes a number of local rarities such as marsh lousewort, creeping willow, knotted pearlwort, fen bedstraw, flea sedge and golden rod and a good range of mosses including *Sphagnum teres* and *climacium dendroides*.

A number of LBAP priority species are present including hen harrier, harebell and ragged robin.

The site follows the corridor of the River Avon and is connected to Grangeneuk wildlife site to the north.

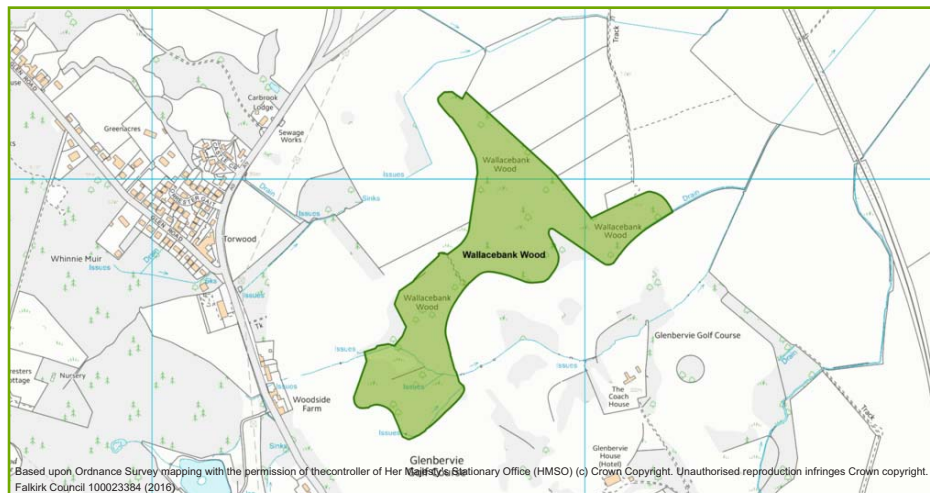
Despite previous peat cutting and drainage, the water table of the site appears quite high, perhaps enabling recovery from past vegetation damage/drying.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Ensure old drainage ditches remain unmaintained and block if necessary.
- Continue to manage grazing levels to inhibit scrub growth but avoid excessive trampling or over-grazing.

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57. Wallacebank Wood



Grid Ref. NS 284776 684807

Area 15.6 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved woodland.
Species	Interesting invertebrate populations. Bluebell.
Connectivity	Connects to wider parkland/golf course landscape at Glenbervie.
Community	Limited recreational use.

Description

Wallacebank wood is a large lowland oak woodland. Most of the site supports ancient woodland, with blocks of long-established woodland of plantation origin to the north and south ends. Several shallow streams run through the woodland.

The site is surrounded on three sides by Glenbervie golf courses, with improved pasture to the north.

The site is actively managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Nature Conservation Summary

While not a huge site, Wallacebank wood represents one of the largest remnants of oak woodland in the Falkirk Council area and a significant block of ancient woodland.

The site has limited habitat diversity (dominated by oak woodland), but habitat interest is added by small areas of grassland and bracken and by a number of small watercourses and associated wetter areas.

Plant species diversity is good with over 100 higher plant species recorded including the locally rare wood millet grass. Fauna records include 25 woodland bird species, 75 species of butterfly and moth, and 77 spider species. Of the spider species one (*Cicurina cicur*) has not been recorded elsewhere in Scotland and 8 are new records for the Stirlingshire area.

Work to remove *Rhododendron* appears to have been successful and may lead to improved ground flora diversity.

The parkland setting of the site enhances the value of the woodland habitats.

This is an important site in the context of other woodland sites across the Torwood - North Larbert area, including Torwood Glen Wildlife Site.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Encourage regeneration of native tree species by protecting saplings.
- Prevent re-establishment of *rhododendron ponticum*.
- Retain standing and lying deadwood on the site.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

58. West Mains Pond



Grid Ref. NS 290618 681552

Area 10.1 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Open water Swamp Marshy grassland Neutral grassland Broadleaved woodland.
Species	High plant diversity.
Connectivity	Part of Helix Park and next to canal.
Community	High recreational use.

Description

Most of West Mains Pond now sits within the main Helix Park site, adjacent to the Forth and Clyde canal.

The site consists of a central wetland area of open water and marginal swamp vegetation. Adjacent to this are areas of relatively recently planted woodland and rough grassland. The north and northwestern part of this site has been impacted by developments associated with the canal extension and Helix park. This has resulted in a reduction in the area of woodland and rough grassland. However, the remaining parts of the wildlife site are now under active management as part of the Helix Park and improved access has been provided via a boardwalk.

The site is a core element of the extensive habitat network created by the Helix and the canal.

Nature Conservation Summary

While the core interest of this site is the open water and locally rare swamp habitat, the woodland and rough grassland help provide relatively high habitat diversity.

Species diversity is also reasonably high (over 100) and includes a few locally rare species - water speedwell, spiked water milfoil, hairy sedge and soft-stemmed bulrush. A good range of amphibian, bird and invertebrate species are likely to be associated with the mosaic of wetland, woodland and grassland habitats, particularly where disturbance can be limited.

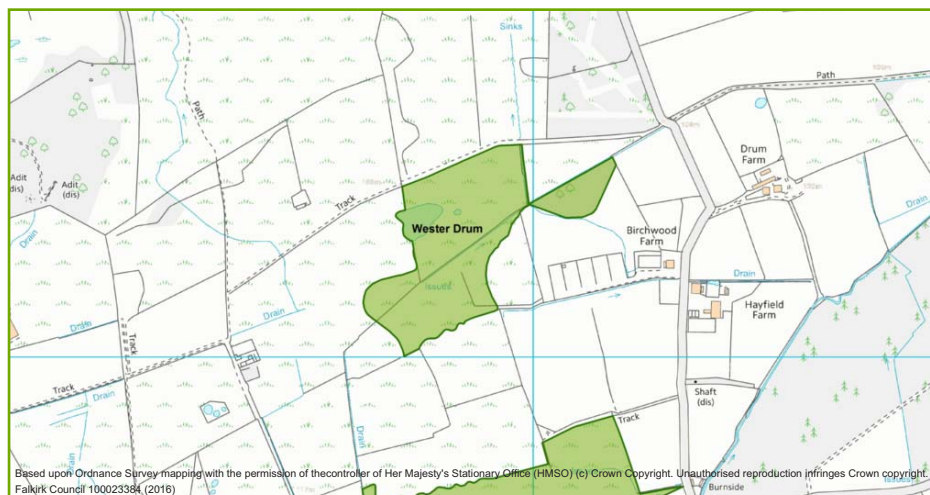
The site occupies an important location within the wide habitat network created by the Helix and the canal and may act as a slightly less disturbed sanctuary for wildlife within the Helix Park area.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Grassland management to enhance the neutral grassland habitat.
- Retention of a 'sanctuary' area where access is not encouraged.
- Retention of open water areas, by vegetation management if required.
- Woodland management to encourage age and structural diversity.
- Monitor water levels, which could be impacted by nearby developments.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

59. Wester Drum



Grid Ref. NS 282913 678241

Area 7.2 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Raised and modified bog Ponds and swamp Grassland Broadleaved woodland and scrub.
Species	High species diversity. Several local rarities.
Connectivity	Linked to South Drum Claypit SINC and South Drum Moss with other peatland/wetland sites nearby.
Community	Little or no recreational use.

Description

Wester Drum is a complex site with a mix of habitats including grassland, rush pasture, swamp, basin mire, raised and modified bog, ponds, scrub and broadleaved woodland. It occurs on undulating ground with locally wet areas.

The surrounding area is mainly agricultural, although much of it is not heavily improved.

Nature Conservation Summary

This site supports nationally rare raised bog and locally rare basin mire and swamp habitats. Given its limited extent the habitat diversity is particularly high.

The mosaic of different habitats is key to the sites high conservation value. The ponds are likely to be of particular value to a range of birds, amphibians and invertebrate species.

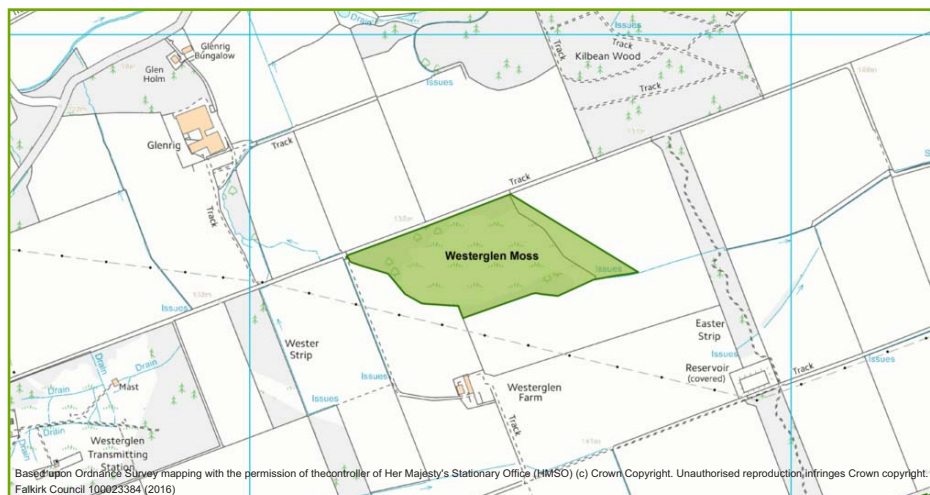
Species diversity is higher than average and the habitats, particularly the swamp, support a number of local rarities.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Undertake scrub/birch control within the mire habitat.
- Consider drain blocking to prevent drying out of the mire habitat.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

60. Westerglen Moss



Grid Ref. NS 287418 677584

Area 6.2 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Raised bog Modified bog Marshy and neutral grassland Broadleaved woodland and scrub.
Species	86 plant species including 3 local rarities.
Connectivity	Relatively isolated.
Community	Little or no recreational access.

Description

Wester Glen is a small lowland site consisting mainly of raised bog habitat, dominated by cotton-grass and with some sphagnum moss species.

The bog is surrounded by rush dominated marsh and marshy grassland with scattered willow carr and a small area of birch woodland.

The site is surrounded by improved agricultural fields.

Nature Conservation Summary

The dominant habitat at this site is nationally rare raised bog habitat.

The site exhibits moderate habitat diversity with the presence of marsh/marshy grassland, woodland, willow carr/scrub, scattered trees, neutral grassland and raised and modified bog.

The site has high species diversity with 86 higher plant species recorded, including local rarities cranberry, bogbean and small sweet-grass.

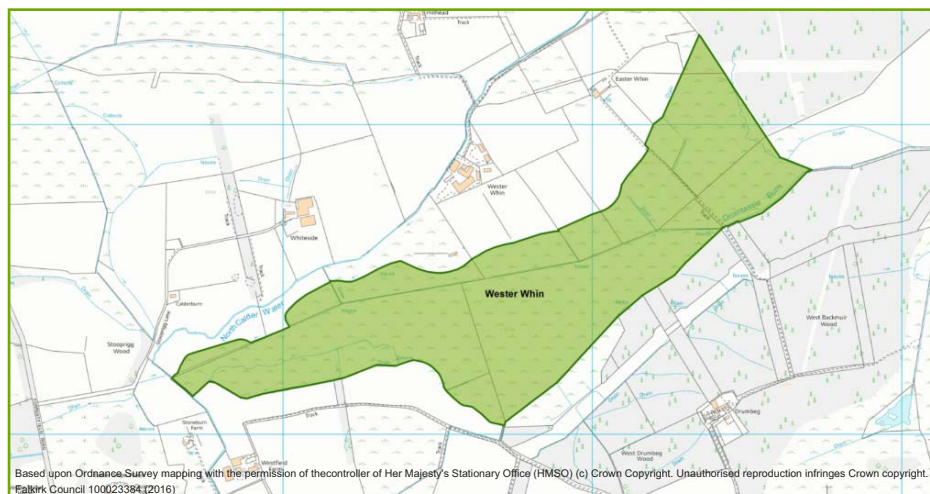
The site is relatively isolated but represents one of the most easterly of a network of raised bog sites on the Slamannan Plateau.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Consider drain blocking to increase water level in bog.
- Maintain low grazing levels to avoid excessive poaching from stock.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

61. Wester Whin



Grid Ref. NS 286857 68545

Area 73.4 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Raised bog Modified bog Basin mire Marshy and neutral grassland.
Species	Good species diversity. Typical bog species including roundleaved sundew.
Connectivity	Part of a much larger mire complex. Blawhorn and Black Loch Mosses nearby.
Community	Little or no recreational access.

Description

This site comprises the northern part of a much larger mire complex, located in the south-western corner of the Falkirk Council area. Much of the mire lies within West Lothian and is also a wildlife site, with the combined area in both districts totalling 70 hectares.

While the site is dominated by raised bog habitat it does also support areas of basin mire and marshy grassland around its edges.

Nature Conservation Summary

The nationally rare raised bog habitat provides the core interest at this site.

The bog vegetation varies from marginal, drier and degraded vegetation to more typical, intact sphagnum bog vegetation. Despite past drainage the eastern section is now very wet and supports a good range of bog species including the LBAP priority round-leaved sundew.

Habitat diversity is average for a site of this type with interest added by the marginal basin mire and marshy grassland. There is a good species diversity (89 plant species recorded).

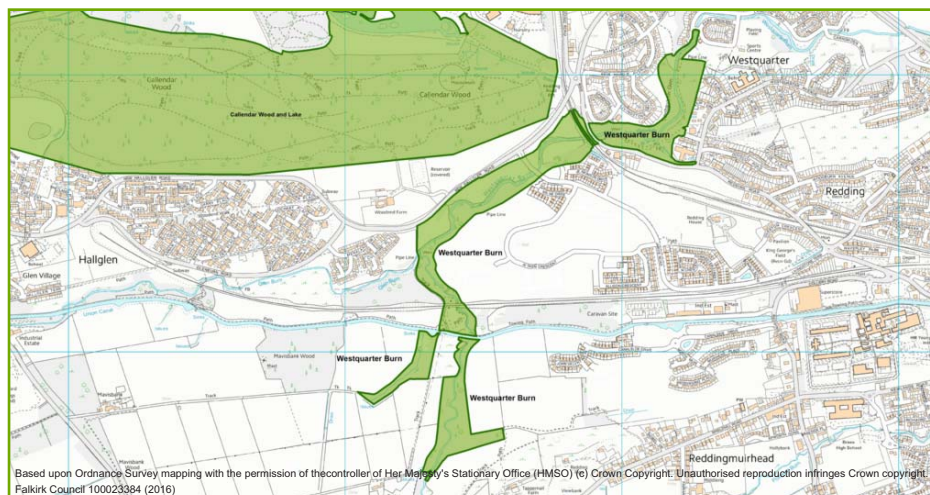
The site plays a particularly important role as part of a much larger mire complex and in association with the nearby nationally important raised bogs at Blawhorn and Black Loch Moss.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Management of grazing levels to avoid overgrazing or heavy trampling.
- Block drains to re-wet drier parts of the bog.

7. Appendix 1 Site Statements : Wildlife Sites

62. Westquarter Burn



Grid Ref. **NS 290653 678426**

Area **23.3 Hectares**

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved woodland Scrub Neutral grassland Running water.
Species	High plant diversity.
Connectivity	Important wildlife corridor.
Community	Part well used for recreation and education.

Description

Westquarter Burn is a large riparian site with varied, although mainly semi-natural, broadleaved woodland.

In the south the steep-sided valley cuts through improved grassland and the burn crosses the Union canal. This section supports semi-natural broadleaved woodland. The central valley is relatively shallower and is now bounded on its southeast side by residential development and crossed by a new road bridge. On its north side is unimproved grassland.

The northern section of the site is steep-sided valley surrounded by residential areas. The woods here have been heavily disturbed but more recently have undergone some management.

The northern section of the site is well used by local people and has undergone some management by a local community group.

Nature Conservation Summary

While the site is dominated by broadleaved woodland, habitat diversity is increased by the grassland areas and the burn.

Much of the woodland is ancient semi-natural woodland. There are also significant blocks of long-established plantation woodland.

The site has high species diversity, with 199 plant species recorded. Species of interest include wood cranesbill and sanicle. In addition badgers are known from the site. It is also likely to be of value for woodland birds and invertebrates.

The site forms an important wildlife corridor in its own right but also links to corridors along the Union Canal and railway lines. This role is particularly valuable in the urban fringe setting of Westquarter.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Continue to control rhododendron ponticum.
- Control Himalayan balsam.
- Continue a suitable grazing regime on grassland areas.
- Woodland management in north to encourage semi-natural vegetation.
- Selective thinning may be undertaken in denser areas to the south.

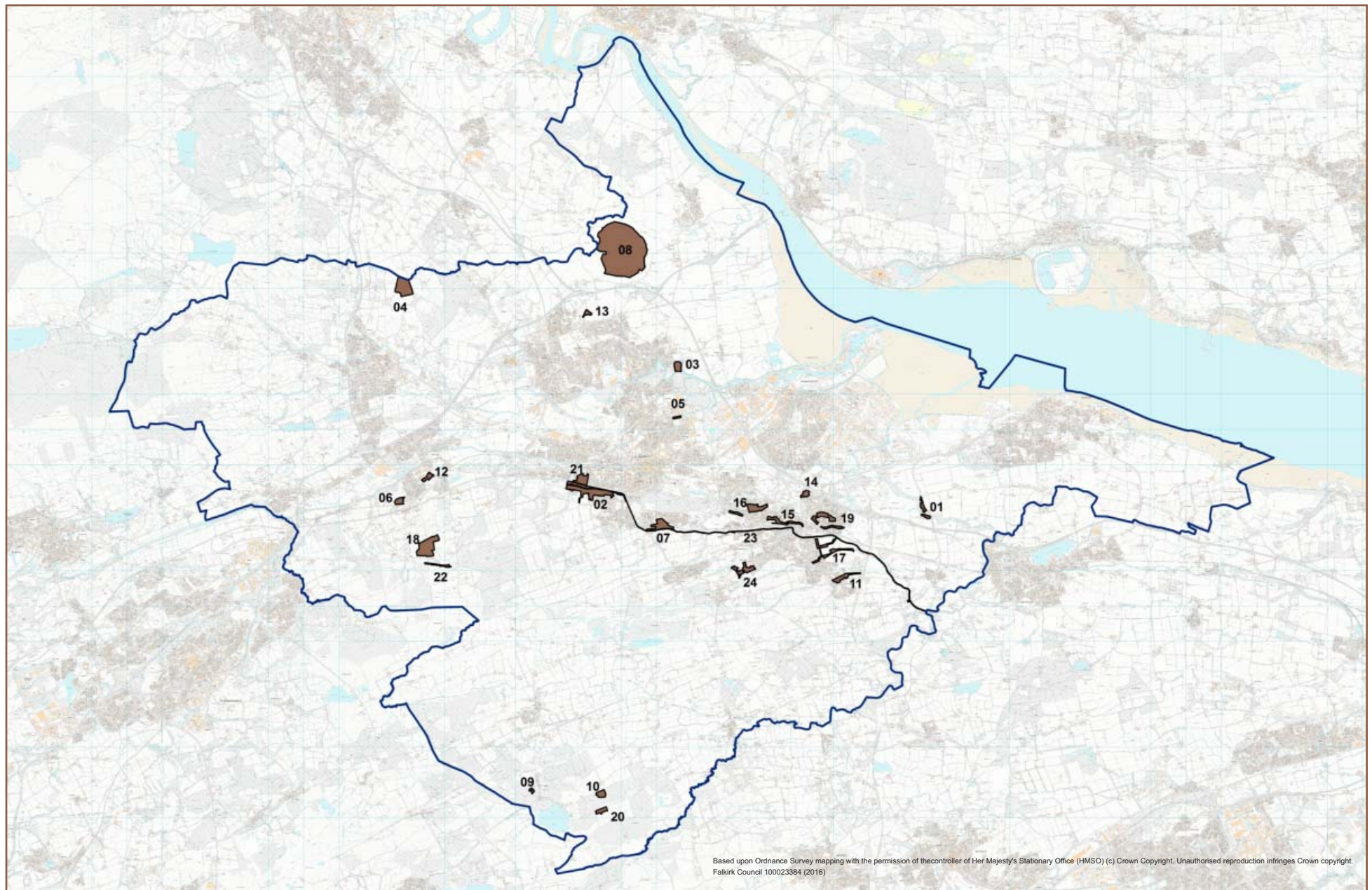
7. Appendix 2 Site Statements : Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

List of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Site No.	Site Name	Page No.
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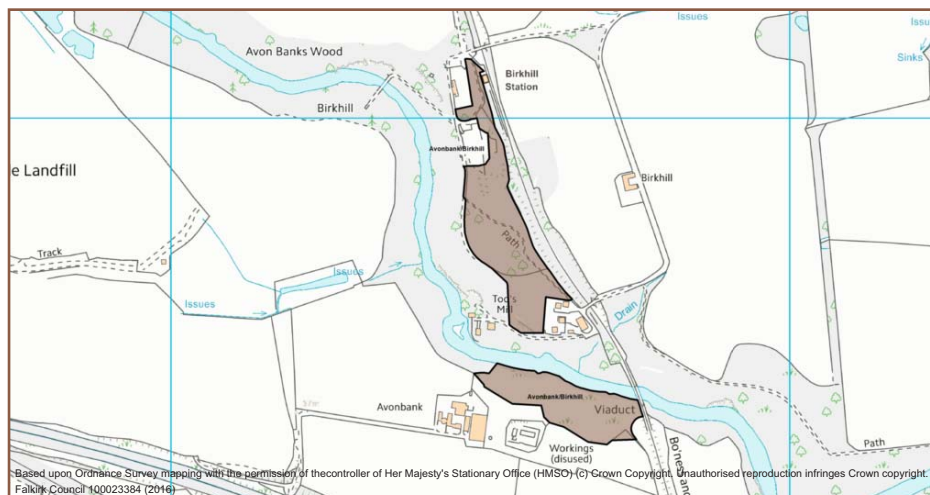
7. Appendix 2 Site Statements : Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Map of All Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation



7. Appendix 2 Site Statements : Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

01. Avonbank/Birkhill



Grid Ref. NS 296535 678837

Area 4.4 Hectares

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved semi-natural woodland Scrub Neutral grassland Bracken.
Species	Several locally rare species.
Connectivity	Key part the River Avon corridor, close to Avon Gorge SSSI.
Community	Recreational (and possibly educational) use of Birkhill.

Description

This site represents two distinct areas associated with the woodland corridor of the River Avon. The areas support a number of habitats ranging from herb-rich neutral grassland and marsh to scrub and woodland.

The Birkhill area, on high ground to the north of the river, is the site of a former fireclay mine and factory. To the south of the mine is a small area of grassland known as the meadow. Much of the rest of the site supports broadleaved woodland and scrub.

The Avonbank site consists of a small area of north-facing embankment and low lying, often marshy slopes situated on the south side of the River Avon valley.

Nature Conservation Summary

This site supports a diverse range of habitats including neutral grasslands, marsh, bracken, tall herbs, scrub and various woodland types (including locally rare ash dominated valley woodland).

The core interest of the Birkhill site is the species-rich grassland, a locally rare habitat and LBAP priority.

Although species diversity (86 plant species) is not particularly high, a number of locally rare species have been recorded including common retharrow, pale sedge and greater butterfly orchid.

The site is also likely to be of value for breeding birds, invertebrates and mammals such as bats and badgers.

The site is an important element of the wider river corridor, including the Avon Gorge SSSI to the north-west and Avonbank Woods to the west of Birkhill.

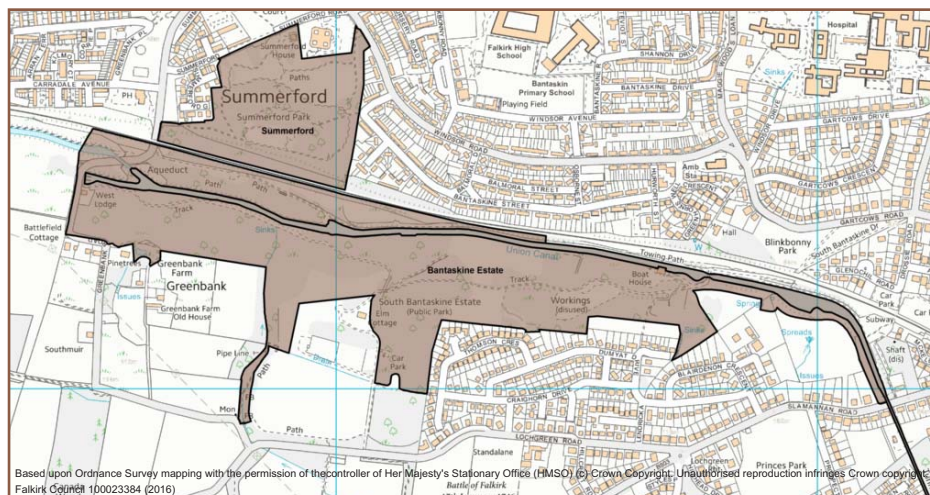
The steam railway stops at Birkhill and a series of paths provides for recreational use of the site.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Scrub and bracken control within grassland areas.
- Control of invasive non-native species (Himalayan balsam).
- Re-introduce a grassland cutting regime at Birkhill meadow.
- Scarify soils in coarser grassland areas within Birkhill.

7. Appendix 2 Site Statements : Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

02. Bantaskine Estate



Grid Ref. **NS 287083 679267**

Area **28.2 Hectares**

Key Features

Habitat (s)	Broadleaved woodland Broadleaved parkland Wet woodland Neutral grassland Scrub.
Species	Wych Elm (LBAP priority species).
Connectivity	Adjacent to Union Canal wildlife corridor.
Community	Well used public park and openspace.

Description

Bantaskine Estate, located south of central Falkirk, is a large area of parkland and semi-natural woodland adjacent to the Union Canal. The majority of the site consists of broadleaved woodland (primarily of plantation origin), with a significant area of broadleaved parkland and several large areas of improved or semi-improved neutral grassland.

The site includes a small area of woodland and scrub to the north side of the canal, between the canal and railway. Recent surveys identified areas of wet woodland to the west either side of the canal.

The site is located on the wildlife corridors formed by the Union canal and railway line. It is also adjacent to the Union Canal SINCC and close to Summerford SINCC.

Nature Conservation Summary

This extensive site supports a number of different habitats, although most are not particularly rare. Wet woodland is an LBAP priority and relatively rare locally. The association of the site with the neighbouring Union Canal SINCC increases the variety of habitats present locally. Nine hectares of the woodland is identified as long-established woodland of plantation origin.

Plant species diversity is likely to be average and to date no locally rare plant species have been recorded, although the LBAP priority species Wych elm and Oxeye daisy are present. The parkland may support veteran trees which tend to be of high value for wildlife. The site supports bats and badgers and is likely to be of value for woodland birds and invertebrates. A breeding bird survey of the site recorded 13 species.

The site represents an important area of habitat along the wildlife corridors formed by the Union Canal and the railway line. It is also very well used for recreation, although disturbance away from the main paths is limited.

Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Control of invasive non-native species including Rhododendron, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed.
- Control exotic species within the areas of semi-natural habitat.
- Continue woodland management.
- Retain (as far as possible) any veteran trees within the parkland.
- Consider altering grass cutting regimes to benefit wildlife and introducing additional native species.