

## Beckford Village Hall Nature Area

The plant life in nature area adjacent to the village hall was surveyed in May and July 2022 in order to provide a botanical baseline against which the future management for wildlife could be assessed. The area was split into two parts: the open area next to the sports field, and the more wooded area near to the car park and village hall. The hedgerows, trees and shrubs were not included.

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### Open Meadow Area:

#### Grasses:

Cock's-foot	D
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Yorkshire Fog	D
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False Oat-grass	D
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Rough Meadow Grass	A
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Creeping Bent	A
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Timothy	O
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Perennial Rye Grass	O
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Meadow Barley	O
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Meadow Foxtail	O
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Tufted Hair-grass	O
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#### Herbs:

Broad-leaved Dock	O
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Common Nettle	O
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Hogweed	O
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Creeping Thistle	O
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Groundsel	O
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Creeping Buttercup	F
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Cleavers	O
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Dandelion	O
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Common Mouse-ear	R
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Comfrey sp.	R
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Herb Robert	R
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Common Sorrel	R
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White Clover	O
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Meadow Buttercup	O/R
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Prickly Sow-thistle	R
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Common Poppy	R
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Opium Poppy	R
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Self-heal	R
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White Bryony	R
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Other Dock sp. R

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Wooded Area:

**Grasses**

Cock's-foot D

Yorkshire Fog D

False Oat-grass D

Rough Meadow Grass D

Perennial Rye Grass O

Meadow Barley O

Rough Meadow Grass A

Creeping Bent A

Meadow Foxtail F

Timothy F

Tufted Hair-grass R

Giant Fescue R

**Herbs:**

Broad-leaved Dock O

Common Nettle D

Hogweed O

Creeping Thistle O

Groundsel O

Creeping Buttercup F/O

Cleavers D

Dandelion O

Common Mouse-ear R

Common Comfrey R

Herb Robert O

Common Sorrel O

White Clover R

Meadow Buttercup O

Ground Ivy R

Cut-leaved Cranesbill O

Green Alkanet O

Cow Parsley D

Ground Elder D

Field Bindweed F

Hemlock R

<b>Great Willowherb</b>	O
<b>Lords-and-ladies</b>	R
<b>White Dead-nettle</b>	R
<b>Stinking Iris</b>	R
<b>Spear Thistle</b>	R
<b>Scentless Mayweed</b>	R
<b>Hoary Ragwort</b>	R
<b>Other Dock Sp.</b>	O

The lists provide a rough estimate of the abundance of each plant using the 'dafor' scale: Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, or Rare. This only relates to the area surveyed, so 'rare' plants may number only one or two on site, but may be very common elsewhere.

Both areas are dominated by the tougher grasses, though the presence of meadow barley and meadow foxtail already adds to the interest. In the woodland area there are more patches of fast growing competitive plants such as cow parsley, ground elder, nettles, thistles and Willowherb, but they are not so dominant as to be overwhelming and offer good habitat and nectar for insects. Smaller wildflowers are scattered and generally not yet dominant. Plants such as common sorrel point to the potential of the site, and even common hogweed as a result of mowing should become a more scattered and attractive meadow plant providing plenty of useful nectar. While we often want a great show of wildflowers, we should remember that this type of rough grassland is already providing really valuable shelter and food for a wide range of pollinating insects, mammals and birds.

Autumn mowing should help reduce the rough grass dominance and it would be good to introduce yellow rattle. Native wildflower plugs and bulbs will increase diversity and interest, but care should be taken to avoid introducing invasive plants and/or garden varieties.

Paul Wilson

06/09/2022