

Hedgerow Survey Report
Land West of Sapley Playing Field
Overton Biodiversity Society
September 2016

Introduction

The Overton Biodiversity Society Action Plan 2015- 2019 includes the action ‘Record condition and diversity of hedgerows potentially at risk from building work’, providing a report detailing species and condition of hedges for the Parish Council.

This survey work builds on experience studying hedgerows in Overton Parish since 2003 using the methodology in Hedgerow Survey Handbook – a standard procedure for local surveys in the UK, Catherine Bickmore 2002. Previous survey results can be viewed at <http://www.overton-biodiversity.org/resources/catalogue/surveys.html>.

In accordance with the hedgerow survey protocol, the left end of the hedge is designated ‘end C’ with detailed surveying of woody species beginning 30m from ‘end C’ and continuing for the next 30m. Ground flora in two 2m x 1m quadrats within this 30m hedge length is also surveyed.

The hedgerows surveyed are on the perimeter of site J: W of Sapley Playing Field in the Overton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 – 2029. All photographs below are from the site interior.

Identification of hedges to be surveyed

Inspection of the site perimeter identified two hedgerows to be surveyed, the first forming part of the Southern perimeter and the second to the East forming the boundary with Sapley Playing Field.



Southern hedge East end



Southern hedge, West end



Eastern hedge from the West

The Northern perimeter comprises mainly mature conifers and some deciduous trees and does not qualify as a hedgerow.



Northern perimeter

The Western perimeter of the site presently has no boundary for most of its length with an arable field continuing to the West, and with a short section of rough bank at its Southern end.



Western perimeter southern end

The Northern boundary of the access road from Sapley Lane comprises a wire fence with its southern perimeter presently an arable field. There are a number of mature trees in the vicinity of the designated access point from Sapley Lane.

Summary of survey findings

Full data can be found in Appendix 1.

Southern hedge

This hedge contains several mature Oak trees. The hedge is tall and wide with some significant gaps and no evidence of recent management. Five woody species were identified in the 30m hedge length, in order of dominance (most abundant first) Hazel, Blackthorn, Dogwood, Hawthorn and Bramble. The ground flora in the two 2 x 1m quadrats revealed a maximum of 4 different species.

Eastern hedge

This is a very tall hedge with many stems of Hazel forming the tallest points. This hedge is dense but with no signs of recent management. Six woody species were identified in the 30m hedge length, in order of dominance (most abundant first) Hazel, Hawthorn, Oak, Blackthorn, Field Maple and Bramble. The ground flora in the two 2 x 1m quadrats revealed a maximum of 4 different species.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The woody species in both of hedges are locally abundant in other parish hedgerows. Neither hedge is particularly diverse, and with low diversity of ground flora. Both hedges would benefit from maintenance to prevent crowding out of less vigorous species, particularly by Hazel and reduction in height and spread to allow a greater range of ground flora to flourish. Cutting through predominantly tall Hazel towards the centre of the Eastern hedge to facilitate pedestrian access is unlikely to be detrimental to the hedgerow diversity, but the width of this opening should be kept to a minimum to maintain the integrity of this wildlife corridor as far as possible.

Appendix 1 Hedgerow survey records site J: W of Sapley Playing Field, September 2016

Hedgerow Survey		
Hedge ref	W Sapley Playing Field, South hedge	W Sapley Playing Field, East hedge
Date	04-09-16	04-09-16
Grid ref	SU 51333 4869	SU 513 488
Side surveyed	North	West
Surveyors	Alan Stevens, Valda Stevens	Adrian Lewis, Liz Lewis
Whole hedge		
Adjacent Lane use side A	arable - cereal	arable - cereal
Adjacent land use side B	arable - cereal	grassland - recreation ground
Connections end C	gap / hebacceus bank	mature muxed woodland
Connections end D	arable - cereal	wire fencing
Hedgerow trees	over 5	over 5
Cross section bank	hedge bank	no bank
Bank height	under 0.5 m	N/A
Bank type	hedge bank	N/A
Bank management	none	N/A
Other features side A	headland over 2m uncut	netting fence 0.6 - 1.2m
Other features side B	headland 1 - 2 m uncut	headland over 2m uncut
30m structure / management		
Average height	4.1m+	4.1m +
Average width at base	2.1 - 4m	2.1 - 4m
Integrity	significant gaps	stock-proof
Recent management	none	none
Type recent management	N/A	N/A
>10 year management	none	none
typical cross section	unclipped	unclipped
Dominance Woody species per 30m		
Blackthorn	6	1
Brambles	1	1
Dogwood	5	
Field Maple		1
Hawthorn	3	6
Hazel	8	6
Oak		2
Hedgerow trees		
Oak	1 mature, 1 semi-mature	2 mature
Hazel		many tall stems
Quadrat 1 species	4	2
Quadrat 2 species	2	4