

Hildersham Verges Survey: Spring 2023

Document 2: Verges Survey Data Report

Links to the data spreadsheets (which form **Section 1** of the Survey Report): scroll to [the foot of this page.](#)

Background

In the autumn of 2022, with the help of the Parish Council, the HNRP undertook a survey of gardens in Hildersham, which, amongst other aspects, noted the presence and locations in private gardens of various species of wild creature.

In [April and May](#) 2023, the HNRP went on to survey flora on some of the verges in the central part of the village (verges on surrounding paths, and areas on the other side of the A1307 were not studied at this time).

Data consisting of images and attempted identifications of flora were collected from various locations by village residents (mainly non-scientists, although one is a Biology and Zoology graduate), to identify precise locations of flora where possible. We tried to cross-reference data and locations (referenced by the [what3words](#) app) with the CPERC list:¹ which, despite its accuracy and wealth of information, does not provide individual locations of specific flora within the village.

Identification of individual flora proved to be a difficult exercise, and – although good results were achieved in some cases - complete accuracy is neither claimed nor guaranteed.

On 24th May, the County Council Ecology Officer (Ms. Deborah Ahmad), during a walk along the High Street, found several species that had been missed the previous month, such as the rare [Wild Clary](#), *Salvia verbenaca* [CPERC 278], white campion, *Silene latifolia* [CPERC 292], vetches, *Vicia sativa* [CPERC 342], and spotted medick, [Medicago arabica](#).

Methodology

We used quadrats: squares with each **interior** side measuring approximately 50 cms. x 50 cms./20” x 20.” The quadrats were placed at random points within a set location, photographed, and flora within the quadrat recorded. (In some instances, volunteers were able to record coverage percentages of individual species within an individual quadrat.)

We then analysed the resulting data were in an attempt to identify the various species of flora, and cross-reference them with the CPERC list.

1 The CPERC species list can be found [at this link](#), under the Habitat Maps (2015) heading.

We then sought to establish the flowering season of each species of flora, the relationship between that season and particular insect species, and what role those insects might play in the wider environment.

Survey locations

In the event, none of the sections denoted “2” – i.e., the centre of the village - was surveyed (although it is hoped to do so in the future).

1 – Southern end of village - From A1307 down to river and Village Hall:

- 1a) bank/verge opposite Beech Row;
- 1b) Forge Green;

2 - Centre of village [not studied]

- 2a) Long verge opposite Village Hall;
- 2b) Verge/bank outside Village Hall;
- 2c) Verge opposite Bridge House;

3 - Northern end of village²

- 3a) Long verges immediately adjacent to Thuya House and Church Cottages;
- 3b) Blench Lane (verge abutting Red House and Garden House);
- 3c) Small green immediately adjacent to Town Green/Blench Lane;
- 3d) Large green (Town Green);
- 3e) Long verge abutting Rectory House;
- 3f) Bank/verge outside Galanthus House.

² A significant part of the northern end of the village is covered by a [Network Enhancement Zone 1](#) classification (i.e., one of four distinct network zones where action could be undertaken to build greater ecological resilience).

Findings

The results in the spreadsheets reveal that a significant percentage of the plant life growing on the verges does not consist merely of grass (some of it coarse), but also of flora attracting insects, especially bees (whose declining numbers are now of serious concern). To survive, bees need forage, which they find in flowers and plants whose growing season generally lasts from about April to August or September.

Discussions following on from these findings will be found in the next section (Document 3; conclusions and recommendations appear in Document 4).

Acknowledgements

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