

Comberton Parish Wildlife Audit

Submitted to Comberton Parish Council



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Comberton Nature Recovery Advisory Group

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Nature Recovery in Comberton; Habitat and Biodiversity Audit

First report submitted to Comberton Parish Council Natural Environment Committee

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Executive Summary

This report describes the state of nature in the village in 2025 in relation to geography and landscape history. It identifies we are fortunate to live in a historic rural landscape providing vital habitat for our diminished wildlife. It provides:

- an introduction to the village environment, indicating why the area is important as a landscape and wildlife habitat.*
- A summary of work completed as part of the Diocese of Ely Churchyard Conservation Scheme.*
- Detail of the village habitat and ecosystem based on a Phase 1 habitat assessment in 2024, which identifies parts of the parish where habitats and biodiversity can be enhanced.*
- An audit of village biodiversity*

Habitats

The village is within an arable farming area and suitable habitat for biodiversity is restricted to field margins, hedgerows, footpaths and the small areas of woodland scattered around the parish. There is an important riparian strip along Bourn Brook in the south of the parish and smaller but important areas along Tit Brook and Bin Brook.

Within the village, trees and areas of grassland are present but frequent mowing reduces their value to biodiversity. Gardens provide a substantial part of the village ecosystem and some of the best biodiversity opportunities.

Wildlife Records

Mammals

A total of 24 mammal species has been recorded in and around the village. Of these the invasive and destructive Mink is now believed to be extinct after extensive eradication work. The Water Vole is present in Bourn Brook and endangered in England.

There are seven bat species recorded of which three, the Serotine, Barbastelle and Noctule are endangered. Habitat destruction and fragmentation represent a serious challenge to these species.

Amphibians and Reptiles

Grass snakes and slow worms have been observed around the village, as have toads and frogs as well as newts.

Birds

A total of 93 species have been recorded in or overflying the parish in the last 25 years. Of these, 18 are on the UK Red List of threatened species and 22 are endangered or species of concern. These two groups comprise over one third (38%) of the village avifauna. This indicates the importance of habitat restoration in the parish

Insects

Butterflies

Twenty six species have been recorded in the parish, of which only one, the White-letter Hairstreak (*Satyrrium w-album*) is on the UK Red List of endangered species.

Moths

Over 400 species of moths have been recorded in the village. Five of these are vulnerable in the UK.

Flora

Over 800 species and sub-species of vascular plants. The flora has declined substantially over the last 70 years. The important indicator species in the parish, known collectively as axiophytes, have declined by 80%, from 153 to 30 since 1969. During the same period, the number of orchid species has declined by 50%.

Four species of ferns are recorded and one horsetail species, with 35 mosses, none of which are endangered.

Conclusion

This audit confirms the dilemma facing South Cambridgeshire. That is - How do we balance the need for infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing economy with the social perception of a wish to live in an open natural environment, without that environment continuing to pay the heavy price associated with its destruction and maintain the agricultural industry.

Report Structure

Sources

This audit includes records from the Cambridge and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC). These identify species designated under relevant National and International wildlife legislation, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan or known to be rare or critically endangered. Most of these records are from Westfield Farm, owned by the Countryside Regeneration Trust (CRT) and farmed with wildlife and conservation in mind. Records have also been drawn from the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) database as well as personal observations and records by members of the community.

There are several competent naturalists in the village who have provided their observations. These are credited where appropriate. The Parish Council submitted a synopsis of village wildlife and habitats as part of their objection to a planning application in 2024 and reference has been made to this document. Records of bat species have been made over three years on the roof of the church boiler house. Additionally, a small survey of village residents was made using the village magazine (Contact) in late 2024 and residents' comments are included as appropriate in this review.

Background

- Comberton is about 8 km west of and within the Green Belt of Cambridge (Annex I), an internationally important academic, technology and biomedical centre with an increasing population. Major infrastructure projects, housing and other developments target the area around the village.
- The village is in an important landscape with a long history of human habitation. It lies in a broad, shallow clay valley between a chalk ridge to the south and a clay plateau to the north which provides land suitable for high quality arable agriculture. The village is thus an urban environment within an arable farming ecosystem. The climax vegetation is mixed broadleaved woodland.
- Over the last 40 years successive organisations and governments have recognized that a decline in wildlife is associated with agriculture and environmental fragmentation, resulting from house building, industrial and infrastructure development. These problems are especially acute around Cambridge, which now has one of the fastest growing economies in the country.
- The 2021 Environment Act enshrines attempts to reverse the declines in nature in law by improving or at least minimising the loss of biodiversity. The Act brought together partners and funding to restore and enhance wildlife. The scheme is administered by Natural England and the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Locally, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is responsible for the scheme.
- The parish provides significant public goods through agriculture and housing which has been at the expense of natural capital. Natural capital (the physical and biological parts of the environment) also provides public goods, the value of which has been significantly reduced by severe damage to the natural environment.
- The Parish Council responded to the 2021 Environment Act by establishing a working group which is now an Advisory Group to their Natural Environment Committee. This first report to the Council examines the state of nature and biodiversity in the parish and provides a baseline audit against which future changes may be measured. The Introduction to the proposal to establish the Group, submitted to the Council in December 2023 is given as Annex II.

- There is a substantial imbalance between the benefits to the public of infrastructure and the built environment and the costs to the public good paid by the biosphere. The programme on which the group advise will seek to reduce the costs paid by nature to reconcile the imbalance.
- Cambridge Natural History Society has completed a survey of Cambridge published as *The Nature of Cambridge* (Hill, 2022), provides an indication of the range of species that might be expected in the Parish.

Nature Recovery Aims

The Advisory Group programme aims to increase biodiversity in the village and the surrounding arable ecosystem without compromising agricultural productivity or public enjoyment of the environment. It does not aim to impose rewilding but rather encourage local activity in cooperation with landowners to enhance biodiversity. The vision is to:

- Enhance biodiversity
- Develop a network of corridors within and around the village to connect wildlife rich sites of biodiversity importance such as amenity spaces, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and nature reserves.
- The report identifies important areas of habitat which will be of help in consideration of some planning applications.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Axiophyte; Plant species that indicate habitats considered important for conservation

BSBI; Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

CPERC; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre

CRT; Countryside Regeneration Trust

CWS; County Wildlife Site

JNCC; Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Risk and vulnerability; used by the International Union of Nature Conservation (IUCN):

Scarce - A descriptive UK term meaning a species is uncommon but not necessarily threatened. The classification is not necessarily linked to extinction risk.

Red List – Assignment to this list indicates a species is -

Rare - A UK term meaning a species has a small population or restricted distribution and is not necessarily threatened.

Vulnerable - Official IUCN category indicating a risk of extinction in the wild.

Endangered- Official IUCN category to indicates a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD); Measure of soil dryness as the amount of water needed to return soil to its full water-holding capacity after losses through plant use (transpiration) and evaporation.

SSSI; Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Tetrad; Group of four contiguous 1km Ordnance Survey grid squares used for biological recording

WWT; Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

Village Environment

Landscape and Geography

Historical perspective

The area has been intensively cultivated for over 3000 years (Oosthuizen, 2006). There is evidence of Iron Age, Roman and medieval settlements within Comberton and adjacent parishes in the Bourn Valley, with ruins of a Roman villa *ca* 2 km south of the village. The Bourn Valley was one of the most densely populated areas of Cambridgeshire at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 with 12 people per square mile. Evidence of Iron Age field boundaries are still detectable, intersected by Roman roads, medieval boundaries and later infrastructure. Medieval field boundaries trend northeast to southwest and, for example, form part of the boundary between Barton and Comberton (Oosthuizen, (2003).

The Church dates from the mid thirteenth century (Bolton *et al*, 1973), is on a ridge south of the village on the site of a previous building. Details of the village and an inventory of the historic buildings are discussed in British History online (Anon 1968).

Village Today

Rural Environment

Comberton, a civil parish, *ca* 8 km west of Cambridge with a population of *ca* 2500 is primarily a dormitory village. Figure 1 shows that the village is within an area of arable agriculture and thus an important rural resource close to an expanding city. The image was taken on 24th November 2024 and shows a matrix of established crops and fields where no crop is yet established or germination complete.

This is a well established agricultural ecosystem in which food production and housing have been prioritised at the expense of biodiversity. Many of the larger fields show boundaries trending slightly east of north to southwest, reflecting mediaeval plough lines. Some of these have been intersected by more recent features such as the 19th Century enclosures. Cambridge has become a centre of significant economic activity in the last 40 years. This has resulted in demand for new homes and other industrial and research developments all of which have placed and continue to increase pressure on the environment, biodiversity and nature. The national decline of biodiversity, particularly birds, is well described in the series of annual reports on the state of wildlife in Britain. These have been published since the early 1990s. The 2023 report (Burns *et al*. 2023) indicates an average 19% decline of 753 species of terrestrial and freshwater species in the UK since 1970. The reasons are often complex, ranging from changes in land use, farming and the underestimated impact of habitat fragmentation caused by development.

Conservation Area

The village has a significant historical significance and the central part is designated a Conservation Area, shown in pale green in Figure 2. This covers the old houses in the centre of the village as well as the fields between Swaynes Lane, Barton Road and the Recreation Ground. The area around the church is also part of the village Conservation Area. The open area of fields in the centre of the village, north of Swaynes Lane and between the primary school and Hines lane (on the north side of Barton Road) provides an important habitat connection between the recreation ground, through the South Street allotments to Tit Brook and the churchyard in the discrete part of the Conservation Area surrounding the church and adjacent properties. Although this area is not within the village Green Belt, it is within the Conservation Area and represents important habitat.

Figure 1. Google Earth image of Comberton and the surroundings taken in November 2024. © Google Earth, 2025.

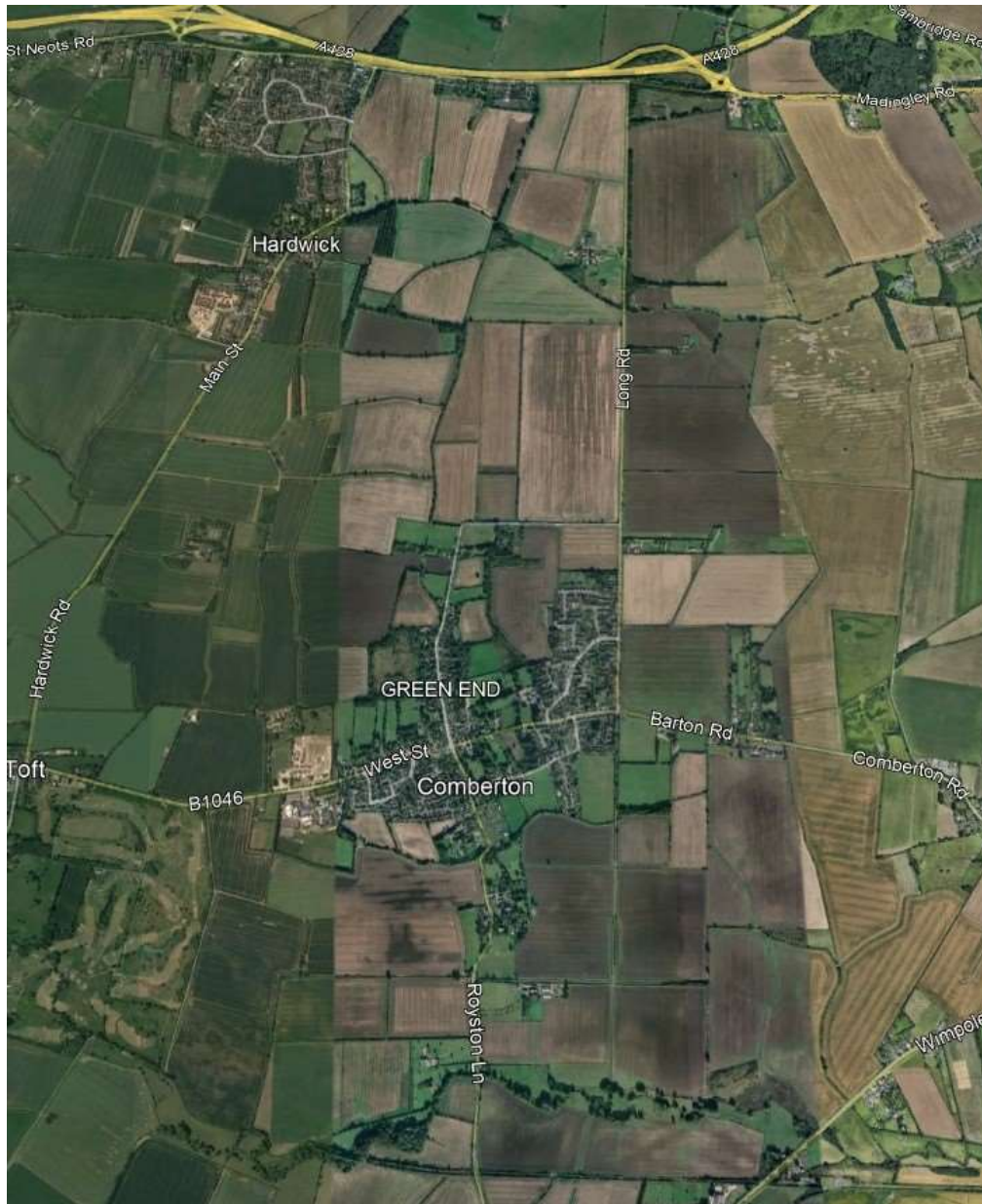
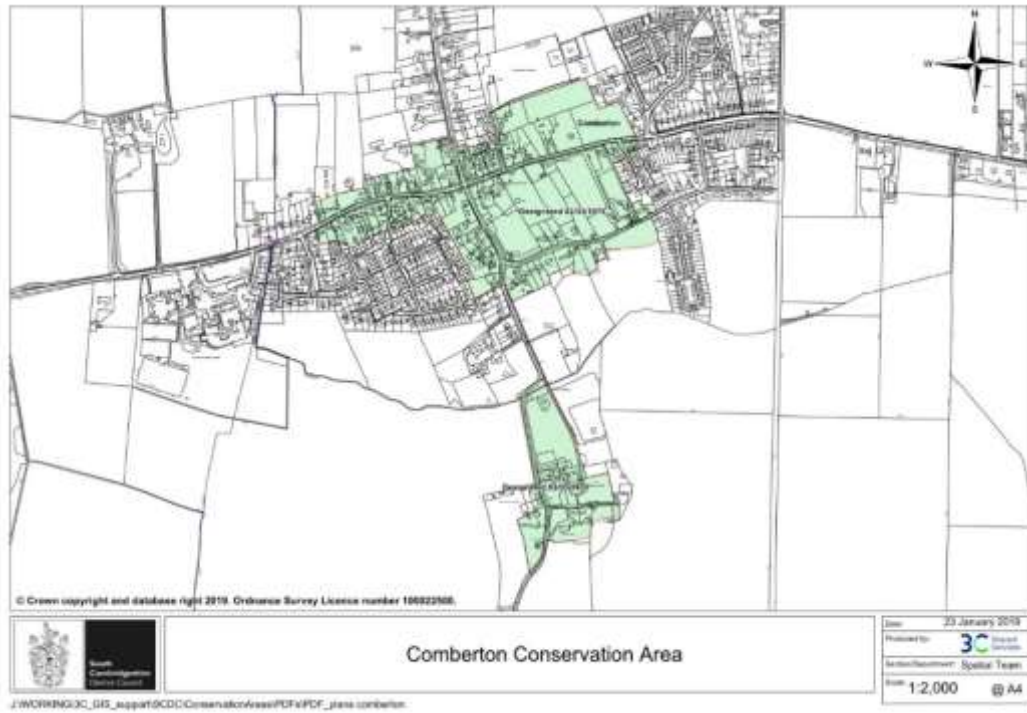


Figure 2. Comberton Conservation Area and Green Belt;

a) Conservation Area which covers the oldest houses in the village and the so-called Green Lung of the fields in the centre of the village between Swaynes Lane, Barton Road and the Recreation Ground.



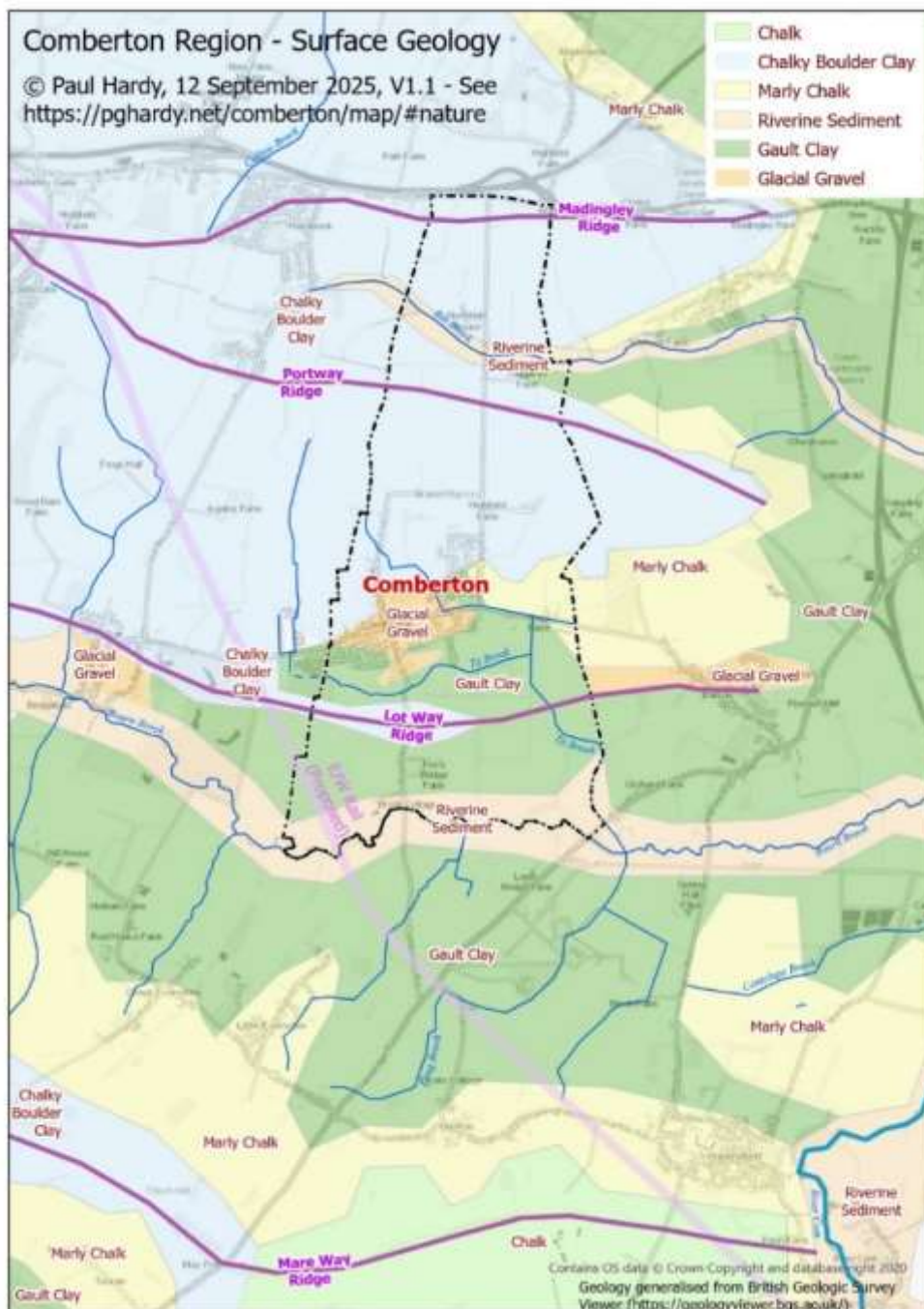
b) village Green Belt



Geology

Comberton is a long parish in a broad valley between the West Cambridgeshire Clay plateau in the north and a chalk ridge south of the village, part of the extensive band of chalk exposed from Salisbury Plain to East Yorkshire (Figure 3). The Gault Clay beneath the chalk is extensively exposed in the southern part of the parish. The northern part of the parish is covered by a chalky boulder clay, Oadby formation (Anon, 2023) deposited during the most recent Devensian Ice Age; this also forms the ridge on which the church stands and possibly represents the southern extent of the Devensian glaciation in the area.

Figure 3. Geology of the Comberton area. The village is in the centre of the valley between the boulder clay West Cambridgeshire Plateau and the chalk ridge. The sand and gravel area in and east of the village comprise reworked glacial deposits following erosion of the overlying boulder clay.



The boulder clay has weathered to form slowly permeable calcareous clay (Hanslope series soils, Anon, 1983), which occur widely in the surrounding area. The advent of effective soil drainage, farming techniques and plant breeding have made these soils some of the most agronomically productive in northwest Europe. During the Anglian glaciation, approximately 500 000 years ago ice sheets extended as far south as Central Essex and mid Bedfordshire. During each of the subsequent cold periods the landscape would have been akin to the Arctic Tundra of today. The surface exposed beyond the most recent Devensian Oadby formation (Gibbard & Clark, 2011) was reworked as glacial outwash to create a complex mix of exposed Cretaceous clays and marls with sands and gravels from earlier glaciations and boulder clay to leave complex surface deposits where gravel, sand and silt lenses occur in parts of the parish.

Development of the landscape is described by Friend (2008). The complex surface geology and soils of the parish have created an important landscape and ideal environment for a diverse flora. The sometime seasonal chalk streams running northeast the spring line above the Gault Clay, creating an additional important and rare chalk stream ecosystem. The underlying geology enabled development of an excellent example of a surviving pre-Roman, and early medieval landscape (Oosthuizen, 2003) which is worthy of preservation.

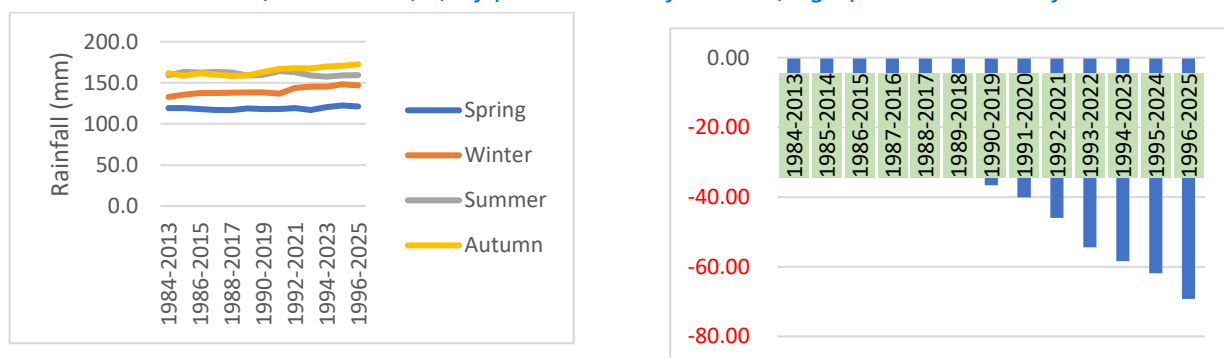
Climate

Cambridgeshire has a temperate climate with moderate temperatures and relatively low rainfall for the UK. A synopsis of the eastern England climate is provided by the Meteorological Office ([eastern-england - climate-met-office.pdf](#) accessed November 2025). Daily weather information for Comberton is provided by the village website ([Comberton Weather – Comberton Village Website](#)).

Rainfall records have been maintained since the mid 1980s in a garden in Green End (52.18912 N, 0.01894 E). Annual average rainfall recorded for this site is 589 mm. The 30 year seasonal average 1984 to 2013 is 573 mm compared with 600 mm for the period 1996 to 2025. Figure 4 summarises the seasonal rainfall at this site and the Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD).

The 30 year means show a trend to higher Autumn and Winter rainfall (significant $P > 0.05$), which is more consistent with a Mediterranean type climate with high winter rainfall and drier summers. Soil moisture deficit (Figure 4b) calculated using the standard evapotranspiration formula (Hess, 1996) shows a marked increase during successive 30 year periods after 1989 to 2018, with a significant increase in SMD during the successive 30 year periods ($P > 0.05$). Taken together, these two sets of data suggest that the climate is becoming warmer and dryer, owing to increased evapotranspiration and little change in summer rainfall.

Figure 4. Seasonal 30 year mean rainfall and soil moisture deficit up to the end of August recorded in Green End, Comberton; a, left) seasonal rainfall and b, right) soil moisture deficit



Habitats

Village Habitats

Habitat assessment

The environment and wildlife of Comberton Parish are typical of lowland eastern England. The climax vegetation would normally be mixed ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and oak (*Quercus robur*) woodland, classified as W8 and W9 on the National Vegetation Classification (Rodwell, 1991). Thus, oak and ash regularly establish on open spaces and in gardens, the latter often perceived as a weed.

Assessments of the village habitat were completed by the CPERC using aerial photographs during 2019 and 2020. In 2024 the Advisory Group made a critical ground based comprehensive assessment of the habitats in the Parish using the standard JNCC Phase 1 Habitat Survey (Anon 2010). The method enables simple colour coded maps to be produced showing broad habitat types. Ten volunteers worked with one of the Advisory Group (Francine Hughes, who had taught the technique as a university lecturer) over several weeks in the summer of 2024. The aim was to assess the range of habitats within the parish and their quality to help assess areas in which biodiversity improvements might be made. The assessment was made from public footpaths or ways with landowner consent for some areas which were difficult to assess.

The map produced (Figure 5; see also Figure 1) shows the extent of arable land within and close to the parish. Three streams transect the village west to east to provide contrasting riparian habitats. There are areas of grassland, but they are of limited biodiversity value if mown frequently. Several of the gardens in the village are large and support substantial biodiversity, as do the small areas of undeveloped land. There are also small areas of woodland which provide important habitat, often linked with hedges managed with wildlife conservation in mind. The assessment has identified that a number of local farmers and land owners have made substantial local improvements to habitats with specific planting schemes and sympathetic management, sometimes using government grants.

The resulting map (Figure 5) provides an essential baseline for development planning, conservation or management and can guide the need for more detailed Phase 2 surveys. The map identifies potential areas where replanting or changes in management would be likely to enhance wildlife. The notes which accompany the map are shown in the box and identify important habitats as well as comments on wildlife in particular areas.

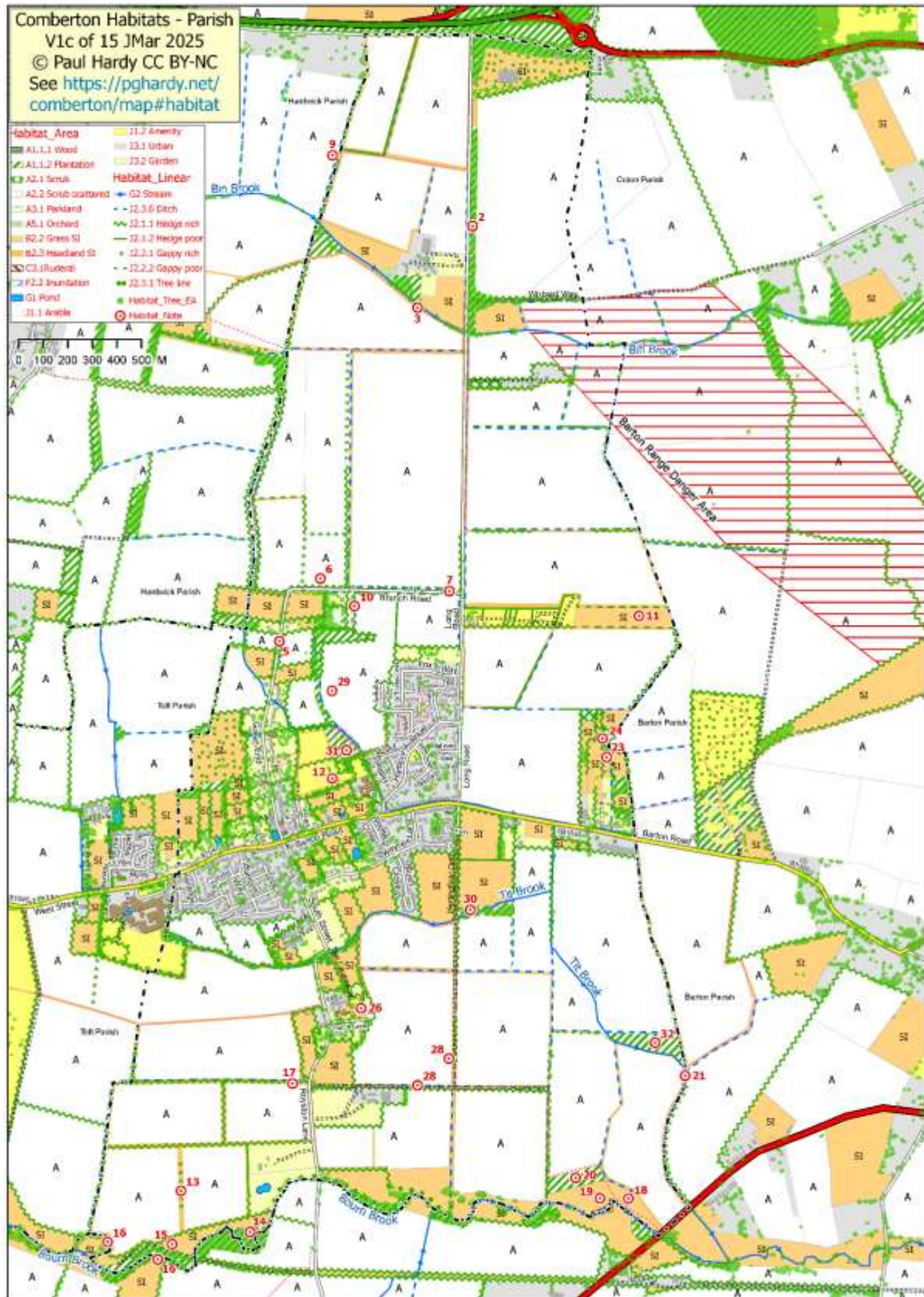
County Wildlife Sites

The parish includes one important County Wildlife site. The Bourn Brook, which forms the southern boundary of the parish is part of the River Cam designation. It has recently been enlarged by addition of the adjacent Westfield Farm as a County Wildlife Site (Figure 6; Lucy Wilson, WWT, personal communication, 2026). The CRT manage the site of four fields under a regime of low-input, rotational cultivation, which allows some arable plants to survive in crops.

A total of 14 rare arable plant species of local or national significance, threatened with extinction both locally and nationally are present at Westfield Farm. These plants underpin an ecosystem which includes threatened farmland birds that breed on the site. The site thus provides a refuge for vulnerable wildlife and can act as a centre for dispersal to help recolonisation of nearby areas.

This means that much of the southern part of the parish is officially recognized as of significant value to nature.

Figure 5. Phase 1 habitat assessment of Comberton parish, completed by volunteers working with the Group in 2024. Notes to accompany the assessment are shown in the Box.



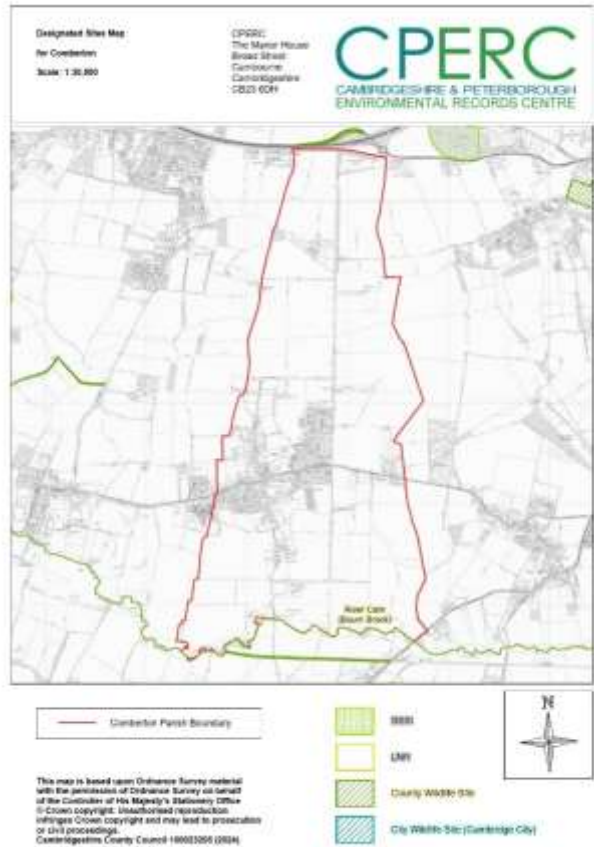
Box 1. Abbreviated target notes for features of conservation interest identified during the 2024 village survey.

1. Badger sett
2. Oak woodland
3. Mature White poplars along Bin Brook
4. Pyramidal orchids on verge 2023 and 2024
5. Fairly species rich wide grassy verges with some large ash and oak trees
6. Hares often seen here
7. Species more varied in verges and include Crosswort and Grey sedge
8. Badger sett
9. Large oaks along this ditch
10. Large White poplars
11. Grassland allowed to grow long, many butterflies and pyramidal orchids
12. Large oaks, possibly veteran specimens
13. Beetle bank on CRT land
14. Bourn Brook shortcut from 1970s now dry since re-instatement of old meandering channel by CRT
15. Floodplain hay meadows belonging to CRT, managed for biodiversity. Many butterflies
16. Former oxbows due to be reinstated as an active channel by CRT
17. Large oak trees
18. Reeds on both sides of ditches and in patches on the floodplain
19. Flood meadow
20. Newly planted small woodlands
21. Bur sedge reed in Tit Brook
22. Many bee orchids
23. Two very large and ancient hazel coppices
24. Inactive badger sett and foxes

Some additional numbered notes on the map refer to other habitat features, details for which are available on request.

Figure 6. County Wildlife Site, Bourn Brook and Westfield Farm.

a, left) the original Bourn Brook designation as part of the Cam Valley site



b) aerial photograph of Westfield Farm and the adjacent to Bourn Brook site (courtesy of Dr Lucy Wilson, WWT).

The farm is managed by the Countryside Regeneration Trust. Note the well-established woodland along Bourn Brook and the line of the old Oxford to Cambridge railway used until recently by the Mullard Laboratory radio telescope running east to west at the bottom of the image



Nearby Wildlife Sites

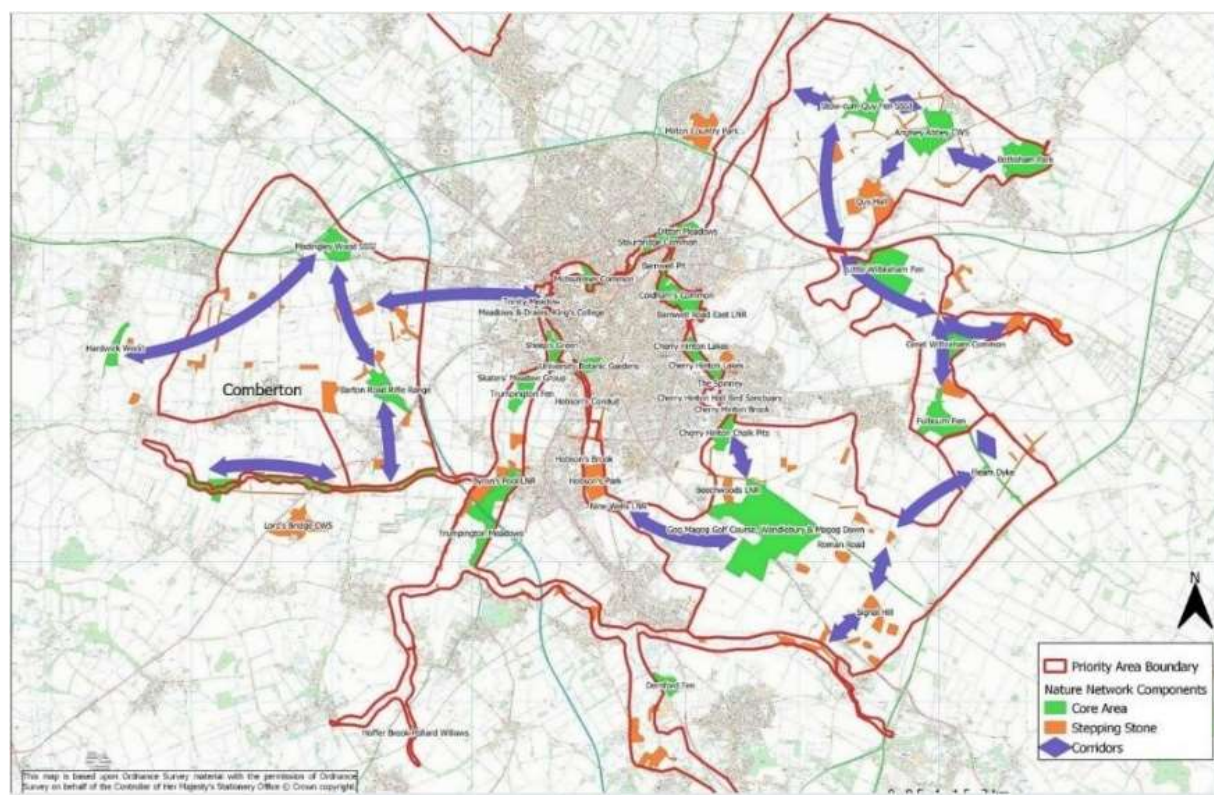
In addition to being part of the Cambridge Green Belt (Annex I), the village is close to several Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI). Figure 7 shows sites near the village from the official map (<https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra:sites-of-special-scientific-interest-england/> accessed 8 July 2025).

Figure 7. Wildlife sites close to Comberton; SSSIs in purple, other sites of value and County Wildlife sites as brown and green circles respectively. From Natural England/Defra data with addition of local sites of interest. Location of Comberton village pointed by solid black line.



The Wildlife Trust recognize the significance of the area west of Cambridge. Comberton is in the centre of a potential set of corridors and sites which they identify, including the Barton Rifle Range, Maddingley and Hardwick Woods (Figure 8). The grassland at Lords Bridge, although not within the parish provides an important and well conserved area of short, ill nourished sward over clay with a distinct flora.

Figure 8. Overview of wildlife sites and potential corridors around Cambridge compiled by the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust.



St Mary's Church

Churchyard Habitat

The churchyard was managed for many years as short regularly mown or grazed grassland to produce a typical unimproved lowland meadow plant community, albeit nitrogen rich. In 2020 it was included in a habitat management scheme as part of the Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Scheme sponsored by the WWT and the Bishop of Ely. The aim of the scheme is to increase biodiversity in churchyards. A series of habitat management regimes were introduced with the aim of creating a diverse set of habitats. The church was rewarded with a Silver Award from the scheme in 2022. This project effectively initiated the village audit. A full report of the habitat work in the churchyard has been submitted to the Church Council and is available on request.

The church is *ca* 1 km south of the village and is a hub for a network of footpaths, hedges and byways leading to the village and across adjacent farmland (Figure 9). These provide links east to Watts Wood and north to the village Recreation Ground as well as areas important for wildlife in adjacent parishes. These include, for example, The Meridian Golf Course, in Toft, The Woodland Burial Site in Barton and Coton Nature Reserve, as well as sites further from the village.

Figure 9. Footpaths, ways and field boundaries radiating from St Mary's church, Comberton. Map prepared by Paul Hardy

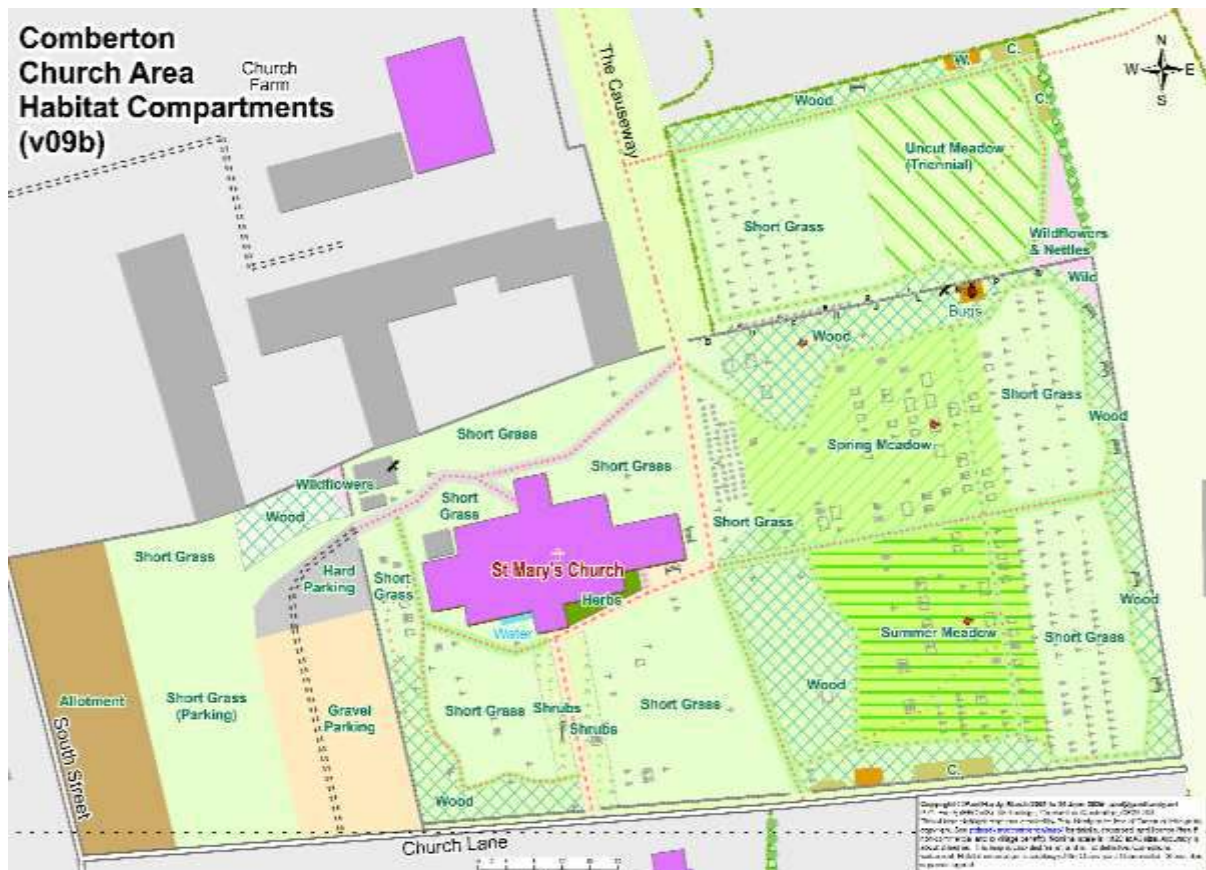


As part of the scheme, the churchyard was divided into a set of compartments so that over time diverse habitats would develop. The regimes in each habitat zone were modified in 2024 to simplify management, retaining areas of short mown grass around recent graves, whilst reducing the total area of contrasting Spring (Hay) Meadow and Summer Meadow regimes in older parts of the churchyard (Figure 10). The amendment was a response to concern by parishioners that the churchyard was looking unkempt. The change involved replacing an area of meadow in the southwest corner of the churchyard with the regular mowing of amenity grass to improve the vista of the church. This removed one of the areas where the flora had been monitored for two years.

In Autumn 2021 and 2022 and spring 2023 and 2024, yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) was introduced to each of the meadow areas as seed and plant plugs, to reduce the vigour of the established grass and open the sward to other species. In addition, nettle-leaved bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*) was planted in December 2022, in separate shaded areas to represent east Cambridgeshire woods where the species occurs naturally. The transplants flowered in 2023.

Bird boxes, hedgehog boxes and a 'Bug hotel' have been installed in parts of the churchyard to encourage wildlife.

Figure 10. Comberton Churchyard showing the habitat zones adopted in 2024. Map reproduced, courtesy of Paul Hardy



Species Recording and Monitoring

Assessments were made by members of the community to record plants, birds, small mammals and butterflies. CPERC provided a list of species of national biodiversity interest recorded within 1 km of the Church between 1990 and 2023. These were skewed by the impressive, regular series of records from formal transects collected by CRT on their Westfield farm in the south of the parish. A similar list for the parish was obtained in 2024.

Overall diversity

The number of species designated under National and International wildlife legislation, identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan or known to be rare or critically endangered in 2023 and 2024 recorded

within 1 km of St Mary's Church (CPERC personal communication) is shown in Table 1. These data indicate that the area is important for national biodiversity. The table indicates that of the endangered species in Britain, each of the reptiles, over half the endangered birds and most of the mammals have been recorded close to the village church. Additionally, 8% of the plants recorded within 1 km of the church are on the UK critically endangered list.

The overall diversity of the churchyard is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Species of national biodiversity concern reported within 1 km of St Mary's Church, Comberton, 2000 – 2023 in the CPERC database.

Taxon	Number of critically endangered species"	Total UK species	Number UK endangered species
Reptiles	3	6	3
Birds	44	640	70
Plants	24	ca 1700	ca 300
Insects	1	>25000	35
Mammals	8	79*	11
" within 1 km of church; * Terrestrial mammals			

Flora

The botanical survey of the churchyard in March 2020 recorded more than 120 species of vascular plants (Shanklin, 2020). Table 2 summarises the vascular plants within 1 km radius of the churchyard.

Table 2. Plant phyla recorded within the churchyard and in a 1.0 km radius of the churchyard 2020 to 2023,

Phylum	Number species*	Number observations	Sources
Angiosperms (flowering plants)	480	ca 1800	1, 2, 5
Bryophytes (mosses)	38	48	1, 3
Gymnosperms (firs)	7	7	1, 2
Pteridophytes (ferns)	3	7	1

* subspecies and hybrids. Sources: 1, CPERC records; 2, Jonathan Shanklin, Botanical Society of the British Isles; 3, Cambridge Bryophyte Group

Potential changes to the flora in the different habitat zones were assessed by observations between April and August. Cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) was the most common species recorded each year and is invasive on unmown areas. There were no consistent differences between the regimes in the two years. ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) was common in each of the mowing regimes and was the most common species in the amenity area. Hoary plantain (*Plantago media*) is becoming increasingly rare in Cambridgeshire but is common in the churchyard. Similarly, the churchyard is a rare county site for bugle (*Ajuga reptans*). Unfortunately, owing to the changes in cutting regimes these surveys have been discontinued.

Mammals

Droppings of muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) are frequently observed around the churchyard and rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) are regularly seen. An established badger sett (*Meles meles*) is nearby. Monitoring of small mammals and bats is included in the village audit below.

Full details of the bat monitoring in 2023, 2024 and 2025 are given in the village audit below. The two pipistrelle species were the most common. Noctules (*Nyctalus noctula*), serotines (*Eptesicus serotinus*) and barbastelles (*Barbastella barbastellus*) were considerably less common.

Birds

During 2023 ten weekly records of birds were made between April and August, within the churchyard and along the medieval causeway which links the church to the village. The 32 species recorded have been incorporated into the village records.

Butterflies

During 2023 six counts of butterfly species were made at 10 to 20 day intervals within the churchyard and along the medieval causeway that links the church to the village. A total of 17 species were recorded in and around the churchyard and are incorporated into the village species list.

Parish Wildlife Audit

This audit covers the main wildlife groups (phyla) on which observations have been made, either from CPERC records or by naturalists within the village. Some animal kingdoms and groups, such as Crustaceans and Fish, are excluded as there is insufficient information. Molluscs have also been excluded. There is little information on their distribution around Comberton, other than casual observations on presence of slugs and snails, usually as plant pests, although this term maligns an important animal group. Similarly, earthworms are excluded with some less observed insect orders, which attract little attention. No formal survey of spiders (Araneae) has been made. No information is available for the Orthoptera (grasshoppers and crickets)

Reptiles and Amphibians

Grass snakes (*Natrix natrix*) are believed to be widely present, as they are observed in gardens and eggs have been noted by some residents in compost heaps; dehiscent skins have also been noted. Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) has been reported from a garden in Green End. Both species are protected in England

Toads (*Bufo bufo*) and frogs (*Rana temporaria*) were reported in several responses to the village wildlife survey as well as the smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) and palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*). CPERC records indicate the presence of great-crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*). All these amphibians are protected species.

Mammals

Land species

CPERC records report Mink (*Mustela vison*) were relatively common in Bourn Brook in 2000 and 2001 and none have been observed since 2018, following extensive eradication work.

Small mammals

Assessments of small mammals were made in April and October 2022, April 2023 and October 2025, using Longworth traps placed in undergrowth around the churchyard for one night. Traps were set at ca 19.30h BST and revisited at ca 08.30 the following morning, to record and release any trapped animals. Wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and bank vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*) were trapped in April 2022 when the cadaver of a common shrew (*Sorex raneus*) was also found. Wood mice were also recorded in October 2022, April 2023 and October 2025 (Table 3).

Table 3. Frequency of mice, voles and shrews in 2022 and 2023, based on number of animals caught in 10 Longworth traps in 2022 and 2023 and 20 traps in 2025, placed overnight in undergrowth around the churchyard

	2022 ¹		2023 ¹	2025 ²
	20 April	27 Oct	5 Apr	19 Oct
Wood mouse	.20	.60	.10	.15
Bank vole	.20	.00	.10	.00
Common shrew	body	.00	.00	.00

Traps were set and released by 1, Roger Featherstone; and 2, Peter Pilbeam and Cambridge Mammal Group,

Bats

Presence

For many years the presence of bats in the church building has been obvious from their droppings and observed flights. A survey of bats in the church was completed on behalf of Natural England (Halstead, 2014). A static bat recorder (Anabat Express) placed in the church for three nights in July 2014, recorded *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (common pipistrelle), *Plecotus* sp (long-eared bat) and *Myotis* sp (mouse-eared bat).

Sonograms

Bat calls were recorded from the roof of an outhouse on the north side of St Mary's Church, on the nights of 27th and 28th August 2023 (Table 4), during 52 nights throughout August and September 2024, and 73 nights in July and August 2025. On each occasion, samples were made at 256 kHz frequency using a microphone connected to a Raspberry Pi computer running Bat Pi 4 software (<http://www.bat-pi.eu/EN/index-EN.html>). Upon detection of a putative bat call, a sequence of up to 5 seconds was automatically recorded. Species were identified off-line by their calls using the Acoustic Pipeline of the British Trust for Ornithology (<https://www.bto.org/data/tools-products/acoustic-pipeline>), which outputs an estimated probability. A value of ≥ 0.95 was taken as positive identification and data were analyzed using R (R Core Team, 2023).

Table 4. Number of time samples in which bat species were identified in 411 sonogram recordings made on the church outhouse roof on the nights of 27th and 28th August 2023

Species	Vernacular	Number
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common pipistrelle	329
<i>P. pygmaeus</i>	Soprano pipistrelle	26
<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	Barbastelle	1

In 2024 and 2025 the two *Pipistrelle* species were again the most common and other species were encountered much less frequently. Relative frequency of occurrence was broadly similar in 2024 and 2025 (Table 5).

Table 5. Number of time samples in which bat species were identified in 2024 and 2025. Species were identified off-line using the Acoustic Pipeline of the British Trust for Ornithology.

Species	Vernacular	2024	2025
		1 Aug – 30 Sep	20 Jul – 30 Sep
<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	Barbastelle	24	52
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	Serotine	1	0
<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Daubenton's	0	12
<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Leisler's	3	0
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Noctule	34	1
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common Pipistrelle	19,677	18,872
<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Soprano Pipistrelle	853	770

Distribution

The records at the church can be augmented by information from the CPERC which provide 28 records of brown long-eared bats between 2000 and 2019. Specific studies (Vine, 2022) show that the area is important to the threatened barbastelle bat (*Barbastella barbastellus*). Figure 11 taken from that report

(Anon, 2024) shows the flight tracks across the Comberton area, demonstrating, with the records from St Mary's Church and the CRT, that the parish is an important foraging zone for this threatened species.

Figure 11. Flight paths of *Barbastelle* bats recorded using radio tags during summer 2022. (From Vine, (2022) as presented in Anon 2024



It is interesting to note that one track follows the line of the radio telescope to the west of Lords Bridge. Figure 6b shows scattered trees along the old telescope line, linking to woodland along Bourn Brook, at the west of the track. *Barbastelles* forage along avenues, and open woodland canopy, close to watercourses (Altringham, 2003). This area, although not in the parish, thus seems to be a very important foraging area for this species.

Resident observations

The village survey, made through the village magazine in 2024 (Cook, 2025), shows that foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) are common in the village and frequently seen at night as well as on trail cameras used by residents to monitor garden wildlife. Badgers (*Meles meles*) and hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) were also commonly reported around the village with a tendency for fewer hedgehogs where badgers were noted, especially in gardens close to the edges of the village or open farmland. Several households noted increasing numbers of muntjac Deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*) in recent years and many report damage to garden plants. Muntjac are frequently seen within the village at night and are believed to inhabit some areas of open ground.

Plecotus sp (long-eared bat) and *Myotis* sp (mouse-eared bat) recorded in the church in 2014, were not present during the recent surveys and are not included in the list of mammals (Table 6) recorded in the parish,

Table 6. Mammals recorded in Comberton Parish in the 24 years 2000 to 2025. Vulnerable and endangered species in red typeface.

Vernacular	Taxon	Status*
American mink	<i>Neovison vison</i>	Introduced
Bank vole	<i>Clethrionomys glareolus</i>	
Brown hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	
Brown long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	
Brown rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	
Chinese muntjac	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>	Introduced
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	
Common shrew	<i>Sorex raneus</i>	
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	
Eastern grey squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	
Eurasian badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	
Eurasian otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	
European rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	
European water vole	<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	Endangered
Mouse-eared bat.	<i>Myotis</i> sp	
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus</i> spp	Vulnerable
Pipistrelle spp	<i>Pipistrellus</i> spp	
Polecat	<i>Mustela putorius</i>	
Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	Vulnerable
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	
Weasel	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>	
Western barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	Vulnerable
Wood mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	

Records from the CPERC, Countryside Regeneration Trust, Westfield Farm, 2024 Village Wildlife Survey, Small mammal trapping by Roger Featherstone and the Cambridge Mammal Group, Brian McCabe in St Mary's churchyard and Natural England. * From Natural England Red List of UK Mammals.

Birds

Data from CPERC contains an average of 425 records each year, ranging from 131 to 530 between 2000 and 2014. The total number of species was 85 and averaged 64 per year.

Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) and reed warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) were recorded once only in 2001, redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) once in 2002, marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) twice in 2001 and 2008 and spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*) 3 times in 2002, 2003 and 2010. cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), garden warbler (*Silvia borin*), whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*), stonechat (*S. torquata*) and greater black-backed gull (*Larus marinus*) were each recorded 4 times. Barn owl (*Tyto alba*) and merlin (*Falco columbarius*) were each recorded in five years, with a total of 23 and ten records each, with 10 records of barn owl in 2013. Further observations from Green End, at the northern edge of the village (Curtis, 2025) provided records for 67 species in the year May 2024 to May 2015. Barn owl has been observed occasionally over open farmland in the north of the parish and tawny owls are regularly heard calling in nearby woodland. In recent years up to 2025, the number of species has dropped to ca 30 per year.

The 93 bird species recorded in or overflying the parish between 2000 and 2024 are given in Table 7; birds of conservation concern are shown in red and green type (Anon 2021) for Red List and Conservation Concern, respectively.

Table 7. Bird species recorded in or overflying Comberton 2000 to 2024.

Vernacular	Taxon	Vernacular	Taxon
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	Pied wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
Common crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	Raven	<i>Corvus corvus</i>
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Red kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
Corn bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Red-legged partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>
Dunnoek	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
Feral pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	Reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Golden plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Great black-backed gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Green woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Stock dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Grey partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>

Table 7, continued

Vernacular	Taxon	Vernacular	Taxon
Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Tawny owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>
House martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Tree creeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Willow warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>
Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Lesser whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Yellow wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		

Records from CPERC data including CRT, unpublished lists from Curtis (2025) and Crosby (2024) and reliable observers in the village. Birds on the UK Red List are printed in red, those on the Endangered List in green bold font

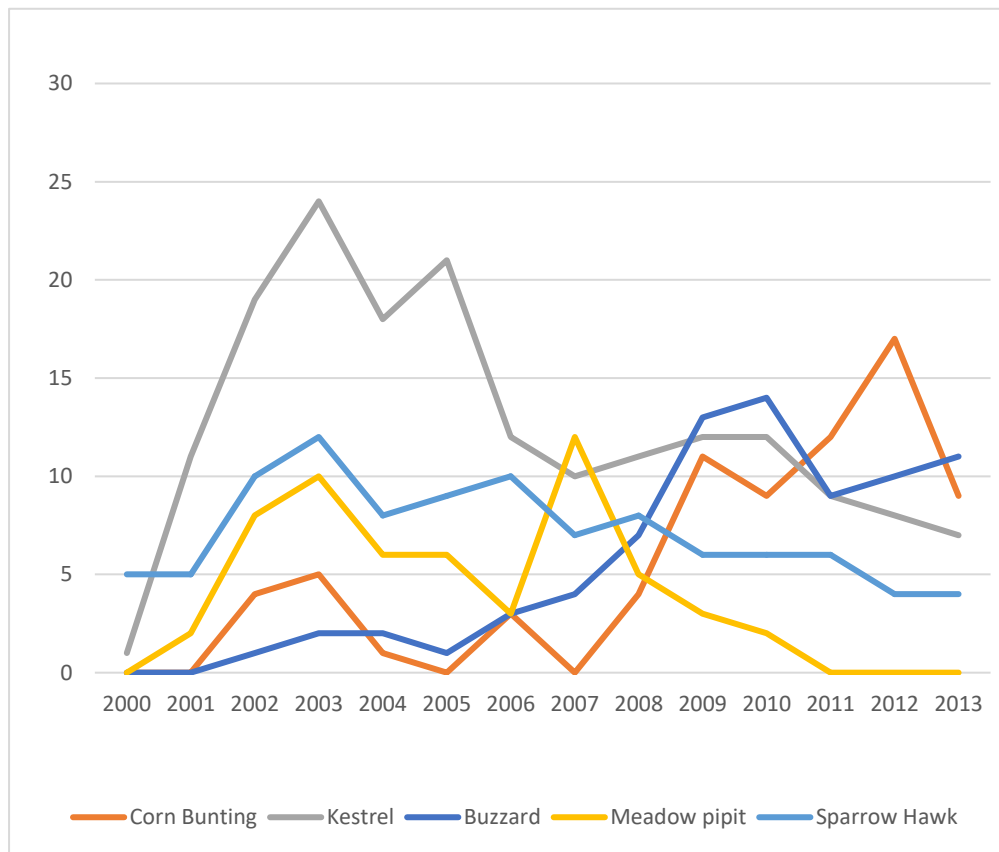
Since 2013 several additional species have been added to the parish list. Red kites (*Milvus milvus*) nested in woodland in the south of the parish in 2024. They are now often seen gliding over rural parts of the parish, an observation also made by several respondents to the village survey. Raven (*Corvus corus*) has been noted overflying the village in the last few years and there are frequent sightings of buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), which is known to nest in several nearby areas of woodland.

Three turtle doves (*Streptopelia turtur*) were recorded in 2000 and 2001, with none after 2006. Similarly, Mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) seems to decline during the period with two or three recorded most years from 2000 to 2009 and none in 2010, 2011 or 2012 (Figure 10). Grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) were recorded each year and numbers increased slightly over the period, whereas red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*) numbers declined slightly.

Corncrake (*Crex crex*) was recorded once, in May 2004, presumably on passage and has been omitted from the list as the record is 21 years old. cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) was recorded in April and May 2001 and in April 2004 and has not been seen since.

Figure 12 shows the numbers of five species recorded each year between 2000 and 2013. The increase in numbers of buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) and corn bunting (*Emberiza calandra*) during this period are notable. The increase in corn bunting is encouraging, given the environmentally friendly farming methods used at Westfield Farm, where most of these observations were made. Kestrel numbers fall substantially, mirroring a national decline. Meadow pipit numbers also decline.

Figure 12. Annual variation of five bird species, buzzard, corn bunting, kestrel, meadow pipit and sparrow hawk recorded at Westfield Farm between 2002 and 2013.



Insects

Beetles (Coleoptera)

This group is a common sight in the village with Ladybirds (Coccinellidea) and the invasive alien harlequin ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*) observed regularly, both during the summer and as overwintering hibernating clusters. No pitfall trapping to record ground beetles has been made as part of this audit.

Bees and Wasps (Hymenoptera)

No formal assessment of these has been made. However, several species of Bumble bees are commonly seen in the parish including the white- and red-tailed bumble bees (*Bombus lucorum* and *B. lapidaries*) respectively and the frequently observed Garden bumblebee (*B. hortorum*). The common carder bee (*B. pascuorum*) has also been seen in gardens. Honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) are a common summer sight in gardens and swarms are frequently seen.

The wasp family is large and diverse. It includes the ubiquitous and much maligned common wasp (*Vespula vulgaris*), an important predator of many smaller insects, which is regularly seen each summer. The family also includes numerous specialised species, reported by interested observers. Many of these are important for controlling insect populations. Wasp species are also frequently responsible for some of the plant galls seen around the parish.

The larger Hornet (*Vespa crabro*) is also frequently observed in and around the village.

Flies (Diptera)

This large group of insects has not been included in this survey of village wildlife. However, the hoverflies are an important part of the group and several species are regularly seen in summer after a peak in garden aphid populations, on which they feed. Like wasps and ladybirds, they are important predators of aphids.

Butterflies and Moths (Lepidoptera)

Butterflies

The CPERC records include butterflies from transects at Westfield Farm, in the south of the Parish between 2002 and 2012. These provided an average of 450 records each year with an average of 18 species recorded each year with a total of 26 species during the period (Table 8). The table includes two species not recorded during the routine transects surveyed between 2002 and 2012 and records from the churchyard.

Table 8. Butterfly species recorded in Comberton between 2002 and 2012

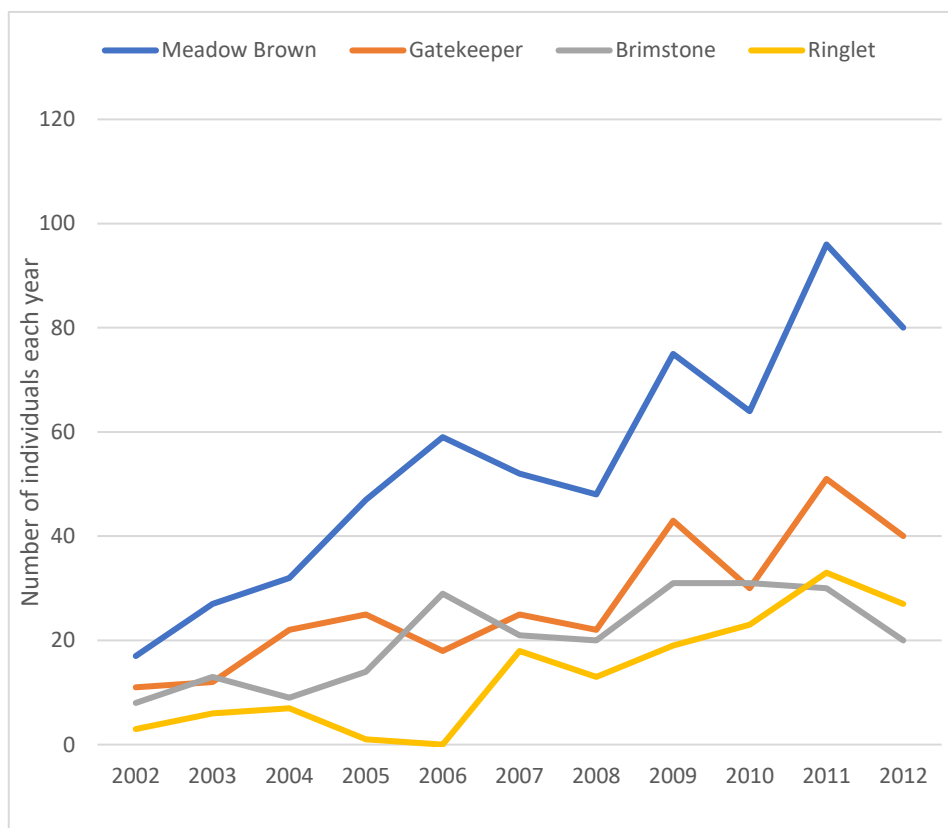
Vernacular	Taxon	Years recorded	Total records
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	11	226
Brown argus	<i>Arícia agestis</i>	11	149
Clouded yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>	5	15
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	11	105
Common blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	11	237
Essex skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	11	118
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	11	299
Green-veined white	<i>Pieris napi</i>	11	409
Holly blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	7	16
Large skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>	10	55
Large white	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	11	212
Meadow brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	11	597
Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	11	111
Painted lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	9	135
Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>	11	230
Purple hairstreak	<i>Favonius quercus</i>	2018	2
Red admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	11	144
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	10	150
Small copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	9	64
Small heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	11	262
Small skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	10	113
Small tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	11	314
Small white	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	11	849
Speckled wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	11	124
Thymelicus	<i>Thymelicus sp</i>	11	108
White-letter hairstreak	<i>Satyrrium w-album</i>	2018	2
Total records			5042

White-letter hairstreak is endangered on the UK Red List

The most common butterflies were the small white and meadow brown with an average of over 77 and 54 respectively, recorded each year. Ringlet tended to increase in the 11 years for which we have information. Holly blue was recorded in 7 years, clouded yellow in 5 and painted lady, 9 years but with peaks in 2006 and 2009.

Although the numbers of individual species varied from year to year the number of most species remained fairly constant through the recording period. Since 2012, when regular recording of transects at Westfield Farm ceased, 67 records of 18 species were made in 2018. These included four records of the white-letter hairstreak (*Satyrrium w-album*), which is endangered in Britain (Fox *et al*, 2010). meadow brown, gatekeeper, ringlet and brimstone tended to increase during the period (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Population increases of four common butterflies in the CPERC records for Comberton Parish between 2002 and 2012



Moths

Invaluable records have been provided by a resident of Barton Road, at the east of the village, who has kept a moth trap for some years and has kindly allowed a summary of his information to be used in this audit (Butchart, 2024). Table 9 lists the 20 most common species recorded over the five years 2019 to 2022. Over 200 species of moth were caught in each year and the total number of moths caught varied from 2966 in 2019 to 4264 in 2021.

The most common moths were common wainscot (*Mythimna pallens*) and uncertain (*Hoplodrina octogenaria*) with 1360 and 1244 individuals averaging 272 and 249 specimens per year, respectively over the four years. A full list of moths recorded in the village is shown in Annex Table III.

The CPERC data also includes moth records for the 14 years between 2000 and 2013. Most of these are from Westfield Farm and comprise single individuals. The CPERC records from Westfield Farm reflect daylight observations, compared with the more comprehensive trapping records from Barton Road,

Table 9. Numbers of the 20 most common moth species caught in each of the five years, 2019 to 2023 in Barton Road, Comberton.

Vernacular	Taxon	Numbers of the 20 most common moths caught each year				
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Common footman	<i>Eilema lurideola</i>	64	73	175	113	109
Common grass-veneer	<i>Agriphila tristella</i>	147	22	71	118	89
Common quaker	<i>Orthosia cerasi</i>	99	31	21	3	2
Common wainscot	<i>Mythimna pallens</i>	109	252	431	151	417
Elbow-striped grass-veneer	<i>Agriphila geniculea</i>	8	13	171	83	176
Garden grass-veneer	<i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>	117	229	173	93	210
Grey tortrix agg	<i>Cnephasia spp.</i>	76	82	64	38	197
Heart and club	<i>Agrotis clavis</i>	85	75	27	33	128
Heart and dart	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	256	196	31	15	84
Hebrew character	<i>Orthosia gothica</i>	74	52	41	22	23
Inlaid grass-veneer	<i>Crambus pascuella</i>	46	148	171	43	85
Large yellow underwing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	204	132	173	74	229
Lunar underwing	<i>Anchoscelis lunosa</i>	91	28	163	105	16
Set hebrew character	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	119	66	211	115	265
Straw grass-veneer	<i>Agriphila straminella</i>	19	4	69	10	107
Treble Lines	<i>Charanyca trigrammica</i>	142	177	92	34	55
Uncertain	<i>Hoplodrina octogenaria</i>	236	292	171	280	265
Vine's rustic	<i>Hoplodrina ambigua</i>	25	37	60	49	113
Water veneer	<i>Acentria ephemerella</i>	254	43	115	71	43
Willow beauty	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>	49	103	109	93	212
Total no individuals	Number of individuals	3465	3495	4264	2966	4184
Total no species	Number of species	222	247	241	243	251

Records provided by Dr Stuart Butchart from his garden moth trap in Barton Road, Comberton

Five of the moths recorded in the village are classified as Vulnerable (Fox et al 2019; Table 10).

Table 10. Moth species identified as vulnerable in the UK Red List recorded in Comberton between 2019 and 2023.

Vernacular	Taxon	Years recorded				
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Early moth	<i>Theria primaria</i>		1	2	1	1
Mottled umber	<i>Erannis defoliaria</i>	1	3			
Mouse moth	<i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>	3	1	1	2	8
Oak hook-tip	<i>Watsonalla binaria</i>		1	2		
Sprawler	<i>Asteroscopus sphinx</i>	1		5		2

One of the most spectacular moths in the village, for the characteristic leaf blotching symptom is the horse chestnut leaf miner (*Cameraria ohridella*). The larvae are responsible for the large greyish leaf blotches and early defoliation which regularly affects the tree.

Dragonflies and Damselflies (Odonata)

CPERC records (Table 11) cover 13 species of dragonflies and damselflies from the area around Bourn Brook between 2005 and 2011. The average number recorded each year was 3.8 and the banded demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*) was the most common species recorded. southern hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*) was recorded once, in 2008. The migrant hawker (*Aeshna mixta*) was recorded in the village in 1994 and 1995. It has been omitted from this audit list as these records were made over 30 years ago. None of the species recorded is on the UK Red List (Daguet, *et al* 2008).

Table 11. Species of dragonfly and damselflies recorded between 2005 and 2011

Vernacular	Taxon	Years recorded	Total records
Azure damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	2	7
Banded demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	7	15
Black-tailed skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	1	2
Blue-tailed damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	1	1
Broad-bodied chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	1	2
Brown hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	2	3
Common blue damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	2	5
Common darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	2	7
Emperor dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	1	1
Large red damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	1	2
Ruddy darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	2	3
Southern hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	1	1
Total			49

CPERC records

Fungi

There has been no formal survey of the fungi in the parish, although individual observations have been made by several interested residents. Several important plant pathogens such as Hhney fungus (*Armillaria mellea*), silver leaf (*Chondrostereum purpureum*) are present in gardens, often indicating former orchards. Butt rot (*Ganoderma spp*) is present on many of the mature oak (*Quercus robur*) in the village, The recently established Ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is well established on the self-seeded young ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) plants in Jubilee Wood. Stags horn (*Xylaria hypoxylon*) is often seen on recently fallen tree branches. Several other plant pathogens are regularly noticed but they are deemed beyond the scope of this audit at present.

Among other fungi frequently noted in the parish are several toadstools such as *Agaricus spp*, *Clitocybe spp*, *Lactaria spp* and *Tricholoma spp* as well as the beefsteak fungi (*Boletus spp*). Other commonly seen

species are the ink cap (*Coprinus comatus*) often seen in grassland. Other grassland species such as Earth star (*Geastrum* spp) and the fairy ring (*Marasmius oreades*) are often seen in established gardens.

Lichens are a distinct group of organisms generally classified with the fungi as they are a result of a symbiosis between fungi and algae. Several species including *Xanthoria parietina*, *Parmelia sulcata*, *Physcia adscendens* and *Lecanora expallans* have been recorded in the village but there has been no formal survey.

Flora

Records

The vascular plant flora around and in the churchyard was recorded by botanists as part of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) monitoring of the national flora. Those records and those made by CRT at Westfield Farm are included in this audit.

The BSBI has a comprehensive database (BSBI, 2025) of plant records. These data, collected by different observers all of whom are competent botanists go back to 1900. The records are often collected at different times of the year and so variation in species lists is inevitable. There are also likely to be several taxonomic changes, which have not been checked in this analysis. Some inconsistencies were also noted in the data and where noted corrections have been made. The data set is used to compile the atlases of British plants (eg [BSBI Online Plant Atlas 2020](#)) which maps changes to the British flora.

The Comberton records provide an opportunity to assess the species present now and also to analyse changes since the 1950 to 1969 recording period. These records provide information on specific time periods of 20 years between 1950 and 1969, 15 years between 1970 and 1986, 13 years 1987 to 1999, ten years between 2000 and 2009 and 2010 to 2019 and six years since 2020. These time periods are not consistent but their use facilitates the analysis.

Data were extracted from this database, which uses the standard recording tetrads; Figure 14 shows those covering the parish. The system divides each 10 km grid square (hectad) of the UK National Grid into four 2km by 2km squares (tetrads; BTO, 2025), each using the letters A to Z, where A is applied to the most south westerly square and Z the most north easterly in each hectad, omitting the letter O (Anon 2025). Comberton parish is within the tetrads TL35S, TL35T and TL35X, Y and Z.

Bryophytes (Mosses and Liverworts)

The Cambridge Bryophyte Group (Preston, 2024) visited the churchyard to identify and record the range of moss species present in December 2023. They recorded 34 species using the grid reference TL383555 to define the churchyard. (Table 12). There are no records for this group in other parts of the parish and none of those recorded are on the UK Red list. The church is within the tetrad TL35X.

Several species of liverwort have been seen in the parish but no formal survey has been made

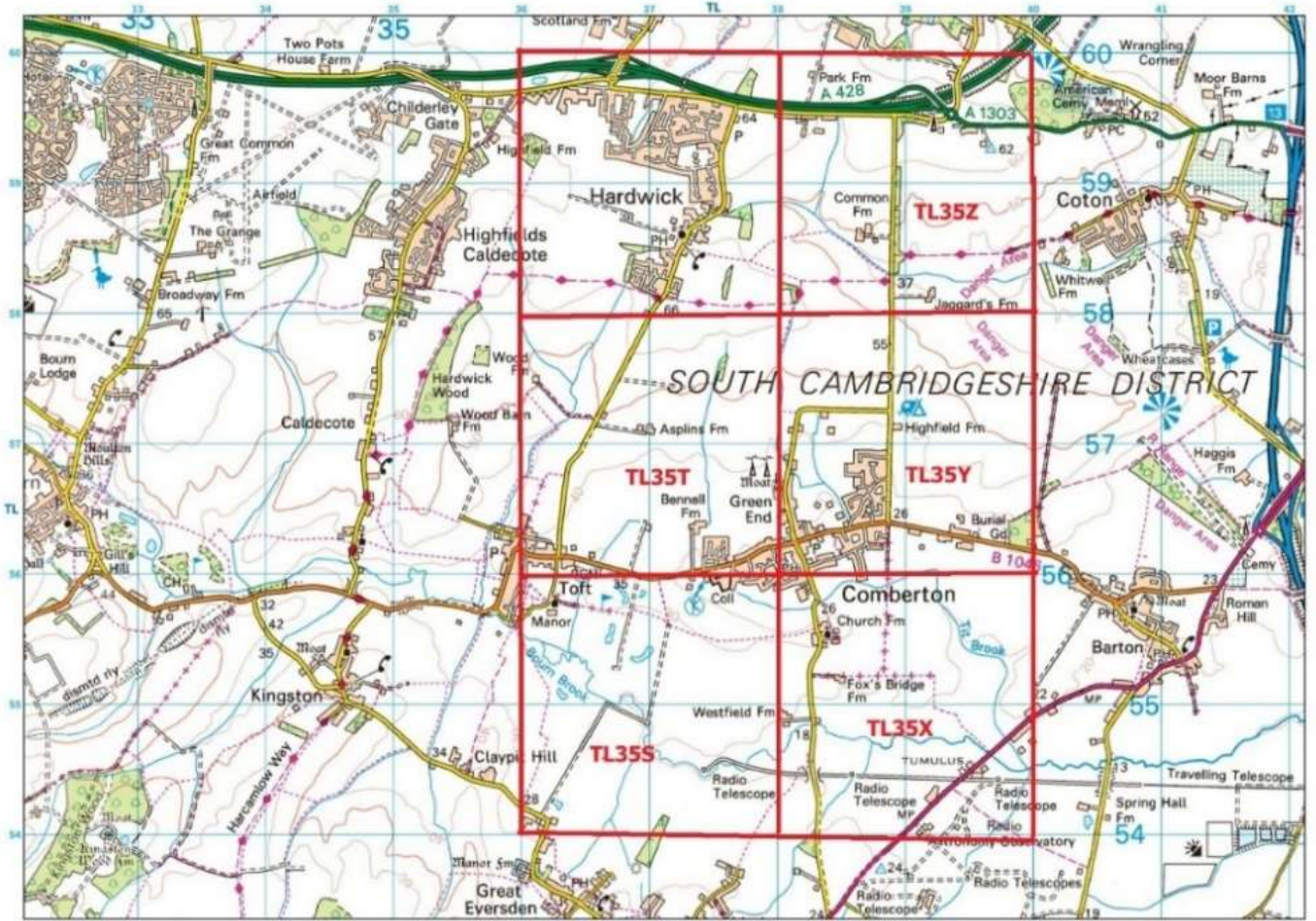
Pteridophytes (Ferns)

Four fern species are recorded in the parish: Adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), shield fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), broad buckler fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*) and hart's tongue (*Asplenium scolopendrium*). These were recorded in the tetrads TL35T, TL35X and TL35Y. Field horsetail (*Equisetum*

arvense) occurs around Bourn Brook (TL35S) and there are occasional records on wet ground the tetrad TL35Y. None of these species are threatened. There have been no records for Adders tongue since 2019.

Figure 14. Recording tetrads covering Comberton Parish drawn on 1:25000 Ordnance Survey map.

© Ordnance Survey



Angiosperms (Seed Plants)

The full species list for the parish during different recording periods since 1970 to 1986 is summarised in Table 13. Overall, the number of species in each tetrad is fairly constant, however the actual number in each tetrad has declined in each of the recording periods especially since 2000 to 2009. The total number of species in the Parish has remained relatively constant, although this reflects species variability rather than the presence of those important to indicate habitats.

Table 12. Bryophytes recorded in and around the churchyard of St Mary's Church, Comberton by Cambridge Bryophyte Group on 29th December 2023. Few mosses have common names and so this list has the taxon name in the left-hand column

Taxon	Vernacular	Habitat
<i>Amblystegium serpens</i>		
<i>Barbula convoluta</i> var. <i>convoluta</i>		
<i>Barbula unguiculata</i>	Beard moss	extension graveyard
<i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i>	Rough stalked feather-moss	
<i>Bryum argenteum</i>		
<i>Bryum capillare</i>		
<i>Bryum dichotomum</i>		extension graveyard
<i>Bryum radiculosum</i>		
<i>Bryum ruderae</i>		path
<i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i>	Pointed spear-moss	
<i>Cryphaea heteromalla</i>	Lateral cryphaea	base of birch tree
<i>Didymodon insulanus</i>	Beard moss	
<i>Didymodon nicholsonii</i>	Beard moss	path
<i>Didymodon rigidulus</i>	Beard moss	
<i>Didymodon sinuosus</i>	Beard moss	
<i>Didymodon vinealis</i>	Beard moss	
<i>Fissidens taxifolius</i>		
<i>Funaria hygrometrica</i>		extension graveyard
<i>Grimmia pulvinata</i>	Grey cushioned grimmia	
<i>Homalothecium sericeum</i>	Silky wall feather-moss	
<i>Hypnum cupressiforme</i> var. <i>cupressiforme</i>	Cyprus leaved plait-moss	
<i>Kindbergia praelonga</i>	Common feather-moss	
<i>Orthotrichum affine</i>		Churchyard wall and birch tree
<i>Orthotrichum anomalum</i>	Anomalous bristle-moss	
<i>Orthotrichum diaphanum</i>		
<i>Phascum cuspidatum</i>		extension graveyard
<i>Plagiomnium undulatum</i>		below N wall of church
<i>Pseudocrossidium hornschuchianum</i>		path
<i>Pseudoscleropodium purum</i>		
<i>Rhynchostegiella tenella</i>		base of oolite gravestone
<i>Rhynchostegium confertum</i>		
<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	Springy turf moss	
<i>Schistidium crassipilum</i>	Thick point grimmia	
<i>Syntrichia montana</i>	Intermediate screw-moss	
<i>Tortula muralis</i>	Wall screw-moss	

Table 13. Number of species and distinct sub-species of vascular plants recorded in each Comberton tetrad since 1970, including introduced species.

Tetrad	1970 to 1986	1987 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 to 2019	From 2020	Mean	Total spp
TL35S	353	401	509	293	284	372	693
TL35T	351	402	496	293	220	352	668
TL35X	353	411	511	322	383	396	705
TL35Y	354	385	490	296	279	361	684
TL35Z	356	408	529	383	272	390	660
Mean	354	405	507	317	288		
Total spp	378	471	573	520	554		865

Rare and Scarce Plants

This group of plants does not necessarily have any great intrinsic value, except sometimes creating interest and indicating species which are under threat for various reasons. The BSBI database enables scarce or threatened species to be identified in the tetrads covering the parish. The Society has compiled a list of rare and scarce plants in Cambridgeshire (Shanklin, 2019). Several of the species which are Rare, Endangered or Vulnerable in Cambridgeshire are present in the tetrads which cover the village and one species, *Lathyrus aphaca* (yellow vetchling) is on the County Red List. Those recorded in the Comberton tetrads since the 1970 to 1986 recording period are listed Table 14.

Some species recorded earlier, for example corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*) has not been recorded since the war and is unable to survive modern arable farming. The habitat conditions in which these plants are found are from Stace (2019). Most of these species are from dry and or calcareous soils. Most soils in and around the village are, as discussed above under geology either contain free chalk pebbles, as in the boulder clay or reworked chalky clays and marls as over the Gault clay. It indicates clearly why the area is so important botanically and why areas around the village should be protected from destructive development.

Axiophytes

The actual number of species or rarities in an area does not necessarily indicate importance to the floral diversity. Botanists use worthy or interesting plants, identified as axiophytes (see Definitions at the front of the report). They comprise around 40% of the total flora. The incidence of axiophytes in an area can be used as an indicator of habitat quality:

- Lists of axiophytes thus provide a method of determining conservation values and priorities.
- Sites with many axiophytes are usually of greater importance than those with fewer
- changes in the number of axiophytes over time can be used to monitor habitat changes and management practices.

Axiophytes for each botanical vice county are defined by Walker, (2018).

Table 14. Rare or scarce plants recorded in Comberton tetrads since 1970 which are included in the Cambridgeshire Rare Plant Register. Vulnerable species are in red, endangered in green; axiophytes are marked with an asterisk

Vernacular	Taxon	Primary habitat requirements
Butterfly orchid	<i>Platanthera chlorata</i>	Woods, calcareous soils. All
Crested cow-wheat	<i>Melampyrum cristatum</i>	Wood borders and scrub. All
Early-purple orchid	<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Base rich grassland or woods. 5
Fine-leaved sandwort	<i>Sabulina tenuifolia</i>	Dry, arable land. 3
Green winged orchid	<i>Anacamptis morio</i>	Calcareous undisturbed grass. All. *
Hairy whitlowgrass	<i>Erophila majuscula</i>	Dry ground, calcareous soils.3
Lizard orchid	<i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>	Rough ground and scrub. All
Sea barley	<i>Hordeum marinum</i>	Rough ground. 5
Shepherd's needle	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Arable weed. All
Slender tare	<i>Ervum gracile</i>	Grassy places. All *
Spreading hedge-parsley	<i>Torilis arvensis</i>	Arable weed. all
Sulphur clover	<i>Trifolium ochroleucon</i>	Heavy soils. All
Tuberous thistle	<i>Cirsium tuberosum</i>	Nutrient poor calcareous grassland. All
Water-soldier	<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>	Calcareous ponds and ditches. 1
Yellow vetchling	<i>Lathyrus aphaca</i>	Dry rough ground. All *

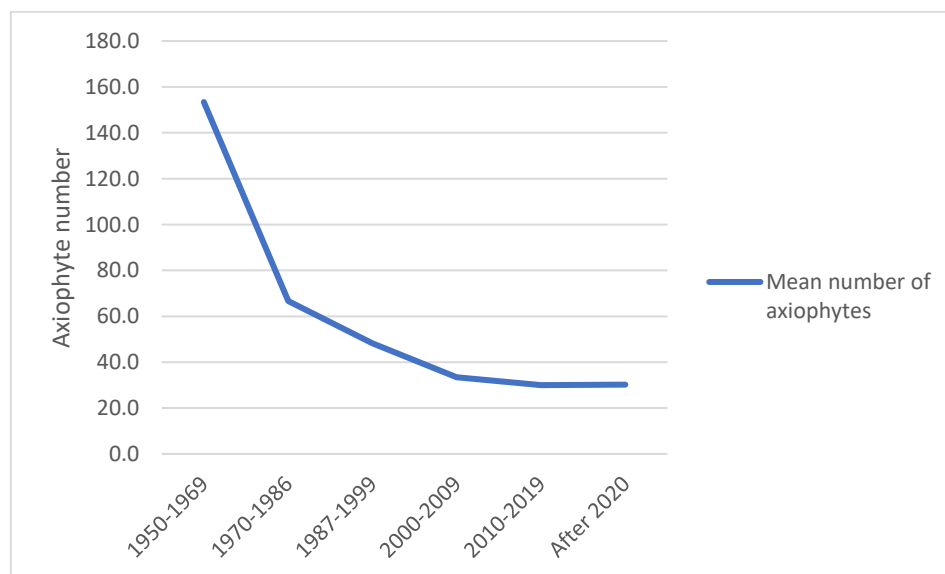
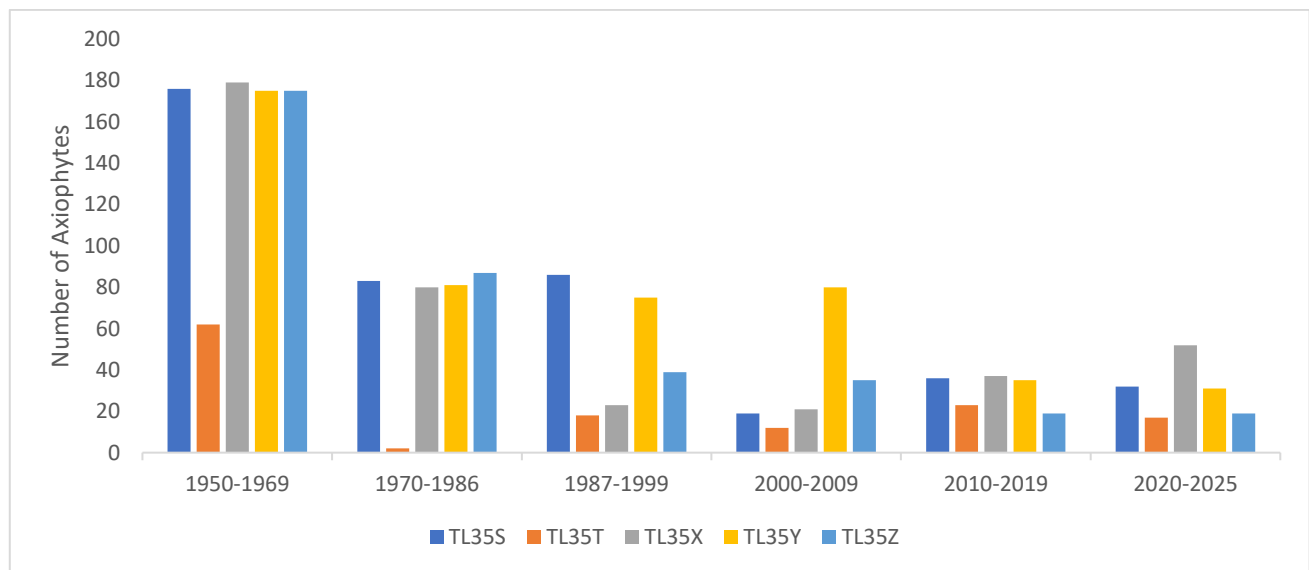
Tetrad present: 1, TL35S; 3, TL35X; 5, TL55Z, All; Comberton tetrads in which recorded. *Cirsium tuberosum* has not been recorded in any tetrad since the 1970 to 1986 recording period. Habitat information from Stace (2019).

A total of 277 axiophytes have been recorded in the five village tetrads since the 1950 to 1986 recording period. The numbers in the five tetrads varied over the five assessment periods (Figure 13), The contrast in the number of axiophytes in each tetrad can illustrate habitat differences. Tetrads TL35S and TL35X both include Bourn Brook and thus have a wider range of habitats than tetrad TL35T, which shows a relative paucity of flora. Most of this quadrat is outside the village envelope and it has few public footpaths, which might limit observations but it is also an area with large arable fields. In contrast, tetrad TL35Z also includes a stream and an area of woodland, which might increase the species richness of the tetrad.

An average of 153 axiophytes was recorded across the five tetrads between 1950 and 1969, compared with 66, 48, 33 30 and 32 respectively in each of the subsequent periods, although an additional 28 species classified as axiophytes were recorded between 2020 and 2025. The decline occurred in each tetrad (15a). The decline is significant (correlation coefficient 0.88; Figure 15b). A list of axiophytes lost between 1970 and 2020 is given in Annex IV. This shows there were 89 axiophytes recorded between 1970 and 1986, compared with an increased number of 121, recorded between 2020 and 2025. 39 of the species recorded between 1970 and 1986 were not present between 2020 and 2025.

The decline in axiophyte number since the period 1950 to 1969 coincides with construction of the two large housing developments in the village with the Harbour Avenue and Barrons Way estates. These also involved a substantial increase in the village population, from 812 in 1961 to 2251 in 1981. This created associated pressure on adjacent farmland. This period from 1950 also coincides with changes in agriculture practices driven partly by government policy to increase food production, following the Second World War, which resulted in a reduction in dairy and animal production and an increase in arable farming. Since 1950, average wheat yields in England have increased from ca 2.0t/ha to ca 8.0 and have not increased since the mid 1990s (Anon 2026).

Figure 15. Axiophytes in Comberton parish since the 1950 to 1969 recording period; a, top) number in each of the five tetrads covering the parish and below, b) mean number in the five Comberton tetrads in each recording period. Data extracted from the BSBI database, November 2025



Agricultural technologies also changed during this period with improved field drainage, increased use of fertilizers, higher yielding cultivars and the introduction of chemicals designed to kill weeds, insect pest and diseases. This led to a move away from the wartime and pre-war production system which was akin to what is now described as 'organic' farming.

The number of axiophytes in the five Comberton tetrads was compared with the number in the county, in each of the recording periods (Table 15). The overall reduction in the number of axiophytes in the Vice County is lower than for Comberton. However, there is a substantial reduction in the number of axiophytes in the county since 2020. The difference, between the county and Comberton data, demonstrate the relative paucity of the village flora. There is a need to increase areas where these species are able to regenerate to improve biodiversity and the ecosystem.

Table 15. Number of axiophytes in Comberton Parish compared with Cambridgeshire Vice County 29

Recording period	Comberton	County
1950 to 1969	176	406
1970 to 1986	89	413
1987 to 1999	101	434
2000 to 2009	118	433
2010 to 2019	125	439
After 2020	121	137

Orchids

Ten species of orchid have been recorded in the village tetrads since the first recording period (1950-1969) used in this report. Few have been recorded every year and not all are present in each of the five tetrads which cover the parish. Table 16 summarises the frequency of individual orchid species in each tetrad. In the table the maximum score is 30 (5 tetrads and 6 recording periods). The most common orchid is the bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) and the rarest, the southern marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*) which has been recorded in each tetrad except TL35T and has not been seen in the parish since the 1950 to 1969 recording period. This is an orchid of wet soils in full sun which has probably succumbed to improved field drainage.

The green-winged orchid (*Anacamptis morio*) was last recorded between 2010 and 2019 in the tetrad TL35Y and was last reported there between 1970 and 1986 and has not been recorded in any other parts of the parish since 1986. This is an orchid of short undisturbed grassland, a habitat which could be reintroduced in the parish.

The number of orchid species in each tetrad, (Figure 16a) shows the decline of since 1950. These records are collected by different observers and at various times of year, so there must be some element of inconsistency in the records. However, tetrad TL35Z, which shows an increase in orchid number since 2020, includes diverse habitats with areas of grassland, woodland and a stream. Much of this tetrad is more elevated than other parts of the village and on the clay plateau, where soils are slightly more calcareous, owing to the presence of free chalk. Figure 16b, shows the decrease in the mean number of orchids in each recording period across each tetrad. This curve resembles that for axiophytes.

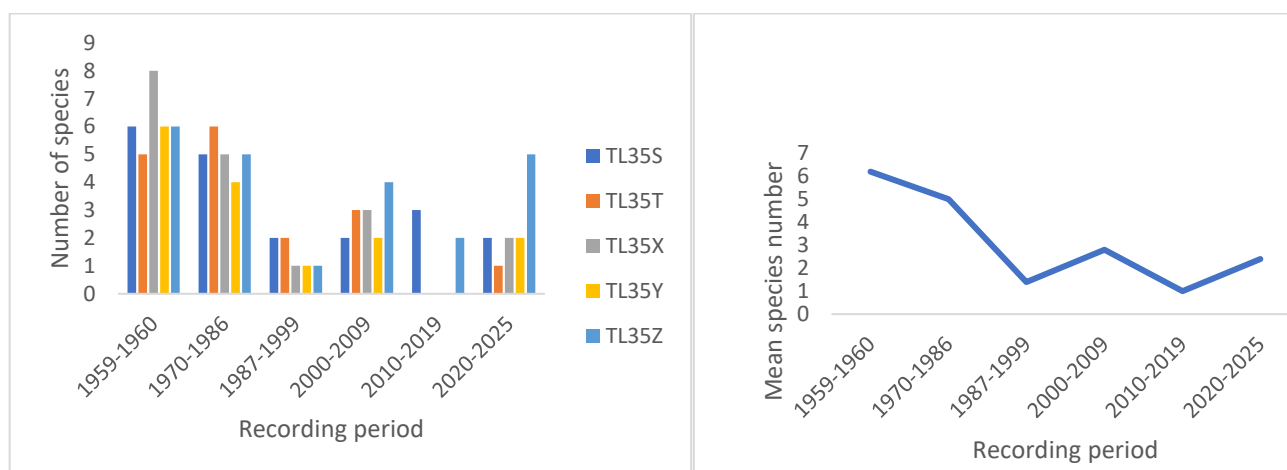
The mean number of orchid species recorded in the five tetrads which cover the parish is shown in Table 16 for the six recording periods. The bee orchid (*Orchis apifera*) is the most common species present in 24 of the possible 30 combinations. It is the only species which has tended to become more common over the ca 70-year timespan surveyed.

Table 16. Orchid species recorded in the five Comberton tetrads during the six recording periods from 1950 until 2025

Orchid spp	Number of records *
Bee orchid (<i>Ophrys apifera</i>)	24
Broad-leaved helleborine (<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>)	10
Butterfly orchid (<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>)	8
Common spotted-orchid (<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>)	10
Common twayblade (<i>Neottia ovata</i>)	13
Early purple orchid (<i>Orchis mascula</i>)	6
Green-winged orchid (<i>Anacamptis morio</i>)	6
Lizard orchid (<i>Himantoglossom hircinuim</i>)	11
Pyramidal orchid (<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>)	11
Southern marsh-orchid (<i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>)	4

Maximum of 30 observations in 5 tetrads and 6 recording periods

Figure 16. a, left) number of orchids in each tetrad in Comberton parish since the 1950 to 1969 recording period and right, b) mean number of orchid species in the Comberton tetrads since 1950 to 1969 (Correlation coefficient =0.85)



Discussion

This part of England has a long history of human habitation and the nearby presence of Cambridge, reflects this as it was established as a Roman bridgehead on the River Cam. The landscape and geology make the area particularly important for agriculture, which has been recognized since before Roman times. Advances in agricultural technology and drainage in the second half of the 20th century have made the area an essential element of the UK food sector. The rise of the scientific, medical and knowledge-based economies, associated with Cambridge University over the last 50 years, has led to a decline in the relative contribution of agriculture to the regional economy. None the less good quality arable land remains essential should be cherished for food production and security.

The aims of the 2021 act may seem to be in conflict with some government policies to build houses where needed. The biodiversity net gain element of the 2021 act often leads to developers destroying important areas of diversity to replace it in other areas. Such substitution is often a disaster for biodiversity. The new sites take many years to develop whereas well established habitat which can benefit the environment is destroyed; frequently because it is cheaper to build on undeveloped land rather than brown field sites. This makes the challenges of increasing the number of people especially acute in this area.

This means that our part of England encapsulates the issues surrounding some modern economic theory. Cambridgeshire is rich in public goods in terms of infrastructure, housing and economic well being. However, we have often overlooked the fact that the natural environment also provides substantial benefit to the public and to individual well being but has become severely depleted. A challenge is how to present that benefit in financial terms. That is more important than often realised, simply because the substantial public good built up by a developing society has been to the detriment of the natural environment. The 2021 Environment Act, and thus this audit, seek to find a way to balance these costs and benefits in financial terms but also in a way that enhances habitats and species on the ground .

The botanical analysis demonstrates a decline in diversity over the last 70 years primarily attributable to the intensification of agriculture in response to government policy to increase food security. It led, by the early 1980s, to a recognition of the need to reduce reliance on technology and especially pesticides and adoption of integrated farming systems, now termed regenerative farming. Government policy, following public concerns about intensive agriculture is now focused on what are perceived to be more sustainable systems which generally have lower output per unit area. This offers great opportunities for enhancing biodiversity on farmland, reducing the costs paid by the environment to support the public goods provided by developed infrastructure and the human population. However, a 'big picture' view might argue that all this does is export environmental degradation to another part of the world from which we import our food and have no control over production standards.

The churchyard at the southern edge of the village may seem relatively unimportant in terms of representing biodiversity. However, it provides a hub of footpaths and hedges linking important features in Comberton and adjacent villages with the Bourn Brook and Westfield Farm County Wildlife sites. There are areas of woodland nearby at Kingston, Hardwick, Wimpole and Madingley, some of which are recognised as SSSIs. These sites are relatively remote from one another so the opportunity of developing a matrix of wildlife corridors to link them together would be of substantial biodiversity benefit.

The presence of so many bat species and especially the Barbastelle is important. This is a bat of open woodland or woodland edges, near water courses (Altringham, 2003). The fragile woodland with open

space and water around Comberton seems critical for this bat and we probably should not allow further environmental fragmentation.

The report has made no mention of climate change, except by inference from the rainfall and SMD changes over the last 14 sequential 30 year means. Most official climate models estimate that temperatures will increase in the long term (presuming no change to the Gulf Stream). That raises the possibility of increased rainfall. The data collected in the village suggest that the increased evapotranspiration, associated with higher temperatures will exceed the effect of any increase in rainfall to create dryer late summer soil conditions. This is unlikely to change significantly the crops grown in the area but is likely to impact what people can grow in their gardens.

Relevance to Comberton

Audit Conclusions

A wide range of wildlife has been reported in the village and many species are on the UK list of endangered or vulnerable organisms, at risk of extinction. This confirms that the Bourn Valley is an important landscape which includes a range of important habitats. These need serious consideration when any further attempt to disturb them is promoted.

In particular, the audit identifies critical and important species which occur in the village and habitats which provide significant biodiversity in the parish. In addition the analysis of the flora indicates that several species have already been lost and are unlikely to recur naturally. These conclusions can be used to guide planning decisions

County Strategy

Following consultation during 2024, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Nature Recovery Strategy has been agreed. It is available to view on the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority \(CPCA\) website](#). The report identifies plans for the county and its habitats and also provides a list of priority species.

Priority Habitat

The priority habitats in the county are listed at [Longlist of Priority Habitats](#) on the Combined Authority website and most do not occur in the parish. However, some elements of the following do occur:

Woodland and park land – The Recreation Ground, Small areas of woodland occur in Watts Wood, Jubilee Wood, Starve Goose Plantation and the copse north of Bin Brook, alongside Long Road and south of and close the Branch Road-Green End corner.

Wet Woodland – Riparian strip along and close to Bourn Brook, Tit Brook (in Watts Wood) and Bin Brook

Trees outside woodland

Rivers and streams – Three streams transect the parish

The strategy identifies dry calcareous and acid grassland as priority habitat. Neither of these now occur naturally in the parish owing to building development or agriculture. There are areas of grassland on parish land, private property and commercial organisations, some of which would be suitable for dry calcareous habitats with suitable management. Some of the scarce plants or those that have recently become extinct within the county and the parish are grassland species.

Priority Species

This county list includes many species which have probably never been recorded in the parish. It has been edited to include those species recorded in Comberton in Table 17. This list provides an indication of some which might be reintroduced, if appropriate areas of habitat can be located. Before that can be considered it is necessary to identify places in the parish where appropriate conditions might be established.

It is of note that black poplar (*Populus nigra* ssp *betulifolia*) is on the list. This is now a rare tree and there are several reintroduction schemes. These seek to re-establish *P. nigra* rather than any of the many hybrids.

Table 17. Species from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Nature Recovery Strategy that also occur or have been recorded in Comberton.

	Taxa	Comberton Records
Plants		
<i>Anacamptis morio</i>	Green-winged orchid	Last record 2010-2019
<i>Campanula glomerata</i>	Clustered bellflower	Last record 1950-1969
<i>Ervum gracile</i>	Slender tare	Last 2020-2025
<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>	Dropwort	Last record 1959-1960
<i>Groenlandia densa</i>	Opposite-leaved pondweed	Last record 1987-1999
<i>Legousia hybrida</i>	Venus's-looking-glass	Last record 2000-2010
<i>Ononis spinosa</i>	Spiny restharrow	Last record 2000-2009
<i>Orobanche elatior</i>	Knapweed broomrape	Last record 1950-1969
<i>Populus nigra</i>	Black poplar	Comberton
<i>Silaum silaus</i>	Pepper-saxifrage	Last record 2000-2009
<i>Thalictrum minus</i>	Lesser meadow-rue	Only record 2000-2019
<i>Trifolium ochroleucon</i>	Sulphur clover	Last record 1987-1999
Terrestrial Mammal		
<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	European water vole	Bourn Brook Churchyard, 2023-2025
<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	Western barbastelle	
<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	West European hedgehog	
Amphibian		
<i>Bufo bufo</i>	Common toad	Occasional
Bird		
<i>Apus apus</i>	Swift	Comberton
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Turtle dove	No record since 2009
<i>Crex crex</i>	Corncrake	Old record
<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Kingfisher	Comberton
<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Corn bunting	Comberton
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Snipe	Comberton
<i>Grus grus</i>	Common crane	Overflying
<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Grey partridge	Comberton
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl	Comberton
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing	Comberton

Parish Strategy

Actions

The habitat map produced during 2024 can be used to identify suitable areas for reintroduction or encouragement of several of the plant species in the county list. This would help the parish contribute to nature recovery in the county. Additionally, the Parish Council can support biodiversity in the parish on land it owns by:

- Retaining areas of grass mown only in August or September to encourage biodiversity
- Sympathetic biennial hedge cutting
- Adopting a biodiversity focused approach to managing areas for which it has responsibility in consultation with residents
- Commit to supporting District and County strategy to meet objectives of the 2021 Environment Act.

Continued monitoring

This audit will need to be kept up to date with frequent reviews. The advisory group envisage a series of updates will be issued from time to time. There is limited information on several types of wildlife in the village. Specific surveys to cover taxa for which information in this audit is limited should be made, including grassland fungi, especially on long-established grassland where rare and specialised species may occur. It would be helpful to monitor numbers of insects, particularly bees and beetles and to assess bats in other parts of the parish.

The audit is irrelevant if the findings are not converted into action plans for species recovery and the group will now focus on developing specific advice for nature recovery parts of the parish to meet both the needs of Comberton and nearby villages and the larger aims of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough strategy. To this end the Parish Council should consult adjacent parishes and the District Council.

Wildlife Corridors

Several of the footpaths and hedgerows radiating from the churchyard (Figure 15) were identified in the village mapping survey as providing important habitat and potential wildlife corridors. These are a well established method of encouraging and supporting the movement of many species used successfully in many parts of the world (for example, Kearsley 2020). A priority for any improvement of nature within the parish is to identify and establish zones suitable for establishment of wildlife corridors and to prevent inappropriate adjacent development.

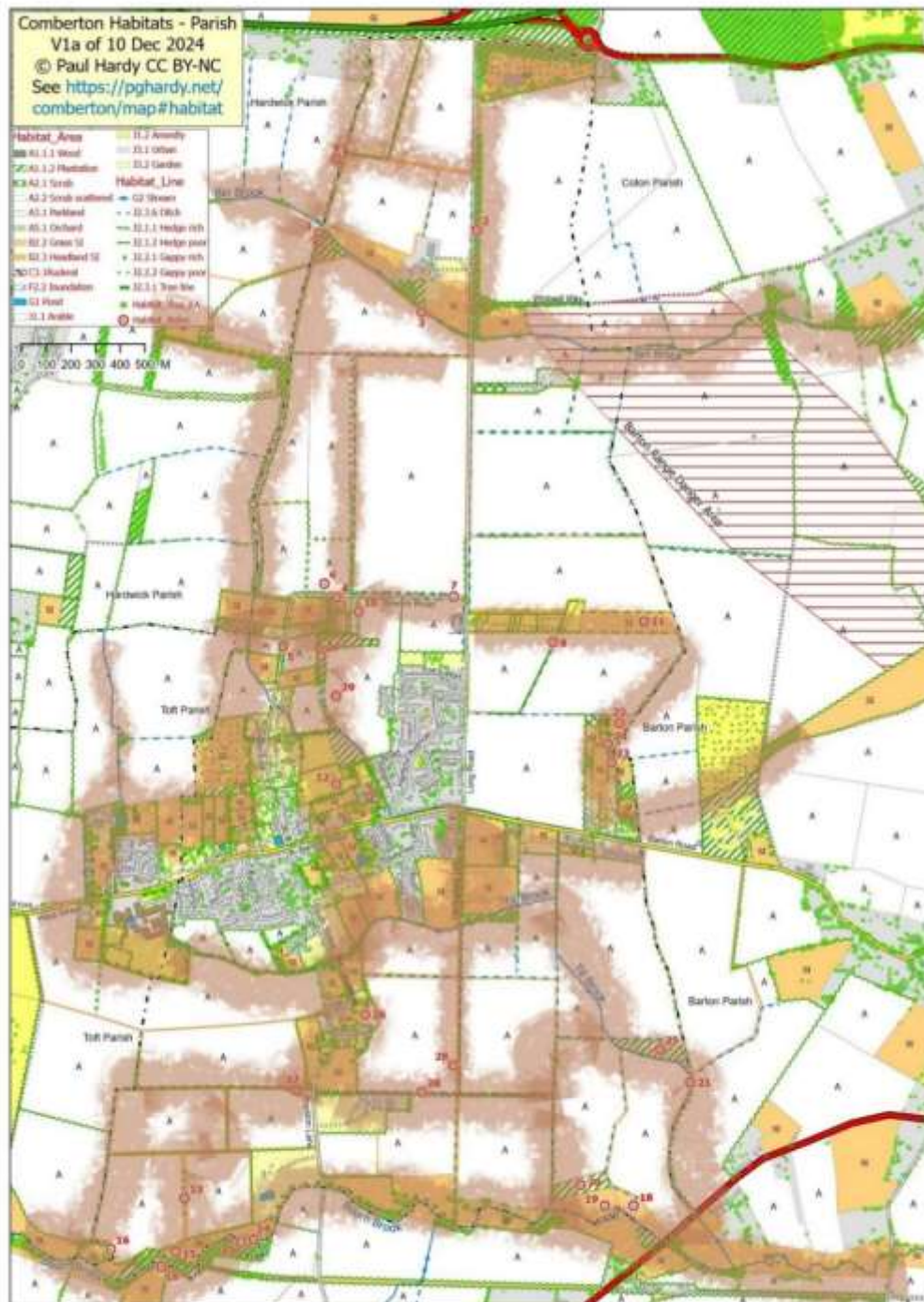
The village is fortunate that potential corridors already exist, were identified in the habitat survey and are visible in aerial photographs:

1. A potential north-south corridor, linking the churchyard and recreation ground to Branch Road in the north. This area of open space in the centre of the village, is often referred to as the village green lung.
2. The riparian strips of the three streams, Bourn Brook, Tit Brook and Bin Brook in the south and north of the parish, respectively.
3. The Bin Brook corridor also links with the well established copse and hedgerow along the east side of Long Road to the area of woodland surrounding the water reservoir south of the road to Hardwick. In theory, this could link the village to Madingley wood.
4. The line of hedges and trees along Green End and up to the Starve Goose Plantation follows a medieval feature.

Figure 17 shows in broad terms how these may be linked, using field margins and open spaces, some of which recognize the substantial achievements of farmers in the area for improving the farmed

environment for wildlife. The map indicates the best quality habitat identified in the Phase 1 survey which is already or has the potential to form wildlife corridors. To achieve this the Parish Council need to recognize that these potential corridors are an essential part of the nature recovery programme to which they are committed by the 2021 Act. It will need cooperation with the parish planning committee, the District Council and landowners who could be encouraged to adopt appropriate management practices close to the corridor.

Figure 17. Presence of good quality habitat along field margins and streams in the parish, linking the three streams through the green lung and recreation ground from Bourn Brook and Westfield Farm in the south to Starve Goose plantation and Bin Brook in the north. The highlighted areas show potential habitat links.



Recommendations

Following this audit the Council is advised to:

- Recognize Comberton is an important wildlife area where the declining biodiversity of South Cambridgeshire might be reduced and enhanced;
- Agree a timeframe for establishing wildlife corridors in the parish;
- Adopt appropriate planning policies to minimise biodiversity loss and maximise biodiversity gain in accordance with the 2021 Environment Act, paying special attention to areas within the village conservation area and green belt;
- Discuss approaches with nearby parishes to minimise jointly biodiversity losses and landscape destruction within the catchment of the Bourn Brook;
- Agree and consolidate actions with the District Council, to meet the requirements of the 2021 Act.
- Manage open spaces for which it has responsibility sympathetically to encourage biodiversity

The Advisory Group will

- Consider approaches to nature recovery by enhancing wildlife corridors once the Council confirms acceptance of this audit and to establish corridors as wildlife havens.
- Explore suitable areas for encouraging county target species within the parish.
- Continue to work with the Natural Environment Committee of the Parish Council as consulted

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to the volunteers who have helped monitor wildlife and habitats around the churchyard, especially Brian McCabe, for recording bats, Roger Featherstone and Peter Pillbeam, with the Cambridge Mammal Group, for recording small mammals, Andrew Gallichan and Geoff Wilson for recording birds and butterflies, Ann Miles who has made regular botanical surveys and the Cambridge Bryophyte Group. We also thank the village residents who have provided information for the audit and comments on draft versions. We would also like to acknowledge the group of village surveyors who gave their time during the summer of 2024 to walk the whole parish in order to create the Phase 1 habitat base map. They included Bill Adams, Jo Callan, Robert Cook, Steve Clark, Claire Crang, John Crang, Mike Crosby, Paul Hardy, Quin Hollick, Francine Hughes, Geoff King, Lynn Tatnell, Charmian Wall, David Wall and Chris Westgarth

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Annex II. Introduction: Original Proposal to the Council, December 2023

Summary

The proposal has developed from changes in the management, to improve biodiversity of St Mary's churchyard since 2020. A set of distinct habitat compartments was created and opportunities for wildlife increased. There was a realisation that the churchyard has a radiating network of paths and hedges that have the potential to create habitat corridors to nearby sites of importance to wildlife. The proposal identifies how the Parish Council may incorporate these changes into a Comberton Nature Recovery Network to improve our natural environment and bring more wildlife into the village

Introduction

In 2020, a small group based around St Mary's Church in Comberton created a series of distinct habitat zones in the churchyard as part of the Ely diocese Churchyard Conservation Scheme under the auspices of and in collaboration with the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust. The Church was awarded their Silver Award. The church is south of the village and at the centre of a radiating network of footpaths and hedgerows. A paper outlining the changes, presented to the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2023 is given in Annex I.

The strategic objectives of the proposal are taken directly from the government's 2018 policy paper '[A Green Future: Our 25-year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)', enacted in the [2021 Environment Act](#), supplemented by the [2023 Environmental Improvement Plan](#), and now a cornerstone of environmental planning. The [Nature Recovery Network](#) (NRN) was elaborated in 2022 and is being rolled out by [DEFRA](#) and [Natural England](#) by bringing together partners, legislation and funding to restore and enhance England's wildlife-rich places.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is responsible for the scheme. Cambridgeshire County Council has established the [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (LNRS) in collaboration with [Natural Cambridgeshire](#), using an evidence-based, locally led collaborative approach. Locally, the policy is also being carried forward by [South Cambridgeshire District Council](#), through their *Doubling Nature Strategy* and *Doubling Nature Action Plan*. Parish Councils are offered support for LNR plans through donations of trees and a [Wildlife Enhancement Grant Scheme](#) of up to £2000.00 per project.

Additionally, several sources have identified the significant improvements to health and wellbeing of people that countryside and nature offer (for example [<MHAW21-Nature-research-report.pdf \(mentalhealth.org.uk\)>](#)).

This paper outlines an opportunity for the Comberton Parish Council to create a Nature Recovery Network. This would be based on wildlife corridors radiating from the Churchyard to link green spaces in the village with nearby areas of woodland, open space and important wildlife sites. The project will be preceded by an initial scoping exercise to assess support for the concept and identify sources of funding. This proposal includes a possible timeline.

Strategic Objectives

The proposal seeks to develop a Comberton Nature Recovery Network to protect and restore wildlife and provide opportunities to reintroduce species that we have lost from our countryside. It will establish a network of potential wildlife corridors within and around the village to link significant sites of biodiversity importance, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The network will use and enhance the habitat diversity of the village and focus around the churchyard. The corridors will help wildlife move between and explore habitats within the area. It will also augment agri-environment schemes on farms and environmentally benign food production.

Annex III. Moth species recorded in the Parish

458 Moth species recorded in Comberton between 2000 and 2025. The list includes observations at Westfield Farm, by the CRT, in Barton Road, by Dr S Buchart, Barton Road and casual observations made by residents.

Taxon	Vernaculoar	Taxon	Vernaclar
<i>Abrostola tripartita</i>	Spectacle	<i>Hedya nubiferana</i>	Marbled Orchard Tortrix
<i>Acasis viretata</i>	Yellow-barred Brindle	<i>Hedya pruniana</i>	Plum Tortrix
<i>Acentria ephemerella</i>	Water Veneer	<i>Hedya salicella</i>	White-backed Marble
<i>Acleris forsskaleana</i>	Maple Button	<i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i>	Small Emerald
<i>Acleris holmiana</i>	White-triangle Button	<i>Hemithea aestivaria</i>	Common Emerald
<i>Acleris rhombana</i>	Rhomboid Tortrix	<i>Hepialus humuli</i>	Ghost Moth
<i>Acleris variegana</i>	Garden Rose Tortrix	<i>Herminia grisealis</i>	Small Fan-foot
<i>Acrobasis advenella</i>	Grey Knot-horn	<i>Herminia tarsipennalis</i>	Fan-foot
<i>Acrobasis consociella</i>	Grey Oak Knothorn	<i>Hofmannophila pseudospretella</i>	Brown House-moth
<i>Acrobasis suavella</i>	Thicket Knot-horn = Blackthorn Knot-horn	<i>Homoeosoma sinulla</i>	Twin-barred Knot-horn
<i>Acronicta leporina</i>	Miller	<i>Hoplodrina ambigua</i>	Vine's Rustic
<i>Acronicta psi</i>	Grey Dagger	<i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>	Rustic
<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>	Knot-grass	<i>Hoplodrina octogenaria</i>	Uncertain
<i>Acronicta tridens</i>	Dark Dagger	<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	Rosy Rustic
<i>Agapeta hamana</i>	Common Yellow Conch	<i>Hydriomena furcata</i>	July High Flyer
<i>Aglossa pinguinalis</i>	Large Tabby	<i>Hypena proboscidalis</i>	Snout
<i>Agonopterix alstromeriana</i>	Brown-spot Flat-body	<i>Hypena rostralis</i>	Buttoned Snout
<i>Agonopterix arenella</i>	Brindled Flat-body	<i>Hypomecis punctinalis</i>	Pale Oak Beauty
<i>Agonopterix subpropinqua</i>	Ruddy Flat-body	<i>Hypsopygia costalis</i>	Gold Triangle
<i>Agriopis aurantiaria</i>	Scarce Umber	<i>Hypsopygia glaucinalis</i>	Double-striped Tabby
<i>Agriopis marginaria</i>	Dotted Border	<i>Idaea aversata</i>	Riband Wave
<i>Agriphila geniculea</i>	Elbow-striped Grass-veneer	<i>Idaea biselata</i>	Small Fan-footed Wave
<i>Agriphila inquinatella</i>	Barred Grass-veneer	<i>Idaea dimidiata</i>	Single-dotted Wave
<i>Agriphila selasella</i>	Pale-streak Grass-veneer	<i>Idaea fuscovenosa</i>	Dwarf Cream Wave
<i>Agriphila straminella</i>	Straw Grass-veneer	<i>Idaea rusticata</i>	Least Carpet
<i>Agriphila tristella</i>	Common Grass-veneer	<i>Idaea rusticata subsp. atosignaria</i>	<i>Idaea rusticata subsp. atosignaria</i>
<i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>	Beaded Chestnut	<i>Idaea seriata</i>	Small Dusty Wave
<i>Agrotis clavis</i>	Heart and Club	<i>Idaea trigeminata</i>	Treble Brown Spot
<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	Heart & Dart	<i>Incurvaria masculella</i>	Feathered Leaf-cutter
<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	Heart and Dart	<i>Ipimorpha subtusa</i>	Olive

<i>Agrotis puta</i>	Shuttle-shaped Dart	<i>Isotrias rectifasciana</i>	Hedge Tortrix
<i>Agrotis segetum</i>	Turnip Moth	<i>Korscheltellus lupulina</i>	Common Swift
<i>Alcis repandata</i>	Mottled Beauty	<i>Lacanobia oleracea</i>	Bright-line Brown-eye
<i>Aleimma loeflingiana</i>	Yellow Oak Button	<i>Lacanobia w-latinum</i>	Light Brocade
<i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i>	Green-brindled Crescent	<i>Laothoe populi</i>	Poplar Hawk-moth
<i>Alsophila aescularia</i>	March Moth	<i>Larentia clavaria</i>	Mallow
<i>Amphipyra pyramidea</i>	Copper Underwing	<i>Lasiocampa quercus</i>	Oak Eggar
<i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>	Mouse Moth	<i>Laspeyria flexula</i>	Beautiful Hook-tip
<i>Anania coronata</i>	Spotted Magpie	<i>Lateroligia ophiogramma</i>	Double Lobed
<i>Anania coronata</i>	Elder Pearl	<i>Leptologia lota</i>	Red-line Quaker
<i>Anania hortulata</i>	Small Magpie	<i>Leptologia macilenta</i>	Yellow-line Quaker
<i>Anarsia innoxia</i>	Acer Sober	<i>Leucania comma</i>	Shoulder-striped Wainscot
<i>Anarta trifolii</i>	Nutmeg	<i>Leucoma salicis</i>	White Satin Moth
<i>Anchoscelis litura</i>	Brown-spot Pinion	<i>Leucoma salicis</i>	White Satin
<i>Anchoscelis lunosa</i>	Lunar Underwing	<i>Ligdia adustata</i>	Scorched Carpet
<i>Ancylis achatana</i>	Triangle-marked Roller	<i>Lithophane leautieri</i>	Blair's Shoulder-knot
<i>Anorthoa munda</i>	Twin-spotted Quaker	<i>Litoligia literosa</i>	Rosy Minor
<i>Anthophila fabriciana</i>	Common Nettle-tap	<i>Lomaspilis marginata</i>	Clouded Border
<i>Anticlea derivata</i>	Streamer	<i>Lomographa temerata</i>	Clouded Silver
<i>Apamea anceps</i>	Large Nutmeg	<i>Lozotaeniodes formosana</i>	Orange Pine Tortrix
<i>Apamea crenata</i>	Clouded-bordered Brindle	<i>Luperina testacea</i>	Flounced Rustic
<i>Apamea epomidion</i>	Clouded Brindle	<i>Luquetia lobella</i>	Sloe Flat-body
<i>Apamea lithoxylaea</i>	Light Arches	<i>Lycia hirtaria</i>	Brindled Beauty
<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	Dark Arches	<i>Lymantria dispar</i>	Gypsy Moth
<i>Apamea remissa</i>	Dusky Brocade	<i>Lyonetia clerkella</i>	Apple Leaf Miner
<i>Apamea sordens</i>	Rustic Shoulder-knot	<i>Macaria liturata</i>	Tawny-barred Angle
<i>Apeira syringaria</i>	Lilac Beauty	<i>Macrochilo cribrumalis</i>	Dotted Fan-foot
<i>Aphomia sociella</i>	Bee Moth	<i>Mamestra brassicae</i>	Cabbage Moth
<i>Aplocera eformata</i>	Lesser Treble-bar	<i>Marasmarcha lunaedactyla</i>	Crescent Plume
<i>Aplocera plagiata</i>	Treble-bar	<i>Melanchra persicariae</i>	Dot Moth
<i>Aporophyla lutulenta</i>	Deep-brown Dart	<i>Menophra abruptaria</i>	Waved Umber
<i>Aporophyla nigra</i>	Black Rustic	<i>Mesapamea secalis</i>	Common Rustic
<i>Apterogenum ypsilon</i>	Dingy Shears	<i>Mesoligia furuncula</i>	Cloaked Minor
<i>Archips crataegana</i>	Brown Oak Tortrix	<i>Micropterix calthella</i>	Plain Gold = Plain Pollen-moth
<i>Archips podana</i>	Large Fruit-tree Tortrix	<i>Mompha jurassicella</i>	Scarce Mompha
<i>Archips rosana</i>	Rose Tortrix	<i>Mompha ochracella</i>	Buff Mompha

<i>Archips xylosteana</i>	Variegated Golden Tortrix	<i>Mompha subbistrigella</i>	Garden Mompha
<i>Argyresthia goedartella</i>	Golden Argent	<i>Monochroa palustrellus</i>	Wainscot Neb
<i>Argyresthia trifasciata</i>	Triple-barred Argent	<i>Monopis crocicipitella</i>	Pale-backed Clothes Moth
<i>Argyrotaenia ljugiana</i>	Heather Tortrix	<i>Monopis laevigella</i>	Skin Moth
<i>Aspilapteryx tringipennella</i>	Ribwort Slender = Ribwort Slender	<i>Monopis obviella</i>	Yellow-backed Clothes-moth
<i>Asteroscopus sphinx</i>	Sprawler	<i>Monopis weaverella</i>	Carrion Moth
<i>Atethmia centrargo</i>	Centre-barred Sallow	<i>Mormo maura</i>	Old Lady
<i>Athrips mouffetella</i>	Dotted Grey Groundling	<i>Mythimna albipuncta</i>	White-point
<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	<i>Mythimna conigera</i>	Brown-line Bright-eye
<i>Axylia putris</i>	Flame	<i>Mythimna ferrago</i>	Clay
<i>Batia lunaris</i>	Lesser Tawny Tubic = Lesser Tawny Crescent	<i>Mythimna impura</i>	Smoky Wainscot
<i>Batrachedra praeangusta</i>	Poplar Cosmet = Poplar Needle-moth	<i>Mythimna pallens</i>	Common Wainscot
<i>Biston betularia</i>	Peppered Moth	<i>Mythimna straminea</i>	Southern Wainscot
<i>Blastobasis adustella</i>	Dingy Dowd	<i>Mythimna vitellina</i>	Delicate
<i>Blastobasis lacticolella</i>	London Dowd = Large Pale Masoner	<i>Nematopogon swammerdamella</i>	Large Longhorn
<i>Blastodacna hellerella</i>	Hawthorn Cosmet	<i>Neocochylis dubitana</i>	Little Conch = White-faced Straw
<i>Borkhausenia fuscescens</i>	Small Dingy Tubic	<i>Noctua comes</i>	Lesser Yellow Underwing
<i>Bryotropha affinis</i>	Dark Neb	<i>Noctua fimbriata</i>	Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing
<i>Bryotropha basaltinella</i>	Thatch Neb	<i>Noctua interjecta</i>	Least Yellow Underwing
<i>Bryotropha domestica</i>	House Neb	<i>Noctua janthe</i>	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing
<i>Bryotropha terrella</i>	Cinerosus Neb = Brown Moss-moth	<i>Noctua orbona</i>	Lunar Yellow Underwing
<i>Bucculatrix thoracella</i>	Lime Bent-wing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	Large Yellow Underwing
<i>Cabera pusaria</i>	Common White Wave	<i>Nola confusalis</i>	Least Black Arches
<i>Callistege mi</i>	Mother Shipton	<i>Nola cucullatella</i>	Short-cloaked Moth
<i>Calliteara pudibunda</i>	Pale Tussock	<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>	Rush Veneer
<i>Cameraria ohridella</i>	Horse-chestnut Leaf-miner	<i>Notocelia cynosbatella</i>	Black Cloak
<i>Campaea margaritaria</i>	Light Emerald	<i>Notocelia roborana</i>	Summer Rose Bell
<i>Camptogramma bilineata</i>	Yellow Shell	<i>Notocelia trimaculana</i>	Triple-blotched Bell
<i>Caradrina clavipalpis</i>	Pale Mottled Willow	<i>Notocelia uddmanniana</i>	Bramble Shoot Moth
<i>Caradrina kadenii</i>	Clancy's Rustic	<i>Notocelia uddmanniana</i>	Bramble-shoot Moth
<i>Caradrina morpheus</i>	Mottled Rustic	<i>Notodonta dromedarius</i>	Iron Prominent
<i>Carcina quercana</i>	Long-horned Flat-body	<i>Notodonta ziczac</i>	Pebble Prominent
<i>Catarhoe cuculata</i>	Royal Mantle	<i>Nymphula nitidulata</i>	Beautiful China-mark

<i>Catocala fraxini</i>	Clifden Nonpareil	<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>	Flame Shoulder
<i>Catocala nupta</i>	Red Underwing	<i>Oegoconia</i> spp.	Four-spotted Obscure agg
<i>Catoptria falsella</i>	Chequered Grass-veneer	<i>Oligia latruncula</i>	Tawny Marbled Minor
<i>Celypha lacunana</i>	Common Marble	<i>Oligia strigilis</i>	Marbled Minor
<i>Celypha lacunana</i>	Common Marble	<i>Operophtera brumata</i>	Winter Moth
<i>Celypha striana</i>	Barred Marble	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	Brimstone Moth
<i>Cerastis rubricosa</i>	Red Chestnut	<i>Orgyia antiqua</i>	Vapourer
<i>Cerura vinula</i>	Puss Moth	<i>Orthosia cerasi</i>	Common Quaker
<i>Charanyca trigrammica</i>	Treble Lines	<i>Orthosia cruda</i>	Small Quaker
<i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>	Latticed Heath	<i>Orthosia gothica</i>	Hebrew Character
<i>Chloroclysta siterata</i>	Red-green Carpet	<i>Orthosia gracilis</i>	Powdered Quaker
<i>Chloroclystis v-ata</i>	V-pug	<i>Orthosia incerta</i>	Clouded Drab
<i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>	Garden Grass-veneer	<i>Ourapteryx sambucaria</i>	Swallow-tailed Moth
<i>Cidaria fulvata</i>	Barred Yellow	<i>Pandemis cerasana</i>	Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix
<i>Cilix glaucata</i>	Chinese Character	<i>Pandemis corylana</i>	Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix
<i>Cirrhia icteritia</i>	Sallow	<i>Pandemis herperana</i>	Dark Fruit-tree Tortrix
<i>Clepsis consimilana</i>	Rufous Tortrix = Privet Tortrix	<i>Panolis flammea</i>	Pine Beauty
<i>Clostera curtula</i>	Chocolate-tip	<i>Parapopynx stratiotata</i>	Ringed China Mark
<i>Cnephasia asseclana</i>	Flax Tortrix	<i>Parastichtis suspecta</i>	Suspected
<i>Cnephasia</i> spp.	Grey Tortrix agg	<i>Paraswammerdeamia nebulella</i>	Hawthorn Ermine
<i>Cochylichroa atricapitana</i>	Black-headed Conch =Black-fronted Straw	<i>Parornix anglicella</i>	Hawthorn Slender
<i>Cochylimorpha straminea</i>	Straw Conch	<i>Pasiphila rectangulata</i>	Green Pug
<i>Cochylis hybridella</i>	White-bodied Conch	<i>Patania ruralis</i>	Mother of Pearl
<i>Cochylis molliculana</i>	Ox-tongue Conch	<i>Pediasia contaminella</i>	Waste-grass Veneer
<i>Coleophora alcyonipennella</i>	Clover Case-bearer	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>	Willow Beauty
<i>Coleophora mayrella</i>	Meadow Case-bearer	<i>Perizoma albulata</i>	Grass Rivulet
<i>Coleophora</i> spp	Case-bearer agg	<i>Perizoma flavofasciata</i>	Sandy Carpet
<i>Colocasia coryli</i>	Nut-tree Tussock	<i>Pexicopia malvella</i>	Hollyhock Seed Moth
<i>Colostygia pectinataria</i>	Green Carpet	<i>Phalera bucephala</i>	Buff-tip
<i>Colotois pennaria</i>	Feathered Thorn	<i>Pheosia tremula</i>	Swallow Prominent
<i>Conistra ligula</i>	Dark Chestnut	<i>Philereme transversata</i>	Dark Umber
<i>Conistra rubiginea</i>	Dotted Chestnut	<i>Philereme transversata</i>	Dark Umber
<i>Conistra vaccinii</i>	Chestnut	<i>Philereme vetulata</i>	Brown Scallop
<i>Cosmia trapezina</i>	Dun-bar	<i>Phlogophora meticulosa</i>	Angle Shades

<i>Cosmorhoe ocellata</i>	Purple Bar	<i>Photedes minima</i>	Small Dotted Buff
<i>Crambus lathonniellus</i>	Hook-streaked Grass-veneer	<i>Phragmatobia fuliginosa</i>	Ruby Tiger
<i>Crambus pascuella</i>	Inlaid Grass-veneer	<i>Phtheochroa rugosana</i>	Rugged Bryony Beauty
<i>Crambus perlella</i>	Satin Grass-veneer	<i>Phycita roborella</i>	Dotted Oak Knot-horn
<i>Craniophora ligustri</i>	Coronet	<i>Phyllonorycter coryli</i>	Nut Leaf Blister Moth
<i>Crassa unitella</i>	Golden-brown Tubic	<i>Piniphila bifasciana</i>	Pine Marble
<i>Crocallis elinguaris</i>	Scalloped Oak	<i>Plagodis dolabraria</i>	Scorched Wing
<i>Cryphia algae</i>	Tree-lichen Beauty	<i>Platytes alpinella</i>	Hook-tipped Grass-veneer
<i>Cydalima perspectalis</i>	Box-tree Moth	<i>Platytes cerussella</i>	Little Grass-veneer
<i>Cydia pomonella</i>	Codling Moth	<i>Plemyria rubiginata</i>	Blue-bordered Carpet
<i>Cydia splendana</i>	Marbled Piercer	<i>Plusia festucae</i>	Gold Spot
<i>Deilephila elpenor</i>	Elephant Hawk-moth	<i>Plutella porrectella</i>	Grey-streaked Diamond-back
<i>Deilephila porcellus</i>	Small Elephant Hawk-moth	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	Diamond-back Moth
<i>Diachrysia chrysitis</i>	Burnished Brass	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	Diamondback
<i>Diaphora mendica</i>	Muslin Moth	<i>Poecilocampa populi</i>	December Moth
<i>Diarsia rubi</i>	Small Square-spot	<i>Prays fraxinella</i>	Ash Bud Moth
<i>Dichrorampha plumbana</i>	Lead-coloured Drill	<i>Pseudargyrotoza conwagana</i>	Yellow-spot Tortrix
<i>Ditula angustiorana</i>	Red-barred Tortrix	<i>Pseudatemelia/Agnoea flavifrontella</i>	Yellow-headed Tubic
<i>Diurnea fagella</i>	March Tubic = Early Reveller	<i>Pseudoips prasinana</i>	Green Silver-lines
<i>Donacaula forficella</i>	Pale Water Veneer	<i>Pterophorus pentadactyla</i>	White Plume
<i>Drepana falcataria</i>	Pebble Hook-tip	<i>Pterostoma palpina</i>	Pale Prominent
<i>Dyseriocrania subpurpurella</i>	Common Oak Purple	<i>Ptilodon capucina</i>	Coxcomb Prominent
<i>Dysstroma truncata</i>	Common Marbled Carpet	<i>Ptilodon cucullina</i>	Maple Prominent
<i>Earias clorana</i>	Cream-bordered Green Pea	<i>Pyralis farinalis</i>	Meal Moth
<i>Earophila badiata</i>	Shoulder Stripe	<i>Pyrasuta aurata</i>	Small Purple and Gold
<i>Ectropis crepuscularia</i>	Engrailed	<i>Pyrausta despicata</i>	Straw-barred Pearl
<i>Eilema complana</i>	Scarce Footman	<i>Pyrausta purpuralis</i>	Common Purple and Gold
<i>Eilema griseola</i>	Dingy Footman	<i>Pyrrhia umbra</i>	Bordered Sallow
<i>Eilema lurideola</i>	Common Footman	<i>Recurvaria nanella</i>	Brindled Groundling = Lesser Bud Moth
<i>Eilema sororcula</i>	Orange Footman	<i>Rhizedra lutosa</i>	Large Wainscot
<i>Elachista albifrontella</i>	White-headed Dwarf	<i>Rhodometra sacraria</i>	Vestal
<i>Elachista argentella</i>	Swan-feather Dwarf = Silver Grass-miner	<i>Rhopobota naevana</i>	Holly Tortrix
<i>Elachista canapennella</i>	Little Dwarf = Common Grass Miner	<i>Rhyacionia buoliana</i>	Pine Shoot
<i>Elophila nymphaeata</i>	Brown China Mark	<i>Rhyacionia pinivorana</i>	Spotted Shoot

<i>Emmelina monodactyla</i>	Common Plume	<i>Rivula sericealis</i>	Straw Dot
<i>Endotricha flammealis</i>	Rosy Tabby	<i>Rusina ferruginea</i>	Brown Rustic
<i>Endrosis sarcitrella</i>	White-shouldered House Moth	<i>Scoliopteryx libatrix</i>	Herald
<i>Ennomos alniaria</i>	Canary-shouldered Thorn	<i>Scoparia ambigualis</i>	Common Grey
<i>Ephestia woodiella</i>	False Cacao Moth = Blushed Knot-horn)	<i>Scopula imitaria</i>	Small Blood-vein
<i>Epiblema cynosbatella</i>	Yellow-faced Bell	<i>Scrobipalpa ocellatella</i>	Beet Moth
<i>Epiblema foenella</i>	White-footed Bell	<i>Scythropia crataegella</i>	Hawthorn Moth
<i>Epinotia abbreviana</i>	Brown Elm Bell	<i>Selenia dentaria</i>	Early Thorn
<i>Epinotia bilunana</i>	Crescent Bell	<i>Selenia tetralunaria</i>	Purple Thorn
<i>Epinotia immundana</i>	Common Birch Bell	<i>Sideridis rivularis</i>	Campion
<i>Epinotia nisella</i>	Grey Poplar Bell	<i>Sitochroa verticalis</i>	Lesser Pearl
<i>Epione repandaria</i>	Bordered Beauty	<i>Smerinthus ocellata</i>	Eyed Hawk-moth
<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	Light Brown Apple Moth	<i>Sphinx ligustri</i>	Privet Hawk-moth
<i>Epirrhoe alternata</i>	Common Carpet	<i>Sphinx pinastri</i>	Pine Hawk-moth
<i>Epirrita spp</i>	November Moth agg	<i>Spilonota ocellana</i>	Bud Moth
<i>Erannis defoliaria</i>	Mottled Umber	<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>	White Ermine
<i>Eremobia ochroleuca</i>	Dusky Sallow	<i>Spilosoma lutea</i>	Buff Ermine
<i>Esperia sulphurella</i>	Sulphur Tubic	<i>Stenoptilia pterodactyla</i>	Brown Plume
<i>Ethmia dodecea</i>	Dotted Ermel	<i>Subacronicta megacephala</i>	Poplar Grey
<i>Euclidia glyphica</i>	Burnet Companion	<i>Sunira circellaris</i>	Brick
<i>Eucosma cana</i>	Hoary Belle	<i>Swammerdamia caesiella</i>	Birch Ermine
<i>Eucosma cana</i>	Hoary Bell	<i>Syndemis musculana</i>	Dark-barred Tortrix
<i>Eucosma conterminana</i>	Pale Lettuce Bell	<i>Tethea ocularis</i>	Figure-of-eighty Moth
<i>Eucosma hohenwartiana</i>	Common Knapweed Tortrix	<i>Thalpophila matura</i>	Straw Underwing
<i>Eucosma obumbratana</i>	Two-coloured Bell	<i>Thera britannica</i>	Spruce Carpet
<i>Eudonia angustea</i>	Narrow-winged Grey	<i>Thera obeliscata</i>	Grey Pine Carpet
<i>Eudonia lacustrata</i>	Little Grey	<i>Theria primaria</i>	Early Moth
<i>Eudonia mercurella</i>	Small Grey	<i>Tholera decimalis</i>	Feathered Gothic
<i>Eulamprotes wilkella</i>	Painted Neb	<i>Tiliacea aurago</i>	Barred Sallow
<i>Eupithecia abbreviata</i>	Brindled Pug	<i>Tiliacea citrargo</i>	Orange Sallow
<i>Eupithecia assimilata</i>	Currant Pug	<i>Timandra comae</i>	Blood Vein
<i>Eupithecia centaureata</i>	Lime Speck Pug	<i>Tinea pellionella</i>	Case-bearing Clothes-moth
<i>Eupithecia dodoneata</i>	Oak-tree Pug	<i>Tinea trinotella</i>	Bird's-nest Moth
<i>Eupithecia exigua</i>	Mottled Pug	<i>Tischeria ekebladella</i>	Oak Carl = Oak Blotch-miner
<i>Eupithecia indigata</i>	Ochraceous Pug	<i>Tortrix viridana</i>	Green Oak Tortrix
<i>Eupithecia phoeniceata</i>	Cypress Pug	<i>Triodia sylvina</i>	Orange Swift
<i>Eupithecia subfuscata</i>	Grey Pug	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	Cinnabar
<i>Eupithecia vulgata</i>	Common Pug	<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>	Rusty-dot Pearl

<i>Euplagia quadripunctaria</i>	Jersey Tiger	<i>Udea olivalis</i>	Olive Pearl = Garden Pearl
<i>Euproctis chrysorrhoea</i>	Brown-tail	<i>Udea prunalis</i>	Dusky Pearl
<i>Euproctis similis</i>	Yellow-tail	<i>Watsonalla binaria</i>	Oak Hook-tip
<i>Eupsilia transversa</i>	Satellite	<i>Xanthia togata</i>	Pink-barred Sallow
<i>Euthrix potatoria</i>	Drinker	<i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>	Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet
<i>Euzophera pinguis</i>	Ash-bark Knot-horn	<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>	Garden Carpet
<i>Evergestis forficalis</i>	Garden Pebble	<i>Xanthorhoe montanata</i>	Silver-ground Carpet
<i>Evergestis limbata</i>	Dark-bordered Pearl	<i>Xanthorhoe spadicearia</i>	Red Twin-spot Carpet
<i>Galleria mellonella</i>	Wax Moth	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character
<i>Gandaritis pyraliata</i>	Barred Straw	<i>Xestia triangulum</i>	Double-square Spot
<i>Globia sparganii</i>	Webb's Wainscot	<i>Xestia triangulum</i>	Double Square-spot
<i>Glyphipterix simplicella</i>	Cocksfoot Moth	<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	Square-spot Rustic
<i>Gortyna flavago</i>	Frosted Orange	<i>Xylocampa areola</i>	Early Grey
<i>Griposia aprilina</i>	Marveille du Jour	<i>Yponomeuta cagnagella</i>	Spindle Ermine
<i>Gymnoscelis rufifasciata</i>	Double-striped Pug	<i>Yponomeuta evonymella</i>	Bird-cherry Ermine
<i>Gypsonoma aceriana</i>	Rosy Cloaked Shoot	<i>Yponomeuta malinellus</i>	Apple Ermine
<i>Gypsonoma dealbana</i>	Common Cloaked Shoot	<i>Yponomeuta padella</i>	Orchard Ermine
<i>Gypsonoma sociana</i>	White-cloaked Shoot	<i>Ypsolopha dentella</i>	Honeysuckle Moth
<i>Habrosyne pyritoides</i>	Buff Arches	<i>Ypsolopha scabrella</i>	Wainscot Smudge
<i>Hada plebeja</i>	Shears	<i>Zelleria hepariella</i>	Brown Ash Ermine
<i>Hadena bicruris</i>	Lychnis	<i>Zeuzera pyrina</i>	Leopard Moth
<i>Hadena compta</i>	Varied Coronet	<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>	Six-spot Burnet
<i>Hadena perplexa</i>	Tawny Shears	<i>Zygaena trifolii</i>	Five-spot Burnet

Annex IV. Comberton Axiophytes

Taxonomic names of axiophytes recorded in the periods 1970 to 1986 and 2020 to 2025, with a list of the 39 lost between the two recording periods; subspecies not separated for simplicity.

Axiophytes 1970-1986	Axiophytes 2020-2025	Axiophytes lost between 1970-1986 and 2020-2025
Ajuga reptans	Ajuga reptans	Anacamptis morio
Anacamptis morio	Anacamptis pyramidalis	Anthemis cotula
Anthemis cotula	Anthoxanthum odoratum	Artemisia absinthium
Arabidopsis thaliana	Aquilegia vulgaris	Asparagus officinalis.
Artemisia absinthium	Arabidopsis thaliana	Campanula trachelium
Asparagus officinalis	Asplenium scolopendrium	Centaureum erythraea
Blackstonia perfoliata	Asplenium trichomanes	Clinopodium nepeta
Briza media	Avenula pubescens	Epipactis helleborine
Campanula trachelium	Berula erecta	Ervilia hirsuta
Carex spicata	Betula pubescens	Galeopsis bifida
Carex sylvatica	Blackstonia perfoliata	Galium uliginosum
Centaureum erythraea	Borago officinalis	Holcus mollis
Chaenorhinum minus	Brachypodium pinnatum	Lotus tenuis
Cichorium intybus	Briza media	Milium effusum
Circaea lutetiana	Bromopsis erecta	Myosotis ramosissima
Cirsium acaule	Caltha palustris	Nymphaea alba
Cirsium eriophorum	Carduus tenuiflorus	Ononis repens
Cirsium palustre	Carex divulsa	Ononis spinosa
Clinopodium nepeta	Carex spicata	Orobancha minor
Cruciata laevipes	Carex sylvatica	Papaver dubium
Dactylorhiza fuchsii	Catapodium maritimum	Potentilla sterilis
Daphne laureola	Catapodium rigidum	Ranunculus trichophyllus
Epipactis helleborine	Centaurea debeauxii	Ribes nigrum
Ervilia hirsuta	Centaureum erythraea	Ribes rubrum
Ervum gracile	Centaureum pulchellum	Ribes uva-crispa
Euphorbia platyphyllos	Cerastium semidecandrum	Roemeria argemone
Fragaria vesca	Chaenorhinum minus	Rubus idaeus
Galeopsis bifida	Cichorium intybus	Rumex acetosella
Galium uliginosum	Circaea lutetiana	Sanicula europaea
Geranium pratense	Cirsium acaule	Saponaria officinalis
Geranium rotundifolium	Cirsium eriophorum	Schoenoplectus
Holcus mollis	Cirsium palustre	tabernaemontani
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Cochlearia danica	Senecio sylvaticus
Hypericum hirsutum	Crataegus laevigata	Senecio viscosus
Inula conyzae	Crepis biennis	Silaum silaus
Kickxia elatine	Cruciata laevipes	Stellaria holostea
Lathyrus aphaca	Dactylorhiza fuchsii	Tanacetum vulgare
Lathyrus nissolia	Daphne laureola	Valeriana officinalis
Linum catharticum	Digitalis purpurea	Vicia sativa subsp. nigra
Lithospermum officinale	Dryopteris dilatata	Viola riviniana

Lonicera periclymenum	Echium vulgare
Lotus tenuis	Elodea canadensis
Luzula campestris	Epilobium obscurum
Mentha arvensis	Ervum gracile
Milium effusum	Euphorbia amygdaloides
Myosotis ramosissima	Euphorbia platyphyllos
Neottia ovata	Festuca ovina agg.
Nymphaea alba	Ficaria verna subsp. fertilis
Ononis repens	Foeniculum vulgare
Ononis spinosa	Fragaria vesca
Ornithogalum umbellatum	Geranium lucidum
Orobancha minor	Geranium pratense
Papaver dubium	Geranium rotundifolium
Petasites hybridus	Hesperis matronalis
Picris hieracioides	Hippuris vulgaris
Polygonum rurivagum	Hyacinthoides non-scripta
Potentilla sterilis	Hypericum hirsutum
Poterium sanguisorba	Hypericum tetrapterum
Ranunculus auricomus	Inula conyzae
Ranunculus trichophyllus	Inula helenium
Rhinanthus minor	Juncus conglomeratus
Ribes nigrum	Kickxia elatine
Ribes rubrum	Lamium galeobdolon
Ribes uva-crispa	Lathyrus aphaca
Roemeria argemone	Lathyrus nissolia
Rosa arvensis	Leontodon saxatilis
Rubus idaeus	Linum catharticum
Rumex acetosella	Lithospermum officinale
Sanicula europaea	Lonicera caprifolium
Saponaria officinalis	Lonicera periclymenum
Schedonorus giganteus	Luzula campestris
Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani	Lycopsis arvensis
Scrophularia nodosa	Malva moschata
Senecio sylvaticus	Mentha arvensis
Senecio viscosus	Moehringia trinervia
Silaum silaus	Neottia ovata
Stellaria holostea	Ophioglossum vulgatum
Tanacetum vulgare	Orchis mascula
Trifolium fragiferum	Origanum vulgare
Trifolium ochroleucon	Ornithogalum umbellatum
Valeriana officinalis	Petasites hybridus
Verbascum virgatum	Picris hieracioides
Veronica anagallis-aquatica	Plantago major
Veronica polita	Poa angustifolia
Vicia sativa subsp. nigra	Poa humilis
Viola hirta	Polygonum rurivagum
Viola reichenbachiana	Populus tremula

Viola riviniana	Poterium sanguisorba
Vulpia bromoides	Ranunculus auricomus
	Raphanus raphanistrum
	Rhinanthus minor
	Rosa arvensis
	Rosa rubiginosa
	Rosa stylosa
	Sagina apetala
	Sagina maritima
	Salix purpurea
	Saxifraga tridactylites
	Schedonorus giganteus
	Schedonorus pratensis
	Schoenoplectus lacustris
	Scrophularia nodosa
	Silene noctiflora
	Sinapis alba
	Stellaria pallida
	Thalictrum minus
	Tilia platyphyllos
	Tragopogon porrifolius
	Trifolium fragiferum
	Trifolium ochroleucon
	Typha angustifolia
	Verbascum virgatum
	Verbena officinalis
	Veronica anagallis-aquatica
	Veronica officinalis
	Veronica polita
	Viola hirta
	Viola reichenbachiana
	Viola tricolor
	Viscum album
	Vulpia bromoides
