

Chequers Wood and Old Park

CA58

Reasons for designation

Chequers Wood and Old Park SSSI was originally designated in 1968 and the boundary follows land ownership parcels rather than the ecological extent of the habitat. In the years since then the city of Canterbury has expanded considerably and is now encroaching on the heathland and woodland of this area. This Wildlife Site encompasses the remaining areas of high-quality habitat around the SSSI and adds numerous features to the overall ecological value of the area; moreover, it forms a buffer zone around the SSSI, helping to protect the wildlife from disturbance and edge effects.

Rationale for site boundary

The proposed boundary includes all areas of semi-natural and otherwise relatively undisturbed habitat around the SSSI.

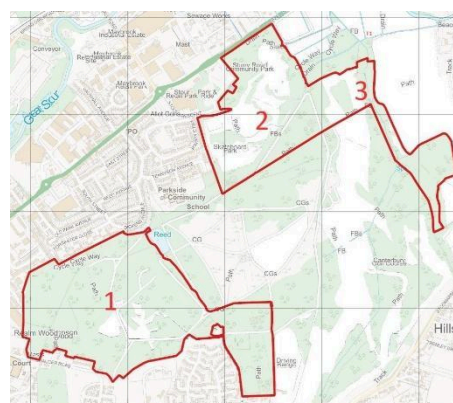
Description

CA58 should be viewed as integral to the SSSI, creating one large site. However, when considered separately, CA58 comprises three distinct areas. The largest part (1 on the plan) is the MOD land at Old Park, which is acid grassland and scrub and contains numerous species typical of this habitat, including four uncommon species of clover (*Trifolium ornithopodioides*, *Trifolium glomeratum*, *Trifolium striatum* and *Trifolium subterraneum*), Mossy Stonecrop *Crassula tillaea* and Blinks *Montia fontana*. It also contains one of the largest populations in Britain of the Nationally Rare Bedstraw Broomrape *Orobanche caryophyllacea* and hosts a good population of breeding nightingales *Luscinia megarhynchos*.

The second area (2) is Sturry Road Community Park, which is a capped and landscaped rubbish tip which has a good range of scrub, woodland and grassland, with patches of wet rushy habitat and dry, sandy acid grassland. As a recent secondary habitat, it has few axiophytes, but it does contain a large population of the nationally rare (VU) Yellow Pea *Lathyrus aphaca*.

The third area (3) is the eastern edge of the golf course, including the wet woodland along the stream and the lower part of the golf course. The woodland is high quality ancient wet woodland with county rarities such as Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium alternifolium*, which is one of the plants for which the SSSI was designated (but which is mostly outside the SSSI boundary). A small block of plantation (PAWS) adjacent to this shows clear signs of a rich ancient woodland ground flora as well as some relict tree species, including hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*. The roughs in this parcel are amongst the more species-rich acid grassland swards of the golf course.

The Wildlife Site contains in 2 Nationally Rare plants and at least 25 species of axiophyte (10 species is the recommended minimum for a Wildlife Site and 30 for a SSSI). It is also important for the Red List bird species nightingale and turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur*.



Axiophytes in CA58

Aira praecox
Anemone nemorosa
Avenula pubescens
Caltha palustris
Campanula rotundifolia
Carpinus betulus
Chrysosplenium alternifolium
Chrysosplenium oppositifolium
Dryopteris affinis

Equisetum palustre
Euphorbia amygdaloides
Galium saxatile
Galium verum
Miliium effusum
Myosotis discolor
Ornithopus perpusillus
Orobanche caryophyllacea
Poa nemoralis

Spergularia rubra
Trifolium glomeratum
Trifolium ornithopodioides
Trifolium striatum
Trifolium subterraneum
Veronica montana
Vicia sativa ssp. nigra