

**ACOMB**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:**

**Ecological Information**



**Designated Sites and Priority Habitats in the Plan Area (Acomb Parish)**

1. **Internationally Designated Sites**

1.1 The nearest European sites to the Neighbourhood Plan boundary are:

* 1.6km west from Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC
* 5.8km south west North Pennine Moors SAC
* 5.8km south west North Pennines Moor SPA
* 10.6km west from Border Mires Kielder-Butterburn SAC
* 10.7km west from Roman Wall Loughs

1.2 The Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC lies 1.6km west from the site boundary. The Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC is complex, in that maintenance of the Calaminarian grassland plant communities that form the interest features of these sites is dependent on the ongoing deposition of heavy metals such a lead and zinc, which are washed out of historic mine workings upstream of these sites. Therefore policies and projects within the neighbourhood plan are unlikely to affect this site.

1.3 The North Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and North Pennine Moors Special Protection Area lies 5.8km south west of the Neighbourhood Plan area at its nearest point. These sites are designated for a breeding bird assemblage and upland habitats including species rich grasslands. This is just within the 6km zone of influence for upland sites. There are no policies or projects within the Neighbourhood Plan which will affect the interest features of those sites buy increasing disturbance to those areas.

* 1. The other sites are well beyond the 6 to 10km zone of influence for activities that could cause recreational disturbance, and there are no other adverse effects arising from development of this nature that could cause a significant effect over these distances.
	2. A Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan concludes no likely significant effect on internationally designated sites.
1. **Nationally Designated Sites**

2.1 Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest fall within the boundaries of the Parish and Neighbourhood Plan area.

2.2 **Fallowfield Mine SSSI**. Geological SSSI Fallowfield Mine is one of the two world type localities of the very rare double carbonate mineral alstonite. While the other type locality (Brownley Hill Mine, near Alston) no longer yields the mineral, specimens can still be found from dumps at Fallowfield, even though these are now largely overgrown

and planted with trees.

2.3 **Tyne Watersmeet SSSI** is located at the confluence of the rivers North and South Tyne, is an area of diverse habitats of particular interest for its invertebrate fauna, being regarded as one of the best sites in north east England for ground beetles. The varied flora also includes some uncommon plants. The woodlands include types dominated by native species; oak *Quercus* sp., birch *Betula* sp. and wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, and others with introduced species including beech *Fagus sylvatica*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, horse-chestnut *Aesculus hipposcastanum*, grey poplar *Populus canescens* and riverside willow *Salix* spp. and alder *Alnus glutinosus* communities. The ground-flora includes the locally rare yellow star-of Bethlehem *Gagea lutea* and clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata* as well as many characteristic woodland species including dog’s mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, wood melick *Melica uniflora*, wood millet *Milium effusum* and great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica* which are locally dominant.

A periodically flooded riverside rock outcrop supports an unusual ground flora

assemblage beneath a variety of willow shrubs which includes dyer’s greenweed

*Genista tinctoria*, globeflower *Trollius europaeus* and wild basil *Clinopodium*

*vulgare*. An abandoned river terrace supports a short turf of plants, typical of river

deposits contaminated by heavy metals, with spring sandwort *Minuartia verna*, thrift *Armeria maritima* and meadow oat-grass *Avenula pratensis*.

The most significant invertebrate records are for the variety of specialised beetles and uncommon species of flies and moths. Of particular note is the community of beetles adapted to life on the alluvium and unstable sand river banks, these include several ground beetles; *Bembidion testaceum, B. monticola, Dromius notatus, .melanocephalus* and a dung beetle, *Aegialia sabuleti*. Another insect-rich habitat is the grey poplar woodland where two weevils, *Dorytomus tremula*, a nationally rare species and *D. tortrix* are found along with caterpillars of the sprawler moth *Brachiongelia sphinx*. Two hoverflies *Cheilosia antiqua* and *C. impressa*, both unusual in the north are found in herb-rich grassland. Other rare species include *Tropiphorus obtusus* a large weevil which feeds on dog’s mercury and two ground beetles, *Pterostichus cristatus* which is characteristic of mixed woodland with its main centre of distribution in North East England, and *Lebia chlorocephala*, usually a coastal species in the north, the larvae of which are parasitic on *Chrysolina polita* a leaf beetle.

1. **Priority Habitats**

UK BAP priority species and habitats were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework', published in July 2012, has succeeded the UK BAP. The UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats have been used to help draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England, as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Ancient Woodland is still present within the plan area at East Wood, Broom Park Wood Acomb Dene and along the Birkley Burn.

Woodland and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat is present to the south of Acomb House and to the south of Riding Farm.

*Designated Sites and priority habitats are shown at Figure 1. Areas of ancient woodland are shown as green with brown diagonal lines. Parkland is light green.*

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