

BUSHFIELD CAMP IN THE WIDER LANDSCAPE

The landscape to the south of Winchester contains a number of patches of remnant chalk grassland, the most important of which lie on the slopes of St Catherine's Hill. These chalk or calcareous grasslands support a remarkable diversity of specialist plants. The rich chalk grassland flora in turn supports a number of specialist chalk downland insects, most characteristic of these are the chalk downland butterflies.

Cutting through the downland landscape is the chalk river valley of the River Itchen. The Itchen is internationally important for wildlife which is dependent upon its clear, swiftly flowing spring fed water

Planning Policy Context

The remaining patches of chalk grasslands around Winchester have been designated as Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These are locally or nationally designated wildlife sites which are protected by planning policy. The River Itchen is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive. This infers special levels of protection on the River both through planning policy and UK legislation.

The Winchester City 'Core Strategy' has a policy for biodiversity that says that the Council will:

"support development which maintains, protects and enhances biodiversity across the District, delivering a net gain in biodiversity".

In particular the policy requires the protection of designated wildlife sites. The policy also seeks to maintain a network of wildlife sites across the Winchester District and to conserve priority habitats and species identified in the District's Biodiversity Action Plan



Wildlife in the local landscape

The chalk downland landscape around Winchester is important for a range of declining and threatened wildlife. Of particular importance are the chalk grassland butterflies such as the Chalkhill blue, Small blue, Dingy skipper and Grizzled skipper. Chalk downlands are also important for several birds including Yellow hammer, Linnet and Skylark. The chalk landscape also supports many mammals of wildlife importance including Hedgehog, Badger, Harvest mouse and the Bats – Serotine, Daubenton's, Noctule, Common pipistrelle and Soprano pipistrelle.

