

Parish  
Biodiversity  
Audit 2022

# Little Torrington



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## Introduction

**As part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project -Conservation Communities - the original parish audits completed in 2015 have been updated, recognising the new biodiversity information that has been generated by the individuals and groups that have participated since it began.**

Little Torrington parish is located in Torridge district and is 1,268 hectares. The village of Little Torrington is located in the centre of the parish. Taddiport, which is the other main village, is to the North of Little Torrington, alongside the River Torridge. The parish is bordered along its North-eastern boundary by the River Torridge and along its Western boundary by a tributary of the River Torridge and the Tarka trail.

Much of the land use of Little Torrington was found to be agriculturally improved grassland for silage production or cattle grazing. There were some areas of species poor semi-improved grasslands for sheep grazing as well as areas of rush pasture and possible areas of Culm grassland. There were some areas of arable land and conifer plantation.

Little Torrington parish is an important area for Lowland mixed deciduous woodland. There were found 15 Ancient woodland sites within the parish, some of which still had ancient, semi-natural woodland present including a Site of Special Scientific Interest: Huntshaw wood.

Other wildlife features that occurred within the parish include the following: traditional orchards; wet woodland; scrub woodland; species-rich hedges with mature/veteran trees; species-rich hedgebanks; species rich road verges; semi-improved grasslands; buffer strips/margins around arable and improved fields some of which are in agricultural schemes. Little Torrington churchyard had some species-rich semi-improved grassland and notable lime trees and many lichens.

Old farm buildings and houses/barns throughout the parish provided habitat for swallows, barn owls and bats (all recorded within the parish). Hazel dormouse has been recorded within the parish as has otter and freshwater pearl mussel on the River Torridge.

The Tarka trail runs along the western boundary of the parish and footpaths run from Little Torrington into the surrounding countryside and from Taddiport along the River Torridge and to Great Torrington Common. Little Torrington parish falls within the North Devon Biosphere Reserve. Biosphere Reserves are places with world-class environments that are designated by the United Nations to promote and demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature. They are places where conservation and sustainable development go hand in hand.

<http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk>

The Leper fields were found in the North of the parish by the River Torridge in Taddiport. These two strips or 'straps' are remaining examples of medieval land culture, once the norm in England, now very rarely seen. The two strips are part of what were originally seven small fields preserved for cultivation by the lepers whose hospital was located in Taddiport circa 1300 AD. Over 500 years later, the Tithe Map of 1838 illustrates clearly that the seven strips were still in use.

*Most of the information used to create this report and land use map was secured from aerial photograph interpretation together with historical data collected with access permission.*

*Occasionally vantage points within the parish would have been used to help to map habitats and establish land use.*

*The fact that potential and confirmed wildlife-rich land is mapped does not imply any right of access and does not change any existing rights or use of the land. Key species and habitats listed in the Devon and North Devon Biosphere Reserve Biodiversity Action Plans are indicated in bold italic text throughout the report.*

## Designated / Non-designated sites

### Designated statutory/non-statutory sites

Within Little Torrington parish there is 1 Site of Special Scientific Interest and 15 Ancient Woodland Sites.

Site Name	Habitat Description	Status
Huntshaw Wood	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SSSI
KENNICKS WOODS	Ancient & Semi- Natural Woodland Ancient Replanted Woodland	ASNW PAWS
SERVIS WOOD	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Ancient Replanted Woodland	ASNW PAWS
FRIZENHAM WOOD	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	PAWS
WEEK BOTTOM WOOD	Ancient Replanted Woodland	PAWS
VINNEY COPSE	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Ancient Replanted Woodland	ASNW PAWS

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** these are notified by Natural England because of their plants, animals or geological features (the latter are geological SSSIs or gSSSI). Natural England needs to be consulted before any operations likely to damage the special interest are undertaken. SSSI is a statutory designation with legal implications.

**Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI):** Ancient Woodland is a term applied to woodlands which have existed from at least medieval times to the present day without ever having been cleared for uses other than wood or timber production. A convenient date used to separate ancient and secondary woodland is about the year 1600. In special circumstances semi-natural woods of post-1600 but pre-1900 origin are also included. The Devon Ancient Woodland Inventory was prepared in 1986 by the Nature Conservancy Council. There are two types of ancient woodland, both of which should be treated equally in terms of the protection afforded to ancient woodland in Planning Policy Statement note nine (PPS9):

**Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW):** where the stands are composed predominantly of trees and shrubs native to the site that do not obviously originate from planting. The stands may have been managed by coppicing or pollarding in the past, or the tree and shrub layer may have grown up by natural regeneration.

**Plantations on ancient woodland sites (or PAWS, also known as ancient replanted woodland):** areas of ancient woodland where the former native tree cover has been felled and replaced by planted stock, most commonly of a species not native to the site. These will include conifers such as Norway spruce or Corsican pine, but also broadleaves such as sycamore or sweet chestnut.

**Lowland mixed deciduous woodland** is on the North Devon Biosphere Biodiversity Action Plan and is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland includes woodland growing on the full range of soil conditions, from very acidic to base-rich, and takes in most seminatural woodland in southern and eastern England, and in parts of lowland

Wales and Scotland. It occurs largely within enclosed landscapes, usually on sites with well-defined boundaries, at relatively low altitudes, although altitude is not a defining feature.

Many are ancient woods and they include the classic examples of ancient woodland studied by Rackham (1980) and Peterken (1981) in East Anglia and the East Midlands. The woods tend to be small, less than 20 ha. Often there is evidence of past coppicing, particularly on moderately acid to base-rich soils; on very acid sands the type may be represented by former wood-pastures of oak and birch.

There is great variety in the species composition of the canopy layer and the ground flora. *Quercus robur* is generally the commoner oak (although *Quercus petraea* may be abundant locally) and may occur with virtually all combinations of other locally native tree species. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland may form a mosaic with other woodland types, including patches of beech woodlands and small wet areas. Rides and edges may grade into grassland and scrub types.

There are no precise data on the total extent of lowland mixed deciduous woodland in the UK, but in the late 1980s the Nature Conservancy Council estimated the total extent of this type to be about 250,000ha. There is however no doubt that the area of this priority type on ancient woodland sites has declined in area by clearance, overgrazing and replanting with non-native species, by about 30-40% over the last 50 years.

**DBRC is currently working on an update to the AWI which will be released in the new year.**

**The project page can be found here:**  
<https://www.dbrc.org.uk/projects-surveys/current-projects-and-surveys/#AWI>

**Unimproved grassland** Flower-rich meadows and pastures (or unimproved grasslands) are a habitat of conservation concern in Devon and are listed on the Devon and UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Unimproved neutral grassland habitat has undergone a huge decline in the 20th century, almost entirely due to changing agricultural practice. It is estimated that by 1984 in lowland England and Wales, semi-natural grassland had declined by 97% over the previous 50 years to approximately 0.2 million ha.

Unimproved grassland is often very flower-rich and as a result of this attracts an abundance of butterflies and other invertebrates. The rich insect life in turn attracts bats such as the greater horseshoe bat and birds such as the green woodpecker and skylark.

**Parkland and wood-pasture** Parklands and wood pasture are habitats listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve Biodiversity Action Plan. The parklands and wood pastures of Devon are ancient places, some of which date back to mediaeval times or even further.

The main interest of parklands and wood pastures are the trees - often several centuries old and mainly oak, but also beech, ash and other long-lived species. It is thought that the oak supports more species of organism than any other tree in Britain. The parkland trees may provide habitat for invertebrates, lichens, and mosses and fungi. Dead and fallen limbs of trees are the habitat to a specialised invertebrate fauna which feed on decaying wood. Mammals, such as bats may roost in old trees and a variety of birds use parklands and wood pastures for nesting and feeding.



*Unimproved grassland*

**Wet woodland is a UK and Devon Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.** Wet woodland occurs on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils, usually with alder, birch and willows as the predominant tree species, but sometimes including ash, oak, pine and beech on the drier riparian areas. It is found on floodplains, as successional habitat on fens, mires and bogs, along streams and hillside flushes, and in peaty hollows. These woodlands occur on a range of soil types including nutrient-rich mineral and acid, nutrient-poor organic ones.

Wet woodland supports a rich lichen flora as well as a rich invertebrate flora. Such an abundance of insect food attracts a rich assemblage of breeding birds including the uncommon willow tit. Wet woodland may also provide lying up areas for otters and suitable habitat for dormice.



## Other habitats

### Species-rich hedges

Species rich hedges are listed on the North Devon Biosphere Reserve Biodiversity Action Plan, Devon Biodiversity Action Plan and UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Species rich hedges were found to be a wildlife feature of Little Torrington parish. During the parish visit in 2015 a 'species-rich' hedge was recorded as being one that has eight or more woody species in a 30 metre length.

Hedgerows are often an essential corridor for the movement of wildlife and may support many animals and plants. Berries provide an important food source for birds, and flowers and are an important nectar source for butterflies. Hedgerows and hedgebanks represent continuity as features in the landscape and provide a significant wildlife resource at a time when the fields themselves are being more intensively used. Most of the hedges that occurred in Little Torrington parish were a mixture of medieval and 18th and 19th century hedges. with oak (some veteran), blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel and ash being the main trees but also holly, field rose, birch, willow and beech were recorded. The location of the hedge within the landscape gives an indication of the age. A helpful explanation can be found here <https://devonhedges.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Interactive-Distinctive-Hedge-Map-Devon.pdf>



*Hedge west of Five Lane End*





*Species rich hedgebank near Five Lane End.*

## **Cemetery/churchyard**

Churchyards can often hold unimproved flower-rich grassland which has been protected from chemicals and ploughing, and can provide habitat for a wide range of species including bats, birds, insects, reptiles and mammals.

Having areas designated for less frequent mowing can allow longer grasses and stands of wild flowers to flourish. This not only looks attractive but it can also provide cover and food sources for birds and insects.

Little Torrington Churchyard had some areas of semi-improved grassland with nice flora, some of which have been left uncut to flower. Species recorded included: cats ear, self heal, common sorrell, Yorkshire fog, barren strawberry, germander speedwell, mosses, daisy, bent, cocksfoot, ribwort plantain, red clover, creeping cinquefoil, creeping buttercup, primroses, ground ivy, wood false brome and perennial rye grass.

Trees recorded included: cedar, cypress, holly, 2 yews, beech, pine, cherry and 2 nice sized limes. There is a stone wall which is good for invertebrates and old hedge bank dominated by hazel with occasional ash and dog's mercury, wood sorrel and wood false brome also present. The church and gravestones are good for lichens.



## Public footpaths

Public footpaths are also often areas which are good for wildlife. For example, a footpath runs from the village hall along a nice ride towards Monkspark with a species rich hedge and nice bank flora.

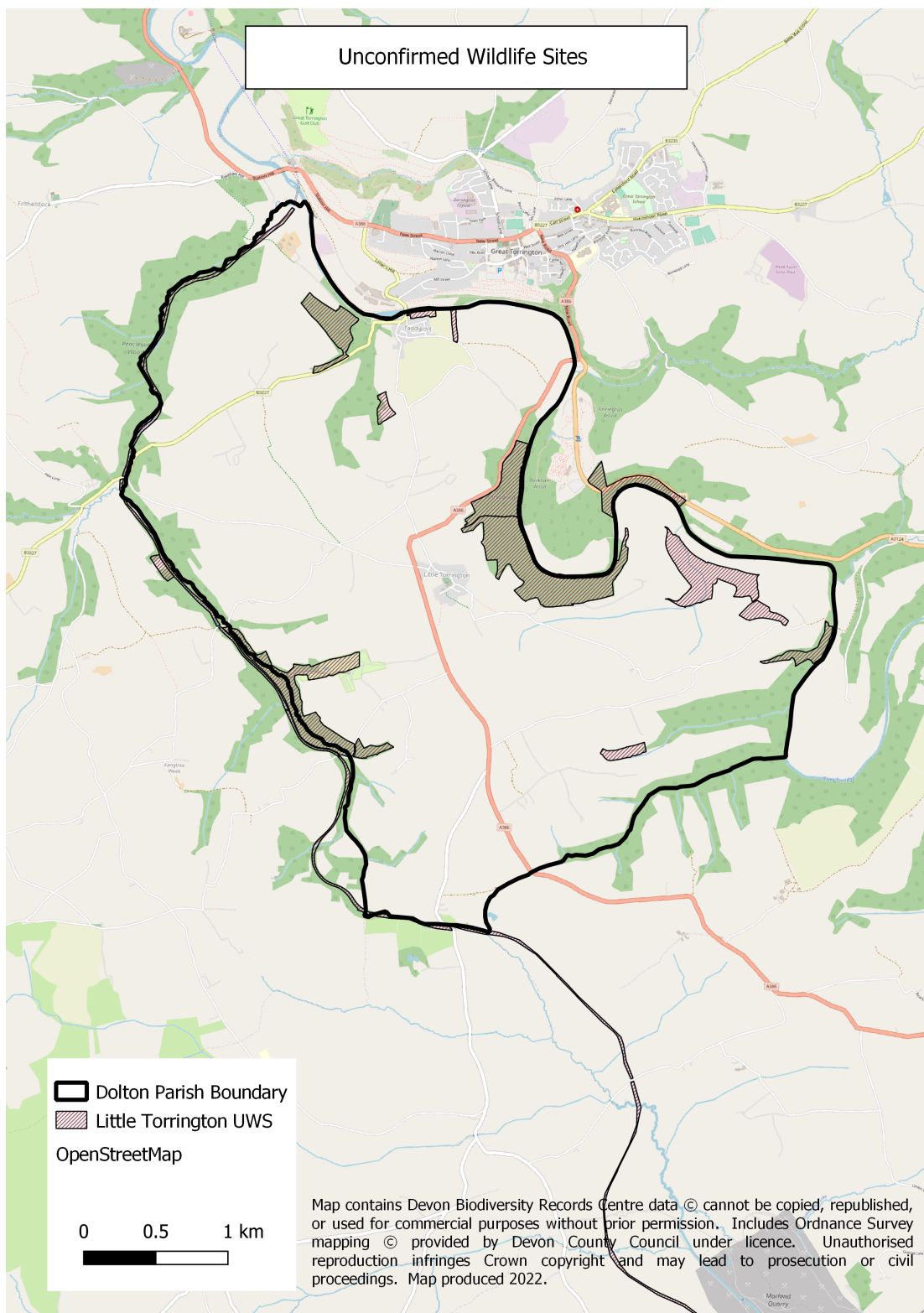
Species recorded included: dog's mercury, wood aven, field rose, soft shield fern, clevers, yellow archangel, elder, holly, ramsons, yorkshire fog, germander speedwell, blackthorn, hawthorn, tutsan, lesser stitchwort, foxglove, creeping soft grass, wood false brome, willow herb, ivy, violet, polypody, wood sage, mosses, scaly male fern, wall pennywort, hogweed, creeping buttercup, bracken, campion, ground ivy, hart's tongue fern, herb robert, sycamore, hazel, oak, sycamore, holly, ash.



# Unconfirmed wildlife sites

There are 16 Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites in Little Torrington parish.

Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites (UWS): these are sites identified as having possible interest but not fully surveyed. Some of these sites will be areas of significant wildlife interest. The UWS dataset may also contain Proposed County Wildlife Sites (pCWS): these are usually sites that have been surveyed but are awaiting consideration from the CWS Designation Panel, or sites that have been surveyed at an unfavourable time of year and are awaiting a re-survey.



## Types of habitat found in the parish

**Traditional Orchards:** Some orchards were identified during the aerial photo interpretation of this parish audit. Some of these may be managed in a traditional way.

Traditional orchards are listed on the North Devon Biosphere Reserve Biodiversity Action Plan and Devon Biodiversity Action Plan.

Traditional orchards have great cultural and landscape importance and can be really valuable habitats for a wide range of species from fungi and lichens, through to insects and other invertebrates, to birds and mammals. As there is no herbicide use in most old orchards, the range of species will be even greater.

The trees themselves play host to a variety of mosses, lichens and often mistletoe. The old trees can be fantastic for hole-nesting birds. The large amount of deadwood in the trees provides an important habitat for insects and fungi including some very rare ones. For example, the Noble Chafer, *Gnorimus nobilis*, is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority beetle associated with old orchards.

Fruit and insects available in old orchards, provide food for birds and mammals. Birds such as woodpeckers (green and great-spotted), nuthatches, tree creepers and tits may be seen on tree trunks and hollow branches. Fieldfares, starlings, redwings, thrushes, blackbirds and jays will be feeding on the fruit (on or off the tree). Orchards are also home to a number of declining bird species, including tree sparrow and spotted flycatcher.

If it has escaped sprays and fertilisers, and particularly if traditional management such as a hay cut or grazing has been kept up, the ground beneath can be covered with wild flowers such as cowslips, daisies, knapweed and trefoils.

Losses of traditional orchards have been severe in recent decades, with estimates ranging from 40 per cent to 95 per cent loss. Orchards have been grubbed up to make way for other crops or for urban development.



**Culm grassland:** Some areas of potential Culm grassland were identified during the aerial photo interpretation of this parish audit.

Culm grassland is listed in the North Devon Biosphere Biodiversity Action Plan, Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (Rhôs pasture) and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (purple moor-grass and rush-pasture). Culm grassland is characterised by purple moor-grass, as well as sharp-flowered rush, and various flowering species such as devil's-bit scabious, meadow thistle, heath spotted orchid, water mint and round-leaved sundew. Culm grassland may support the rare marsh fritillary butterfly and narrow-bordered bee hawkmoth, as well as the barn owl and curlew.

## Veteran Trees

English Nature (now Natural England) have defined veteran trees as: “trees that are of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of their age, size or condition”. In relation to oak it has been taken that trees with a diameter of more than:

- 1.0metre are potentially interesting
- 1.5metre are valuable in terms of conservation
- 2.00metre are truly ancient.

Veteran trees will be at least as big as these measurements:

- 1 metre - Hawthorn, blackthorn
- 2.5 metres - Field maple, rowan, yew, birch, holly
- 3 metres - Oak, ash, scot's pine, alder
- 4.5 metres - Sycamore, limes, chestnuts, elms, poplars, beech, willows, pines, non-native trees.

It has been estimated that Britain may be home to around 80% of Europe's ancient trees. Veteran trees are large old trees found in wood-pasture and parkland, but also in a number of other locations: ancient yews in churchyards; mature oaks in hedgerows; black poplars along stream-sides; and many noble trees in ancient woodlands. Ancient trees support particularly rich assemblages of invertebrates, fungi, mosses and lichens. Several species of bat may use hollow trees as roosting sites and birds such as tree creepers and woodpeckers feed on the insects living in the bark. Insects such as stag beetles and hornets are associated with old trees.

**Arable land:** There are a number of rare arable weeds associated with spring cereals and winter stubble including cornflower, corn marigold, shepherd's-needle and weasel's-snout. Arable land in Britain has lost most of its arable plants over the last 50 years; several species have become extinct and there are many more that are now rare.

Changes in arable farming practice are thought to be responsible for the losses. Technology that allowed more effective seed-cleaning caused an initial decline, but herbicide development was catastrophic for many plants. Nowadays, arable plants are generally confined to the strip along the field edge, which provides a home to many animals, invertebrates and plants

## Nature recovery networks

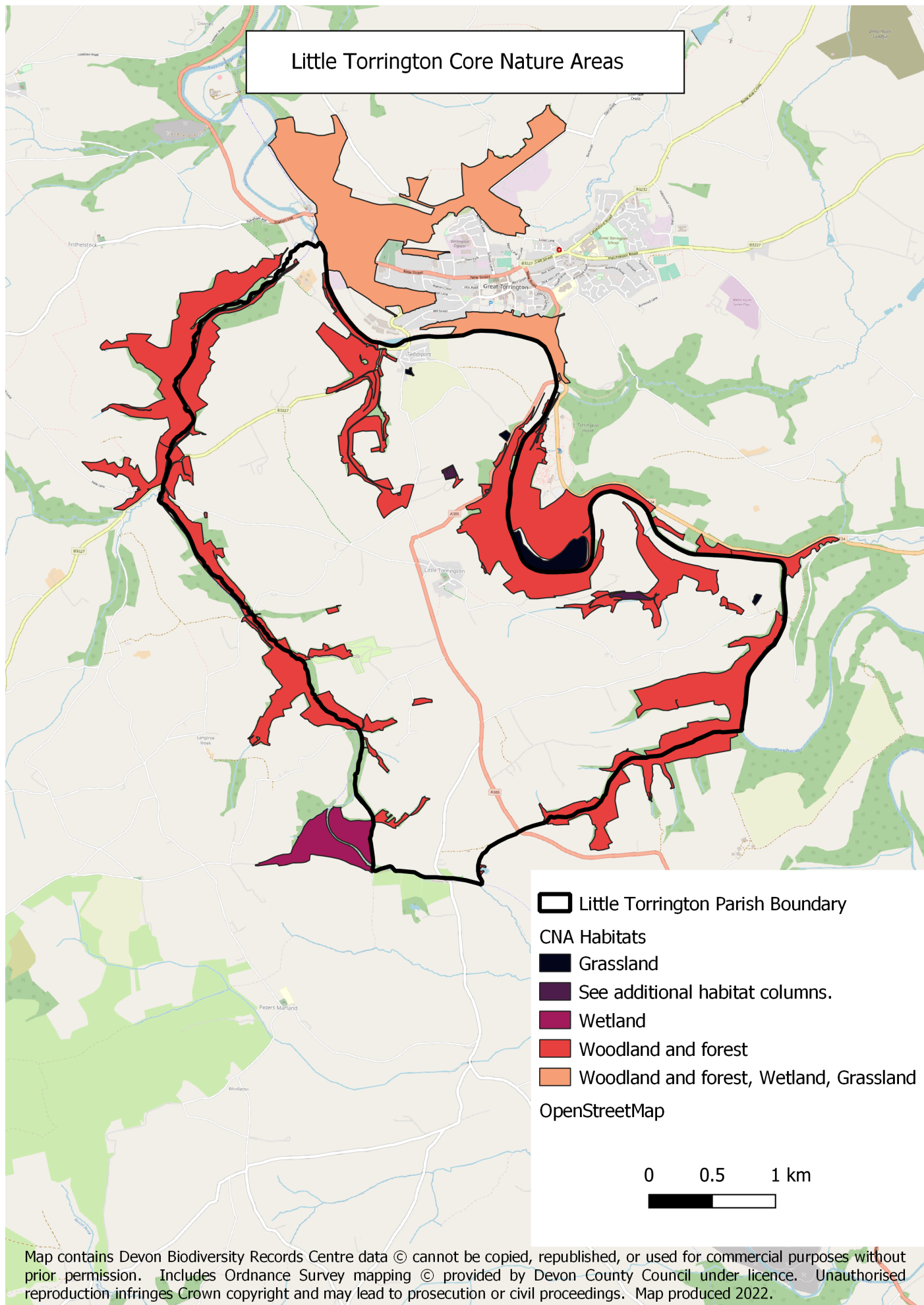
Details of the nature recovery networks can be found here - <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/our-work/nature-recovery-network/>

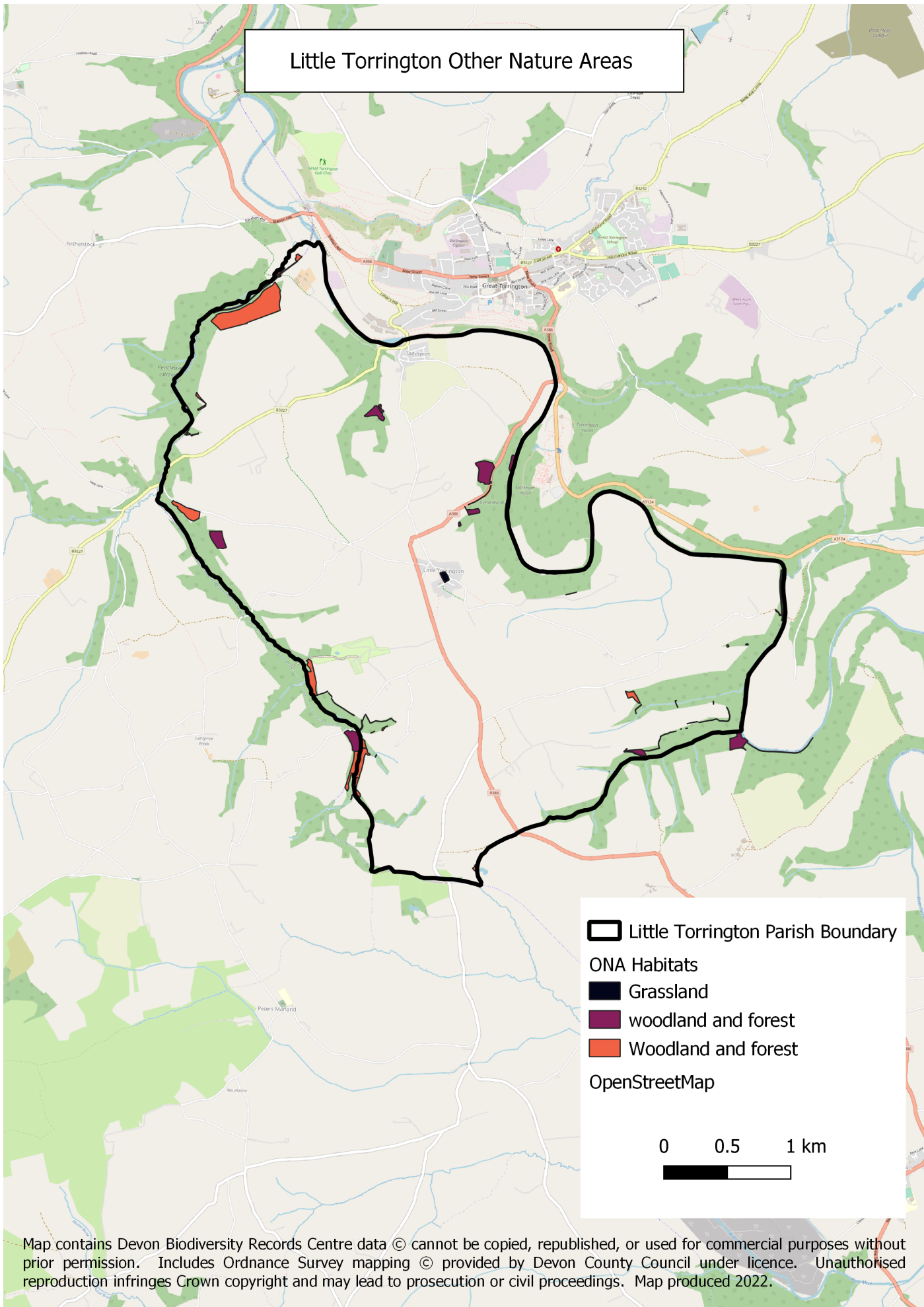
The following two maps show Core Nature Areas as well as Other Nature Areas along with their associated habitats.

**Core Nature Areas** are our richest wildlife habitats. They include Priority Habitats (excluding hedges and arable margins) and statutory and non-statutory designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves and Ancient semi-natural woodlands.

Habitats are grouped together and mapped as Broad Habitats (grasslands, woodlands, wetlands etc).

**Other Nature Areas** are existing habitats which have wildlife value (or potential value) but which are not Priority Habitats or designated sites. These currently include: Other Sites of Wildlife Importance, parks, urban greenspaces, some churchyards, National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves and non-Priority Habitats on the National Forest Inventory. Other habitats will be included in future iterations when data is available.



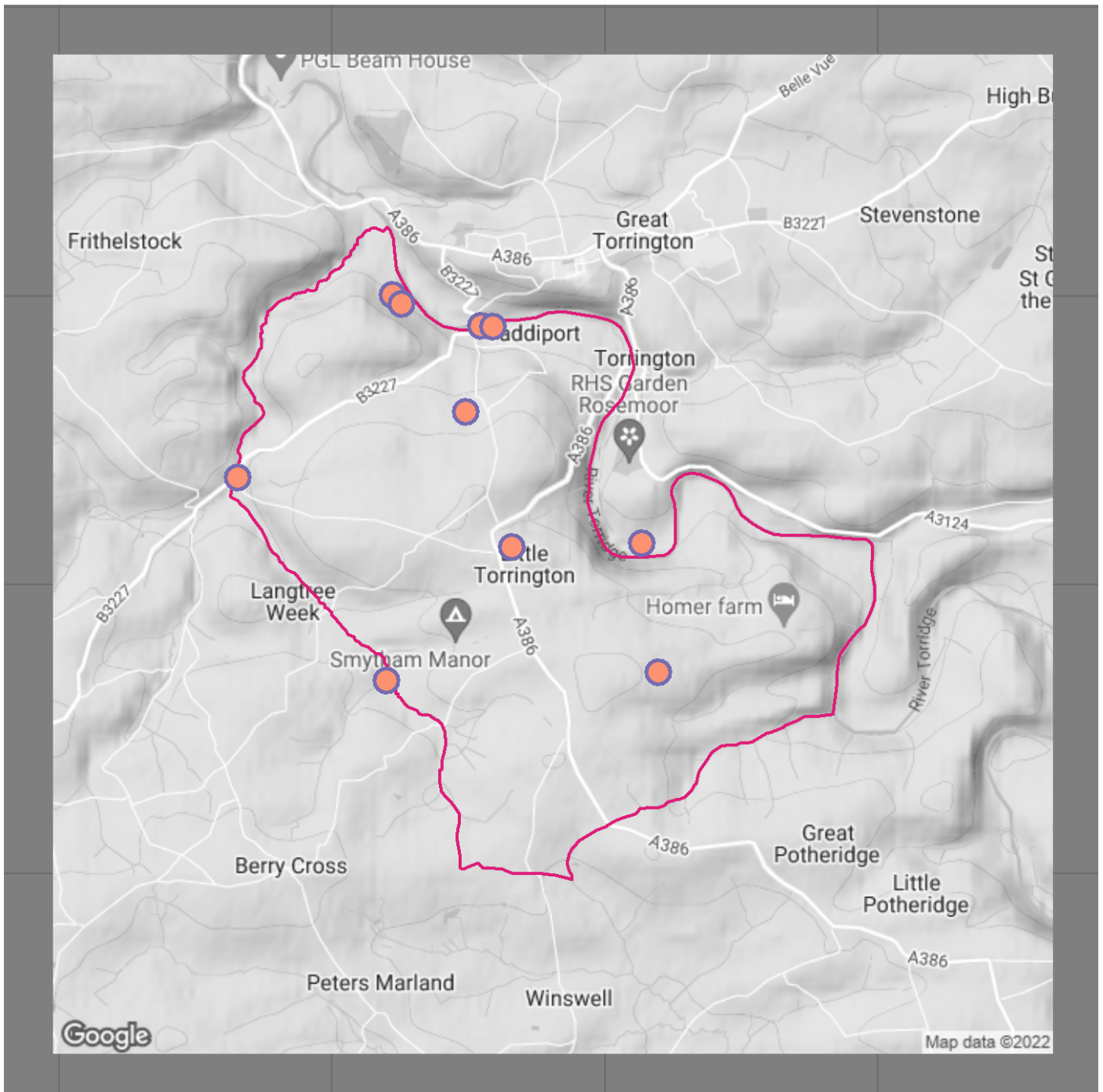


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## Species found in the parish

The map below shows the location of recording within the parish over the lifetime of the Conservation Communities project



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## Species records

Listed below are the species records held by DBRC for the parish of Little Torrington. The list is broken into three tables. The first table holds Section 41 species, the second Priority species, and the third common species. The table shows the number of records we hold per species in our database (1968 - 2022). As well as the number of records per species collected over the period of this project (2020 - 2022).

### Species of principle importance found in the parish.

These are the species that normally are the most likely to affect development and are taken into account when planning.

Taxon Group	Records added during project
terrestrial mammal	1

Summary of section 41 species recorded during project.

 Records added during Conservation Communities

Taxon Group	Common name	Scientific	Other Status	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
bird	Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	UKBAP (P); Amber		2	2
bird	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	UKBAP (P); Red		7	7
bird	Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	Bern II, UKBAP (P); Red		1	1
bird	Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	Bern II, UKBAP (P); Red		1	1
terrestrial mammal	Eurasian Otter	Lutra lutra	WCA 5; EC IIa, IIIa; Bern II, UKBAP (P); DBAP	1	6	7
terrestrial mammal	Lesser Horseshoe Bat	Rhinolophus hipposideros	WCA 5, 6; EC IIa, IVa; Bern II; Bonn II, UKBAP (P)		2	2

## Priority species found in the parish.

These are the species that have been identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)

Taxon Group	Records added during project
flowering plant	1
insect-moth	1
insect - true fly	1
3 New priority species records for the parish	

Summary of priority species recorded during project.

- Records added during Conservation Communities
- New records added during Conservation Communities

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific	Status	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
bird	Barn Owl	Tyto alba	WCA 1, 9, Bern II, DBAP		1	1
bird	Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	Bern II		13	13
bird	Dunnock	Prunella modularis	Bern II, Amber		11	11
bird	Fieldfare	Turdus pilaris	WCA 1, Red		1	1
bird	Goldcrest	Regulus regulus	Bern II		5	5
bird	Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	Bern II		12	12
bird	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos major	Bern II		5	5
bird	Great Tit	Parus major	Bern II		12	12
bird	Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis	Bern II		1	1
bird	Greenfinch	Chloris chloris	Bern II, Red		9	9
bird	Grey Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea	Bern II, Amber		2	2
bird	Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	Red		3	3
bird	House Martin	Delichon urbicum	Bern II, Red		1	1
bird	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	Amber		1	1
bird	Meadow Pipit	Anthus pratensis	Bern II, Amber		1	1
bird	Mistle Thrush	Turdus viscivorus	Red		2	2
bird	Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	Amber		2	2
bird	Nuthatch	Sitta europaea	Bern II		8	8
bird	Pied Flycatcher	Ficedula hypoleuca	Amber		1	1
bird	Pied/White Wagtail	Motacilla alba	Bern II		2	2
bird	Robin	Erithacus rubecula	Bern II		13	13

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific	Status	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
bird	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Amber		4	4
bird	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	Bern II		4	4
bird	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	UKBAP (P); Red		1	1
bird	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	UKBAP (P); Amber		8	8
bird	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Amber		1	1
bird	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red		3	3
bird	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber		2	2
bird	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Bern II		6	6
bird	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Bern II		1	1
bird	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber		13	13
bird	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Bern II, Amber		9	9
flowering plant	Himalayan Balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	WCA 9	1		1
insect - moth	Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Migrant	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Conisternum decipiens</i>	NS	1		1
terrestrial mammal	a Bat	<i>Myotis</i>	WCA 5, 6, EC IVa; Bern II; Bonn II		2	2

## Common species

All common species found in the parish.

Taxon Group	Records added during project
fern	1
flowering plant	27
insect - beetle	1
insect - moth	1
insect - true bug	1
insect - true fly	37
68 New species records for Little Torrington	

Summary of common species recorded during project.

 New records added during Conservation Communities

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
bird	Blackbird	Turdus merula		14	14
bird	Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla		8	8
bird	Buzzard	Buteo buteo		7	7
bird	Carrion Crow	Corvus corone		8	8
bird	Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs		11	11
bird	Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita		5	5
bird	Coal Tit	Parus ater		6	6
bird	Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto		4	4
bird	Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo		1	1
bird	Garden Warbler	Sylvia borin		1	1
bird	Jackdaw	Corvus monedula		7	7
bird	Jay	Garrulus glandarius		5	5

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
bird	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		1	1
bird	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		3	3
bird	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		4	4
bird	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>		3	3
bird	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		7	7
fern	Hartstongue	<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Bush Vetch	<i>Vicia sepium</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Common Bird's-foot-Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	2		2
flowering plant	Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Dog-rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Field Scabious	<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Germander Speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Great Mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Hemlock Water-dropwort	<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Knotgrass	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Lesser Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Meadow Vetchling	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Perennial Sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Pignut	<i>Conopodium majus</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Pineappleweed	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Pink Purslane	<i>Claytonia sibirica</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Ramsons	<i>Allium ursinum</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Square-stalked Willowherb	<i>Epilobium tetragonum</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Tutsan	<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Water Figwort	<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	1		1
flowering plant	Yellow Rattle	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	1		1
horsetail	Field horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	1		1
insect - beetle (Coleoptera)	Common Red Soldier Beetle	<i>Rhagonycha fulva</i>	1		1
insect - moth	Dingy Footman	<i>Eilema griseola</i>	1		1
insect - true bug (Hemiptera)	Potato Capsid	<i>Closterotomus norwegicus</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Bluebottle	<i>Calliphora vicina</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Crane fly	<i>Dicranomyia didyma</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Crane fly	<i>Dicranomyia modesta</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Crane fly	<i>Limonia nubeculosa</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Crane fly	<i>Molophilus obscurus</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Crane fly	<i>Tipula couckeii</i>	1		1

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Argyra argyria</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Bibio leucopterus</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Campsicnemus curvipes</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Chirosia histricina</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Dolichocephala irrorata</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Dolichopus latilimbatus</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Euleia heraclei</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Fannia similis</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Gymnopternus metallicus</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Hebecnema vespertina</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Hilara maura</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Hilara sturmii</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Hylemya vagans</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Limnophora maculosa</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Lispe tentaculata</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Lonchoptera lutea</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Nemopoda nitidula</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Neria cibaria</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Peromyia bicolor</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Rhaphium appendiculatum</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Rhaphium caliginosum</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Spaziphora hydromyzina</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Symplecta hybrida</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Sympycnus pulicarius</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Fly	<i>Zaphne caudata</i>	1		1

<b>Taxon group</b>	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific</b>	<b>2020 to 2022</b>	<b>1968 to 2019</b>	<b>1968 to 2022</b>
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Hoverfly	<i>Cheilosia albitarsis</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Hoverfly	<i>Neoascia podagrica</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Hoverfly	<i>Sphegina clunipes</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	a Hoverfly	<i>Xylota segnis</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	Narrow-cheeked Clusterfly	<i>Pollenia angustigena</i>	1		1
insect - true fly (Diptera)	Yellow-legged Water-snipefly	<i>Atherix ibis</i>	1		1



## Some ideas for local action

**This section of the report is provided by Devon County Council (contact: [nature@devon.gov.uk](mailto:nature@devon.gov.uk)).**

A major step to knowing what you can do for your local wildlife and geology is to know what you have already got. This report will help you in this, but it is just a start. Ultimately, the protection and enhancement of the local natural environment requires the interest and enthusiasm of the local community.

There follows some initial ideas for local nature conservation action. Many of them will directly help to achieve the objectives of the habitat and species action plans contained in the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan. It is by no means an exhaustive list. As a community, you may have many more ideas for action that you would like to take forward in the coming years.

### **1 Further survey:**

This report is just a beginning. Carrying out further survey within your area will help build a better picture of the wildlife present, and of the opportunities for enhancement. Gaining a better understanding of the resource is usually a key objective of the Devon BAP's habitat and species action plans.

Specific features to survey in Little Torrington might include species-rich hedgerows and flower-rich road verges. The last two actions would directly contribute to the Species-rich hedgerow Action Plan and the Flower-rich meadows and pastures Action Plan.

One example of survey work that might usefully be undertaken would be to produce a hedgerow appraisal for your local area. Comparing the current distribution of hedges against boundary lines shown on old maps will give a clue as to how this important resource has changed over recent years. It may also highlight opportunities for restoring hedges in your area. It might also be possible to assess the condition of hedges and this may, in turn, give some ideas about improving their future management to benefit wildlife.

Survey work could be undertaken as a community group or in liaison with conservation groups active in the area.

Help to build up a picture of the state of Devon's environment by sending your wildlife records to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre <https://www.dbrc.org.uk/wildlife-sightings/> where they can be properly collated.

### **2 Influence the management of Public Open Space:**

Creating areas of more species-rich grassland will help to reduce the isolation of the remaining fragments of traditionally managed agricultural land, contributing to the Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Action Plan.

Churchyards have often received less intensive management than the surrounding land and can provide good opportunities for wildlife.

Planting up areas that are currently of little wildlife interest with new copses of native trees and shrubs will also help to attract wildlife. Suitable sites might include unused areas of playing fields, for example.

**3 Build relationships with local landowners:**

Encourage the adoption of more wildlife-friendly land management. For example, hedges which are cut only every other year will provide an autumn and winter source of nuts and berries for birds and small mammals (and can save the landowner money in management costs). The improved management of hedgerows is a key objective of the Species-rich Hedges Action Plan. If the owner is willing, why not get involved with practical management, such as traditional hedge laying or pond restoration? Devon County Council's website has some very good resources for hedge management and ideas for community involvement <https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/wildlife/habitats-and-species/hedges>

**4 Adopt a road verge:**

Many verges can have a significant value for wildlife because they have escaped the intensive management of the surrounding farmland. Ensuring such verges are managed for their wildlife is a very positive step, again contributing to the Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Action Plan.

There are, of course, obvious health and safety implications to roadside management. It is an action that would need to be undertaken in close liaison with the relevant highways authority (generally, this is the Highways Agency for motorways and trunk roads, and Devon County Council for all other roads).

**5 Wildlife gardening:**

Green up your garden! Collectively the gardens of Little Torrington represent a significant area that could be used to benefit wildlife. Large or small, you can turn your garden (or a part of it!) into a haven for wildlife. A very good source of information on wildlife gardening is the Devon Wildlife Trust web site: <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/take-action/garden-wildlife>

**6 Contact the North Devon Biosphere Reserve:**

The North Devon Biosphere reserve has a number of initiatives running to enable communities within the North Devon Biosphere Reserve to improve wildlife. On their website <https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/> you can get ideas of how to improve nature in your area including tips on wildlife gardening and details of community initiatives in your area.

**7 Japanese Knotweed:**

Not something to cherish, but it can't be ignored! Unfortunately Japanese Knotweed is present in several locations in Little Torrington. Introduced into Britain by the Victorians, Japanese Knotweed is a native of Japan, north China, Korea and Taiwan. It flourishes in Britain's mild and fertile environment and has no natural biological enemies here. Consequently, it is very invasive and can overrun large areas, replacing our native flora. It is a serious pest which can be so vigorous as to cause significant damage to buildings and roads. It is also a difficult plant to eradicate.

For these reasons Japanese Knotweed is listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as a plant that is not to be planted or otherwise introduced into the wild. In addition, all parts of the plant are considered as controlled waste under the Waste Regulations.

Fortunately, a great deal of advice (including an Environment Agency Code of Practice) is available on the Devon Knotweed Forum's web pages. You are recommended to view these at: <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/invasive-species/japanese-knotweed/>

**8 Himalayan Balsam:**

Himalayan or Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is another very invasive plant. A relative of the busy Lizzie, it is known by a wide variety of common names, including Indian balsam, jumping jack and policeman's helmet. It was introduced to Britain in 1839, but escaped from gardens and rapidly

colonised riverbanks and areas of damp ground.

Himalayan balsam grows in dense stands that suppress the growth of native grasses and other flora. In the autumn, the plants die back, leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. It is sometimes seen in gardens, either uninvited or grown deliberately, but care must be taken to ensure that it does not escape into the wild.

It is a tall, robust, annual producing clusters of purplish pink (or rarely white) helmet-shaped flowers. These are followed by seed pods that open explosively when ripe, shooting their seeds up to 7m (22ft) away. Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds.

Although Devon Biodiversity Records Centre does not hold any official records of Himalayan Balsam in Little Torrington, it is known to be widespread along rivers and water courses.

A useful leaflet on Himalayan Balsam can be viewed by following this link: <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/invasive-species/>



*Japanese Knotweed*

## Useful sources of further information

Northern Devon Nature Improvement Team [www.devonwildlifetrust.org](http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org)  
(Tel: 01392 279244)

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre [www.dbrc.org.uk/](http://www.dbrc.org.uk/) (Tel: 01392  
274128)

Devon Wildlife Trust: [www.devonwildlifetrust.org](http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org)

Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society: [www.devonbirds.org](http://www.devonbirds.org)

Natural England: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

Plantlife: [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)

RSPB: [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

The Woodland Trust: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

Butterfly Conservation <https://butterfly-conservation.org/>

Environment Agency <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

Devon Hedge Group <https://devonhedges.org/>

Forestry Commission <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission>

## Guidance

<https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/>  
<https://www.dbr.org.uk/information/sites-and-habitats/>  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions#ancient-and-veteran-trees>  
UKBAP-BAPHabitats-65-WoodPastureParkland-2011  
UKBAP-BAPHabitats-29-Lowland-Meadows  
UKBAP-BAPHabitats-56-TraditionalOrchards  
UKBAP-BAPHabitats-64-WetWoodland  
UKBAP-BAPHabitats-30-LowlandMixedDecWood  
UKBAP-BAPHabitats-02-ArableFieldMargins  
UKBAP-BAPHabitats-07-CoastFloodGrazingMar  
<https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/our-work/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network-map/>  
<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-species/>  
<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/2829ce47-1ca5-41e7-bc1a-871c1cc0b3ae>