

Nant y Cafn Industrial Estate Ecological Assessment

Introduction

The scheme is to construct 14 new businesses units over 3 sites. The Countryside and Wildlife Team were asked to provide ecological assessments of the sites.

Nant y Cafn Industrial Estate is a partly established site with business units currently occupied. It is proposed to add 4 x 1,000 sq ft business units.

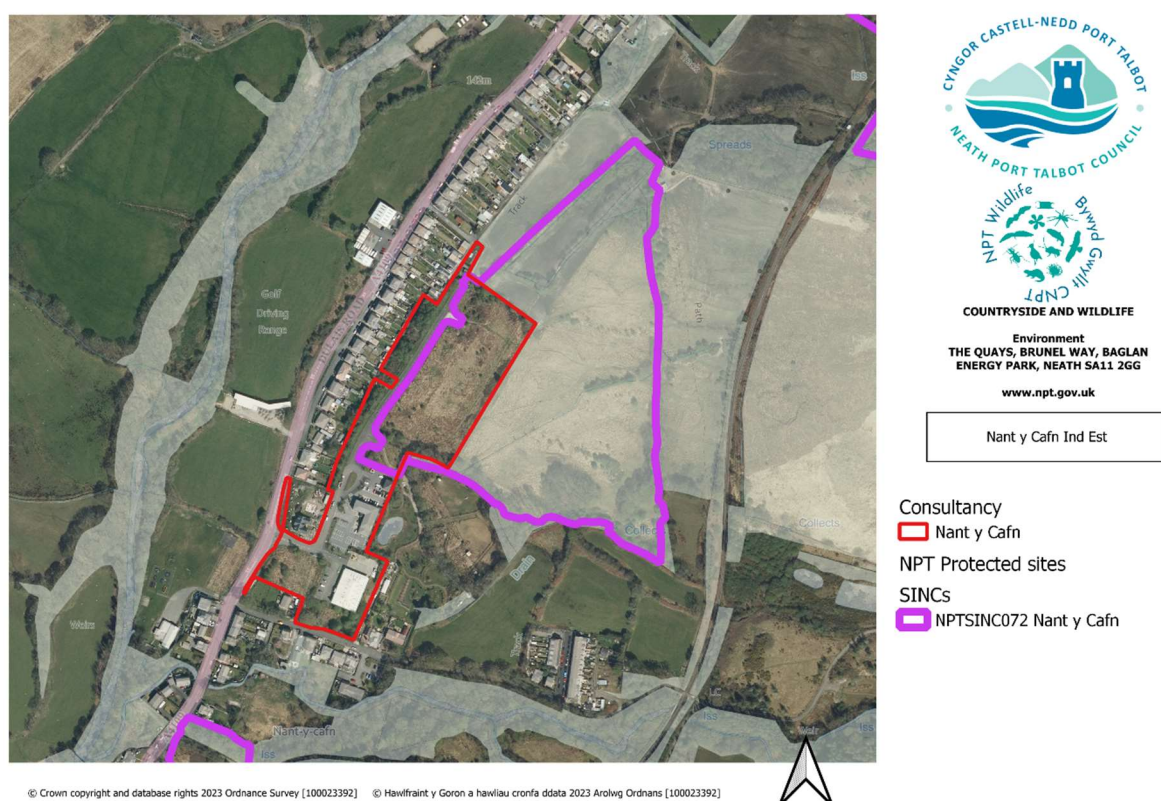


Figure 1 Site Location with SINC boundary

Assessment of the site

The site was assessed in June 2022 as part of the candidate site assessment for the replacement local development plan, and further walkover surveys in May and June 2023. A full species list is available.

Part of the site is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) (see figure 1). It is designated for lowland dry acid grassland, lowland heathland, purple moor-grass and rush pasture. It is also part of wider Marsh fritillary habitat.

The southern part of the site is mostly buildings, hardstanding and ornamental planting. In the centre of the site there is an area of tall ruderal/willow scrub (TN1), which has diminished the quality of the grassland.

The rest of the site is marshy grassland. The scrub and marshy grassland are both in the SINC area. There is some evidence of scrub encroachment from the northern end of the site.

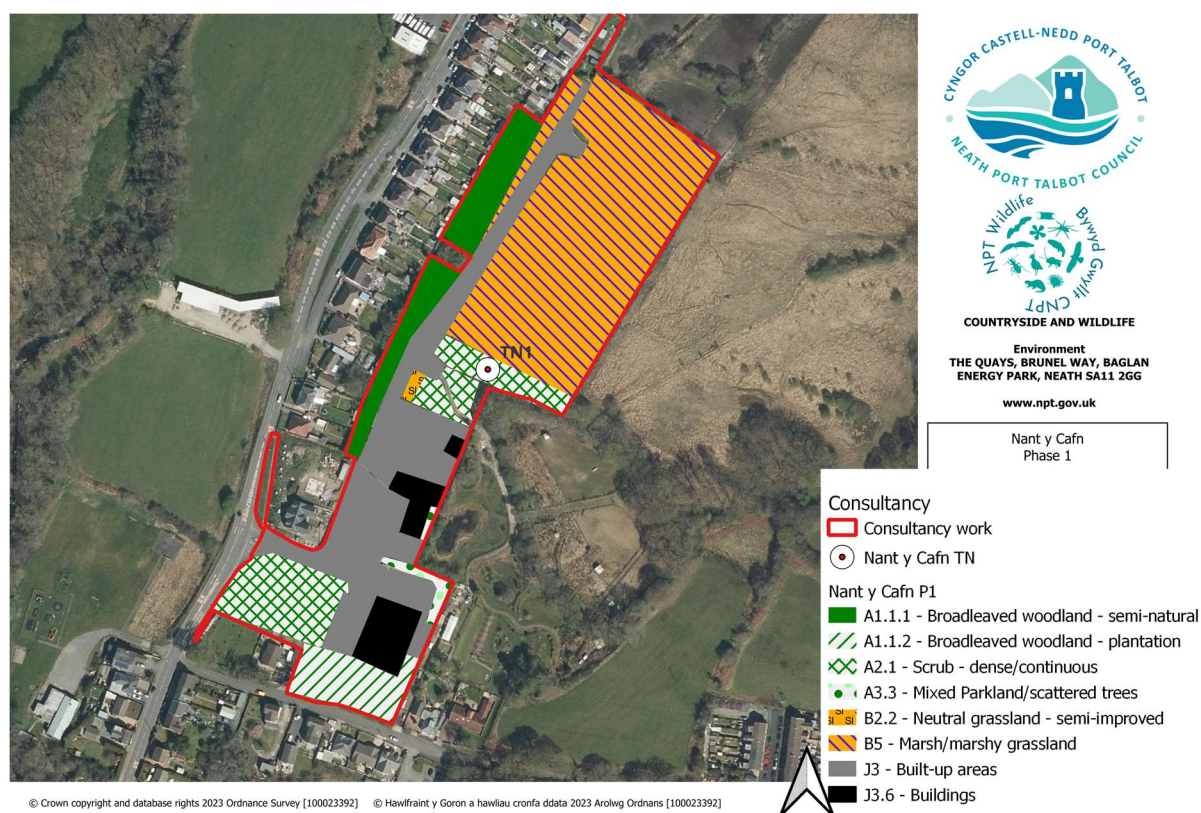


Figure 2 Phase 1

Although the central area of scrub has its own merits, it is degraded as far as the SINC designation is concerned. Any development in this area will require some form of mitigation for the loss of bird nesting habitat plus some form of enhancement.

There should be no loss of the marshy grassland. It is a priority habitat as identified in the Section 7 list of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016. It may be possible to mitigate on site for the loss of a small area by actively managing the encroaching scrub from the north and putting the remainder of the site into active management.

Marsh Fritillary Butterfly

Biodiversity Report

The Marsh fritillary is threatened in the UK and across Europe. Once widespread it is now confined to the west side of Britain and Ireland in the UK. In NPT it is known from the Amman, Swansea and Dulais Valley areas. The species exists as metapopulations, comprising groups of local populations connected by occasional dispersal. This means that they need a network of well-connected habitat. This means that surveying for them is very difficult because they may use a site one year but not the next, so it is impossible to determine that they are absent from a suitable site in an area with known populations.

Due to their rarity they have full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is not possible to get a licence for the purposes of development under this legislation.

This is a **severe constraint** on any further expansion of the Nant y Cafn Industrial Estate.

General recommendations for the site

Any mature trees to be removed should be assessed using the Treeplotter software to ascertain how they need to be replaced. The willow scrub on this site is not mature enough for this calculation but there are some other tree species which might be.

Any works to vegetation should be done outside of the nesting bird season (March – September) or be preceded by a check for nesting birds by an ecologist.

Enhancement can be provided through green infrastructure such as green roofs, and bird and bat boxes on buildings.