

Site Assessment Survey

PROJECT TITLE: Creation of New Clubhouse and Changing Facilities

SITE ADDRESS: Pontrhydyfen RFC, Oakwood Avenue, NPT, SA12 9SD

DATE: 3rd December 2025

The applicant is seeking planning consent to build a new two storey clubhouse building with changing room facilities, a central seating area with kitchen and bar, and outdoor seating area on the existing western overflow car park at Pontrhydyfen Rugby Football Club, Oakwood Avenue Playing Field, Neath Port Talbot. The new clubhouse will replace the disused shipping containers currently in place. The northern car park will also be upgraded and formalised and works will include landscaping and sustainable drainage provision. The proposed development location is centred at approximately SS 7941 9383.

An aerial image showing the development site within the context of the wider complex is provided in Appendix 1 at the end of this report. This report focuses on the land and habitats within the site boundary only.

Site Location

The proposed development site is irregular in shape and is located at the south end of Oakwood Avenue on the southern outskirts of the small village of Pontrhydyfen. The site development boundary includes the current Pontrhydyfen RFC car park which is located to the north of the playing field. The site boundary then extends south west as a strip of land which follows a tarmac path/cycle route from the car park around the north west corner of the playing field. The site boundary then extends south along the west side of the playing field and incorporates the overflow carpark and shipping containers. Along the western edge of the overflow car park is a strip of broad-leaved woodland which is inside the site boundary and will likely remain untouched through development.

Oakwood Avenue is a two lane residential road, bordered by detached and semi-detached properties. Gardens of the adjacent residential properties are located to the north and north west of the site boundary.

The site is considered to sit within a semi-rural location with other villages located across the landscape typically located along river valleys. The closest main trunk road is the A4107 Afan Valley Road which is located approximately 15m away to the east of the car

park. The A4107 links Port Talbot in the south west to the villages and valleys to the north east.

Woodland is located in all directions beyond the playing field and Pontrhydyfen village, the areas of woodland comprises of broad-leaved, mixed and commercial conifer plantations. Riparian woodland also follows the River Afan which flows north east to south west approximately 65m to the west of the proposed site at its closest point. The confluence of the River Afan and Pelenna River is located approximately 295m away to the north west.

There are no ponds apparent on an OS map within 1km of the site radius, the presence of ponds in nearby gardens and woodland areas cannot be discounted.

Desktop Study

A data search was requested from SEWBRc. The data search (LERC Reference: 0256-603) took a 1km buffer around a central point of the proposed development site.

Protected sites returned as part of the data search include:

- There are six Local - Non-statutory designated Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) within 1km of the proposed development site. Cwmavon Coal Tips SINC is the closest such site and the majority of the site is located within the SINC boundary except for the the north car park area of the site. (See figure 1. below for site location and SINC boundaries).
- There are eight sites of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) within 1km of the site. These are broadleaf woodlands comprising mainly native tree and shrub species which are believed to have been in existence for over 400 years. The ground vegetation will reflect the naturalness of these woodlands and will frequently feature species which provide clear indication of long and continued woodland cover. They will have been woodland for centuries and contribute substantially to our natural and cultural heritage. The closest such area of woodland lies approximately 86m away to the west at its closest boundary.
- There are five sites of Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site within 1km of the site. These are sites which are believed to have been continuously wooded for over 400 years. They have been replanted with native or non-native species, most commonly with conifers. They currently have a canopy cover of more than 50% non-native conifer tree species. They will have varying levels of remnant features of ASNW. The closest such area of woodland lies approximately 111mm away to the south west at its closest boundary.

- There are five NRW Priority Area (Woodland - PAWS) within 1km of the proposed development site. NRW Priority habitat areas are large scale areas which were prioritised for targeted conservation work, based on factors including the habitats within them. The closest such area of NRW Priority Area (Woodland - PAWS) is located approximately 111m away to the south west at its closest boundary.

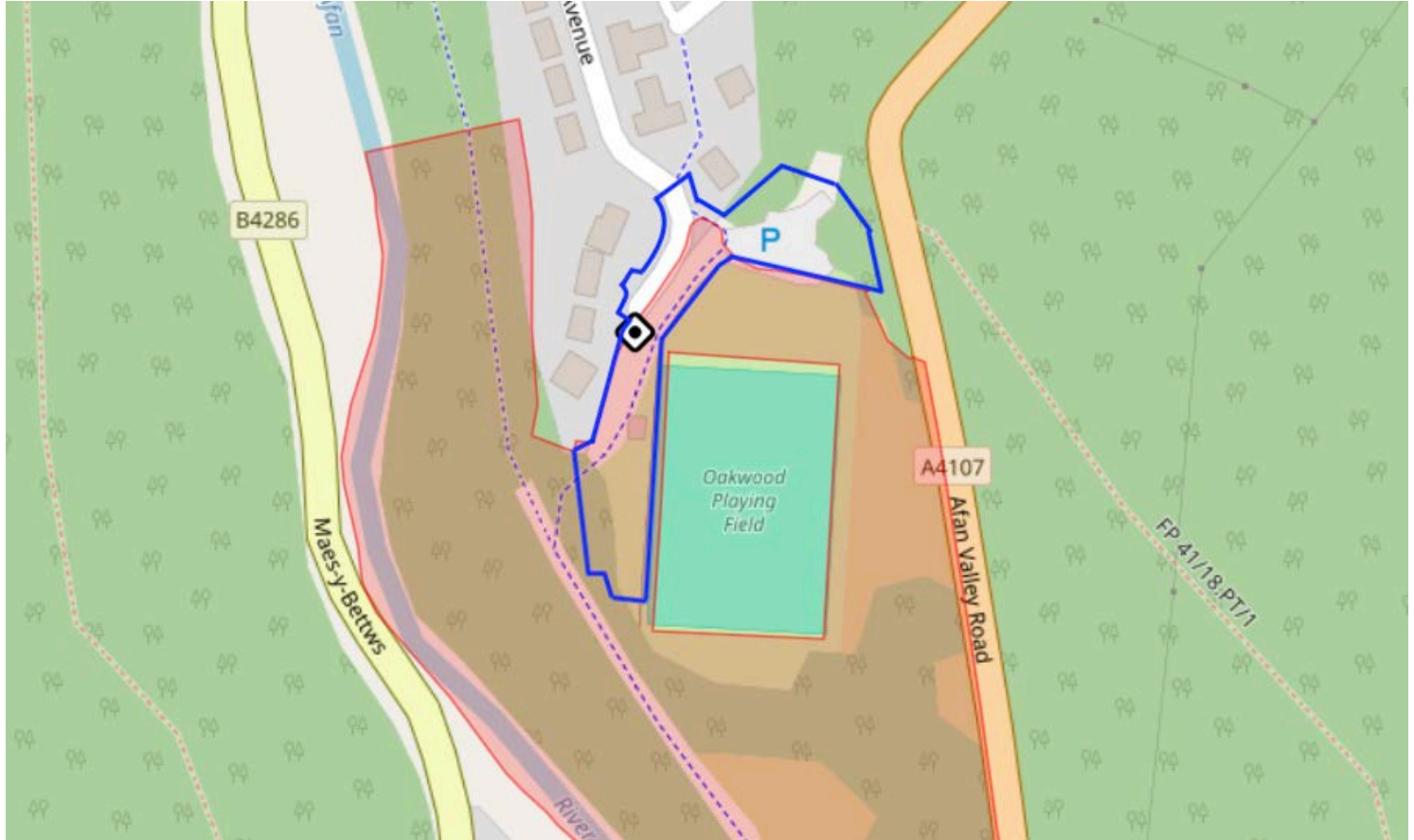


Figure 1. Proposed Development Site Boundary - Blue Line, SINC Boundary - Red.

Protected species records of note returned within 500m of the site include:

- Otter (*Lutra lutra*) - four field sign records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 80m away to the west and involved spraints being found.
- Unidentified Pipistrelle Bat sp. (*Pipistrellus sp.*) - Two foraging/commuting records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 150m away to the north.
- Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula*) - two foraging/commuting records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 243m away to the south west.

- Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) - two foraging/commuting records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 372m away to the north.
- Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) - one record was returned from the 1km data search and is located approximately 288m away to the south.
- Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica*) - three records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 321m away to the north east.
- Adder (*Vipera berus*) - six records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 383m away to the north.
- Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*). - four records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 420m away to the north.
- Birds - Species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA1.1) include; Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*).
- Birds - Species listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA 2016) include; Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*) and Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*).
- Moths - Species listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA 2016) include; Brindled Beauty (*Lycia hirtaria*), Buff Ermine (*Spilarctia luteum*), Dot (*Melanchra persicariae*), Garden Tiger (*Arctia caja*), Goat (*Cossus cossus*) and Small Square-spot (*Diarsia rubi*).
- Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) - two records were returned from the 1km data search both recorded to 1km resolution, the closest record is located approximately 251m away to the south east.
- Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) - three records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 289m away to the north east.
- Brown/Sea Trout (*Salmon trutta*) - nine records were returned from the 1km data search. The closest record is located approximately 289m away to the north east.
- European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) - one record was returned from the 1km data search and is located approximately 329m away to the north west.

Protected species records of note returned beyond 500m and within the 1km data search include:

- Bats foraging/commuting - Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).

- Mammals - Badger (*Meles meles*).
- Reptiles - Viviparous Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*)
- Birds - Species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA1.1) include; Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*), Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) and Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*).
- Birds - Species listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA 2016) include; Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), Marsh Tit (*Poecile palustris*), Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) and Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*).
- Butterflies - Species listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA 2016) include; Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*), Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria selene*).
- Moths - Species listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA 2016) include; Autumnal Rustic (*Eugnorisma glareosa*), Rustic (*Hoplodrina blanda*) and Small Phoenix (*Ecliptopera silaceata*).
- Beetles - Black Oil-beetle (*Meloe proscarabaeus*).
- Hymenoptera - Brown-banded Carder-bee (*Bombus humilis*).

Site Visit

A walkover survey of the site was completed on the **20th November 2025** by Lee Gregory of Ecological Services Ltd. The site visit was completed during late November which is outside of the optimal timeframe for undertaking such surveys. However it was still possible to draw broad conclusions to the habitats present within the development site boundary. Photographs of the site can be found in Appendix 2, a habitat map is provided in Appendix 3. **This report concentrates on the land within the proposed development site boundary only.**

The site is accessed from the south end of Oakwood Avenue via a large metal gate across the short tarmac entrance track, otherwise the site is unfenced and open to land extending beyond the site boundary. The site opens up to the east to form the northern car park which is located to the north of the Oakwood Avenue RFC playing field.

The current car park consists of **crushed tarmac hardstanding** which is mostly devoid of vegetation. Close to the north edge of the northern main car park is a **compost heap** mainly consisting of dead leaves and three stock piled mounds of crushed tarmac hardstanding. Around the edges of the car park where there is less disturbance is areas of **short perennial vegetation** with several species of rushes and sedges indicating that the car park likely holds water following heavy rainfall. Species recorded from the **short perennial vegetation** include; Annual Meadow Grass (*Poa annua*), Bird's-foot Trefoil

(*Lotus corniculatus*), Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), Field Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), Fleabane Sp. (*Erigeron* sp.), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*), Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), Sharp-fruited Rush (*Juncus acuminatus*), Silverweed (*Argentina anserina*), Slender Rush (*Juncus tenuis*), Smooth Sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), Vetch sp. (*Vicia* sp.), Water Pepper (*Persicaria hydropiper*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*).

Along the northern car park boundary with the adjacent residential property is a strip of **woody scrub** with the following species recorded; Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Buddleia (*Buddleia davidii*), Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*), Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Lonicera formosa*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Ivy (*Hedera helix*). An area of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) is located in the north east corner of the site boundary and to the north of a roll-on-off waste skip.

Along the northern and eastern edge of the car park is an unkept strip of **tall ruderal vegetation** with the following species recorded; Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Couch (*Elymus repens*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Hedge Mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*), Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), Tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*).

Along the southern edge of the car park before the land slopes down towards the playing field is a strip of mown **semi-improved grassland** with the following species recorded; Bent sp. (*Agrostis* sp.), Broad-leaved Dock, Cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), Cock's-foot, Common Mouse-ear, Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Creeping Buttercup, Creeping Cinquefoil, Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Dandelion, Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), Hedgerow Crane's-bill (*Geranium pyrenaicum*), Hedge Mustard, Knapweed, Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Prickly Sow-thistle (*Sonchus asper*), Ragwort, Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*), Ribwort Plantain, White Clover, Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*) and Yorkshire Fog.

From the south west corner of the carpark the site boundary follows a strip of mown **semi-improved grassland** which follows a **tarmac patch/cycle way** towards the south west. This grassland has a very similar species composition as the southern edge of the car park grassland. The **path/cycle way** continues south west until it is opposite the southernmost houses of Oakwood Avenue, to the west of the path the strip of land slopes up to the west and is covered in a **woody scrub**. Species recorded from the woody scrub includes; Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - saplings, Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Bramble,

Cotoneaster sp. (*Cotoneaster* sp.), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Himalayan Honeysuckle, and Holly - sapling. Between the western side of the path and the woody scrub slope is a narrow strip of **semi-improved grassland** with similar species to the other areas of grassland.

The site boundary then extends to the south and is the location of the overflow carpark which is sandwiched between the playing field to the east and a **broad-leaved woodland** strip along the western side of the car park. The overflow car park is again covered in **crushed tarmac hardstanding** with sparse **short perennial vegetation** growing around the edge with a similar species make up as the northern car park.

The **broad-leaved woodland** strip to the west of the car park is believed to part sit within the site boundary and includes the following species; Ash, Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) - dominant, Birch sp. (*Betula* sp.), Cotoneaster sp, Oak sp. (*Quercus* sp.) with some sparse Ivy growing up several of the trunks. Below the woodland is an **understory** of Bramble - dominant, Nettle and Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*). At the southern end of the overflow carpark is a wedge of tall ruderal vegetation with a similar species make up to the area in the northern car park. Along the western edge of the carpark and along the eastern edge of the woodland is a narrow strip of mown semi-improved grassland again with a similar species make up as the other areas of grassland on site.

Along the eastern side of the overflow car are located three **metal shipping containers** likely used for storage for the Rugby Club. A converted metal shipping container used for toilets is located near the eastern edge of the northern carpark. All of the shipping containers on site were sealed with no possible wildlife entry points.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) were foraging in the woody scrub along the western site boundary. Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) was seen to fly over the site and land on the playing field.

Legislation

Birds

All breeding birds are protected under schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended. Under this Act it is an offence to:

- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Enhanced protection is afforded to species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, this additional protection makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Bats

All British bats are a European protected species and are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) also protects all species of British bat and their roosting locations. British bats are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance and or obstruction of their roosting places. Barbastelle Bat (*Barbastella barbastellus*), Bechstein Bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*), Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula*), Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Greater Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and Lesser Horseshoe Bats (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) are also listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Reptiles such as the Slow-worm, Common lizard, Adder and Grass snake are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are protected from killing, injuring and sale. They are protected from killing, injuring and sale. They are also listed in section 6 of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The four widespread species of amphibian i.e. the Smooth and Palmate newts, Common frog and Common toad, are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) by Section 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This section prohibits sale of these species. Common toad is listed in section 6 of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Potential Development Impacts

Development plans are at an early stage and detailed proposals showing how the location of the club house within the western portion of the site or north car park upgrades are not available. It is thought likely that the new clubhouse building will sit entirely within the western overflow loose tarmac hardstanding car park boundary and will likely effect small areas of short perennial vegetation, semi-improved grassland and will require the removal of the shipping containers. The upgrading of the northern loose tarmac hardstanding car park will likely affect the boundary vegetation including areas of short perennial vegetation, semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal vegetation and woody scrub.

A strip of broad-leaved woodland is located along the western boundary of the site. This area of broad-leaved woodland and the immediate area surrounding the Ponrhydyfen RFC playing ground sits within designated Cwmavon Coal Tips SINC. The SINC extends outside of the site boundary to the west, east and south as illustrated in Figure 1.

Policy EN6 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan states '*Development proposals that would affect Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs), sites meeting SINC criteria or sites supporting Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) or S42 habitats or species will only be permitted where:*

- 1. They conserve and where possible enhance the natural heritage importance of the site; or*
- 2. The development could not reasonably be located elsewhere, and the benefits of the development outweigh the natural heritage importance of the site.*

Mitigation and/or compensation measures will need to be agreed where adverse effects are unavoidable.'

Potential species impacts the development works could pose are discussed below:

- The development proposals are likely to result in the loss of SINC habitat. At present much of the land proposed to be included within the development site boundary is currently poor quality habitat already in use by the public. However, regardless of the current SINC quality the relevant planning policies must be addressed. A scheme of habitat compensation in the wider RFC grounds is recommended as compensation for the SINC habitat loss.
- The western boundary broad-leaved woodland strip including Ivy up the tree trunks and bramble scrub understory, and areas of woody scrub along the north western and northern site boundaries are considered likely to be suitable for use by **nesting birds**. Any vegetation removal or work immediately adjacent to such features has potential to

disturb nesting birds during the bird nesting season of March to August inclusive. All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- The broad-leaved woodland, areas of semi-improved grassland and woody scrub appear suitable for **reptile and amphibian** use. However it should be take into consideration the overall small area of habitat to be impacted and the more suitable habitat located immediately beyond the site boundaries. The development proposals focus mainly on areas of hardstanding already within the site boundary which are unlikely to be used by reptiles. Reptile surveys are not recommended in this instance however precautionary measures must be adopted for any habitat clearance works.
- The woodland edge and tree line along the western site boundary are considered likely to be suitable for use by **foraging bats** and used as **commuting routes**. No trees loss is expected during development.
- No evidence of well used mammal paths through the site were noted during the site visit. The site is fenced around the majority of its boundaries, except the driveway entrance. The garden is likely to be used by mammals such as Badger and Hedgehog for foraging purposes on occasion only.
- Any additional external lighting, may impact on nocturnal species, such as bats and invertebrates using the site for feeding and commuting. Light spill from glazing and or security lighting could cause disturbance to such species.

Biodiversity Enhancements & Green Infrastructure Considerations

Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (version 12), paragraph 6.2.5 requires Green Infrastructure considerations to be included with all planning applications. Development proposals must detail how green infrastructure considerations which are proportionate to the scale and nature of the plans are being provided.

Green infrastructure features currently found within the site boundary are broad-leaved woodland, woody scrub, semi improved grassland, short perennial and tall ruderal vegetation. The proposed development impacts focus on the current northern car park and the western overflow car park also a connecting strip of land between the two car parks. The Western portion of the development site sits within Cwmavon Coal Tips SINC. The SINC extends outside of the development site boundary.

There will likely be some temporary disturbance of semi-improved grassland during construction works along the strip of land between the two car parks, grassland habitat is likely to re-establish quickly. Some permanent and temporary vegetation loss are likely to

be experienced with the upgrade of the northern car park and siting of the new club house.

The proposals must seek to improve the remaining habitat as part of the development proposals to increase the quality of green infrastructure and overall biodiversity value within the site. To demonstrate a biodiversity enhancement and improvement to green infrastructure a provision of a range of bird and bat boxes could provide additional habitat for such species not currently found at site. A cut and collect system would help increase the floral diversity of the currently mown semi-improved grassland located to the north and south of the playing field that is outside of the site boundary but within the ownership of the site.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Planning permission is sought to build a detached two storey clubhouse on the overflow car park to the west of Pontrhydyfen RFC playing field and to upgrade the current northern car park. The habitats to be impacted by the development proposals are small areas of semi improved grassland, woody scrub, short perennial and tall ruderal vegetation. There does not appear to be any impacts to the woodland habitat to the west of the overflow car park. The majority of the development impacts are likely to be short term in nature. Given the potential impacts of the proposed development the below mitigation measures are proposed:

- Appropriate compensation must be provided for the loss of habitat within Cwmavon Coal Tips SINC. It is recommended that a scheme of landscaping and long term management to benefit wildlife is implemented as part of the development proposals. Measures such as reduced mowing of grassland habitat, native species tree and hedgerow planting should be explored.
- The broad-leaved woodland, woody scrub and Ivy habitat has the potential to be used by nesting birds. Vegetation removal must be completed outside of the **bird nesting season of March to August inclusive**. If this is not achievable an ecologist must inspect any trees or ground vegetation with the potential for birds to be present for active birds' nests prior to works beginning. If an active nest is identified a buffer zone of at least 5 m around the nest must be observed until the chicks have fledged. Only then can the vegetation be removed. Greater buffer zones around nests may be required depending on the species and habitat the nest is within.
- A root protection zone (RPZ) must be implemented around any retained trees which lie adjacent to or within the boundary of the proposed development site. British Standard BS 5837, *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations* will be followed. Measures will include clear marking of the RPZ

to guarantee no machinery is used or digging carried out in that area. This will ensure that there is no detrimental impact to the trees and the flora or fauna they supports.

- All excavations within the site will be securely covered over if left unattended. Any excavations that have a depth in excess of 0.5m and that are left open overnight will have a means of escape left for any mammals (e.g. hedgehog) that may fall into them. A wooden board or equivalent will be left from the bottom to the top of the hole at an angle no steeper than 45°. This will allow any mammal to escape and avoid increased stress from being trapped.
- All lighting must meet recommendations in the BCT Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK document <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>
- All external lighting required as part of the development proposals will be focused / directional lighting which is hooded or cowled to prevent light spill onto retained habitats. The external lighting will be placed on a timer set to the minimum duration possible and be motion activated. The proposed amount of lighting will be kept to a minimum level and still adequate on health and safety grounds.
- Lighting has not been included in the design plans as yet but will likely will be placed along the pedestrian walkway from the car park to the clubhouse. Security lighting around the club house is also considered likely. Sensitive lighting will reduce any negative impacts to nocturnal wildlife which use the area. This is particularly important for foraging bats and invertebrates that are likely to use the site. Some examples of motion activated, solar powered sensitive lighting can be found in Appendix 4, equivalent mains powered alternatives are also available. Black-out blinds and light reducing film fitted to the glazing could also be proposed for the clubhouse to help stop light spill from glazing.
- The tree roots and woody scrub have the potential for reptile hibernation use and for breeding. **The compost heap must be carefully hand cleared outside of the reptile hibernation period of October to March inclusive.** Reptiles can still be present within the compost heap at other times of year so a precautionary approach to clearance must be undertaken.
- The clearance of grassland and scrub habitat must be undertaken in two stages as below and during the summer months of April to September inclusive to ensure reptiles are active. Alternatively, the first stage cut can be undertaken September - February to avoid bird nesting season. The second stage cut being undertaken April - September when reptiles are known to be active.

- **First Stage Cut** - All vegetation including scrub, grasses and flowers are to be cut no shorter than 150mm. Once the cuttings have been collected and removed from site the site must then be left for 24hrs.
- **Second Stage Cut** - Once all steps within the first stage cut have been undertaken the remaining vegetation can be cut to 50mm high or shorter. Cutting will look to push any resident reptiles south into adjacent habitats beyond the site boundary to the east. All cuttings must be collected and removed from site.
- The machinery to be used for cutting vegetation depends on the ground conditions and contractors. Owing to the small area of the site still to be cleared ideally hand held trimmers and or brush cutters may be suitable and the tailings hand raked and removed from site.

The Environment Act (Wales) 2016 places a duty on competent authorities such as Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The below bullet points are some simple measures that could be achieved to enhance the biodiversity of the site. It is recommended at least 2 of the below measures are implemented :

- The provision of at least one integrated bird box into the clubhouse building within the development site. Nest boxes must be located at least three metres high and avoid south facing side of the buildings to prevent overheating.
- The provision of at least one integrated bat box into the clubhouse building within the development site. Nest boxes must be located at least three metres high and be placed on south facing side of the buildings to take advantage of the heat of the sun.
- Gaps can be cut into any fencing proposed around the site to allow the movement of reptiles, hedgehogs, and small mammals across the area. 13cm x 13cm gaps will be cut every 3m along the fence line which encompass the site. If post and wire fencing is proposed for use the wire fencing must be lifted at least 20cm from ground level to allow mammals such as badger to pass through.
- The use of native locally sourced species within any soft landscaping works on the site. Suitable long term management of soft landscaping also helps to ensure spaces are beneficial to wildlife. An appropriate mowing regime of the grassland areas across the remaining site would encourage more species diversity within the sward benefiting a range of small animals and invertebrates. Long term habitat management to benefit wildlife within the site would help improve biodiversity levels.
- Japanese Knotweed was recorded within the site, a plan to eradicate the species from the site could be classed as an enhancement. An approximate location of

Japanese Knotweed is provided on the habitat map in Appendix 3. A factsheet for Japanese Knotweed is provided in Appendix 5.

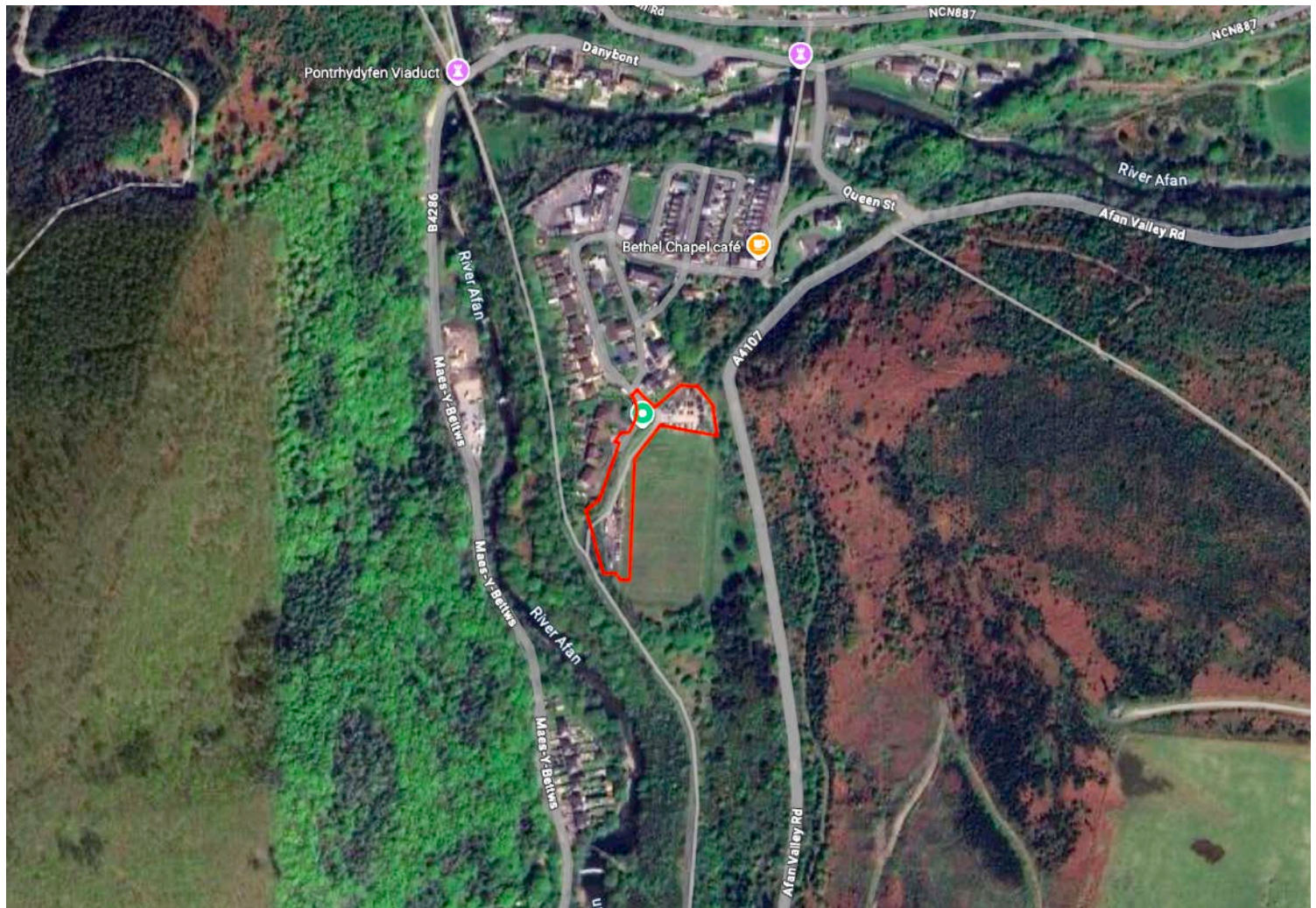
Best Wishes

**Lee Gregory
Ecologist
Ecological Services Ltd**

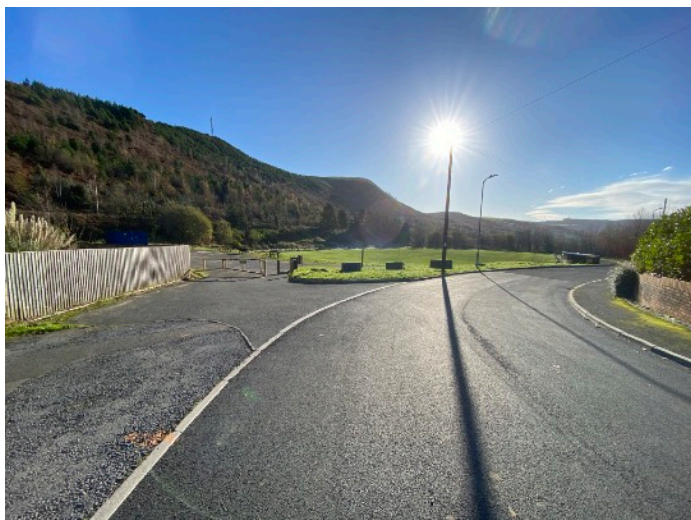
Signed: Lee Gregory

Date: December 2025

Appendix 1 - Aerial View of Site Location



Appendix 2- Site Photographs



View south towards site from the south end of Oakwood Avenue



Entrance gate into the north end of site, viewed south from the south end of Oakwood Avenue



Northern boundary of carpark, viewing east with adjacent residential dwelling to the north



Northern crushed tarmac hardstanding car parking, viewing east



View west from north east corner of carpark, showing roll-on-off waste skip and hardcore mounds



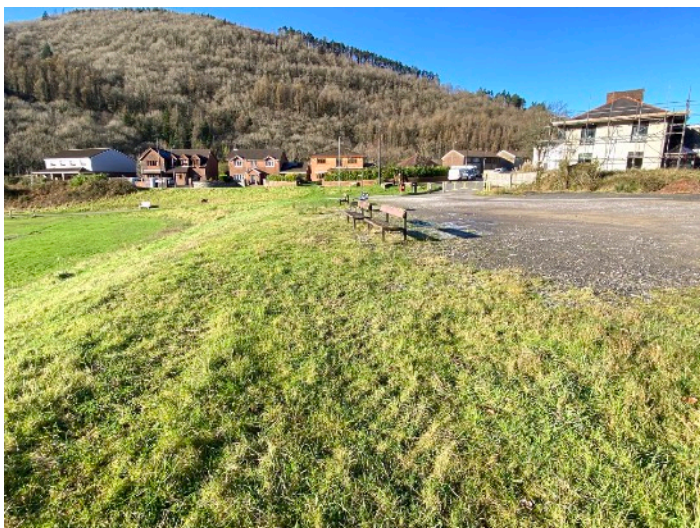
View south along eastern boundary of car park



View north along eastern boundary of car park



View west along southern edge of car park, with converted metal shipping container toilet block



Semi-improved grassland strip along southern edge of carpark, viewing west



Semi-improved grassland strip leading south west from entrance gate



Semi-improved grassland strip and tarmac path leading south west towards overflow car park



Semi-improved grassland strip with bramble and woody scrub below housing at the south end of Oakwood Avenue



Semi-improved grassland strip to the west of the playing field, viewing south



Three shipping containers located on the west side of the playing field and at the north end of the overflow car park



Three shipping containers located on the west side of the playing field and at the north end of the overflow car park



Overflow car park, viewing south with areas of short perennial vegetation around the edges



Woodland strip to the west of the overflow car park, viewing south west



Southern end of overflow car park, viewing south with bramble scrub patch beyond



Area of died back tall ruderal vegetation at south end of overflow car park, viewing west



View north across over flow carpark



Strip of mown semi-improved grassland along eastern edge of woodland strip to the west of the overflow car park



Compost heap near the north east corner of the northern car park



Stock piled crushed tarmac hardstanding in north east corner of northern car park



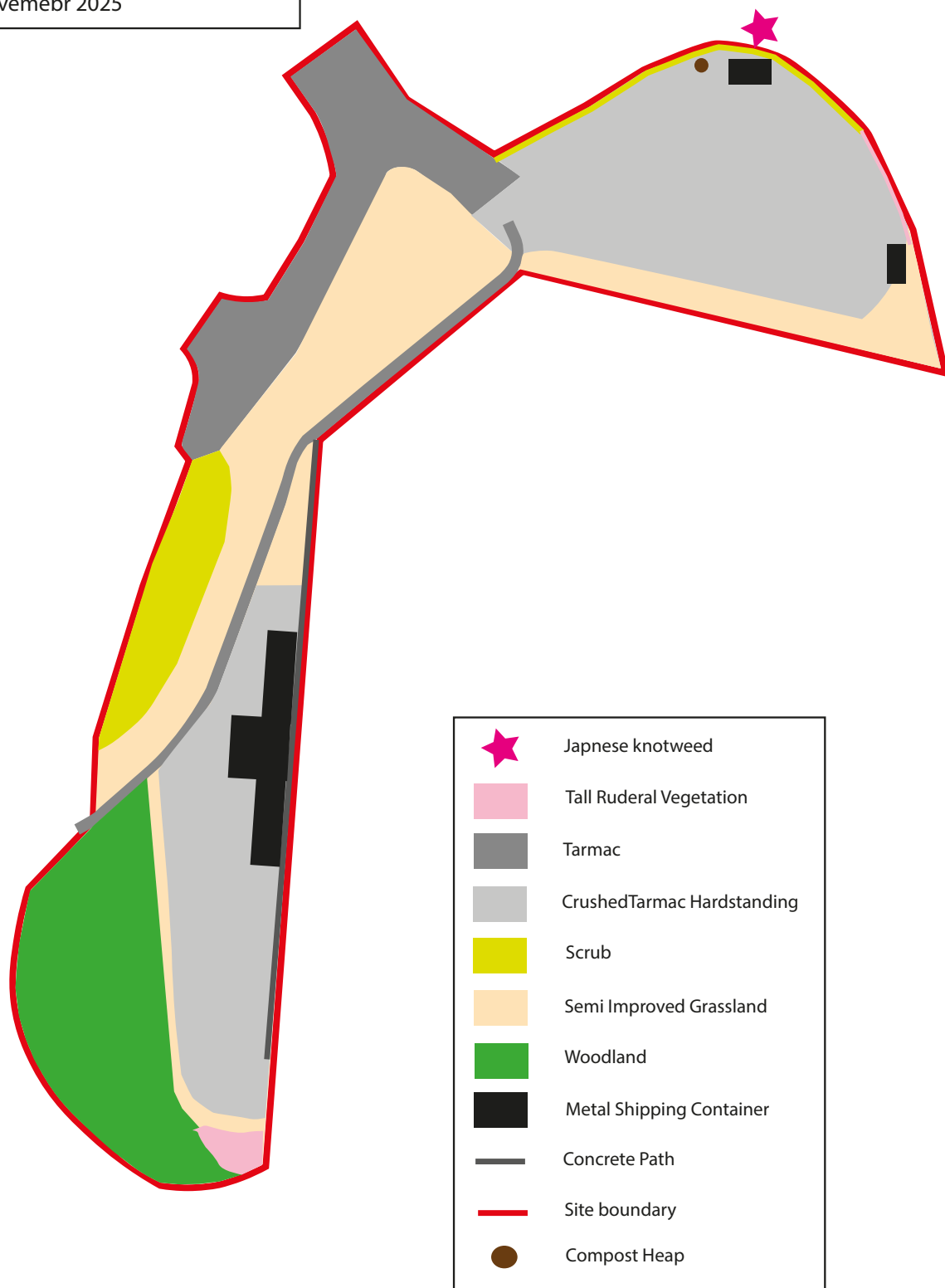
Area of Japanese Knotweed and tall ruderal vegetation in north east corner of northern car park

Appendix 3 - Habitat Map

PONTRHYDYFEN RFC, OAKWOOD
AVENUE, NEATH PORT TALBOT

Habitat Map

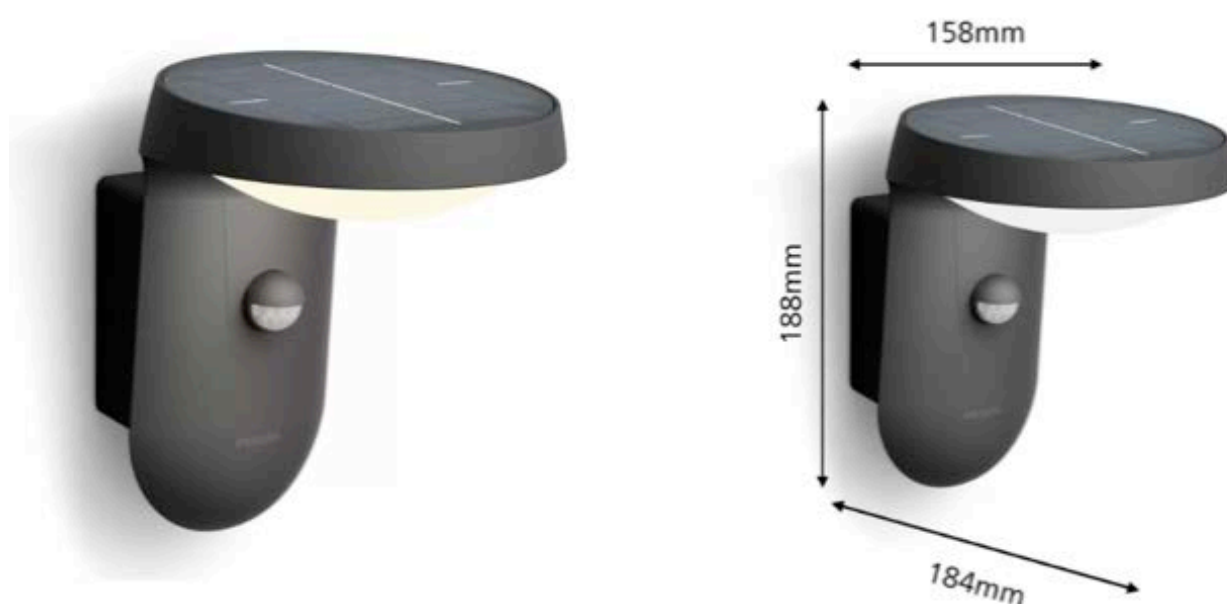
Npovemebr 2025



Appendix 4 - Examples of Solar powered Downlighters



Philips Tyla Solar Pillar Light Sensor 1.2W 250lm



Philips Tyla Solar Outdoor Wall Sensor A-label

Appendix 5 - Japanese Knotweed Factsheet

Japanese Knotweed

Species Description

Scientific name: *Fallopia japonica*

AKA: Japanese Bamboo, Pysen saethwr (Welsh), *Polygonum cuspidatum*, *Reynoutria japonica*

Native to: Japan, Taiwan, northern China

Habitat: Common in urban areas, particularly on waste land, railways, road sides and river banks

Tall herbaceous perennial with bamboo like stems. Often grows into dense thickets. Characteristic leaves and stems, persistence of last year's dead canes and distinctive rhizome (underground root-like stems) enables year round identification.

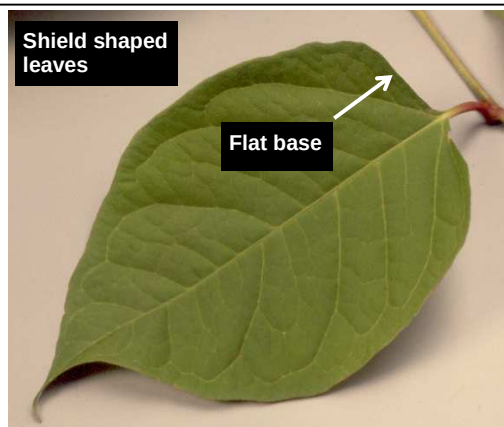
Introduced in the early 19th century as an ornamental plant. Now common and wide-spread across the UK. Spreads rapidly in the wild by natural means and as a result of spread by humans. Spread is solely by vegetative means, either fragments of rhizome or stem. Does not produce seed in the UK. Negative impacts include outcompeting native flora, contributing to river bank erosion and increasing the likelihood of flooding. Can also cause significant delays and cost to development as well as structural damage (it can grow through asphalt and some other surfaces).

Japanese Knotweed is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England, Wales and Scotland. As such it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause Japanese knotweed to grow in the wild. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Japanese Knotweed is classified as controlled waste.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features



Identification throughout the year

Spring



Summer

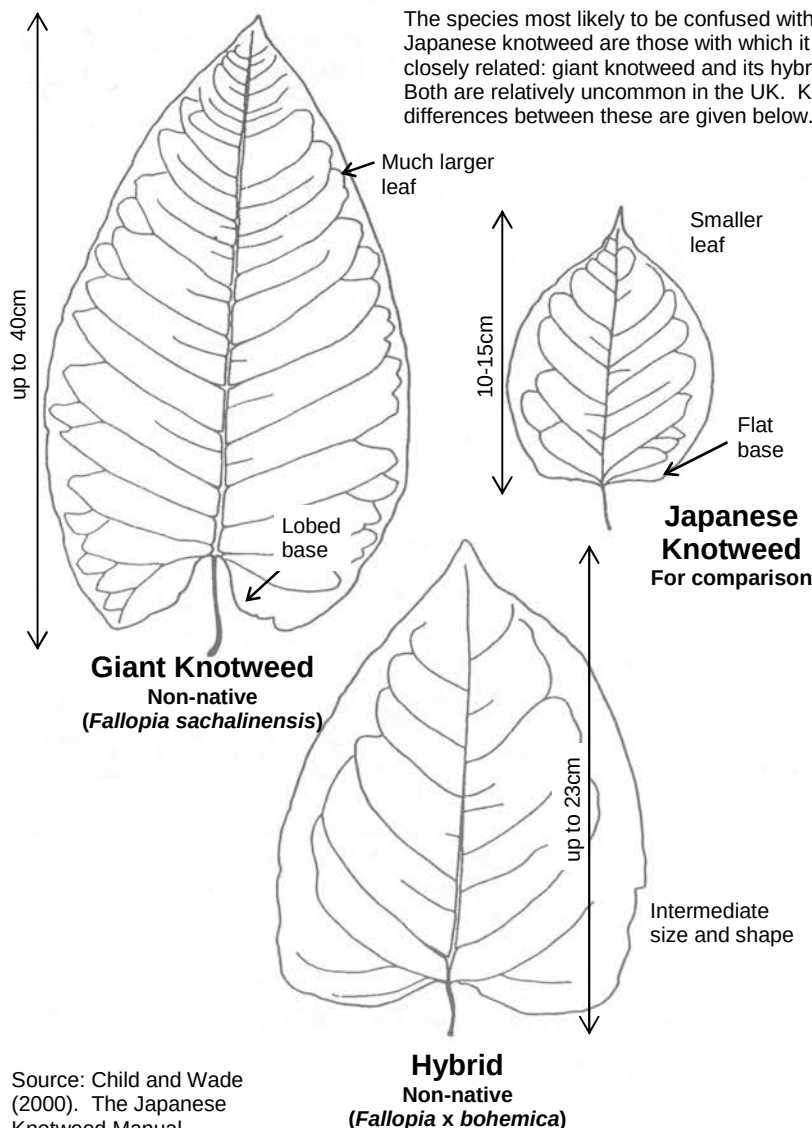


Winter



Similar Species

The species most likely to be confused with Japanese knotweed are those with which it is closely related: giant knotweed and its hybrid. Both are relatively uncommon in the UK. Key differences between these are given below.

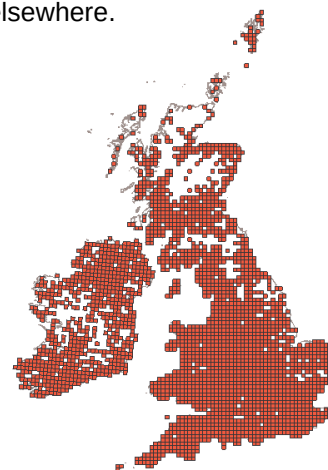


Source: Child and Wade (2000). The Japanese Knotweed Manual

Distribution

Widespread and common across the UK. Notably extensive infestations are found in the south-west of England, south Wales and Greater London, however similarly extensive populations can also be found elsewhere.

Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution



References and further reading:

- Blamey, M, Fitter, R and Fitter, A (2003) "The Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland. The Complete Guide to the British and Irish Flora." A & C Black
- Child, L E and Wade, P M (2000) "The Japanese Knotweed Manual". Packard
- Environment Agency (2006) "The Japanese Knotweed Code of Practice". Environment Agency
- Preston, C D, Pearman, D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) "New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora". Oxford University Press
- Stace, C (1999) "Field Flora of the British Isles". Cambridge University Press