Survey Summary

Petersfield Heath (Heath Common)
Jan 1993

Site Details

Grid Reference : SU75502290 **File Reference :** 72-0161
Total Area : 37.8 ha
Civil Parish : Petersfield
District : East Hampshire
Vice-County : 11, South Hampshire

Survey Details

Survey Type : None
Survey Date : Jan 1993
Survey Time on Site : Not recorded
Data Owned By : Francis Rose
Data Recorded By : Francis Rose

Site Summary

A site which was once part of an extensive heath. The site now includes a pond, extensive open grassland with areas of remnant heath, mixed woodland and many bronze age barrows. An hcc management plan intends to restore the site to heathland.

Site Designations

Designation
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

Site Features

Type	Description
Geology	Folkstone Beds
Geology	Sandgate Beds

Priority Habitats

None recorded

Notable Species

Taxon Name	Common Name	Status
Calluna vulgaris	Heather	IUCN (EN2014) - Near Threatened
Crassula tillaea	Mossy Stonecrop	Hampshire BAP Species Nationally Scarce
Hydrocotyle vulgaris	Marsh Pennywort	IUCN (EN2014) - Near Threatened
Nardus stricta	Mat-grass	IUCN (EN2014) - Near Threatened

Poa bulbosa	Bulbous Meadow-grass	Hampshire BAP Species Nationally Scarce County Scarce South Hampshire Scarce (VC11)
Potentilla erecta	Tormentil	IUCN (EN2014) - Near Threatened
Ranunculus flammula	Lesser Spearwort	IUCN (EN2014) - Vulnerable
Spergula arvensis	Corn Spurrey	IUCN (EN2014) - Vulnerable IUCN (2001) - Vulnerable
Succisa pratensis	Devil's-bit Scabious	IUCN (EN2014) - Near Threatened
Trifolium glomeratum	Clustered Clover	Nationally Scarce

Survey Details

Petersfield Heath (Heath Common)
Jan 1993

Habitats Recorded

Phase 1 Habitat Classifications	Area
D, Heathland	28.8 ha
G1, Open water: standing water	9 ha
A111, Woodland: broadleaved, semi-natural	
B212, Grassland: neutral, unimproved, lowland	
D1, Heathland: dry dwarf shrub heath	

Species Recorded

Taxon Name	Taxon Common Name	Present	Notable
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	P	
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow	P	
Aegopodium podagraria	Ground-elder	P	
Agrostis canina	Velvet Bent	P	
Agrostis capillaris	Common Bent	P	
Agrostis stolonifera	Creeping Bent	P	
Aira praecox	Early Hair-grass	P	
Aphanes australis	Slender Parsley-piert	P	
Apium nodiflorum	Fool's-water-cress	P	
Arrhenatherum elatius	False Oat-grass	P	
Artemisia vulgaris	Mugwort	P	
Aster novi-belgii	Confused Michaelmas-daisy	P	
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	P	
Betula pubescens	Downy Birch	P	
Bidens tripartita	Trifid Bur-marigold	P	
Calluna vulgaris	Heather	P	Y
Calystegia sepium	Hedge Bindweed	P	
Capsella bursa-pastoris	Shepherd's-purse	P	
Carex hirta	Hairy Sedge	P	
Chenopodium album	Fat-hen	P	
Chenopodium rubrum	Red Goosefoot	P	
Cirsium arvense	Creeping Thistle	P	
Crassula tillaea	Mossy Stonecrop	P	Y
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	P	
Crepis capillaris	Smooth Hawk's-beard	P	
Cytisus scoparius	Broom	P	
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot	P	
Deschampsia flexuosa	Wavy Hair-grass	P	
Digitalis purpurea	Foxglove	P	
Dryopteris dilatata	Broad Buckler-fern	P	
Dryopteris filix-mas	Male-fern	P	
Elytrigia repens	Common Couch	P	
Epilobium ciliatum	American Willowherb	P	
Epilobium hirsutum	Great Willowherb	P	
Epilobium parviflorum	Hoary Willowherb	P	
Erodium cicutarium	Common Stork's-bill	P	
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	P	
Festuca filiformis	Fine-leaved Sheep's-fescue	P	

	Taxon Name	Taxon Common Name	Present	Notable
	Festuca rubra	Red Fescue	P	
	Galium saxatile	Heath Bedstraw	P	
	Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	P	
	Geranium molle	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	P	
	Glyceria maxima	Reed Sweet-grass	P	
	Gnaphalium uliginosum	Marsh Cudweed	P	
	Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed	P	
*	*Holcus mollis*	Creeping Soft-grass	P	
#	*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*	Marsh Pennywort	P	Y
	Hypericum perforatum	Perforate St John's-wort	P	
	Hypochaeris radicata	Cat's-ear	P	
*	*Ilex aquifolium*	Holly	P	
	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Iris	P	
	Juncus articulatus	Jointed Rush	P	
	Juncus bufonius	Toad Rush	P	
	Juncus effusus	Soft-rush	P	
	Juncus inflexus	Hard Rush	P	
	Juncus squarrosus	Heath Rush	P	
	Lamium album	White Dead-nettle	P	
	Ligustrum vulgare	Wild Privet	P	
	Linaria vulgaris	Common Toadflax	P	
	Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle	P	
	Luzula campestris	Field Wood-rush	P	
	Lycopus europaeus	Gypsywort	P	
	Malva moschata	Musk-mallow	P	
	Matricaria discoidea	Pineappleweed	P	
	Mentha aquatica	Water Mint	P	
	Mentha arvensis x aquatica = M. x verticillata	Whorled Mint	P	
	Mercurialis annua	Annual Mercury	P	
#	*Molinia caerulea*	Purple Moor-grass	P	
	Myosotis scorpioides	Water Forget-me-not	P	
#	*Nardus stricta*	Mat-grass	P	Y
	Ornithopus perpusillus	Bird's-foot	P	
	Papaver rhoeas	Common Poppy	P	
	Persicaria amphibia	Amphibious Bistort	P	
	Persicaria hydropiper	Water-pepper	P	
	Persicaria lapathifolia	Pale Persicaria	P	
	Persicaria maculosa	Redshank	P	
	Phragmites australis	Common Reed	P	
	Pinus sylvestris	Scots Pine	(P)	
	Plantago coronopus	Buck's-horn Plantain	P	
	Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain	P	
	Plantago major	Greater Plantain	P	
	Poa annua	Annual Meadow-grass	P	
	Poa bulbosa	Bulbous Meadow-grass	P	Y
	Poa humilis	Spreading Meadow-grass	P	
	Poa pratensis	Smooth Meadow-grass	P	
	Polygonum aviculare	Knotgrass	P	
	Potentilla erecta	Tormentil	P	Y
	Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	P	
	Pulicaria dysenterica	Common Fleabane	P	
	Quercus robur	Pedunculate Oak	P	
	Ranunculus flammula	Lesser Spearwort	P	Y
	Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup	P	
	Rhododendron ponticum	Rhododendron ponticum	P	
	Rorippa sylvestris	Creeping Yellow-cress	P	

	Taxon Name	Taxon Common Name	Present	Notable
	Rubus fruticosus agg.	Bramble	P	
	Rumex acetosella	Sheep's Sorrel	P	
	Rumex conglomeratus	Clustered Dock	P	
	Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved Dock	P	
	Sagina procumbens	Procumbent Pearlwort	P	
	Salix alba	White Willow	P	
	Salix cinerea subsp. oleifolia	Rusty Willow	P	
	Salix euxina x alba = S. x fragilis	Hybrid Crack-willow	P	
	Sambucus nigra	Elder	P	
	Scorzoneroides autumnalis	Autumn Hawkbit	P	
	Senecio jacobaea	Common Ragwort	P	
	Senecio sylvaticus	Heath Groundsel	P	
	Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel	P	
	Silene dioica	Red Campion	P	
	Silene latifolia	White Campion	P	
	Sisymbrium officinale	Hedge Mustard	P	
	Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet	P	
	Solanum nigrum	Black Nightshade	P	
	Solidago canadensis	Canadian Goldenrod	P	
	Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	P	
	Sparganium erectum	Branched Bur-reed	P	
	Spergula arvensis	Corn Spurrey	P	Y
	Spergularia rubra	Sand Spurrey	P	
	Stellaria graminea	Lesser Stitchwort	P	
	Stellaria media	Common Chickweed	P	
#	*Succisa pratensis*	Devil's-bit Scabious	P	Y
	Taraxacum officinale agg.	Dandelion	P	
	Taxus baccata	Yew	P	
	Trifolium dubium	Lesser Trefoil	P	
	Trifolium glomeratum	Clustered Clover	P	Y
	Trifolium micranthum	Slender Trefoil	P	
	Trifolium ornithopodioides	Bird's-foot Clover	P	
	Trifolium repens	White Clover	P	
	Trifolium striatum	Knotted Clover	P	
	Trifolium subterraneum	Subterranean Clover	P	
	Tripleurospermum inodorum	Scentless Mayweed	P	
	Tussilago farfara	Colt's-foot	P	
	Typha latifolia	Bulrush	P	
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	P	
	Ulex minor	Dwarf Gorse	P	
	Ulmus procera	English Elm	P	
	Urtica dioica	Common Nettle	P	
*	*Vaccinium myrtillus*	Bilberry	P	
	Vicia sativa	Common Vetch	P	
	Vulpia bromoides	Squirreltail Fescue	P	

Species Summary

	Total no. of species :	**139**
	No. of woodland species :	**63**
*	**No. of AWVP indicators :**	**3**
#	**No. of acid/neutral grassland indicators :**	**4**

Notes

Habitat Classifications :

Priority: Habitats identified as the highest priority for conservation action in the UK
NVC: A system of classifying natural habitat communities according to species associations
Phase 1: A standardised system for surveying, classifying and mapping broad wildlife habitats including urban areas
Peterken: A stand type classification that describes woodlands by tree species

Indicators Species :

* Ancient Woodland Vascular Plants (AWVP) - species most strongly associated with ancient woodland and are typical components of botanically rich ancient woodland communities
\# Acid/neutral grassland indicators - species which seldom occur outside of unimproved acid/neutral grasslands or are indicative of a long period of uninterrupted grassland management
~ Chalk grassland indicators - species characteristic of unimproved chalk downland or have a strong affinity to calcareous soil

Species Abundance:

Frequency: D=dominant A=abundant F=frequent O=occasional R=rare L=locally
Frequencies within brackets ( ) indicate non-native occurrences

Habitat and Species designations and statuses:

Habitat designations/categories and species legislation/statuses are correct at the time the report was generated and may not necessarily reflect those applicable either at the time of survey or later than the generated date.

SU 75502290 (01)

PETERSFIELD HEATH

BOTANICAL REPORT AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Francis Rose, January 1993

INTRODUCTION

Petersfield Heath, situated in the south west corner of the Weald, is the most westerly of the formerly extensive heaths of the Folkestone Sand beds. In earlier times, to judge from the First Edition 1 inch Ordnance Survey map, it supported heathland vegetation similar in character to the other Greensand commons, such as Iping/Stedham and Heyshott/Ambersham Commons in West Sussex and the once vast Woolmer Forest in Hampshire. Petersfield Heath was about twice its present size, at the time of the early maps, extending much further to the east.

Large areas of Heather (Calluna - Erica) heath once existed, with wet heath on the damper slopes and in valleys with a high winter water table. The grazing of livestock, as on all heaths, was once regularly practiced and helped to maintain the biological diversity and prevented the most agressive and invasive species, such as Birch and Bracken, from smothering evrything else (largely by duplicating the actions of the original wild cattle and other herbivores with which our native plants evolved). Grazing, and more recently trampling by people, was also important for maintaining areas of short, species rich acid grassland which occur particularly in the northern part of the site.

Heath Pond is a very old feature and there used to be a marshy valley running from it to the east which contained a meandering stream. In the parts of this valley which were periodically inundated, there once occurred one of Britain's rarest plants, Hampshire Purslane, Ludwigia pelustris. This species was first found here by the botanist John Goodyer in 1660, growing in a ditch by the Pond. It was still recorded as abundant in 1848 but, after the deepening and straightening of the stream into a more or less straight ditch, the plant disappeared. It is now only known from three sites in the New Forest, although it has possibly been introduced to Epping Forest.

Apart from the creation of the deep drainage ditch, the botanical interest of Petersfield Heath has also been greatly reduced by the intensive fertiliser application and mowing associated with the golf course, lack of appropriate woodland management and, most recently, by the dumping of nutrient rich silt dredged from the pond onto herb rich grassland. The site retains many valuable features, however, and still supports 144 plant species (not including mosses, lichens or fungi), although many have declined quite markedly.

This report summarises the present vegetation of Petersfield Heath, and is based on the accompanying map prepared by the North East Hampshire Heathlands Project. A number of recommendations for management are also made which, if implemented through a management plan, would help to ensure that the botanical value of the Heath, and hence the wildlife interest, is conserved and improved, whether the golf course moves or not. This will also increase the appearance and recreational value of Petersfield Heath for local people and visitors alike.

BOTANICAL REPORT

The main areas of botanical interest have been divided into compartments, many of which are further subdivided, indicated on the map. Most of the playing areas of the golf course have been excluded because past management, especially fertiliser application, has produced extensive swards of monotonous, species poor, "improved" grassland. The actual boundaries between the improved grassland and the nutrient poor, natural vegetation have become indistinct in places due to fertiliser run off. Heathland restoration is possible over much of the Heath, although the techniques required to achieve this will vary with the level of nutrients present and further planning will require the results of the planned soil survey.

Compartment 1

This compartment extends along the southwestern side of Heath Pond, adjacent to Sussex Road. The shoreline is the most valuable feature here, while the woodland is less interesting botanically. Many of the trees have been obviously planted, as on much of the Heath, and Scots Pine, Beech, Birch, Sallow, Sycamore and Yew are present. Holly and Rhododendron occur in places and the ground flora is either improved grassland or is dominated by Bracken and Bramble with very little diversity.

Compartment 1a - along the fringe of the lake in this area is a marshy shore with fen and reedswamp species. In the reedbeds and fen (r) the following species occur:

Gypsy Wort	Lycopus europeus
Woody Nightshade	Solanum dulcamara
Reedmace	Typha latifolia
Common Reed	Phragmites australis
Reed Sweet-grass	Glyceria maxima
Great Hairy Willow-herb	Epilobium hirsutum

On the more open sandy shore (s) plants of interest include:

Bur-marigold	Bidens tripartita
Creeping Yellowcress	Nasturtium sylvestre
Amphibious Bistort	Persicaria amphibia

plus other commoner annual plants of wet, open ground.

Compartment 1b - more open sandy/stoney shoreline occurs here. The flora is similar to that found in Compartment 1a (s) with the addition of Marsh Pennywort, Hydrocotyle vulgaris, now a rather local plant.

Compartment 1c - tall fen vegetation, similar to 1a (r) reappears here, with Reedmace etc present again, with the addition of Fleabane, Pulicaria dysenterica. On the open sandy shore, small rushes such as Juncus bulbosus and J. articulatus are prominent. There are various escaped garden plants in this compartment, including along the Hawthorn hedge boundary.

Compartment 2

With the exception of the grassy bank below the boundary hedge, which has been enriched with nutrients (probably run off from Heath Road), this compartment supports some very good areas of unimproved, sandy acid grassland. Compartment 2a has been much modified, by heavy recreational use, and 2b has suffered marginally from the activities discussed for compartment 3. Nonetheless, this compartment is one of the richest parts of Petersfield Heath for plant diversity. This is primarily due to the low nutrient levels in the soil and the trampling activities of humans, which have both helped to prevent the establishment of a dense, species poor sward. Extremely heavy trampling has had adverse effects in one or two places but has been beneficial over most of the area for plants like:

Sheep's Sorrel	Rumex acetosella
Common Bent	Agrostis capillaris
Buckshorn Plantain	Plantago coronopus *
various annual clovers	Trifolium species
~~Heath~~ Spurrey	Spergularia rubra *
Small	Aphaxes microcarpa
Smooth Meadow-grass	Poa pratensis
Hairy Sedge	Carex hirta

and the mosses, Polytrichum juniperum and Ceratodon purpureous.

* indicates local species, of interest for this area.

An extremely rare clover for Hampshire, Trifolium glomeratum, formerly occured in Compartment 2 but has not been recorded since 1975.

In places along the edge of Heath Pond, below the playground area in Compartment 2a the sandy shoreline is similar to that in Compartment 1. This has been kept open, to the benefit of many plants, by the trampling actions of humans and waterfowl.

Compartment 3

The area west of the old tennis courts (now removed) was, botanically, formerly the richest part of Petersfield Heath. When the Pond was cleared of silt, the resulting material was dumped on the environs, including this area. This material has now been removed but, instead of being allowed to recover naturally, has been sown with Rye-grass, which I consider was unnecessary. Prior to this there had been a very rich flora, particularly spring annuals, including several extremely rare species. As well as the species listed for Compartment 2, the following plants also used to occur in this area:

Bulbous Meadow-grass	Poa bulbosa (only on few S. coast sites)
Mossy Tillaea	Crassula tillaea (New Forest & Woolmer + Aldershot
Early Hair-grass	Aira praecox only)
Fine-leaved Heath Fescue	Festuca filiformis (tenuifolia)
Common Storksbill	Erodium cicutarium
Birdsfoot	Ornithopus perpusillus
plus the annual Clovers	Trifolium ornithopodioides, T. striatum and T. subterraneum

In one or two patches, along the edge and along the main path, narrow strips of the former unimproved sandy grassland still persist. Here, Ornithopus perpusillus and Trifolium subterraneum have survived the silt dumping and sowing of Rye-grass but all the other species listed seem to have disappeared from Compartment 3.

Most, if not all, of these species would probably reappear from the seed bank, however, if the Rye-grass was stripped off or even if the area was lightly rotovated or scarified in early Spring. This could happen naturally, but slowly, as the nutrients are leached from the sandy soil. In any event, it would ultimately involve considerable effort and expense, with regular applications of fertiliser, to maintain a healthy sward of Rye-grass on such a poor soil which is also subjected to regular trampling. The natural turf is much easier and cheaper to manage, more wear resistant and considerably more interesting botanically than Rye-grass anyway.

Compartment 4

This is a sandy knoll supporting Birch trees with some Rowan and Oak. Gorse, Ulex europeaus, and several other heathland/acid grassland species can be found here but Bracken is beginning to smother the ground flora. This is an attractive feature, which can be kept more or less as it is, although the bracken will require controlling (see Compartment 9b).

Compartment 5

There are again many areas of interesting, species rich, unimproved grassland in Compartment 5, particularly on the slope just below the knoll (Compartment 4), where Fine-leaved Fescue, Birdsfoot and Sheep's Sorrel, among others, can be found. It is important to avoid the use of any fertilisers in this, or any other unimproved area, to maintain the natural sward. Bracken control will be needed adjacent to Compartment 4 to stop this species spreading.

The boundaries between Compartment 5 and the improved parts of the golf course are indistinct, with lateral movements of fertilisers confusing the picture somewhat. The damage to the natural sward caused by fertilisers seems to vary around the site and the soil survey will enable more detailed recommendations on management, and the potential for heathland restoration, to be made.

Compartment 6

This area, within the fence, was used as a "bund" for storage of silt removal from the lake for several years. It has been reputedly sown with a "wild flower" seed mixture, but it is (6b) now covered with a dense growth of wayside and arable weeds. The only attractive plant here now is Musk Mallow (Malva moschata) which is here and there. This area needs mowing each year (or more often, if necessary) to try to restore semi-natural grassland. It should be noted that all areas where silt was dumped will have been enriched in nutrients. To restore more natural grassland, or heath, nutrient-stripping may be needed. This will happen naturally over time, slowly, by leaching out of the extra nutrients, but it could be much speeded up by removal of a) mowings, & b) stripping of the

surface soil which is enriched.

At 6a and around 6c, short open turf remains, not enriched by extra nutrients. These areas still have a good flora of sandy type: Storks Bill Erodium cicutarium, Birds foot Ornithopus, Sheep's Sorrel Rumex acetosella, and several clovers Trifolium spp. They are best left alone to restore naturally. Opening them to public walking will help this process. 6c areas are scrub. These could be left for the birds to give some cover.

Compartment 7

7a is an area proposed for heath restoration. It is unsuitable for this purpose at present, without stripping the present nutrient enriched plant cover, which contains dense Soft Grass Holcus mollis, False Oat-grass, Arrhenatherum elatius, and Couch, Agropyron repens, etc. Some of the area has patches of the former grass-heath still present. The Gorse areas here should be left to spread.

At 7b there is more acid grassland with the heathland relic rush, Juncus squarrosus, on the bank, plus acid grassland species. This could easily be restored to heathland.

The fairway between 6 - 7 and 5 - 8 is improved grassland which could in part6 eventually be restored to more natural grassland, or to heath along its east edge adjoining the relict heath area of 8: in 8 there is still locally abundant Calluna with moor-grass Molinia caerulea, and much Festuca tenuifolia - this community would extend W if nutrient levels fell.

8a is the line of the ditch which is the outlet for the Heath Pond. This is too deepened and straightened at present and should be made shallower with some areas into which water can spread and sit during the winter. This is the area presumably where the Hampshire Purslare once grew. There are still a few interesting plants by (Devilsbit Scabious, Succisa pratensis) or in the ditch (Fool's Watercress, Apium nodiflorum, Gipsy wort, Lycopus europaeus, Moor-grass Molinia, and Marsh Pennywort Hydrocotyle vulgaris - even a little Bur-reed Spargonium erectum. The potential here for restoration of a small, shallow but botanically interesting marsh is considerable.

Area 9 contains (in 9b) the best remaining area of heath left on Petersfield Heath. Ling Callum is still dominant over about one acre, together with the following heathland associates:-

Heath Bedstraw	Galium saxatile
Tormentil	Potentilla erecta
Common Beat	Agrostis capillaris
Sheeps sorrel	Rumex acetosella
Moor-Grass	Molinia caerulea
Wild Golden Rod	Solidago virgaurea (rare here now)
Dwarf Gorse	Ulex minor (only one clump left)

This fine heathland relic is getting badly overgrown with Bracken. The Bracken should be sprayed out, and the surrounding Birch scrub removed and pushed back to enlarge the area. 9a is also potential heath with some of the same plant species present, but has been overmown as part of a golf fairway. Mowing should be stopped here and heathland be allowed to form a closed community again.

10a is the strip of Bracken (with Gorse) parallel to Heath Road in the N>E> Bracken control by spraying would improve public access for walkers who do not wish to walk along Heath Road itself, with its fast traffic. At 10b under birch, there is a good patch of Bilberry Vaccinium myrtillus. This would benefit from Bracken spraying.

11 is another strip of umimproved grassland with heather which should be extended on to the present fairway to its south. If fertiliser is no longer applied on to the fairways after the Golf Course leaves the common, then unimproved grassland (and heath) will spread on to them.

12 is the extensive area of North-eastern woodland with open Oak (all much the same age and presumably originally planted late last century) Birch, Bramble and Bracken. This is an attractive feature but in its present state of density, with much Bramble and Bracken, poses a hazard to the public from molesters, muggers etc, and would be better opened out to some extent.

The numerous tumuli on this east part of the common need to be mentioned here. Most of them are tree-covered; the trees look as if they may have been planted. Strictly speaking, trees should not be planted on archaeological evidence,and they should really be carefully removed. This, however, is a complex matter, and consultation with the Ancient Monuments people will be necessary.

13 is a small area of enriched grassland in the NE corner of the common; this is basically an entrance area, best left alone at present.

14 comprises several compartments adjacent to improved fairways and the drainage ditch. 14a is rough but clearly nutrient enriched grassland with Bracken, Common Bent, Agrostis capillaris, Perforate St. John's Wort Hypericum perforatum, etc, of no interest at present. 14b and 14c are similar. The water table is fairly high from its position and this low-lying area, if stripped of its nutrient rich surface layer and litter, could develop into wet-heath of some interest if the area south of it reverted to heath.

15 is an interesting site with a dish barrow, with much Calluna and Molinia. At present it is closely mown, but could if left uncut, form the nucleus of a future heathland area which could be extended on to the adjacent fairway. At 16 there is another (very small) heath patch.

17 comprises areas of Oak-Birch woodland similar in structure and origin to 12. It is probably best to leave most of this except for clearing the tumuli. See 18 at beginning.

Summary

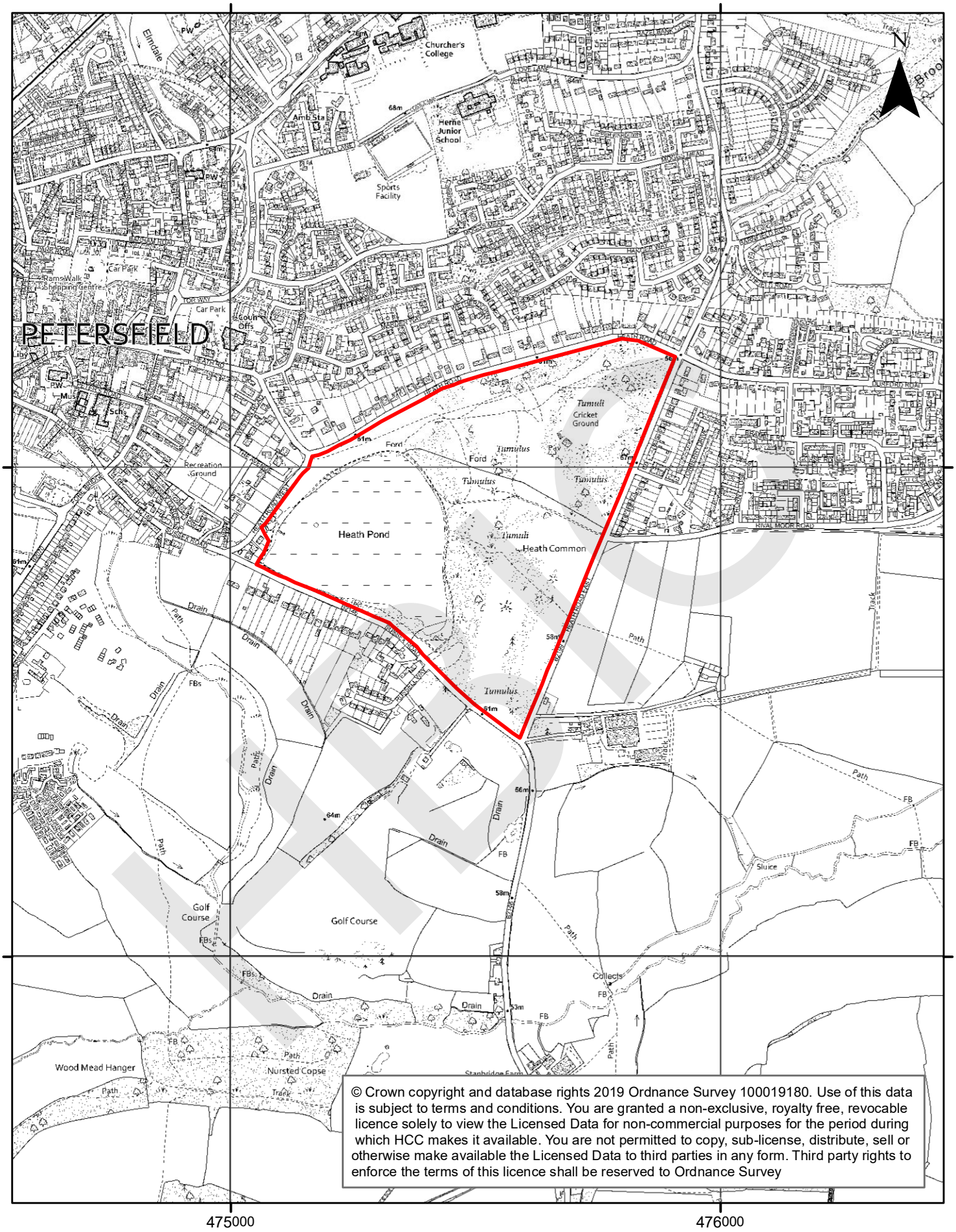
Petersfield Heath has much changed over time due to a) drainage (including deepening of the Pond run of ditch; b) creation of artificial improved and fertilised swards on the fairways and greens of the golf course; c) development of woodland, probably planted in part, in 12 and 17; d) the bunds created for the silt removed from the pond, now removed.

Artificial fertiliser application has not only resulted in monotonous species - poor swards on the fairways, but lateral run-off has affected other areas of

former acid species-rich grassland and heath, the latter community being now very reduced in extent and threatened by birch invasion and by Brambles and Bracken.

It would be impracticable to try to convert all of the eastern part back to heath, but a much more attractive and interesting mosaic of heath, acid grassland, small wetland areas (in 8 & 14) could be recreated where indicated, particularly if fertiliser applications and intense mowing cease; the fertiliser will leach out on these sandy soils if no more is applied. The sandy turf in 2b in particular was bery species rich until c. 1980-81 and measures outlined would help to recreate this. I feel that the woodland blocks at present are a social hazard and there is a case for reducing them and thinning them out.

Petersfield Heath could become a much more interesting and attractive place and much richer in wildlife, if at least some of these (not very complex) recommendations were carried out.



Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

Site Name: Petersfield Heath (Heath Common)
Grid Ref: SU75502290
File Code: 72-0161

Legend

Survey Site

Scale: 1:10,000