

## BURLEY HOUSE FIELD BOTANICAL SURVEY

The field is classed as semi-improved grassland in the National Vegetation Classification and a botanical survey was carried out in June 2014. Two distinct grassland communities were identified and surveyed. The first covers the majority of the field, whilst the second species-poor sub-community is the area alongside Bradford Road wall from the gate down to the NE corner. Soils in that area were probably disturbed when the retaining wall was rebuilt, leading to fewer species compared with the rest of the field.



The parish council lease on the field from Bradford Council requires it to maintain and improve the biodiversity. The survey was undertaken firstly, to obtain baseline ecological information and, secondly, to make recommendations for management of the area and future monitoring.

For many decades up to 2010, cattle grazed the area and naturally maintained the grassland species. Without the cattle, a mowing regime has been established to manage this valuable grassland environment, whilst allowing public access throughout the year. The first cut will be taken after 15<sup>th</sup> July to allow wildflower species to set seed, with a

second cut in late September, both mowings removed for haylage. Selected areas such as the orchard will also be mowed more frequently. The mowing does not replicate the effects of grazing and it may be necessary to counteract the impact of vigorous grasses to prevent them overcoming some wildflower species.

Invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam, snowberry and giant hogweed will be removed along with inadvertent garden escapes. The management practices will:

- Retain mature trees on site as they have the potential to provide valuable habitats for fungi, nesting birds, bats and invertebrates.
- Retain scrub and tall ruderal vegetation within specified limits in established areas as they provide habitat for breeding birds and invertebrate species, whilst ensuring that they do not encroach into grassland habitat.
- Stack small amounts of prunings, etc, unobtrusively to rot down naturally, further providing for invertebrate species.
- Monitor species composition of grassland communities to ensure management is having the desired impact.