University of Suffolk

Bulb Land

UK Habitat Classification Survey Report

2026

Site name: University of Suffolk Bulb Land

Grid reference: TM 17086 44235

Area: 87.47m²

Date and time of the survey: 7th April 2026, 14:30 to 15:30

Weather conditions: sunny, slight breeze, 12°C

Recorders: Thomas Heathwaite, and Sam Owen

Location, description, and geology of site:

The site is located on the University of Suffolk campus which is in the centre of Ipswich. Bordering the Bumblebee Buffet Area and Bulb Land to the east, is Alexander Park. Suffolk new college borders just to the north of the University of Suffolk campus and the marina and Ipswich wet docks are to the south of the University of Suffolk campus. The centre of Ipswich is about 1km from the site campus.

The bedrock geology of the site consists of clay, silt, and sand (the Thanet Formation and Lambeth Group) and the superficial deposits consist of sand and gravel (the Lowestoft formation).

Statuary and Non-statutory designations:

There are no statutory designations within a radius of 1km of the survey site.

Three non-statutory designations are present within a radius of 1km of the survey site including Nitrate Vulnerable Zones 2017 Designations (England), total catchment source protection zone and drinking water protected area (surface water) (DEFRA, 2024)

Habitats and species:

Given the Wildlife Garden is only 119 meters away, the finding presented within the 2022 Wildlife Garden Phase 1 Habitat Survey report is likely to be valid here too.

Methodology (terrestrial):

Before the site visit, a desktop survey consisting of 1) the geology of the site; 2) statutory and non-statutory designations and 3) a search using the NBN Atlas (2025) of all protected species recorded within a 1km radius of the survey site listed on the UK Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* was conducted.

A visit to site was made on the 7th April 2026 to survey the site, with weather conditions sunny, a slight breeze, and 12°C

Plants were surveyed using 1 meter squared quadrats, using standardised sampling (see figure 1). Plant species present in these quadrats were recorded, along with their local frequency in each quadrat. From this, dominant species were noted, as well as abundance and local frequencies. The habitats were mapped as per the UK Habs, UK Habitat Classification System, V2.0 methodology (UK Habs, 2025). Where habitats were too small to map, target notes were added.

Any species observed throughout the survey period were also noted.

Figure 1, a diagram showing where each quadrat was placed, using systematic sampling. The blue dots indicate where the quadrats were laid. Image produced using Google Earth (Google Earth, 2025).

Results:

The habitats are described below. Figure 2 shows the habitats and boundaries present at the survey site and their codes. Table 1 shows that species were present within the quadrats, their local frequencies, and a photo where relevant (figures 3 to 6).

Total species richness (plants and animals combined) is estimated at 18 species, including the crocus and snowdrops that had come up before the survey and were recorded.

The UK Habitat Classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023) essential secondary codes of relevance for this site is: 61: ‘re created habitat’ (applies to whole site as this site is a re created habitat from previously being developed upon)

The Uk Habitat Classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023) additional secondary codes of relevance for this site are:

1. 500: ‘dry’ (applies to whole site as the land was very dry during the survey).
2. 814 ‘’educational premise open space’

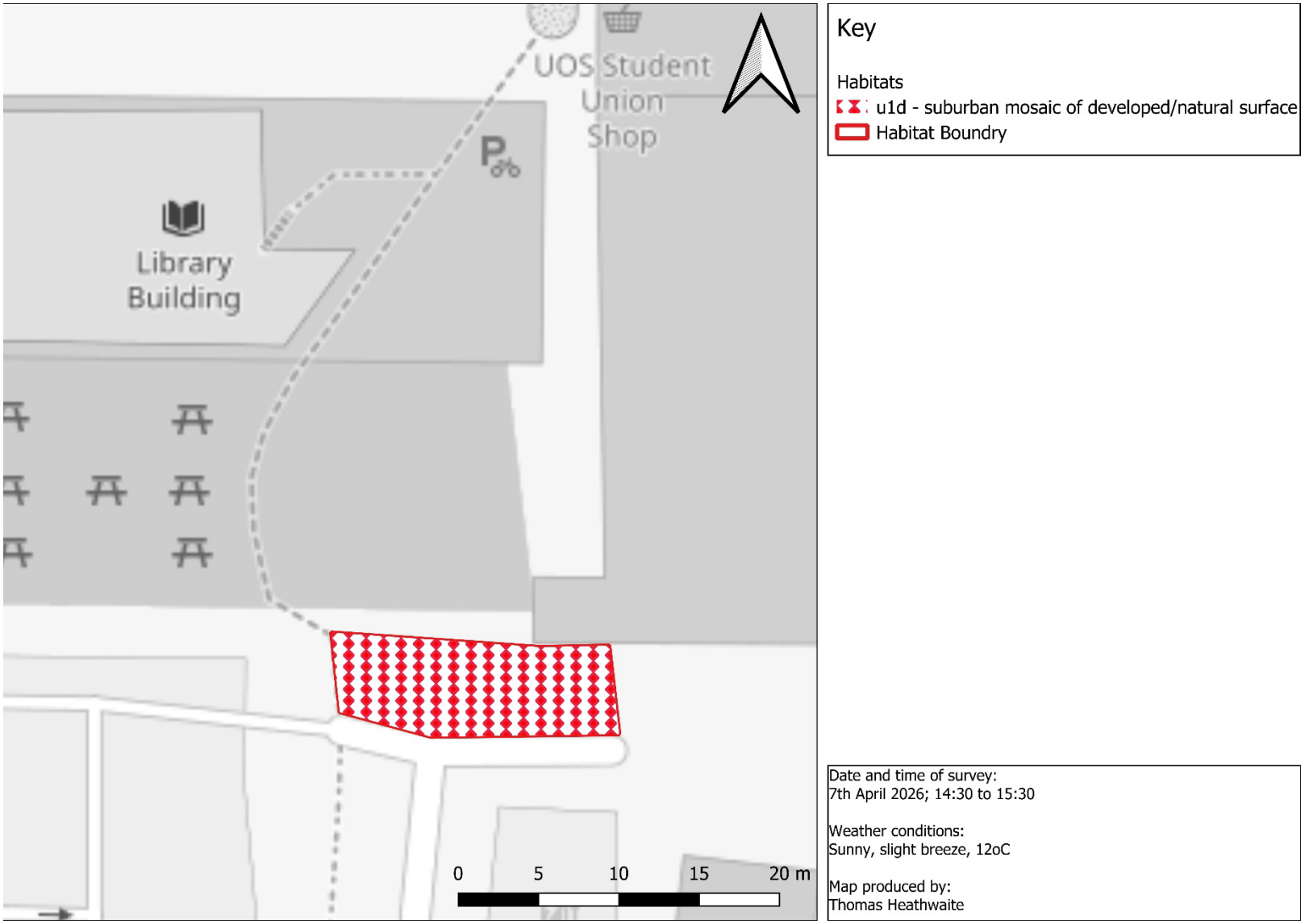

Figure 2, habitat map of the University of Suffolk's Bulb Land, Ipswich, OS Grid Reference TM 17086 44235 using the UK Habitat Classification methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023)

Results – Plants:

Table 1, a table describing the species found in each quadrat, the local frequency and a photo, if taken.

Quadrat number	Local frequency of plants	Photos
Q1	$\frac{25}{25}$ = red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) $\frac{14}{25}$ = spotted medick (*Medicago arabica*) $\frac{12}{25}$ = garden chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*) $\frac{10}{25}$ = rough hawksbeard (*Crepis biennis*) $\frac{2}{25}$ = native daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*)	
Q2	$\frac{25}{25}$ = Red fescue (*F. rubra*) $\frac{20}{25}$ = spotted medick (*M. arabica*) $\frac{3}{25}$ = garden chervil (*A. cerefolium*) $\frac{2}{25}$ = native daffodil (*N. pseudonarcissus*) $\frac{1}{25}$ = annual blue grass (*Poa annua*) $\frac{1}{25}$ = common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)	

Figure 3, Spotted medick (*M. arabica*) and annual blue grass (*Poa annua*) present – Q2.

Q3

$\frac{23}{25}$ = red fescue ($F. rubra$)

$\frac{14}{25}$ = spotted medick ($M. arabica$)

$\frac{12}{25}$ = Dove's − foot cranesbill ($Geranium\ molle$)

$\frac{12}{25}$ = common daisy ($Bellis\ perennis$)

$\frac{6}{25}$ = garden chervil ($A. cerefolium$)

$\frac{5}{25}$ = native daffodil ($N. pseudonarcissus$)

$\frac{1}{25}$ = rough hawksbeard ($C. biennis$)

Figure 4, common daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and spotted medick (*M. arabica*).

Q4

$\frac{25}{25}$ = Yorkshire fog ($Holcus\ lanatus$)

$\frac{14}{25}$ = spotted medick ($M. arabica$)

$\frac{14}{25}$ = garden chervil ($A. cerefolium$)

$\frac{13}{25}$ = $white\ lace\ flower$ ($Orlaya\ grandiflora$)

$\frac{3}{25}$ = Dove's − foot cranesbill ($G. molle$)

$\frac{3}{25}$ = native daffodil ($N. pseudonarcissus$)

$\frac{1}{25}$ = common daisy ($B. perennis$)

Q5

$\frac{24}{25}$ = red fescue ($F. rubra$)

$\frac{5}{25}$ = common yarrow ($Achillea\ millefolium$)

$\frac{3}{25}$ = Dove's − foot cranesbill ($G. molle$)

$\frac{2}{25}$ = spotted medick ($M. arabica$)

$\frac{2}{25}$ = common dandelion ($T. officinale$)

$\frac{1}{25}$ = rough hawsbeard ($C. biennis$)

$\frac{1}{25}$ = common daisy ($B. perennis$)

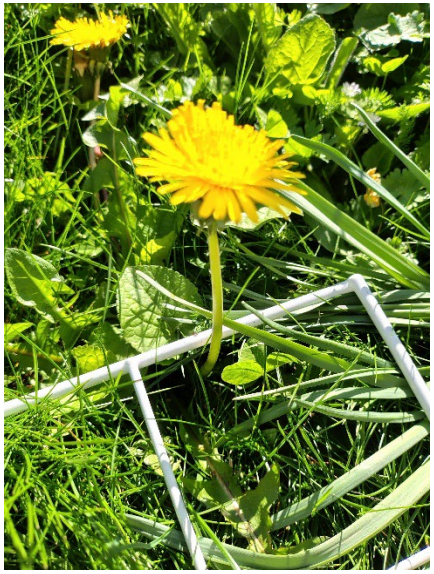

Figure 5, common dandelion (*T. officinale*) present - Q5

Q6

$\frac{25}{25}$ = white clover ($Trifolium\ repens$)

$\frac{20}{25}$ = spotted medick ($M.arabica$)

$\frac{7}{25}$ = Garden chervil ($A.cerefolium$)

$\frac{4}{25}$ = common daisy ($B.perennis$)

$\frac{3}{25}$ = chickweed ($Stellaria\ media$)

$\frac{2}{25}$ = native daffodil ($N.pseudonarcissus$)

Figure 6, sticky chickweed (*Stellaria media*) present in Q6

Discussion:

The newly created Bulb Land site was only planted in October 2025 with native daffodils (*N. pseudonarcissus*), crocuses (*Crocus Speciosus*), and snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*), so it is pleasing to see a species richness of 18 species already present. This result is encouraging and represents a habitat in an early successional stage, with the results indicating dominance of opportunistic grasses and ruderal/ annual forbs which are typical of such a site which otherwise was amenity grassland.

The data shows dominance of species such as the native red fescue (*F. rubra*) and Yorkshire fog (*H. lanatus*) which had very high local frequencies per quadrat (often between 23 to 25 quadrat squares per quadrat). These plants are ideally suited to drought and dry conditions (secondary code 500) and were likely there before the bulbs were planted.

Moreover, generalist species such as common daisy (*B. perennis*), common dandelion (*T. officinale*) and dove's foot cranesbill (*G. molle*), when combined with the above, are characteristics of amenity grassland habitats.

All of the quadrats showed signs of native daffodils (*N. pseudonarcissus*) but crocuses (*C. Speciosus*), and snowdrops (*G. nivalis*) were not found during the survey day, principally due both to the season coming to an end when the site was surveyed and due to the relatively short time after planting. The results indicate the bulbs are currently subdominant in terms of the planting structure. It is hoped that next year, perhaps with an earlier survey date, the establishment of bulbs will be stronger throughout the site.

Ecological value:

Whilst only newly established, this site represents some level of ecological value for the following reasons:

1. Late winter/ spring flowering bulbs provide critical nectar and pollen resources, supporting pollinators.
2. Landscape connectivity: this site is directly connected with other habitats on campus including the Wildlife Garden, Bumblebee Buffet Area and Wildflower Meadows which directly aligns with the principle of "Bigger, Better, More Joined Up (Lewton, 2011).

Recommendations:

The site is characteristic with strong dominance of drought tolerant grass species and common generalist species typical of amenity grassland habitats. Therefore, it is recommended to carefully watch the dominance of these plants and intervein, if necessary, to help support the establishment of bulbs. This would prevent homogenisation of the habitat.

Despite planting with over 1,400 bulbs, there is no provision made for late spring, summer and autumn bulbs which would provide an excellent pollination resource for pollinators. Species such as wild garlic (*Allium ursinum*) which flowers March to June as an example would be beneficial.

A management plan is recommended that could be implemented to help this site increase its ecological value, consisting of:

- A low intensity mowing regime with a cut taking place in late summer. This will potentially reduce the dominance of red fescue (*F. rubra*) and Yorkshire fog (*H. lanatus*), which should allow bulbs and other forbs to gain access to more light. After the cut, removal of the arising is required to prevent soil fertility increasing.

- Linked to the above, rotational cutting could create a greater number of small mosaic habitats to help provide more niches, or leave some undisturbed refuge areas over winter, to support more invertebrates, too.

Limitations:

There is the limitation of survey effort which may mean that the actual species richness may be higher than found. This will always be a limitation of all surveys.

Bibliography:

DEFRA (2024) *MAGIC*. Available at: Magic Map Application [accessed 17/04/26].

Google Earth (2025) https://earth.google.com/web/@52.05396664,1.16491551,12.5172182a,1000d,30y,0h,0t,0r/data=CgRCAggBMikKJwolCiExOWI5VGxyWjBkWmRKVlldGZhaDFrQnU1VDNtcFZVaC0gAToDCgEwQgIIAEoICPqF588BEAE [Accessed: 19/03/2026].

Lawton, John. Making space for nature. *Envtl. L. Rev.* 13 (2011)

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, c. 16. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents [accessed 04/08/26].

NBN Atlas (2025) *Explore your area*. Available at: https://records.nbnatlas.org/explore/your-area#52.10412650000001|1.3288216|13|ALL_SPECIES [accessed 07/08/26].

The conservation of habitats and species regulations 2017 (SI 2017/1012). Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made [accessed: 07/08/26].

UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0*. Available at: ukhab – UK Habitat Classification [accessed 22/05/26].

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, c. 69. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents [accessed 07/08/26].