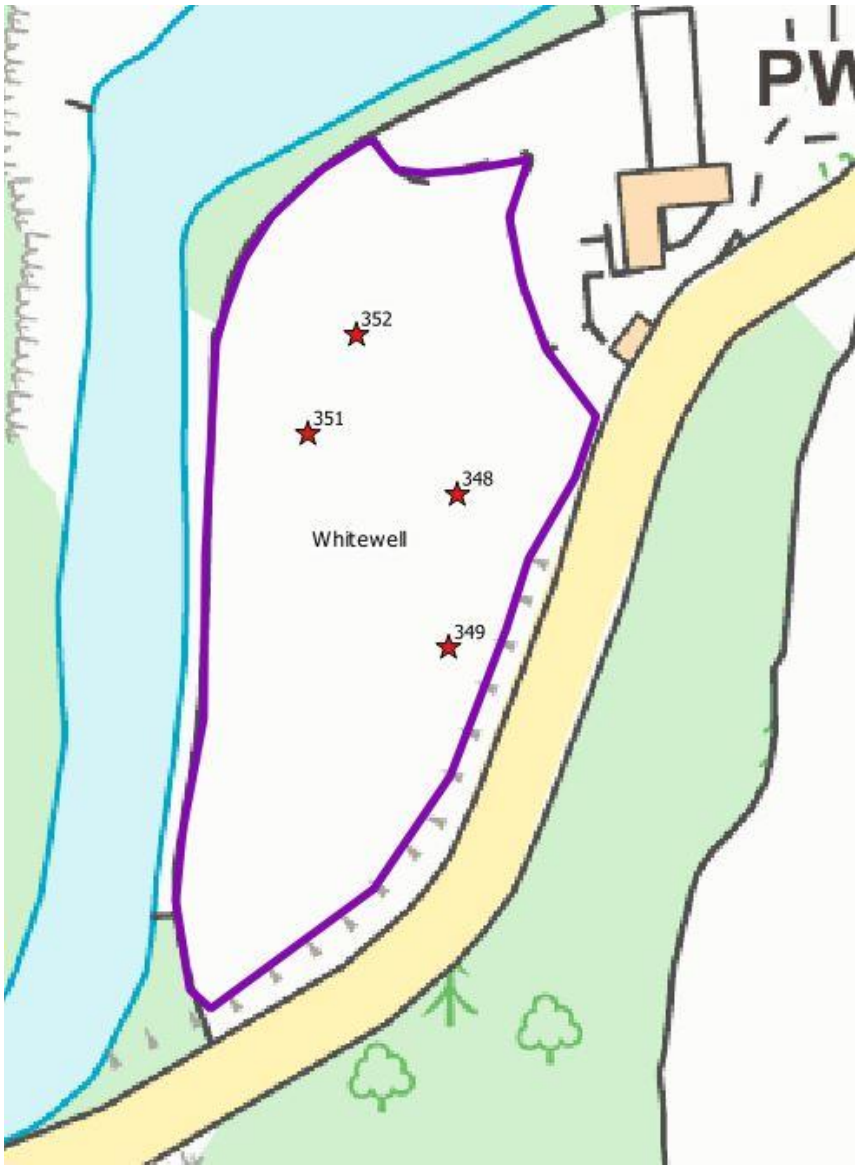
Site Visit Assessment Form, Whitewell (Piggery Meadow), Lancashire



Site Name Piggery Meadow, Whitewell	**Grid Ref** SD657467	**County** Lancashire	
River Lune	**Ownership** Hotel – The Inn at Whitwell	**Designation** None	**Size (ha)** 1.12
Date 18th June 2018	**Meeting with** Sarah Robinson	**Managed by** The Inn with the AONB team	
Management and History			
Agri environment agreement			
No			

Current management

This site has not been cut for 2 years (dog poo is a problem, as are high levels of docks) and it is a small site, so is fragmented from a wider farming system. There is also no grazing. It has proved difficult to find a farmer therefore who will take the crop.
It was cut in 2013 and 2014. In 2015 it was topped and arisings were left on site. One of these years small bale hay was made and in another year, big bales made. Overall it has been cut and baled 2 times since 2013 (2 years out of 5).

Restoration

Technique used/Dates

Green hay was spread in 2013 as per the Forest of Bowland Haytime project technique https://www.forestofbowland.com/Hay-Time-Project-0 (all the techniques are in the Hay Time report in the download section at the bottom of the page), Plug plants have also been planted since 2013. Rushes have been cut by hand.

Hydrology	This site sits wet in hollows all winter. Soil is sandy silt or silty sand and very free draining with 70 cm depth to sand in the augers we dug. The top 30 cm in the soil profile is more silty and organic with red sandy soil below. There appears to be seepage coming from the bank along the road. There is a drain running north-south through the meadow (not shown on the OS map). Quadrats 348-349 were recorded to the east of the drain and show a wetter area, with patches of rushes in the north-east corner of the field. Quadrats 351-352 are in a drier area of the site and sit to the west of the drain.
Flooding regime Water management Soil-water levels (indicated by auger hole/any other data)	

Historical information

The site was an old pig field and it is also known as 'Piggery field'. P levels are not that high however. The farmer who used to take the hay said it always had docks in it.

Current site interest	Attach excel spreadsheet for botanical data

The microtopography of the site is very uneven. In the middle, there is a depression (pond) overgrown by reed canary grass *Phalaris arundinacea.* In the northern part of the site there is a small 'hump' (location of q 352) which provides drier conditions. Paths, ditches and the adjacent slope of the valley all have an effect on the vegetation of this small site. The sandy soil provides good drainage across the site.

However, a seepage from under the high bank of the river valley adjacent to the road to the east of the site supports flourishing soft rush *Juncus effusus* and docks on the field, while meadow species such as great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* and knapweed *Centurea nigra* are struggling to survive. The current vegetation on the meadow scored a reasonably high similarity coefficient (59%) to MG6a grassland (*Filipendula ulmaria* sub-community of *Lolium perenne-Cynosurus cristatus*) according to the NVC. It is also similar to the *Agrosris stolonifera* subcommunity of

MG15 *Alopecurus pratensis-Poa trivialis-Cardamine pratensis* grassland) and MG4 *Alopecurus pratensis-Sanguisorba officinalis* grassland.

Phosphorus levels	Not known

Soil profiles

SP1 near q 350

A horizon
0 - 10 cm – very dark, slightly silty sandy loam

B horizon
10 - 20 cm – hint of iron appears in the soil, brown sandy loam with some coal

20 - 30 cm – light-brown sandy loam, amount of sand increases

30 - 70 cm – light-brown very sandy loam with 2% of small stones

SP2 – near q 352

A horizon
0-10 cm sandy loam

B horizon
10-20 cm Sandy silt
20-70 cm sandy clay

C horizon
70-90 cm gravel/sand

No evidence of mottling. Very free draining profile.

Site manager aspirations/objectives
Species rich meadow for AONB, nice backdrop for wedding photos for hotel
Management recommendations
An annual hay cut is highly recommended on this site - even if in the short term, someone has to be paid to remove it (in 2018, FMP have paid for this to happen through the Ellerman fund). If a regular hay cut can be used to reduce the spread of docks and increase the diversity of the sward, then there is great potential not only for this to be a very nice species rich meadow, but also a good quality hay crop. Cutting can on occasion take place in June rather than July, in order to help to control the docks and rushes. There is no reason why both the aspiration for a species rich meadow and a nice backdrop for wedding photos cannot be achieved providing management is consistent.

	Whitewell (Piggery Meadow)
Ellenberg F (moisture tolerance)	6.18
Ellenberg N (fertility)	5.58
Ellenberg R (Reaction)	5.84
Species/quadrat (mean and range /1 m x 1 m)	13.8 (10-16)
NVC (top 2 MAVIS subcommunities)	MG6d MG15