

**Report on *Stachys germanica* (Downy Woundwort)
Worsham Lane SSSI (The Freeboard), Minster Lovell
2024**

Management

On 6 February one of the Cotswold Wardens cut back the new woody growth, mostly Blackthorn suckers, in the area which they had cleared last March. He came the day before the one planned because the continuing wet weather would have made it impossible to carry out the work then. The arisings were raked off by two wardens the following day. There was no rotavation this year.



Young plants



Looking west along the cleared area



Looking east along the cleared area

Katherine Doughty's photographs taken on 11 February 2024

Visit to check on the Downy Woundwort plants by Katherine Doughty on 17 May

Katherine counted 25 plants. All were healthy – the majority of a decent size to flower this year. As might be expected, the surrounding vegetation was thick due to the wet weather but all of it was well below knee level, so no intervention needed. Some plants were near the edge of the path but so far there was no evidence of trampling by people or horses into the area where the plants were growing.



Young plants photographed by Katherine Doughty on 17 May 2024

Survey carried out by Katherine Doughty, Genny Early and Brenda Betteridge on 20 July

The Downy Woundwort plants were in little groups spread out along the area in which management work had been carried out. Most of them were quite close to the area mown for the path but a few were near the hedge. They were holding their own amongst vegetation which was as tall or taller than them. As usual the Blackthorn suckers had grown back vigorously. This section of the Freeboard, due to the management carried out here, has a good selection of typical limestone grassland species. Along the length of the area in which the Downy Woundwort plants were found the hedge on the opposite (south) side had been cut back.



One of flowering plants with White
Campion and Wild Basil



One of flowering plants with docks and
Wild Basil



One of the flowering plants closer to

Genny Early's photographs taken on 20 July 2024

Summary of observations made on 20 July

GPS readings	No. of young plants	No. flowering plants	Approximate height	Position	Comment
SP30678-09637		3	70 cm, 80 cm, 100 cm	Close to path	
SP30674-09640		2	60 cm, 80 cm	Close to path	
SP30668-09642		4	80–100 cm	Close to path	
SP30655-09641		4	50 cm, 80 cm × 2, 100 cm	Close to path	
SP30667-09645		3	15 cm, 40 cm, 80 cm	Close to path	
SP30653-09644		1	80 cm	Close to path	
		1	100 cm	Close to path	Main stem branched
SP30644-09643		3	20 cm, 25 cm, 50 cm	Close to path	
SP30637-09651		3	30 cm × 2, 100 cm	Close to path	
SP30632-09656		1	100 cm	Near the hedge, just past the pole	
SP30625-09653		8	15 cm × 4, 25 cm × 2, 50 cm × 2	Group near the hedge close to a gap made in hedge into adjacent arable field	
		2 in bud	15 cm		
	1 rosette				
	1 extending				
SP30615-09656		4	80 cm × 3, 50 cm		
SP30602-09663		4	75 cm, 100 cm × 3		
SP30597-09659		8	Range 15–100 cm		
Total no. of flowering plants		51			
Total no. of young plants	2				

Brenda Betteridge
for the Wychwood Flora Group

Copies to:

Natural England Conservation Delivery Team

Ellen Lee (Biodiversity Data Services Officer, Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre)

Peter Stroh (Scientific Officer, Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland)

Neil Clennell (CEO, Wychwood Forest Trust)

Ms Debra Roget (Minster Lovell Parish Clerk)

David Morris (BSBI County Recorder)

Dr Chris Thorogood (Deputy Director and Head of Science Oxford Botanic Garden)

Rebecca McNaught (Countryside Access Development Officer, OCC)

Katie Walther (Rights of Way Officer, OCC)