

Species Action Plan:

Marsh Helleborine - *Epipactis palustris* ; Early Marsh Orchid – *Dactylorhiza incarnate*

Current Status and Importance

- Both these species of orchid are included in the Kirklees BAP due to their regional scarcity.
- They both occur at the same site in Kirklees, within the perimeter of an active chemical works.



Figure 1. Marsh Helleborine



Figure 2. Early Marsh Orchid

Habitat

- Marsh Helleborine and the Early Marsh Orchid are both types of orchid that grow in damp, lime rich soils
- They spread by underground creeping rhizomes or wind-borne seed
- Calcareous flushes, fens and dune slacks are the most common habitats. An open aspect is important for their survival.

Distribution

- Within the UK the plant grows as far north as southern Scotland.
- Kirklees has the only known population of this plant within West Yorkshire, although it does occur at other sites in Yorkshire on soils with underlying chalk or limestone.



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Marsh Helleborine & Early Marsh Orchid Populations in Kirklees

- The plants in Kirklees occur on lime rich wastes from past industrial activity . Several other orchid species have been recorded at the site, including Marsh (possible hybrids), Common Spotted (*Dactylorhiza fuchsia*) and Twayblade (*Listera ovata*).

Conservation Issues

As both species occur at this one brownfield site within Kirklees they are both vulnerable as there is little suitable habitat within the region. Issues which may affect survival include:

- The natural regeneration of trees within the site;
- Heavy grazing by rabbits and possibly deer;
- Soil disturbance which may have either positive or negative effects on the plants' survival;
- The possibility that the site could be developed in future years.

Objectives

- Prevent the loss of the colony through development.
- Maintain and preferably increase the number of plants present.
- Research issues regarding the plants' ecology to determine the most appropriate management regime for the site. It is unlikely that there will be other suitable sites for translocation within the district.

Target areas for habitat management and creation

- Existing site.

Targets

- Maintain colony of both species.

Key Links and Organisations

- Site protection: Mitchell Cotts;
- Management and restoration: Kirklees Council.
- Monitoring: Kirklees Wildlife and Landscape Advisory Forum.