SDOS Birding Walks Risk Assessment Form: Woods Mill and Downs Link - primarily a Nightingale focused walk, but also suitable for dawn chorus walk.

Assessor: Tony Benton and kindly amended and endorsed by Val Bentley. : Date of Assessment. 22/3/2022

Location: Woods Mill, near Henfield. Woods Mill is the HQ for Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Brief Description: Woods Mill nature reserve (almost flat throughout); the Mill Stream (flat); possible extension to Downs Link (flat). This walk is not wheel-chair accessible. Participants (especially the leader) should monitor the weather forecast, wear suitable clothing and footwear, and recognise that a busy road has to be crossed with great care. Leader will check route prior to the walk.

Suggested clothing: Warm, waterproof clothing depending on weather conditions; strong footwear or wellington boots - participants should take account of prevailing weather conditions and possibility of walk ending in near darkness. SDOS information re the walk will advise that participants carry a torch.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
Bad weather	All participants	Low / Medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Lightning storms	All participants	Low/ Medium	Cancel or curtail walk	Monitor weather forecast
Snow and ice	All participants	Low	Cancel or curtail walk	Very unlikely in May but monitor weather forecast
Darkness, cloud, fog	All participants	Low	Cancel or curtail walk Advise that torch to be carried	Only a risk if the conditions were very extreme
Hot weather	All participants	Low	Participants to wear suitable clothing and bring a drink	Very unlikely to be a risk with walks held in the evening
Uneven walking surfaces	Might affect less mobile participants	Low	Participants might wish to bring a walking stick or walking pole. Participants need to exercise care	Participants have to make judgements and take care
Muddy conditions	All participants	Low	Participants need suitable footwear and to take care if mud could result in slips and falls	Monitor weather forecast and make use of local intelligence in terms of conditions

Road crossing	All participants	Medium	Try to cross the road from	Participants are expected to
			Woods Mill by going	take great care when cross-
			through the woodland,	ing the road from Woods
			bearing right, which eventu-	Mill to the Mill Stream path
			ally leads to the road and a	
			safe place to cross	
Farm animals	All participants	Low	If farm animals are encoun-	Participants must take care
			tered beyond the Mill	to not corner or spook farm
			Stream, animals should be	animals
			given a wide berth	
Biting insects	All participants	Low	Participants to wear suitable	Participants to judge this in
			clothing and bring if neces-	advance
			sary midge spray or similar	
Obstructive vegetation and	All participants	Low	Participants to exercise care	The route is usually unob-
stingy or thorny plants			along the Mill Stream	structed in May, and is
				cleared by the parish council
Stiles and gates	All participants	Low / Medium	Participants to take care and	If the walk goes as far as the
			ask for assistance if neces-	Downs Link then there is
			sary (such as a steadying	one stile
			hand)	
Snakes	All participants	Low	Suitable footwear mitigates	Snakes not previously en-
			any risk	countered on this route