

## NFSG: Verifying Norfolk fungus records

For some time, the BMS has been considering how to verify fungus records. It is appreciated that any in-depth verification is impracticable, but users of the records, such as Natural England, expect some attempt at verification as is now the case with most other large biodiversity datasets.

The most likely system will be based on that currently used for iRecord which has the following categories:

- 1 ACCEPTED: Correct
- 2 ACCEPTED: Considered correct
- 3 NOT ACCEPTED: Unable to be verified
- 4 NOT ACCEPTED: Incorrect
- 5 UNCONFIRMED: Plausible
- 6 UNCONFIRMED: Not reviewed

One suggestion, at least going forward, is that records submitted by recording groups be given the default designation of [2] unless evidence is presented to the contrary. Category [1] is considered unattainable with fungi unless there is almost perfect agreement of a DNA sequence with a type.

If this is to happen, and I am in favour, it puts an onus on local groups to ensure that identifications have been made as well as they can be. For the vast majority of Norfolk records, I am comfortable that this is so. However, for records of rarer species, particularly those that have not hitherto been recorded in Norfolk, or are in particularly difficult genera, a more rigorous approach is needed.

I have discussed with Tony Moverley how records submitted to the Norfolk Mycota from the beginning of 2026 could be flagged with a 1 to 6 verification indicator in anticipation of FRDBI requirements. It might later be possible to extend this to earlier records.

- Each month I will go through Jenny Kelly's accumulated records for that month. Records for widespread species submitted by known recorders would be tagged **2 ACCEPTED: Considered correct**. This would be virtually all of them.
- For those species which are new for Norfolk, nationally rare or particularly difficult to identify (e.g. some species in *Cortinarius*, *Hebeloma*, *Psathyrella*), I will enter into a dialogue with the recorder to obtain supporting evidence (e.g. photograph, reference to literature used, dried specimen) to try to establish **2 ACCEPTED: Considered correct** status. If it cannot be, some other category will be assigned. I will consult others in areas I am not familiar with, creating an *ad hoc* panel to assess records. In essence, this is what I already do.

## **Fungarium specimens**

Currently, recognition of species new to Britain is unlikely to be made without dried specimens being available for future study. Indeed, without such evidence, historical records are often considered unreliable.

From now on, anyone recording a species not already on the Norfolk Mycota should submit a dried specimen if they can. I can advise recorders on how this should be done. I accept that this will not always be possible but if something interestingly unfamiliar is being examined it is good practice to dry some material as soon as possible, even if this is only part of a fruit body. This will then be available for DNA sequencing should that prove useful. At the earliest opportunity, databases should be consulted to see whether the putative species has been recorded.

It is not necessary to wait until the end of the month to open a discussion; I am always happy to advise on identifications or pass the query onto someone who may be able to.

Yvonne Mynett and I have recently been working at the Castle Museum to organise and document their fungarium. There is a long way to go but that is a place where voucher specimens could usefully be deposited in future. We will be discussing a mechanism for this.

Over the last few years there has been an explosion in 'new for Norfolk' records. Some recorders will already have dried material to support these records and we need to discuss whether any of this could usefully be deposited in the Castle Museum.

Tony Leech *January 2026*