

File ref:

**County:** Leicestershire **Site name:** Grantham Canal

**District:** Melton

**Status:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

**Local Planning Authority:** Melton Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SK 747317 to SK 790359 **Area:** 12.69 (ha) 31.36 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 129 **1: 10 000:** SK 73 SW, SK 73 SE, SK 73 NE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1981 **Date of Last Revision:**

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Other Information:**

**Reasons for Notification:**

The site includes some of the best areas of open water and associated marginal habitats in Leicestershire, and is representative of slow river vegetation communities in central and eastern England.

**Biology:**

The banks of the canal on the towpath side are floristically rich, drier areas having affinities with neutral grassland with the occurrence of plants such as knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius*, while lower down these tend to be replaced by plants of marshland edge such as fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata* and gipsywort *Lycopus europaeus*. Some of the fields on the bank opposite the towpath are grazed down to the water's edge and here a characteristic grazed marsh community dominated by rushes *Juncus spp.*, skullcap and lesser water parsnip *Berula erecta* has developed. This community includes such plants as tubular water dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*. The emergent vegetation of the canal is dominated by stands of branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*, bulrush *Typha latifolia* and common reed *Phragmites communis*. Locally these species are supplemented and partially replaced by stands of arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, flowing rush *Butomus umbellatus* and water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*. The open water is characterised by the abundance of free floating plants such as fat duckweed *Lemna gibba* and, occasionally, water fern *Azolla filiculoides*, while cont...

### **Grantham Canal (cont...)**

typical aquatic plants include broad-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton natans*, Canadian waterweed *Elodea canadensis* and rigid hornwort *Ceratophyllum demersum*. Additional interest is provided by the breeding bird community which includes such typical species as sedge warbler, reed warbler, mallard, coot and moorhen. The diversity of habitats also support a varied terrestrial and aquatic insect community.