

File ref:

**County:** Leicestershire **Site name:** Kilby-Foxton Canal

**District:** Oadby and Wigston/Harborough

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Oadby and Wigston Borough Council/  
Harborough District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SP 611969 **Area:** 36.9 (ha) 91.2 (ac)  
SP 699899

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 140 **1: 25 000:** SP 68 and SP 69  
141

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1956 **Date of Last Revision:** 1981

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1984 **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Other Information:**

**Reasons for Notification:**

The plant and animal communities of the site represent excellent examples of those characteristically associated with slow-flowing lowland rivers in eastern and central England. Within Leicestershire this type of habitat is under increasing threat due to hydrological modification of many of the County's natural catchment systems.

**Biology:**

The canal contains an exceptionally diverse and well-balanced community of pondweeds, nine species of Potamogeton having been recently recorded, including two which are nationally rare. The open water is primarily dominated by fennel-pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus*, small pondweed *P. berchtoldii* exerting local dominance, with hairlike pondweed *P. trichoides*, flat-stalked pondweed *P. friesii*, curled pondweed *P. crispus*, perfoliate pondweed *P. perfoliatus* and broad-leaved pondweed *P. natans* occurring throughout the waterway. Shining pondweed *P. lucens* occurs locally, reflecting the relatively high alkalinity of the water. The submergent plant community also includes stiff-leaved water-crowfoot *Ranunculus circinatus*, Nuttall's waterweed *Elodea nuttallii* and yellow water-lily *Nuphar lutea*.

The banks and shallower margins of the canal support well-developed and diverse assemblages of plants, representing swamp, tall-fen and emergent communities typically associated with sluggish water conditions. Lesser reedmace *Typha angustifolia* and greater reedmace *T. latifolia* form single-species reedswamp. Sweet-flag *Acorus calamus*, branched bur-reed

### **Kilby-Foxton Canal (cont...)**

*Sparganium erectum*, greater pond-sedge *Carex riparia* and bulrush *Scirpus lacustris* are present along much of the waterway, whilst flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus*, greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata*, lesser water-parsnip *Berula erecta* and arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia* occur more locally.

Areas of standing water adjacent to the canal provide additional floristic diversity, supporting swamp communities characteristic of the static water conditions.

A long established, well documented colony of Daubenton's bat in Fleckney Tunnel is an important feature of the site, whilst diverse communities of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates provide additional interest.