

COUNTY: NORFOLK SITE NAME: SHELFANGER MEADOWS

DISTRICT: SOUTH NORFOLK

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

Local Planning Authority: South Norfolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TM 110828 Area: 10.7 (ha.) 26.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 144 1:10,000: TM 18 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): – Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
A new site.

Description:

This site which lies in a tributary valley of the River Waveney is one of the most important areas of unimproved grassland in Norfolk, forming an outstanding example of traditionally managed, herb-rich, hay meadows. For several hundred years the grassland has received an annual hay-cut followed by grazing and this traditional management has ensured the survival of a rich and unusual flora. In addition, diverse marshy grassland has developed in seepage zones where springs emerge on the valley-side.

The damp, neutral grassland is rich in grasses and the more abundant species are crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and smooth meadow-grass *Poa pratensis*. Many herbs are associated with this sward notably meadow saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*, cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*, cowslip *Primula veris*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and an exceptionally large population of green-winged orchids *Orchis morio*. Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* is locally abundant in the damper areas on the valley-floor.

Marshy grassland occurs in flushed areas and is generally dominated by brown sedge *Carex disticha*, carnation sedge *C. panicea* and jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*. Other notable species include marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, early marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, southern marsh orchid *D. praetermissa* marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris*.

Small areas of tall, ruderal vegetation and semi-improved grassland are present on some of the field margins and a stream flows through the site.