

COUNTY: NORFOLK            SITE NAME: SHOTESHAM COMMON

DISTRICT: SOUTH NORFOLK

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

Local Planning Authority: South Norfolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TM 241998            Area: 19.6 (ha.) 48.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 134            1:10,000: TG 20 SW, TM 29 NW

Date Notified [Under 1949 Act]: –            Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified [Under 1981 Act]: 1987            Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:  
A new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Shotesham Common is a valley site in the catchment of the River Tas. Extensive areas of unimproved grassland are now rare in Norfolk due to agricultural improvement but the majority of Shotesham Common has remained under a traditional management regime and a good variety of grassland types are present. These range from permanently wet marshy grassland on the valley bottom, through wet neutral grassland, to drier grassland on the slopes. A stream runs through the site and there is a small area of basic flush on the valley side. The scientific interest of the site is maintained by light grazing and a diverse well developed flora is present with several uncommon species.

The areas of marshy grassland are dominated by blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus*, sharp-flowered rush *J. acutiflorus* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* with frequent bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*. More uncommon species present include marsh lousewort *Pedicularis palustris*, marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris* and common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*.

Wet neutral grassland is present on less waterlogged soils. Grasses are dominant in the sward and the more frequent species are tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*. Herb species are well represented and include cowslip *Primula veris*, common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, common twayblade *Listera ovata* and adder's tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. Small areas of dry, neutral grassland on hummocky ground are dominated by sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and Yorkshire fog with meadow saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and common quaking grass *Briza media*.

The small flush has a bryophyte-dominated carpet with a short-sward vegetation that includes marsh arrow-grass *Triglochin palustris*, common quaking grass and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*.

The site also includes small areas of semi-improved and improved grassland.