

**County:** Hampshire **Site Name:** Warnborough Green SSSI

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Hampshire County Council, Hart District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SU 730520

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 186

**1:10,000:** SU 75 SW

**Area:** 4.7 (ha) 11.6 (ac)

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** –

**Date of Last Revision:** –

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 7 February 1992

**Date of Last Revision:** –

**Confirmed:** 30 September 1992

**Other Information:**

This new site is a Registered Common owned by The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and managed as a Nature Reserve.

**Reasons for Notification:**

Warnborough Green comprises two ancient marshy meadows either side of the River Whitewater, close to the Basingstoke Canal. The site lies on alluvium overlying valley gravel and sands, and has traditionally been grazed by the commoners' livestock. The meadows are an example of a rare and declining grassland habitat: being both species-rich with numerous plants characteristic of unimproved wet grassland and containing several species which are regionally uncommon. The diverse flora also supports an outstanding assemblage of invertebrates, including two national rarities.

The tall, lush sward is dominated by rushes, predominantly hard rush *Juncus inflexus*, but also present is the common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, together with such tall species as great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*. Shorter field layers are dominated by creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. No less than thirteen species of sedge have been recorded including distant sedge *Carex distans*, brown sedge *C. disticha*, long-stalked yellow-sedge *C. lepidocarpa* and flea sedge *C. pulicaris*. Other plants occurring include flat-sedge *Blysmus compressus*, slender spike-rush *Eleocharis uniglumis* and marsh arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris* as well as such wet-loving herbs as bog pimpernel *Anagalis tenella*, abundant early and southern marsh orchids *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and *D. praetermissa* respectively, bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*. Marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris* has been recorded (c. 1980). On slightly drier areas quaking grass *Briza media*, round-fruited rush *Juncus compressus*, and meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* are found.

Additional interest is provided by the small area of alder trees *Alnus glutinosa* at the western end of the northern meadow, and a few clumps of grey willow *Salix cinerea*, with greater tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata* beneath, near the north-eastern corner of the southern meadow. Within the internal ditches are such species as floating and reed sweet-grasses *Glyceria fluitans* and *G. maxima* respectively, purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, water mint *Mentha aquatica*, water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*, hemlock water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata* and brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*.

The order of flies, Diptera, is well represented amongst the outstanding assemblage of invertebrates which the meadows support, including two species which are rare nationally: *Stratiomys potamida*, a soldier fly which prefers vegetation standing in water and *Xylota abiens*, a hoverfly, which breeds in dead wood in damp situations such as those to be found within the small block of alders. A notable beetle, *Chrysolina menthastri*, as its name implies, is dependent on water mint, growing in the ditches.