

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: PRESTON MARSHES

DISTRICT: CANTERBURY/DOVER

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

Local Planning Authority: CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL, Dover District Council

National Grid Reference: TR 234605      Area: 42.9 (ha.) 105.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 179      1:10,000: TR 26 SW, TR 25 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1968      Date of Last Revision: 1981

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

Other Information:

There has been a minor reduction in the boundary.

Reasons for Notification:

This is the last remaining area of fen vegetation in the Little Stour valley. Most of the site consists of beds of common reed *Phragmites australis* with scattered willow scrub. There is a small area of pasture with dykes that contain several uncommon plants. The site is one of only two known localities in Kent for the rare sharp-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius*.

The combination of peaty soils and calcareous water has produced a diverse plant community. The peripheral dykes and those adjacent to the pasture have been kept open by management and are the most diverse. Uncommon plants such as opposite-leaved pondweed *Groenlandia densa*, arrowhead *Sagittaria saggitifolia* and slender-tufted sedge *Carex acuta* occur in these dykes and along their margins. The scarce whorled water-milfoil *Myriophyllum verticillatum* is also found here.

The aquatic flora of the Little Stour is restricted to a few species because of pollution by saline minewater from the Tilmanstone colliery. These plants, such as fennel pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus*, water-star worts *Callitriche* species and unbranched bur-reed *Sparganium emersum* are present in large quantities.

The site attracts many breeding and wintering birds. Lapwing and occasionally redshank breed on the pasture, and large numbers of reed buntings and reed and sedge warblers in the reedbeds. In winter large flocks of waders, especially lapwing and snipe, and wildfowl such as teal and wigeon, use the fields which are often flooded. At this time bearded tits and Cetti's warblers usually roost in the reedbeds.