

File ref:

County: Leicestershire **Site name:** Pasture and Asplin Woods

District: North-West Leicestershire

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

Local Planning Authority: North-West Leicestershire District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 426216 **Area:** 41.9 (ha) 103.5 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 129 **1: 10 000:** SK 42 SW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

The site boundary has been amended.

Reasons for Notification:

The site comprises one of the best examples of ash-hazel woodland in Leicestershire, and is representative of ancient woodland developed on somewhat poorly drained clay soils in Central and Eastern England.

Biology:

Pasture and Asplin Woods have developed on stiff, rather ill-drained soils derived from the underlying Glacial Boulder Clays. The semi-natural woodland is dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior* which occurs together with smaller numbers of oak *Quercus robur*, birch *Betula pendula* and elm *Ulmus* sp. The shrub layer contains abundant hazel *Corylus avellana* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, while there is also prolific growth of woody climbers and ramblers, particularly bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and rose *Rosa arvensis*. Besides the bramble the ground vegetation is characterised by the abundance of bluebell *Endymion non-scriptus*, wood millet *Milium effusum* and rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, and includes a large number of herb species typical of ancient woodland, including wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, sweet woodruff *Asperula odorata*, yellow archangel *Galaebdolon luteum*, early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, greater butterfly orchid *Plantanthera chlorantha* and herb paris *Paris quadrifolia*. In the centre of the wood lies a strip of semi-natural neutral grassland which contains a rich flora, including sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, bitter vetch *Lathyrus montanus*, adder's tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, betony *Betonica officinalis*, spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*. Additional interest is provided by the broad woodland rides, woodland ponds and woodland ditches, which contribute to the

diversity of woodland habitats present and enhance the value of the site for breeding birds and invertebrates.