

File ref:

County: Hampshire

Site Name: Ladle Hill SSSI

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SU 478569

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 174 **1:25,000:** SU 45

Area: 10.37 (ha) 25.62 (ac)

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1978 **Date of Last Revision:** -

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

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

Ladle Hill occupies the steep north and west-facing slopes and the ramparts of a hill fort on the crown of the escarpment. The Site of Special Scientific Interest supports some of the floristically richest chalk grassland on the northern escarpment of the Hampshire Chalk plateau.

The earthwork, in particular, is very rich in species, with up to 38/m² recorded, including an exceptionally good range of downland grasses and large populations of such rare or local plants as field fleawort *Senecio integrifolius*, chalk milkwort *Polygala calcarea*, hairy rock-cress *Arabis hirsuta*, fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* and pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*. The escarpment slopes, though species-rich, support fewer species than the earthwork, but some, notably clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata*, only occur there.

The site is of exceptional importance for its population of the rare July flowering form of the burnt-tip orchid *Orchis ustulata*. This form is morphologically distinct, has a peculiar flowering period and survives now on only about six sites in Britain. Though not at present recognised as being taxonomically a separate species, there is a strong case for protecting all remaining sites.