

**COUNTY:** BEDFORDSHIRE

**SITE NAME:** SWINESHEAD WOOD

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

**Local Planning Authorities:** Bedford Borough Council  
Bedfordshire County Council

**National Grid Reference:** TL 061668

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 153                      **1:10,000:** TL 06 NE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1970                      **Date of Last Revision:**

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1985                      **Date of Last Revision:**

**Area:** 21.57 ha 53.3 ac

**Other information:** This site is part of a Woodland Trust reserve.

### **Description and Reasons for Notification**

Swineshead Wood demonstrates the structural and biological diversity associated with ancient, semi-natural woodland. The wood is an example of ash/maple woodland, characteristic of heavy Oxford and Boulder Clay and has been managed in the past as coppice with standards. Uniformly wet, this site has a rich flora including species associated with ancient woodland sites.

The woodland represents a habitat that has become increasingly scarce both within Bedfordshire and nationally.

The woodland canopy is dominated by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* over a diverse shrub community with coppiced ash, field maple *Acer campestre* and hazel *Corylus avellana* which becomes locally dominant. Other species in the shrub layer include dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, wayfaring tree *Viburnum lantana*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris* and Midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*. Aspen *Populus tremula* forms small groves.

Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* locally dominate the ground flora. Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* becomes common towards the eastern edge and primrose *Primula vulgaris* along the northern edge. Other species include the grasses false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, wood meadowgrass *Poa nemoralis*, tufted hairgrass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus* occurring here at one of its few county localities together with remote sedge *Carex remota* and wood sedge *Carex sylvatica*.

Pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* is a feature of the damp rides together with species which include meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, creeping Jenny *Lysimachia nummularia* and various rushes *Juncus* species.

Additional habitat is provided by a green lane and hedge which borders the southern edge of the wood.

Re-presentation of details approved by Council. Re-typed December 1998.

Site Area calculated by GIS 19 April 1998.