

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** Hainton Sheepwalk

District: East Lindsey

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

Local Planning Authority: East Lindsey District Council

National Grid Reference: TF 184862 **Area:** 2.1 (ha) 5.2 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 122 **1: 10 000:** TF 18 NE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1989 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Hainton Sheepwalk is an area of unimproved acid grassland virtually unique in Lincolnshire in being developed on soils derived from one of the rare outcrops of Spilsby Sandstone. This contrasts with the more usual occurrence in the County of acidic swards on superficial deposits. The steep slopes have prevented improvement, whilst continued grazing has maintained the short species-rich turf with many plants characteristic of acidic freely-draining soils.

Sheeps fescue *Festuca ovina*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and field woodrush *Luzula campestris* are locally dominant. Other grasses include heath grass *Danthonia decumbens* and brown bent *A. vinealis*. Typical herbs of dry acidic grassland such as mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, common cat's-ear *Hypochoeris radicata*, common dog violet *Viola riviniana* and sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella* are present. The north-western aspect of the slope encourages an abundance of mosses, in particular *Dicranum scoparium*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Polytrichum juniperinum* and *Pseudoscleropodium purum*. Scattered gorse scrub *Ulex europaeus* on the slopes adds to the diversity of habitat.

At the foot of the slopes is a small area of marsh dominated by soft rush *Juncus effusus*, jointed rush *J. articulatus* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. This area also supports brown sedge *Carex disticha*, oval sedge *C. ovalis*, bog stichwort *Stellaria alsine* and cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis*.