County:　　　　　　**Lincolnshire**　　　**Site name: Math and Elsea Woods**

District:　　　　　　**South Kesteven**

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

Local Planning Authority:　　South Kesteven District Council

National Grid Reference:　　TF 097183　　　　**Area:**　　　43.0 (ha)　　106.2 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:　130　　　**1: 10 000:**　　TF O1 NE, TF 11 NW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):　　1988　　**Date of Last Revision:**

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Math and Elsea Woods are two adjoining ancient semi-natural woodlands which have developed on Kellaways sand overlying Oxford clay and the adjacent fen gravel. The lighter soils of the fen-edge sands and gravels support pedunculate oak-ash-wych elm woodland, now scarce in lowland Britain, while the heavy, poorly-drained soils typical of the Kesteven Plateau support representative examples of wet ash-wych elm woodland, wet ash-maple woodland and acid pedunculate oak-hazel-ash woodland.

Elsea Wood has a high forest structure, with the woodland canopy dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*. There is a large stand of wych elm *Ulmus glabra* near to the road, which has not escaped the effects of Dutch elm disease. The shrub layer is rather sparse, although coppiced hazel *Corylus avellana* and common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* are present.

Math Wood has a coppice-with-standards structure, principally of pedunculate oak and ash standards over neglected hazel and field maple *Acer campestre* coppice. Wild service *Sorbus torminalis* occurs along the northern and southern boundaries and is spreading into the wood by means of suckers. A rich shrub layer is present, including wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, goat willow *Salix caprea*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*.

Both woodlands have a rich ground flora, with the species composition tending to vary with soil drainage. The well-drained areas are characterised by the dominance of bramble *Rubus fruticosus*,in association with honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, cont...

Math and Elsea Woods (cont...)

bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and hairy wood-rush *Luzula pilosa*. The very wet areas support wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, water avens *Geum rivale*, common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre* and yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*. Elsewhere, other plants typical of these woodland types include ramsons *Allium ursinum*, goldilocks *Ranunculus auricomus*, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, yellow archangel *Galeobdolon luteum*, woodruff *Galium odoratum*, wood forget-me-not *Myosotis sylvatica*, wood melick *Melica uniflora* and wood millet *Milium effusum*.

Woodland plants which are rather more uncommon in the County include thin-spiked wood-sedge *Carex strigosa*, early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, herb paris *Paris quadrifolia*, hard shield fern *Polystichum aculeatum* and hart's-tongue fern *Phyllitis scolopendrium*.