

File ref:

County: Leicestershire **Site name:** Sheet Hedges Wood

District: Charnwood

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

Local Planning Authority: Charnwood Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SK 529087 **Area:** 22.57 (ha) 55.77 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 140 **1: 10 000:** SK 50 NW

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

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

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The site comprises one of the best remaining examples of ash and alder woodland in Leicestershire, and is representative of ancient woodland developed on clay soils in Central and Eastern England.

Biology:

The wood, which is basically of the ash-maple type, has developed on soils derived from strata of the underlying Glacial Boulder Clay and Triassic Keuper Marl. The woodland canopy is characterised by the abundance of ash *Fraxinus excelsior* together with smaller numbers of pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, while the basic constituents of the shrub layer are hazel *Corylus avellana*, field maple *Acer campestre*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, and privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, with rose *Rosa* spp. also common. The ground vegetation contains abundant tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia caespitosa*, rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, red campion *Silene dioica* and enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, together with a range of plants typical of ancient woodland, including yellow archangel *Galeobdolon luteum*, wood anemone *Anemone nemerosa*, wood millet *Milium effusum*, wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, ransoms *Allium ursinum*, toothwort *Lathraea squamaria* and giant bellflower *Campanula latifolia*. In the northern part of the wood sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* has invaded and modified the stand type, while in the south alder *Alnus glutinosa* dominates an area of woodland developed on wetter soils. Within the alder wood the shrub layer is characterised by the presence of dogwood *Swida sanguinea*, *Corylus avellana* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*, while the ground vegetation contains abundant *Mercurialis perennis* and lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*, and frequent bugle *Ajuga reptans*, marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, cleavers *Galium aparine* and wood avens *Geum urbanum*. The centre of the wood is largely bare of trees and is dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.