

COUNTY: LEICESTERSHIRE

SITE NAME: TWENTY ACRE PIECE

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 642211

Area: 8.0 (ha.) 19.7 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 129

1:10,000: SK 62 SW

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 includes some of the best remaining examples of acidic clay grassland in Leicestershire and is representative of such habitat in the English Midlands.

Biology

Twenty Acre Piece is common land which contains a mix of habitats developed on somewhat poorly drained and acidic soils derived from Glacial Boulder Clay. To the south and west of the site occur areas of grassland dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, tufted hair grass *Deschampsia caespitosa* and, locally, mat grass *Nardus stricta* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. In wetter areas, soft rush *Juncus effusus*, hard rush *J. inflexus* and compact rush *J. conglomeratus* are common. The sward contains a range of typical herbs, including heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, betony *Betonica officinalis*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, yellow sedge *Carex demissa*, pill sedge *C. pilulifera* and tawny sedge *C. hostiana*. The grassland areas have been invaded by scrub species, notably silver birch *Betula verrucosa*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, aspen *Populus tremula* and various willows and sallows *Salix* spp. Locally, this scrub has become dense, while to the north and east of the site it has developed into secondary woodland, dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Quercus robur* and *Crataegus monogyna*. The mix of habitats present on the site supports diverse breeding populations of birds and invertebrates.