

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site Name:** Ancaster Valley

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: SK 988430 **Area:** 11.0 (ha) 26.0 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 130 **1: 10 000** SK 94 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

This site is included in 'A Nature Conservation Review'. There are minor deletions from the area originally notified. The site is owned and managed as a county trust reserve.

Reasons for Notification:

The best example of a species-rich limestone grassland in the area with scarce plants on the edge of their range. Communities on the slopes of this narrow glacial overflow valley range from those restricted to permanent unimproved grassland through scrub to woodland.

Biology:

The dominant grasses include upright brome *Bromus erectus* and tor grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*. Quaking grass *Briza media* is abundant. Scarce plants include two not found elsewhere in Lincolnshire and one at its most northerly site in Great Britain. Species characteristic of limestone grassland include kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, purple milk vetch *Astragalus danicus*, clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata*, stemless thistle *Cirsium acaule*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, field gentian *Gentianella campestris*, common rock rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and wild thyme *Thymus praecox*.

The pedunculate oak-ash-beech woodland on the eastern slope also has mature cherry *Prunus avium*. Associated with these are early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, violets *Viola spp.* and traveller's joy *Clematis vitalba*. Areas of continuous scrub to the west and south are dominated by gorse *Ulex europaeus* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.