

**COUNTY:** CAMBRIDGESHIRE      **SITE NAME:** SOUTHORPE MEADOW

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Peterborough City Council

**National Grid Reference:** TF 083032

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 142      **1:10,000:** TF 00 SE

**Date Notified (under 1949 Act):**      **Date of last revision:**

**Date Notified (under 1981 Act):** 1983      **Date of last revision:**

**Area:** 1.8 ha 4.6 ac

**Other information:** This is a new addition to the Cambridgeshire Schedule.

#### **Description and Reasons for Notification**

This meadow is one of the few remaining examples of neutral grassland in Cambridgeshire. It is of a type confined to southern Britain, and maintained traditionally by grazing and/or haymaking. The type is increasingly scarce due to changing agricultural trends.

The meadow shows a ridge and furrow structure and this introduces a range of soil moisture conditions which is reflected in the distribution of species. On the drier areas the sward includes such characteristic species as red fescue *Festuca rubra*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, cowslip *Primula veris* and the green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*. On the damper areas species such as salad burnet *Poterium sanguisorba* and lady's smock *Cardamine pratensis* are characteristic. The diversity of the species-rich sward is further enhanced by an underlying calcareous influence.