

File ref:

**County:** Leicestershire **Site name:** Loughborough  
**Meadows**

**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 538218 **Area:** 63.5 (ha) 156.9 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 129 **1: 10 000:** SK 52 SW

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

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1987 **Date of Last Revision:**

**Other Information:**

Part of the site is managed as a nature reserve by the Leicestershire and Rutland Trust for Nature Conservation.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

This site comprises the largest remaining example of unimproved alluvial flood meadow in Leicestershire (similar grasslands are more common in the Upper Thames region). Nationally, this habitat is becoming scarce as a result of agricultural improvement and flood prevention schemes.

Loughborough Meadows have been managed by traditional methods for centuries, providing long-term ecological stability. They are divided into parcels, which are largely unenclosed. Hay is cut over most of the meadows after an annual auction. Enclosed parcels are grazed in autumn and winter and one area is set aside for summer grazing.

Extensive winter flooding provides a natural nutrient input. Grasses, such as meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*, dominate the sward. Typical herbs include great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, narrow-leaved water-dropwort *Oenanthe silaifolia*, which is not found elsewhere in Leicestershire, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and common meadow-rue *Thalictrum flavum*.

Areas less prone to flooding support species such as lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and meadow saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*. Permanently wet areas are dominated by creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus*. cont...

### **Loughborough Meadows (cont...)**

The Summerpool Brook supports large beds of reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* and contains slender tufted sedge *Carex acuta*, gipsywort *Lycopus europaeus*, celery-leaved buttercup *Ranunculus sceleratus* and other fen species.

A field by the brook is grazed all summer and supports breeding lapwing and redshank.