

File ref:

County: Hampshire **Site Name:** Bere Mill Meadows SSSI

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SU 475477 **Area:** 8.21 (ha) 20.29 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 185 **1:25,000:** SU 44

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

Bere Mill Meadows comprise a group of damp, unimproved herb-rich neutral grassland on the flood plain of the upper Test valley. The sward is dominated by sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, creeping fescue *Festuca rubra* and purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, with a wide range of sedges *Carex* species including the uncommon *Carex pulicaris*, and a great variety of locally distributed wet meadow herbs, for example, bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, water avens *Geum rivale* and marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*, and southern marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*. Some drier areas support a different flora with, for example, cowslips *Primula veris*. The numerous ditches traversing the site – remnants of the old water meadow system – support a taller, more lush fen-type vegetation, comprising floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*, reed sweet-grass *G. maxima*, yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus*, lesser water-parsnip *Berula erecta*, greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata*, and both the lesser and greater pond sedges *C. acutiformis* and *C. riparia*.

The meadows have an extensive frontage along the River Test providing a linear habitat that is particularly valuable for birds and invertebrates.

The meadows represent a type of vegetation formerly widespread in the chalk stream valleys but now much diminished through extensive agricultural improvement, flood control and neglect.