

County: Lancashire **Site Name:** Longworth Clough

District: Blackburn

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

Local Planning Authority: Lancaster County Council
Borough of Blackburn

National Grid Reference: SD 698148 **Area:** 24.43 (ha) 60.37 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50 000 109 **1:10 000** SD 61 NE,
SD 62 SE,
SD 71 NW,
SD 72 SW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1994 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

This is a new site managed by Lancashire Wildlife Trust as a Nature Reserve. The site is adjacent to Oak Field SSSI.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Longworth Clough is situated in the valley of Belmont or Eagley Brook about 1 km west of Egerton in the northern outskirts of Bolton. The underlying rocks are Carboniferous sandstones and shales of the Bowland series, and the valley rises from about 165 m AOD to 200 m AOD. The valley sides have a complex drainage pattern of numerous springs and inter-connected streams. This has contributed to the development of a complex of woodland, wetland and grassland habitats including one of the few examples of alder-sedge woodland in Lancashire, examples of alder-ash and birch-oak woodland and the open ground habitats of base-poor flushes, marshy grassland and acid grassland.

The main area of woodland on the south side of the clough is alder *Alnus glutinosa* and willow *Salix cinerea* with some birch *Betula pendula*, sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. Willow is unusually abundant compared to other clough woods in Lancashire. In places there is a well-developed shrub layer of bird cherry *Prunus padus*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*. The shrub guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*, of local distribution in Lancashire, is frequent on wet, base-rich ground. Under the tree canopy there is a series of alternating springs and flushes and drier ridges. The ridges support Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, broad buckler-fern *Dryopteris dilatata* and wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*. The flushes have abundant great horsetail

Equisetum telmateia, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*. Other woodland herbs present include marsh hawk's-beard *Crepis paludosa*, remote sedge *Carex remota* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*. Throughout there are patches of wood horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum* and the moss *Sphagnum fimbriatum*. This hill slope shows complex transitions between woodland communities related to drainage patterns and soil-water conditions.