

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** Doddington Clay Woods

District: North Kesteven

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

Local Planning Authority: North Kesteven District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 893709 & SK 902711 **Area:** 23.2 (ha) 57.3 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 121 **1: 10 000:** SK 87 SE, SK 97 SW

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

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

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Old Hag and Little Sale Woods are two ancient semi-natural woodlands which have developed on the heavy clay soils derived from scattered outcrops of Lias Clay which occur amongst glacial gravels in the Doddington area of the county. The woods contain representative examples of several stand types now scarce in lowland Britain, such as wet ash-wych elm woodland, acid birch-ash-lime woodland and lowland maple-ash-lime woodland.

Little Sale Wood has a high-forest structure, largely derived through the promotion of former coppice. The woodland canopy is dominated by small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, although both silver birch *Betula pendula* and downy birch *B. pubescens* are locally abundant. Field maple *Acer campestre* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* are scattered throughout the woodland, in addition, shrub species are well represented.

Old Hag Wood has a coppice-with-standards structure, principally of pedunculate oak and ash standards with coppiced hazel *Corylus avellana* and field maple. In the centre of the wood small-leaved lime standards assume local dominance, whereas to the south-east corner small-leaved lime occurs as coppice. The shrub layer includes both common and midland hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and *C. oxyacanthoides*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* and wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*.

Both woodlands have a rich and varied ground flora, reflecting variations in soil moisture and base status. The more acidic areas are characterised by bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, yellow archangel *Galeobdolon luteum*, creeping soft grass *Holcus mollis* and, in Little Sale Wood, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. cont...

Doddington Clay Woods (cont...)

Where conditions are more base-rich, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* is locally abundant. Associated plants include bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia*, early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, water avens *Geum rivale* and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*. The wettest areas, which tend to occur along the broad rides, are characterised by meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, lesser pond sedge *Carex acutiformis* and yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*.

Old Hag Wood is the site of a large heronry and also supports a varied community of other breeding birds including woodcock and five species of warbler.