

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** The Hermitage

District: South Kesteven

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

Local Planning Authority: South Kesteven District Council

National Grid Reference: TF 009266 **Area:** 4.6 (ha) 11.4 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 130 **1: 10 000:** TF 02 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1968 **Date of Last Revision:**

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

1. The site contains a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
2. The boundary of the site has been modified at renotification by a partial deletion.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site, where a moated hermitage once stood, includes examples of both rare and threatened grassland types. Calcareous clay and loam pasture and an area of base-rich marsh have developed on underlying alluvium and glacial boulder clay.

A wide range of grasses occur within the site including creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. The typical herbs of calcareous clay pastures occur in the northern part of the field and include pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, cowslip *Primula veris* and adder's tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*.

A base-rich marsh flora has developed along the central hollow of the field, probably as a result of impeded drainage leading to gleying of the soil. The marsh is characterised by plants such as common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, common marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*.

The vegetation nearer the moat suggest that the soil becomes more calcareous, with plants such as quaking grass *Briza media*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*,
cont...

The Hermitage (cont.....)

lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, downy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens*, purging flax *Linum catharticum* and common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*. Anthills occur in some parts of the field, indicating a long absence of ploughing.

The moat provides an extra habitat of open water with emergent vegetation and in the centre there is an island covered in field maple *Acer campestre*, midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*, willow *Salix* spp. and birch *Betula pubescens*. Growing within and around the moat are wetland plants including false fox-sedge *Carex otrubae*, spiked sedge *Carex spicata*, branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*, lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* and yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*.