

File ref:

County: Hampshire **Site Name:** Peake Wood SSSI

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, Winchester City Council

National Grid Reference: SU 639217

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 185 **1:25,000:** SU 62

Area: 17.6 (ha) 43.49 (ac)

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1978 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

Adjoins Old Winchester Hill National Nature Reserve.

Reasons for Notification:

Peake Wood is considered to be a prime example of ash/hazel woodland on calcareous soils. It lies on a west-facing chalk slope on which there are variable depths of loamy material mixed with chalk flints. The woodland is mainly old hazel *Corylus avellana* coppice, with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, field maple *Acer campestre*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, yew *Taxus baccata*, and some conifers. There are a wide range of other woody species and a rich herb layer dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. Rare plants include common star of Bethlehem *Ornithogalum umbellatum* and fly orchid *Ophrys insectifera*.

The eastern side of the Site of Special Scientific Interest, on a steeply sloping west-facing bank, is in the early stages of succession, with interesting areas of herb-rich grassland among hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and bramble *Rubus* species. This area shows signs of developing into yew and mixed deciduous woodland.