

COUNTY: CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** WILBRAHAM FENS

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

Local Planning Authorities: South Cambridgeshire District Council

National Grid Reference: TL 520590

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 154 **1:10,000:** TL 55 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1959 **Date of Last Revision:** 1971

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

Area: 61.1 ha 148.5 ac

Other information: The site has been reduced during the 1984 renotification.

Description and Reasons for Notification

The site is a large area of fen and neutral grassland with associated scrub and open water communities. Similar fens are now rare in Britain and now occur only in a few scattered inland localities, mainly in East Anglia.

A large part of the site consists of common reed *Phragmites australis* which occurs as dense stands. Other fen species such as purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria* and meadow rue *Thalictrum flavum* occur within these areas. The grassland communities include rough wet pastures dominated by tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* together with areas of species-rich sward characterised by plants such as the quaking grass *Briza media* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*, together with herbs such as the harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* and field scabious *Knautia arvensis*.

Substantial areas of willow and hawthorn scrub occur on the site and these are of additional value to insect and bird communities as are the drainage ditches throughout the site which are relatively unpolluted, many thus being rich in emergent plants.