

County: Hampshire **Site Name:** The Wild Grounds SSSI

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, Gosport Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SU 580010

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 196 **1:25,000:** SU 50

Area: 27.35 (ha) 67.58 (ac)

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

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

Other Information:

Local Nature Reserve declared 1979. Owned and managed by Gosport Borough Council

Reasons for Notification:

The Wild Grounds Local Nature Reserve is an acid oakwood on the Brickearth of the south Hampshire coastal plain. It has no known history of management and probably developed naturally on former common land in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. It is dominated by uneven-aged pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with scattered yew *Taxus baccata*, field maple *Acer campestre* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. The shrub layer is confined to scattered hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and holly *Ilex aquifolium* and the ground flora is dominated by bracken *Pteridium*, butcher's-broom *Ruscus aculeatus* and wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*. The epiphytic lichen flora is poor. The reserve includes *Molinia* tussock grassland and a sedge fen on the edge of the River Alver flood plain. Though not specially rich, the Wild Grounds represents a woodland type formerly widespread on coastal commons in Hampshire. Its natural origins and age structure, dominated by old trees which will be permitted to live their natural life span, are of great ecological and historical interest.