

File ref:

County: Leicestershire **Site name:** Chater Valley

District: Harborough

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

Local Planning Authority: Harborough District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 804045 **Area:** 3.8 (ha) 9.4 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 141 **1: 10 000:** SK 80 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981 **Date of Last Revision:**

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

The site includes some of the best remaining examples of neutral grassland and spring-fed marsh in Leicestershire. These habitats are representative of grassland and marsh communities developed on neutral soils in central England.

Chater Valley combines a mosaic of semi-natural habitats occupying the valley slopes of the River Chater and developed on clays and marlstone of the Jurassic Middle Lias series. Areas of species-rich neutral pasture, in places characterised by an abundance of ant hills, occupy much of the southern slope. The sward contains a rich herb flora which includes tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, betony *Betonica officinalis*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and one of the few Leicestershire populations of moonwort *Botrychium lunaria*. At several places along the valley and particularly at the eastern end of the site, spring-fed marshes occur. These are characterised by the abundance of great horsetail *Equisetum telmateia* and wood club-rush *Scirpus sylvaticus* and the community includes such typical plants as marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, angelica *Angelica sylvestris* and opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*. Additional interest is provided by areas of woodland and scrub, and also by the clean-water stream of the River Chater itself. The diversity of plant communities provides ideal habitat for a varied breeding bird community and invertebrate fauna.