

File ref:

County: Hampshire **Site Name:** Binswood SSSI

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SU 764370 **Area:** 62.1 (ha) 153.4 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 186 **1:25,000:** SU 73

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

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

Other Information:

Registered and confirmed as a common, with common rights and grazing, estovers, turbary, etc.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Binswood represents a fragment of the old Royal Forest of Woolmer, still managed as a pasture woodland with common rights of grazing.

The vegetation consists primarily of acidic poorly-drained unimproved pasture overlying Gault Clay and Sand, with scattered old oaks and beeches, areas of denser woodland with a sparse shrub layer and ground flora, and former encoppicements now open to grazing.

The pasture is dominated by bents, especially *Agrostis stolonifera* and *A. capillaris*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and soft rush *Juncus effusus*, with abundant lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, amongst other herbs characteristic of damp acid grassland.

The woodland exhibits a varied age structure, though many of the oldest generation of trees were removed in the 1970s, and regeneration is sparse because of the grazing pressure. The oldest remaining trees are probably 150–200 years old and they support a rich corticolous lichen flora, recognised as being of county importance.

The former encoppicements support a rich ground flora, dominated by bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and including yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and wood-sedge *Carex sylvatica*.

Entomologically the site is rich, with a wide range of groups well-represented. For example, 27 species of butterfly have been recorded in recent years, together with eight species of grasshoppers and crickets, and a range of species dependent on dead and dying wood.

Overall, the site is a characteristic example of a rare habitat—actively managed wood pasture.