

File ref:

County: Hampshire **Site Name:** Bransbury Common SSSI

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SU 409413 **Area:** 155.63 (ha) 384.56 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 185 **1:25,000:** SU 34, 44

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951 **Date of Last Revision:** –

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

Other Information:

Part registered and confirmed as common land with rights of pasture and piscary. Boundary altered in 1984 to exclude an area of improved pasture.

Reasons for Notification:

This site lies on the flood plain of the upper Test valley and consists of two main elements.

1. The Common: the major soil formation is of peat over gravel and the dominant plant association over most of the area is purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*/greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata*. This sward is moderately grazed by cattle and is open, allowing local dominance of common sedge *Carex nigra* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, with meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*. In areas with a more silty soil a rich grass/sedge community is present with Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, creeping fescue *Festuca rubra*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, heath grass *Sieglingia decumbens*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, carnation sedge *C. panicea*, star sedge *C. echinata* and flea sedge *C. pulicaris*. Other species of interest on the common include petty whin *Genista anglica*, bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and bristle club-rush *Isolepis setacea*.

2. Disused Water Meadow: these are especially good examples of ecologically interesting disused (pre-1930) water meadows on a heavier soil than the common and are characteristically dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, meadow fescue *Festuca pratensis*, *F. rubra*, *Holcus lanatus* and rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis* with the hybrid *Festulolium* frequent. *Menyanthes trifoliata*, yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus*, lady's smock *Cardamine pratensis*, early marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and marsh marigold *Caltha palustris* are also present.

The meadows and the common embrace a remarkable range of grassland and grass/sedge communities, probably unparalleled in southern England.