

County: Lancashire **Site Name:** Mere Sands Wood

District: West Lancashire

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

Local Planning Authority: West Lancashire District Council

National Grid Reference: SD 448157 **Area:** 41.0 (ha) 101.3 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50 000 108 **1:10 000** SD 41 NE, NW

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

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

Other Information:

1. This is a new site.
2. Lancashire Trust for Nature Conservation Reserve.

Reasons for Notification:

Mere Sands Wood is situated approximately 1 km west of the village of Rufford and is a planted oakwood now substantially modified by sand extraction.

The site is notified solely on the basis of its geological interest which may be defined as follows:

Mere Sands Wood is a key Quaternary site providing the best sections available in the Shirdley Hill Sand of Lancashire, an extensive sequence of periglacial coversands of Devensian late glacial age. The sands, derived from fluvioglacial sediments, were deposited under aeolian conditions during the Loch Lomond Stadial. Layers of organic-rich sediment interbedded with the sands indicate periods of stability during deposition and have provided pollen and, elsewhere, radiocarbon date which establishes their age. The sands probably became stabilised during the early Flandrian, but subsequent reactivation occurred locally later in the Flandrian after the elm decline as a result of forest clearance. Mere Sands Wood is a critical reference site for studies of the Shirdley Hill Sand and provides important evidence for interpreting geomorphological processes and environmental changes during the Devensian lateglacial and Flandrian in north-west England.

Sand extraction has created several large pools which attract a number of bird species.