

**COUNTY:** Berkshire/Surrey; **SITE. NAME:** Windsor Forest and Great Park

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

**Local planning Authorities:** Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey County Council

**National Grid Reference:** SU940730, SU970685, SU975725

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:**175 **1:10,000:** SU96 NE, SU97 NW, SW, SE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1973 **Date of Last Revision:** 1975

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** 24 October 2001

**Area:..** 1777.23 ha

### Reasons for Notification

Windsor Forest and Great Park farms part of the largest continuous tract of woodland and parkland in Berkshire. The site provides habitat for a range of rare species of invertebrate which include the internationally important violet click beetle *Limoniscus wolaceus* and stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* and a rich assemblage of other Red Data book beetles and flies. The range of provisional Red Data List fungi present includes *Buglossoporus pulvinus*, *Phelinus robustus*, *Boletus regius* and *Hericium coralloides*. In addition there are areas of unimproved acid grassland

### General description

A range of habitats are represented, from coniferous and mixed plantations through mature and over-mature broadleaved woodland to wood pasture and parkland Relicts of the primary forest still survive as ancient oak pollards scattered throughout the Park and Forest. Veteran trees occur with a mosaic of unimproved and semi-improved grassland and grass-heath. Many of these ancient trees are over 500 years old and some reputed to be up to 800 years. Of equal importance, although not reaching such a great age, are numerous over-mature beech trees *Fagus sylvatica*. Being partially hollow and decayed, the oaks and beech afford habitats for a number of extremely rare and specialised insects, particularly beetles, some of which are unknown elsewhere in the British Isles, as well as nesting sites for several species of hole-nesting birds. Groves of hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* are favoured by hawfinches *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* including one of the largest wintering flocks of this species in Britain.

Windsor Forest and Great Park is second only to the New Forest with regard to the diversity of its invertebrate fauna. It is particularly noted for its rare beetles and flies. An impressive list of nearly 2,000 species of beetles has been recorded in recent years, many of which are endangered and vulnerable. Importantly these include beetles which rely on old trees and dying and decayed wood. These include the violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus* and a number of other click beetles and stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*. Many species of fungi occur,

including some which are extremely rare such as *Buglossoporus pulvinus*, *Phelinus robustus*, *Boletus regius* and *Hericium coralloides*.

The site also includes Great Meadow Pond, a secluded lake of importance for waterfowl, and areas of unimproved species-rich acid grassland such as that around Snow Hill, with a diverse flora including adder's tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, mat grass *Nardus stricta*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, bitter vetch *Lathyrus montanus*, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* and many other species in a mosaic of short, dry turf, tall grassland and wet flushes.