

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: NEW BUCKENHAM COMMON

DISTRICT: Breckland

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

Local Planning Authority: Breckland District Council

National Grid Reference: TM 094908 Area: 20.0 (ha) 49.4 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 144 1:10,000: TM 09 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): N/A Date of Last Revision: N/A

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

Other Information:

A new site. Forms part of a registered common. Freehold is owned by the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust.

Reasons for Notification:

New Buckenham Common is a large area of unimproved grassland with a traditional management of light grazing by cattle. A variety of grassland types are present which reflect the alkalinity/acidity and drainage of the underlying soils. A number of uncommon plant species occur including the Green-winged Orchid *Orchis morio* which is present in some abundance.

Neutral grassland covers the majority of the site with Sheep's Fescue *Festuca ovina* and Common Bent Grass *Agrostis capillaris* the principal species on the drier soils. Associated species include Cowslip *Primula veris*, Meadow Saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*, Bird'sfoot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Adder's Tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and the largest colony of Green-Winged Orchids now remaining in Norfolk.

Poorly drained soils, in the area of a small stream that bisects the site, are dominated by Marsh Foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* and Tufted Hair Grass *Deschampsia caespitosa* with frequent Common Quaking Grass *Briza media*, Cuckoo Flower *Cardamine pratensis*, Harsh Rush *Juncus inflexus* and Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*.

Small areas of calcareous grassland with abundant Sheep's Fescue and Crested Hair Grass *Koeleria macrantha* occur on hummocks in an area of undulating ground. A number of calcicoles are present including Large Thyme *Thymus pulegioides*, Dwarf Thistle *Cirsium acaule*, Hoary Plantain *Plantago media* and Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*.

Acidic grassland has developed on free-draining soils in an area of old sand pits. Sheep's fescue is dominant with frequent Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* and scattered bushes of Gorse *Ulex europaeus*.

A sizeable pool is present on the site and contains a number of water plants including Common Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus aquatilis*, Water Starwort *Callitriche stagnalis* agg. and Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*. Small seasonal ponds with abundant Tubular Water Dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa* occur in the undulating ground. These wetland features provide additional interest to the site.

Hawthorn scrub is locally well developed, and provides a habitat for nesting birds including Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat and Linnet.