COUNTY: BERKSHIRE SITE NAME: WYKERY COPSE

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

1981

Local Planning Authorities: Bracknell District Council, Berkshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SU851686

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 175 **1:10,000:** SU86 NW, SU86 NE

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

Area: 3.15 ha 7.79 ac

Description and Reasons for Notification

Wykery Copse is a fragment of ancient broadleaved woodland of a kind now drastically reduced in Berkshire, situated on London Clay on the fringe of Bracknell. It is exceptionally diverse for its size, in terms of both woodland stand-types and herbaceous flora, and it contains several rarities. Its interest is enhanced still further by the small stream which flows through it.

Woodland types include wet ash-maple, valley and base-rich springline alder, and oak, with birch and hazel. There are intermediate grades, and all types except oak have been coppiced at various times. Some English elm survives, and there is a thriving colony of the rare wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis*. Other trees include gean, rowan, holly, crack and grey willows, aspen, crab apple and poplars *Populus serotina* of planted origin. Coppiced hazel is a major component of the dense and varied understorey, which also includes blackthorn, hawthorn, honeysuckle, wild red currant *Ribes sylvestre*, guelder rose and dogwood, this last unusual on London Clay.

The ground flora contains a mosaic of bramble and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*, with more open areas, including the course of the stream, favouring a very wide range of herbaceous species, many of which (like wild service and several of the shrubs) testify to the long history of the copse. These include several rare or local species, such as the sedges *Carex strigosa* and *C. pallescens*, early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, yellow pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*, wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, figwort *Scrophularia nodosa*, wood speedwell *Veronica montana* and the grasses *Melica uniflora*, *Milium effusum* and *Bromus ramosus*. There is a luxuriant moss flora in parts, with *Hypnum cupressiforme* being particularly abundant.

The range of invertebrates and breeding birds appears to be good and warrants further investigation.