

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SITE NAME: FOSTER'S GREEN
MEADOWS

DISTRICT: WYCHAVON

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL,
Wychavon District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 978648

Area: 12.3 (ha.) 30.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150

1:10,000: SO 96

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971

Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

The site is managed as a reserve by the Worcestershire Nature Conservation Trust.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Foster's Green Meadows are a nationally important complex of ancient meadows situated on the damp rich soils of the lias clays of north Worcestershire.

Eades Meadow has a rich varied flora, notable for the abundance of meadow saffron *Colchicum autumnale* and green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*. These are associated with lowland hay meadows on heavy soils. This community is rich in grass species such as meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and hairy oat grass *Helictotrichon pubescens*. A particular feature is the abundance of ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, which has been noted nationally as a characteristic of meadows containing an abundance of meadow saffron. Many other interesting plants also occur in this meadow, including adders tongue *Ophioglossum viride*, pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, cowslip *Primula veris* and dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*.

The other meadows through having been subject to many years of spring and summer grazing have developed very different plant communities adapted to this grazing management. These are characterised by the grasses crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, tufted hair grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and common bent-grass *Agrostis tenuis*. The herb content is less rich than Eades Meadow but they still contain many interesting species such as devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, lady's mantle *Alchemilla vulgaris* and hoary plantain *Plantago media*.

The hedgerows associated with the meadows are ancient in character with many large oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* present. Formerly there were also many English elm *Ulmus procera*, but these have been badly affected by Dutch elm disease.

The diversity of vegetation at Foster's Green encourages an equal richness of insect, bird and mammal life. Fourteen species of butterfly have been recorded.

The meadows provide ideal habitat for such birds as Curlew *Numenius arquata*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, green and greater-spotted woodpeckers *Picus viridis* and *Dendrocopos major*, which are regularly seen here.