

File ref:

County: Hampshire **Site Name:** Burton Common SSSI

Local Planning Authority: Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council

National Grid Reference: SZ 195955 **Area:** 38.5 (ha) 95.1 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 195 **1:25,000:** SZ 19

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1978 **Date of Last Revision:** –

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

Other Information:

Not registered as a Common.

A small area of commercial woodland was excluded from the SSSI in 1984.

Reasons for Notification:

A substantial tract of mature dry heath on relatively free-draining soils. About 25% of the area has been colonised by Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris* to varying densities, and a belt of mixed deciduous woodland flanking a stream traverses the site. The heather *Calluna vulgaris* is considerably older than in any known New Forest site and the older plants are degenerate, giving way to a luxuriant bryophyte and lichen flora in which young heather plants are colonising. Both in its age structure and in the absence of grazing, the site provides a sharp ecological contrast with the nearby New Forest. Notably, dwarf gorse *Ulex minor* (a species removed by grazing in the New Forest) is co-dominant with heather over wide areas. The Common supports populations of sand lizards *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snakes *Coronella austriaca*, which are essentially associated with the mature, dry heath, and is one of only three known sites for the former in the New Forest area.