

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 31 JANUARY 1990

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

SITE NAME: MOSS VALLEY MEADOWS

DISTRICT: NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE SITE REF: 15 WM7

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

Local Planning Authority: DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, North East Derbyshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 385822,
SK 387813,
SK 389803

Area: 16.7 (ha.) 41.2 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 110

1:10,000: SK 38 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1990

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The Moss Valley is situated on the eastern side of the Pennines on the south side of the City of Sheffield. It is a wide valley of about 4 square miles formed by the Moss Brook and its tributaries which rise at the western end of the valley. The Moss Brook is a small fast-flowing stream of high quality water. The valley is situated on the shales and sandstones of the Lower Coal Measures (Upper Carboniferous), giving a wide range of soil types and fertility.

The area is virtually surrounded by urbanisation and industrialisation, contrasting sharply with the rural semi-natural communities of the Moss Valley. The landscape consists of a mosaic of arable and pasture fields with many old hedgerows, woodlands, green lanes, small wetland areas, ditches and water courses.

The site comprises three separate sections, all on north-facing slopes.

The soils of the meadows are neutral to acidic with many areas of flushing. The meadows form a series of species-rich grasslands reflecting the type of soil and are the most diverse examples from the few remaining unimproved pastures in the Moss Valley and the adjacent lower-lying areas of NE Derbyshire where very few semi-natural grasslands now remain.

The plant and animal communities include several local and rare species.

The dry grasslands, found mainly on the central and northern sections of the site, are dominated by bent grass *Agrostis* sp. and fescue *Festuca* sp. and are characterised by dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, betony *Stachys officinalis* and cowslip *Primula veris*. Other species include lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, and abundant purging flax *Linum catharticum*, growing in an uncharacteristic assemblage of species.

The wet grasslands, found mainly on the southern section of the site are dominated by bent grass, sedges *Carex* spp., rushes *Juncus* spp. and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, and are characterised by carnation sedge *Carex panicea*,

sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, jointed rush *J. articulatus*, marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris* and lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*. Other species include southern marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, ragged-robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius* and an abundance of the locally scarce sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*.

Most of the meadows are surrounded by old hedgerows from which 16 shrub species have been recorded, including field maple *Acer campestre*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and aspen *Populus tremula*. Hedgerow trees include pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, wych elm *Ulmus glabra* and alder *Alnus glutinosa*. The hedgerow flora includes many woodland species such as yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon* and wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*.

Ancient woodland of ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wych elm forms part of the northern-most section of the site, with oak *Quercus* sp., wild cherry *Prunus avium* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*. Within these areas some beech and sycamore have been planted. The understorey of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and holly *Ilex aquifolium* has regenerating ash, oak and hawthorn beneath.

The site has a wide range of insects with an abundance of common butterflies, including common blue *Polyommatus icarus*. Two rare hoverflies, *Xylota florum* and *Syrphus torvus* have been recorded.