

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** Kirton Wood

District: South Kesteven

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

Local Planning Authority: South Kesteven District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 980330 **Area:** 30.5 (ha) 75.4 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 130 **1: 10 000:** SK 93 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1968 **Date of Last Revision:**

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

1. Kirton Wood is a nationally important site listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' edited by D. A. Ratcliffe, Cambridge University Press - 1977.
2. The boundary of the site has been modified at re-notification by an extension.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Kirton Wood is a species-rich example of ash-lime woodland, a woodland type which is mainly concentrated in Lincolnshire and neighbouring counties. It is one of a group of similar ancient woodlands developed on the calcareous clay soils of the Kesteven plateau, but is unusual in its abundance of small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*.

The wood has a coppice-with-standards structure. Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* are dominant over much of the wood, with small-leaved lime abundant in the eastern half. At the southern end of the wood, aspen *Populus tremula* and birch *Betula* spp. form part of the canopy.

The varied understorey consists mainly of coppiced hazel *Corylus avellana* and field maple *Acer campestre*, and also includes mildly calcicole species such as wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and spindle *Euonymus europaeus*.

A rich ground flora is present, with water avens *Geum rivale* dominant in the wetter areas and plants such as dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* locally dominant elsewhere. Frequent species include bugle *Ajuga reptans*, lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*, false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, pignut cont...

Kirton Wood (cont...)

Conopodium majus, wood forget-me-not *Myosotis sylvatica*, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, and common dog-violet *Viola riviniana*. Occasional patches of more acidic soil support bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis* and scaly male-fern *Dryopteris affinis*.

Less common plants such as nettle-leaved bellflower *Campanula trachelium* and broad-leaved helleborine *Epipactis helleborine* also occur within the wood.

South of Kirton Wood is an area of damp unimproved neutral grassland with several plants characteristic of calcareous clay pastures, including quaking grass *Briza media*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. The tall vegetation present in this area provides an ideal habitat for invertebrates.