

COUNTY: DEVON

SITE NAME: PARK FARM MEADOWS

DISTRICT: EAST DEVON

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

Local Planning Authority: EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL, Devon County Council

National Grid Reference: SY 294952

Area: 5.9 (ha.) 14.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 193

1:10,000: SY 29 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1991

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site consists of a group of herb-rich meadows supporting representative examples of a type of neutral grassland which is rapidly declining in extent nationally, and which is now rare in Devon.

The site lies on the lower slopes of a small valley in East Devon near Axminster, on Triassic mudstones. The soils are alluvial and brown earth gleys, and are mostly freely draining.

The main plant community is characterised by the presence of Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, with Heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens*, Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* and Field Wood-rush *Luzula campestris*.

A wide variety of other plant species are present including Common Twayblade *Listera ovata*, Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* and an unusually diverse suite of sedges including Glaucous Sedge *Carex flacca*, Spring-sedge *C. caryophyllea*, Carnation Sedge *C. panicea*, Pale Sedge *C. pallescens* and Pill Sedge *C. pilulifera*. Green-winged Orchid *Orchis morio*, a very local plant in Devon, is present as is Corky-fruited Water-dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides*, a nationally scarce species.

An area of marshy ground along the stream adds diversity to the site, being dominated by Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Ragged-Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*.

The central field, whilst supporting the same grassland community, is not as herb-rich as the remainder of the site, being dominated by Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* with Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*.