

COUNTY: DORSET      SITE NAME: BUGDENS COPSE AND MEADOWS

DISTRICT: EAST DORSET

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

Local Planning Authority: DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL, East Dorset District Council

National Grid Reference: SU 089088      Area: 7.61 (ha.) 18.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 195      1:10,000: SU 00 NE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1990      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site comprising Bugdens Copse and the adjoining meadows lies within the urban setting of Verwood on soils derived from the Bagshot Beds. Bugdens Copse is, in part, of ancient origin and the meadows too appear to have been established for a considerable period, a fact reflected by their rich floristic composition. Many species present are now only found in such old grassland communities which are now uncommon both nationally and in Dorset.

The meadows north of Bugdens Copse support a variant of the Crested Dog's-tail–Common Knapweed *Cynosurus cristatus*–*Centaurea nigra* type of neutral grassland. Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Brown Bent *A. canina*, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Heath Grass *Danthonia decumbens* and Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus* are frequent in the sward, which also has a strong sedge component. Oval Sedge *Carex ovalis*, Common Yellow-sedge *C. demissa*, Common Sedge *C. nigra* and Carnation Sedge *C. panicea* are all common.

There is a high diversity of herbs including abundant Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata* and Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*. Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria* also occur and there is an unusual abundance of Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*.

Where drainage is impeded, wetter areas have developed and here Ragged-Robin *Lynchnis flos-cuculi*, Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* and Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* are found. Several shallow channels occur in the northernmost meadow and these support several species not found more

generally on the site including Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Bog Pimpernel *Anagallis tenella* and Bristle Club-rush *Isolepis setacea*.

South of Bugdens Lane is another area of grassland, with invading scrub. Many of the herbs and grasses present in the northern meadows occur, including Dyer's Greenweed and Heath Spotted-orchid, but the presence in this sward of Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and stands of Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* indicate more acidic soil conditions.

Woodland of the Downy Birch–Purple Moor-grass type adjoins this grassland. Here the canopy largely consists of Downy Birch *Betula pubescens* with occasional mature Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*. The ground flora is dominated by Purple Moor-grass with locally abundant Common Cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense*. Low lying areas have carpets of bog mosses, *Sphagnum palustre* and *S. recurvum*.

The main area of Bugdens Copse is of ancient origin and is characteristic of the Oak–Bracken–Bramble woodland type. The most frequent canopy tree is Oak, with occasional Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Aspen *Populus tremula*. The shrub layer is dominated by Hazel *Corylus avellana* with frequent Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and occasional Guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus*. Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* are frequent and the variety of herbs includes Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Pignut *Conopodium majus* and Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*.