

COUNTY: HEREFORD AND
WORCESTER

SITE NAME: PORTWAY FARM MEADOWS

DISTRICT: WYCHAVON

SITE REF: 15 P3M

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL,
Wychavon District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 986548

Area: 2.45 (ha.) 6.05 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150

1:10,000: S0 95 NE, SO 95 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 19.4.93

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Portway Farm Meadows are located on the East Worcestershire plain half a kilometre east of the village of Flyford Flavell. The two meadows overlie a medieval ridge and furrow system and have been maintained by traditional management as hay meadows and pasture. The soils are poorly drained and slightly calcareous (base rich) derived from the underlying Lower Lias clay of the Jurassic Period.

The special interest of the site lies in the diversity of the semi-natural grassland sward with its rich assemblage of herbs and grasses. The dominant vegetation mesotrophic (neutral) grassland, is characterised by common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. The more calcareous soils support the lady's-bedstraw *Galium verum* sub-community of this grassland type, with characteristic species present including agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, hoary plantain *Plantago media* and salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*. Both meadows contain a rich assemblage of associated plants. Frequent species on the ridges include cowslip *Primula veris*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* agg., rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus* and autumn hawkbit *L. autumnalis*. The southern meadow is floristically the richest, with 22 species of grass including downy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens*, tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, quaking-grass *Briza media* and meadow brome *Bromus commutatus*. Locally uncommon species occurring include dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, adder's tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and spiny restharrow *Ononis spinosa*.

The furrows are less herb dominated but contain a rich grass flora which includes yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* and tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea*. Some of the furrows in the southern meadow are seasonally wet and have a modified vegetation type conforming to the yellow oat-grass sub-community of the perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* – crested dog's-tail grassland.

Both meadows are bounded on three sides by species-rich hedgerows which contain English elm *Ulmus procera*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* and field maple *Acer campestre*.