

File ref:

**County:** Hampshire      **Site Name:** Bourley and Long Valley

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Hampshire County Council, Surrey County Council, Hart District Council, Rushmoor Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SU 835515      **Area:** 819.70 (ha) ? (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 186      **1:10,000:** SU 85 SW, SU 85 SE, SU 84 NW

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 15 Oct. 1993      **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Date Confirmed:** 15 June 1994

**Other Information:**

This site includes land proposed for designation as a Special Protection Area under the EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

The site comprises a diverse mosaic of heathland, woodland, mire, scrub and grassland habitats. Such habitat diversity supports a rich flora and fauna including nationally scarce plants, nationally rare insects and three bird species listed in Annex 1 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. The majority of the site is underlain by gently undulating deposits of gravels and sands from the Tertiary era, with Quaternary gravel deposits forming a high ridge to the south of the site and Quaternary Barton sand deposits exposed in Long Valley. Wetter areas such as Bourley Bottom and Long Bottom are underlain by Bagshot Beds.

The dry heathland areas are dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bell heather *Erica cinerea* and dwarf gorse *Ulex minor* with bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* a frequent associate. Extensive patches of dodder *Cuscuta epithymum* occur on dense heather areas. Cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* is found in more humid heathland areas, with purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* dominating locally. The acidic grassland includes areas dominated by bristle bent *Agrostis curtisii*, a grass with a restricted distribution in south-east England. Scrub, dominated by gorse *Ulex europaeus*, forms part of this habitat mosaic.

Springs and ditches, and valleys where drainage is impeded, support valley mire communities. Here, cross-leaved heath and bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp., dominate, with other typical bog plants occurring including common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and the nationally scarce marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*. The nationally scarce pale dog-violet *Viola lactea* is also found on the site.

The rich invertebrate fauna includes three nationally rare species,\* ruby-tailed wasp *Chrysis fulgida* and the heathland flies *Pelecocera tricincta* and *Thyridanthrax fenestratus*. Three nationally scarce heathland insects include the potter wasp *Eumenes coarctatus*, silver-studded blue butterfly *Plebejus argus* and downy emerald dragonfly *Cordulia aenea*.

The mixture of open heathland, scrub, sandy areas and clearings in the coniferous woodland provide habitat for heathland birds including three particularly vulnerable species on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive; woodlark *Lullula arborea*, nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*. The site also supports a small breeding population of hobby *Falco subutteo* which is important in a British context,\*\* and on a European basis as a migratory species. Nationally important populations of the adder *Vipera berus* are also found.

\* Nationally rare species are equivalent to those listed in the British Red Data Book which includes those considered endangered, vulnerable or rare.

\*\* Schedule 1 birds as listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended).