

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: LORD'S WOOD MEADOWS

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS SITE REF:

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,
Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 730552, SO 732551 Area: 6.72 (ha.) 16.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149, 150 1:10,000: SO 75 NW

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

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

Other Information:
New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Lord's Wood Meadows lie at the northern end of the Malvern Hills, south of the River Teme and three kilometres west of the Worcestershire village of Broadwas. The meadows lie on uneven ground comprised of steep knolls and valleys ranging in topography from level ground to steep slopes. The site overlies an area of complex geology, at a juncture between the Lower Old Red Sandstones of the Devonian period and Silurian Limestones.

The special interest of the site lies in the diversity of the semi-natural grassland sward. The site is currently managed by grazing, but hay cutting has also been part of the traditional management. The dominant vegetation is mesotrophic (neutral) grassland characterised by common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. The two fields are a mosaic of the heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* and meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* sub-communities. One field is crossed by spring-line flushes supporting mire vegetation; these features are increasingly threatened by lowering water tables.

The western half of the larger field is steeply sloping, with areas of bracken and scrub at the top of the knoll. The flora is diverse, reflecting the variety of soil types. Frequent grasses include sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*. Herbs present include common bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, bugle *Ajuga reptans*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, cowslip *Primula veris*, plus spring-sedge *Carex caryophyllea*. Large patches of dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria* occur. Other less frequent herbs are common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, common milkwort *Polygala vulgaris*, bitter-vetch *Lathyrus montanus*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, changing forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor*, betony *Stachys officinalis* and musk mallow *Malva moschata*.

The eastern end of the larger field has frequent heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, devil's-bit scabious, betony and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. This vegetation grades into spring-line mire areas dominated by jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*, floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*, marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre*, and water-pepper *Polygonum hydropiper*. Soft rush *Juncus effusus*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, tufted forget-me-not *Myosotis laxa*, common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica* and brooklime *Veronica beccabunga* also occur here.

The smaller field to the north is a steep bank with areas of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub. Dyer's greenweed is abundant with frequent devil's-bit scabious, common knapweed and common bird's-foot-trefoil. Other herbs present include zigzag clover *Trifolium medium*, lesser trefoil *T. dubium*, common milkwort, common spotted-orchid, lady's bedstraw, perforate St. John's-wort *Hypericum perforatum*, tormentil and barren strawberry *Potentilla sterilis*.

The common blue butterfly *Polyommatus icarus* occurs on this site.

The site is bounded to the south by Lord's Wood, an Ancient Semi-natural Woodland. It also includes a line of stream-side alders *Alnus glutinosus* along another boundary.