

COUNTY: KENT            SITE NAME: WATERINGBURY

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

Local Planning Authorities: KENT COUNTY COUNCIL, Tonbridge and Malling District Council

National Grid Reference: TQ 688534    Area: 0.21 (ha.) 0.52 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 188    1:10,000: TQ 65 SE

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1996

Reasons for Notification:

The site at Wateringbury contains a tufa deposit important for Quaternary studies. Tufa is a soft calcium carbonate commonly precipitated by springs which have flowed through chalk or limestone. Tufa is geologically important as it often provides a detailed and complete stratigraphy, preserving a rich and diverse fauna commonly *in situ* and therefore reflecting local and regional environmental changes.

The Wateringbury tufa contains a detailed record of early Flandrian (10,000 to 7,500 years ago) mollusc biostratigraphy (mollusc assemblage zones a to d). It is particularly valuable in demonstrating the order of species recolonisation after the late Devensian cold stage, and for the length and completeness of the record. It is also notable for the small area of deposition which allowed large numbers of terrestrial snails to be incorporated in the tufa. These are of greater value for interpreting regional faunal changes than are autochthonous (*in situ*) freshwater and swamp species. Related pollen, ostracod and vertebrate records are also available from the site making this a key locality for understanding the changing environments of the early Flandrian across southern England.

Date: July 1995