

COUNTY: WORCESTERSHIRE SITE NAME: GRANGE MEADOW

DISTRICT: MALVERN HILLS

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

Local Planning Authority: WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, Malvern Hills District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 804481 Area: 1.49 (ha.) 3.68 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150 1:10,000: SO 84 NW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): – Date of Last Revision: 9 October 1998

Other Information:
A new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Grange Meadow is situated in south-west Worcestershire, to the north of Great Malvern. The field overlies the Keuper Marl Mudstones of the Triassic Period, giving rise to neutral soils.

The special interest of this site is the occurrence of ancient, semi-natural and floristically diverse lowland grassland. The dominant vegetation is mesotrophic (neutral) grassland characterised by common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, a type which has greatly declined through agricultural intensification over the last 50 years and is now nationally scarce and declining. Most of the field conforms to the sub-community characterised by lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*. The field is bounded on three sides by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* hedges with mature trees, and to the south by the Madresfield Brook.

The dominant grasses are sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and crested dog's-tail, with yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens* locally frequent. Frequent herbs include common knapweed, cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, lady's bedstraw, ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*, hairy hawkbit *L. hispidus*, bugle *Ajuga reptans*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, cowslip *Primula veris* and selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*.

Locally uncommon neutral grassland species present in the sward include common restharrow *Ononis repens*, pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, green-winged orchid *Orchis morio* and common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.

On the gentle slope to the south there is a more acidic influence, with species such as tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and betony *Stachys officinalis*. Damp areas have frequent meadow-sweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, creeping jenny *Lysimachia nummularia*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica* and great horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*.

Along the Madresfield Brook at the south of the site there is a riparian strip of alder *Alnus glutinosa* woodland with a ground flora dominated by ramsons *Allium ursinum*. At the north of the field a section of old sunken trackway forms a significant wetland feature.

The invertebrate fauna includes common blue butterfly *Polyommatus icarus*.