

File ref:

County: Nottinghamshire **Site name:** Besthorpe Meadows

District: Newark & Sherwood

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

Local Planning Authority: Newark & Sherwood District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 817643 **Area:** 9.23 (ha) 22.8 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 121 **1: 10 000:** SK 86 NW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 29 May 1998 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Besthorpe Meadows consist of two unimproved alluvial grasslands within the floodplain of the River Trent in east Nottinghamshire. They represent an extensive area of a distinctive plant community now nationally rare and reliant upon seasonal flooding and traditional forms of management for their survival.

An abundance of great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* and the grasses Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* characterise these damp hay meadows. Lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, lesser stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum* are all locally prominent. Other plants which form characteristic components of the meadows include common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*. The abundance of pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus* is a particular feature of these meadows.

A seasonally wet stream traverses the southern meadow and supports an inundation community of creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus*, amphibious bistort *Polygonum amphibium* and hairy sedge *Carex hirta*. An old borrow pit fringed by grey willow *Salix cinerea*, almond willow *Salix triandra* and osier *Salix viminalis* provides additional habitat diversity and supports an interesting aquatic flora including spiked water-milfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum*, common water-crowfoot *Ranunculus aquatilis* and the uncommon grey club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*.