

COUNTY: LANCASHIRE

SITE NAME: FIELD HEAD MEADOW

DISTRICT: RIBBLE VALLEY

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

Local Planning Authority: Ribble Valley Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SD 725524

Area: 3.29 (ha.) 8.13 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 103

1:10,000: SD 75 SW

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 25 May 1999

Other Information:

1. This is a new site.
2. The site lies within the Forest of Rowland AONB.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Field Head Meadow lies at an altitude of 210m OD, approximately 1.3km east of the village of Slaidburn. The site consists of a single field of enclosed, moderately herb-rich hay meadow, typical of its type in northern England. Field Head Meadow is one of the few remaining herb-rich grasslands present in this part of Lancashire. This vulnerable habitat has become increasingly scarce nationally and has been largely destroyed in Lancashire due to agricultural intensification.

The meadow is a variant of the 'northern hay meadow' type. It is characterised by sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis* and field woodrush *Luzula campestris* with greater burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, lady's mantle *Alchemilla glabra*, eyebright *Euphrasia* agg and pignut *Conopodium majus*. Other species present also include abundant ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, daisy *Bellis perennis* and common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*. Yellow oat-grass *Trisetium flavescens*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*, common bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, smooth hawk's-beard *Crepis capillaris* and meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* are also occasionally present in the sward.