

File ref:

**County:** Essex **Site Name:** Mill Meadows, Billericay

**District:** Basildon

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Basildon District Council

**National Grid Reference:** TQ 681941 **Area:** 6.73 (ha) 16.63 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 178, 167, 177 **1: 10 000:** TQ 69 SE

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

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 29 July 1999 **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Other Information:**

This site forms part of Mill Meadows Local Nature Reserve which was declared by Basildon District Council on 3 March 1994.

**Reasons for Notification:**

This site is notified for its unimproved neutral grassland of the type crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* lowland hay meadow and pasture, heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* sub-community.

**General Description:**

Mill Meadows SSSI is comprised of five adjoining grassland units that overlie Claygate beds (sandy-clay or loam) and London Clay. The grassland units generally slope to the north-west and north-east. These grassland units are separated by old hedge lines, some of which are associated with ditches. The site is bounded by a combination of housing, roads, a stream and semi-natural grassland, scrub and secondary woodland.

Although this site lacks any rare species it supports a characteristic flora of a grassland type that is very much reduced within the Essex landscape due to development and agricultural improvement.

The grassland is neutral to acid and dry to wet in character. It is composed of a sward largely of red fescue *Festuca rubra* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* within which Devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* are frequent. Locally frequent to abundant are burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, beton cont....

### **Mill Meadows, Billericay (cont...)**

*Stachys officinalis* and field wood-rush *Luzula campestris*. Other species present include harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, common-spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and pignut *Conopodium majus*.

To the north there are several flushed areas that support a similar flora to that already noted but with the additions of plants including sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*, ragged robin *Lycnis flos-cuculi* and common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*.