

**Site name:** Lower Hollins **County:** Derbyshire  
**District:** High Peak  
**Status:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as substituted by Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.  
**Local Planning Authority:** High Peak Borough Council, Peak District National Park Authority  
**National Grid reference:** SK133852 **Area:** 5.18 ha  
**Ordnance Survey sheet:** **1:50,000:** 110 **1:10,000:** SK 18 NW  
**Notification date:** 23 November 2011

#### Reasons for notification:

Lower Hollins SSSI is a nationally important site for its lowland unimproved neutral grassland which mainly consists of the nationally scarce National Vegetation Classification (NVC) type MG5 crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* – common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* grassland.

#### General description:

The site comprises of a series of species-rich grasslands managed as hay meadows on gentle north-facing slopes above the tree-lined meanders of the River Noe in the Vale of Edale below the Hollins Cross - Mam Tor Ridge. The underlying soils are derived from the Namurian Edale Shales of the Millstone Grit series and are naturally more acidic and generally poorly-drained.

Much of the site comprises agriculturally-unimproved, species-rich neutral grassland characterised by a diverse and rich range of native grasses and herbs. Grasses such as red fescue *Festuca rubra*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* all occur in abundance, with more occasional quaking grass *Briza media* and in damper areas tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*.

Present throughout is a diverse range of characteristic herbs which include an abundance of common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* and yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*. In many places the community is further enriched by frequent common cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, betony *Betonica officinalis*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, autumn hawkbit *Scorzoneroides autumnalis*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and common eyebright *Euphrasia nemorosa*. Also present are common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, common twayblade *Listera ovata* and the locally uncommon greater butterfly orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*.

Where there is impeded drainage or seepage of water, stands of taller marshy vegetation occur which are also species-rich due to the mix of the characteristic grassland species together with rushes including compact rush *Juncus conglomeratus* and soft rush *J. effusus*, small sedges, including an abundance of glaucous sedge *Carex flacca* and oval sedge *C. leporina* and herbs such as great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, ragged robin *Silene flos-cuculi* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*.

The assemblage of grassland fungi present includes a number of species strongly associated with unimproved nutrient-poor grassland, such as the waxcaps *Hygrocybe calyptriformis*, *H. punicea*, *H. ingrata* and *H. citrinovirens*, a number of which are considered to be rare or scarce in the county.