

COUNTY: EAST SUSSEX SITE NAME: HEMINGFOLD MEADOW

DISTRICT: ROTHER

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

Local Planning Authority: ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 777149 Area: 4.91 (ha.) 12.13 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 199 1:10,000: TQ 71 SE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

A new site.

Reasons for Notification:

The site consists of two connected lowland meadows on Weald Clay. The meadows are rich in flowering plants and the grassland community present is of a nationally uncommon type.

The botanical interest of the site has been retained by grazing and mowing regimes which are sympathetic to the local flora. In addition the meadows have not been fertilised or subject to any substantial agricultural improvement in recent years although the smaller, eastern meadow was ploughed 40 years ago. A discontinuous hedge separates the two meadows.

Over 60 species of flowering plant have been recorded from the meadows, a remarkable number considering the small size of the site. The main sward-forming species are black knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, cat's ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, Yorkshire fog grass *Holcus lanatus*, red fescue grass *Festuca rubra* and sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. Plants associated with old, undisturbed meadows are present and include common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, ox-eye daisy *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*, cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, and primrose *Primula vulgaris*.

The hedge consists of mature trees of pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with an understorey which includes hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and hazel *Corylus avellana*.