

COUNTY: SURREY SITE NAME: LINGFIELD CERNES

DISTRICT: TANDRIDGE

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

Local Planning Authority: TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 421447      Area: 10.1 (ha.) 24.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 187      1:10,000: TQ 44 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1975      Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site consists of a small group of alluvial meadows in the valley of the River Eden on the Kent/Surrey border. There are few such meadows remaining in Surrey and this site supports several uncommon plants, two of which are nationally scarce.

The site lies on drift deposits of river gravels and river alluvium, the underlying solid geology is Weald Clay and Upper Tunbridge Wells sandstone. The meadows are poorly drained and it is this, coupled with the retention of mowing and grazing regimes which are sympathetic to the local flora, which is responsible for maintaining the scientific value of Lingfield Cernes. The mature hedgerows which surround the meadows are rich in shrub and tree species. The northern boundary of the site is marked by the slow-flowing Eden Brook; the aquatic communities of this river, and of the ditches which flow into it, contribute to the interest of the area. There is also a small swamp area in the south of the site.

The dominant species of the grassland are rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, tufted hair grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, meadow fox-tail *Alopecurus pratensis*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris* and lesser knapweed *Centaurea nigra*. Several plants occur which are typical of unimproved meadows; these include oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, self-heal *Prunella vulgaris*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*. The meadows support two plants which are scarce nationally and mainly restricted to the south of Britain; these are true fox-sedge *Carex vulpina* and narrow-leaved water dropwort *Oenanthe silaifolia*. Two other plants occur which, although common in Surrey, are of interest for their occurrence at this location. Bearded couch *Elymus caninus* is more usually restricted to chalky soils whilst this is the only locality in the east of Surrey for common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*. Dominant species of the hedgerows include pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, grey willow *Salix cinerea*, crack willow *Salix fragilis*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and alder *Alnus glutinosa*.

The banks of the Eden brook are dominated by reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and the marginal shallow water community includes common water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, water figwort *Scrophularia aquatica*, trifid bur-marigold *Bidens tripartita* and purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*. The ivy-leaved crowfoot *Ranunculus hederaceus*, a plant which is uncommon in Surrey, has been recorded from a ditch at this site. The swamp area supports a diverse community which includes willow scrub, great reedmace *Typha latifolia* and water cress *Nasturtium microphyllum*. The wetland fauna includes kingfishers, good colonies of the banded agrion damselfly *Agrion splendens* and the white-legged damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes*.