

**Site name:** Long Lye Meadow **County:** Somerset

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

**Local Planning Authority:** South Somerset District Council, Somerset Council

**National Grid reference:** ST 267119 **Area:** 3.25 hectares

**Ordnance Survey sheet 1:50,000:** 193 **1:10,000:** ST 21 SE

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1 February 2002

**Reasons for notification:**

This site is nationally important for its neutral grassland of the crested dog's tail - common knapweed community (National Vegetation Classification MG5).

**General Description:**

The site lies close to the Devon border on the Blackdown Hills on a west facing slope of the Yarty valley at an altitude of about 180m. The site straddles shales of the Jurassic Lower Lias and Upper Greensand of the Cretaceous period. These parent rocks have produced soils of the Hense series, which are coarse and loamy.

The neutral grassland component varies in character and herb richness. Sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* are abundant in the sward, other grasses include quaking grass *Briza media*. The herbaceous component is dominated by ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, black knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, cat's ear *Hypochaeris radicata* and meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*. Other herbs include pignut *Conopodium majus*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and more locally devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* and corky-fruited water-dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides*, a plant with a distribution restricted to central southern England. There is a strong population of green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*, together with a few plants of common twayblade *Listera ovata*. In a few areas meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* occurs. Wetter areas are rush (*Juncus acutiflorus* and *J. effuses*) dominated with creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*.

**Other information:**

Lowland Hay Meadows are on the list of Priority habitats of the UK Biodiversity Group.