

COUNTY: CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** ROMAN ROAD

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

Local Planning Authorities: South Cambridgeshire District Council

National Grid Reference: TL 492545 to TL 560498

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 154 **1:10,000:** TL 45 SE, TL 55 SW,
TL 55 SE, TL 54 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1960 **Date of Last Revision:** 1971

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

Area: 15 ha 37 ac

Other information: The adjacent hedges lie within the site boundary.

Description and Reasons for Notification

The Roman Road supports species-rich calcareous grassland communities of a type which was once widespread on the chalk areas of lowland England and which is now scarce due to changes away from the traditional sheep grazing economy of these areas to arable. Thick hedgerows and small copses along this 'green lane' enhance the value of the grassland for invertebrates.

The grassland communities range from short swards characterised by the presence of grasses such as sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* and quaking-grass *Briza media*, together with a rich variety of herbs, to tall grassland dominated by false-oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* with upright brome *Bromus erectus*. The many herbs recorded include characteristic species such as salad burnet *Poterium sanguisorba*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and wild carrot *Daucus carota*, together with harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, purple milk-vetch *Austragalus danicus* and greater knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*.

The hedgerows are dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* but include a good variety of additional shrub.