

COUNTY: SUFFOLK SITE NAME: PASHFORD POORS FEN,
LAKENHEATH

DISTRICT: FOREST HEATH

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

Local Planning Authority: FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL, Suffolk County
Council

National Grid Reference: TL 732835 Area: 12.2 (ha.) 30.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 143 1:10,000: TL 78 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1972

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1995

Other Information:

The majority of the site is managed as a nature reserve by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Pashford Poors Fen, on the Breckland/Fen edge, is a mosaic of several different habitats supporting a great diversity of plants and animals. It consists of an area of unimproved, species rich mesotrophic meadow containing a number of hollows, some of which are occupied by pockets of spring-fed fen and marshy grassland. At one end of the site birch woodland has become established and there are also small areas of willow scrub and reedbed.

Management of the neutral grassland is by mowing followed by cattle grazing in some areas. The dominant grass in the sward is Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. A variety of other grasses and herbs are present including Small Scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, Meadow Saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*.

Acid marshy grassland occurs in several damp hollows in the area of neutral grassland. A distinct transition zone is present on the edges of these wet areas and is characterised by Saw Sedge *Cladium mariscus* and Great Burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. The marshy grassland is dominated by Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Reed Canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* with Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus*.

The fen consists of areas of tall fen vegetation dominated by Reed *Phragmites australis* and Saw Sedge and areas of invasive birch woodland. The fen flora is relatively rich, especially on mown paths and includes Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris*, Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* and Purple Small-reed *Calamagrostis canescens*.

A rich invertebrate fauna, especially beetles, is found on the site and this includes the last known British site for one Red Data Book species.