

COUNTY: BEDFORDSHIRE

SITE NAME: YELDEN MEADOWS

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

Local Planning Authorities: Bedford Borough Council
Bedfordshire County Council

National Grid Reference: TL 010674

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 166 **1:10,000:** TL 06 NW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988 **Date of Last Revision:**

Area: 2.76 ha 6.82 ac

Description and Reasons for Notification

Yelden Meadows are a fine example of species-rich unimproved neutral grassland occurring on clay in North Bedfordshire. This habitat has been greatly reduced in extent nationally and is now rare in Bedfordshire.

The grassland community on the site is an example of *Alopecurus pratensis*-*Sanguisorba officinalis* flood meadow. This community type is noted for a species-rich, varied sward of grasses and herbs which has been maintained traditionally as a hay meadow with grazing during the winter. The *Alopecurus-Sanguisorba* community is a lowland grassland that, once common, is now local in the midlands and southern England. This decline has primarily been due to agricultural improvement and such losses are still continuing.

The grassland is dominated by the grasses meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, and rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, with other grasses frequent including crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, yellow oat grass *Trisetum flavescens* and herbs such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. Other species characteristic of old meadows include meadow brome *Bromus commutatus*, field wood-rush *Luzula campestris*, cuckoo-flower *Cardamine pratensis*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*.

Adding to the diversity of the site are the old hedgerows with field maple *Acer campestre*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Midland hawthorn *C. laevigata*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, crab-apple *Malus sylvestris*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and elm *Ulmus* spp.

Re-presentation of details approved by Council. Re-typed December 1998.

Site Area calculated by GIS 19 April 1998.