

County: Essex **Site Name:** Curtismill Green

District: Brentwood

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

Local Planning Authority: Brentwood District Council

National Grid Reference: TQ 514968 **Area:** 47.3 (ha) 116.9 (ac)
TQ 524953

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 167 **1: 10 000:** TQ 59 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955 **Date of Last Revision:** 1974

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

The Green is registered Common Land.

Reasons for Notification:

Curtismill Green is an area of unimproved grassland and scrub about five miles west of Brentwood on soils derived from London Clay and Chalky Boulder Clay. There are patches of valley gravel and alluvium locally. It is a small, separate relic of the ancient Forest of Waltham, of which Epping Forest is the largest surviving fragment. The varying soil conditions give rise to both damp and dry grassland containing several species which are uncommon, decreasing or unusual in the county.

The dry grassland communities are dominated by Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Meadow Foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* and Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. Marshy or wet hollows have Tufted Hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, Marsh Foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus*, Rushes *Juncus subuliflorus*, *J. inflexus*, *J. bufonius*, Common Spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris* spp. *palustris* and Plicate Sweet-grass *Glyceria plicata*. Notable species in the grassland include Orange Foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis*, Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Pepper Saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica* and Betony *Stachys officinalis*. Strawberry Clover *Trifolium fragiferum* also occurs, a plant found more usually in Essex on the coast.

Additional habitats are provided by areas of oak and hawthorn scrub and several ponds.