

COUNTY: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE **SITE NAME:** DUNGEE CORNER MEADOW

District: Wellingborough

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

Local Planning Authority: Wellingborough Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SP 927601

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 152 **1:10,000:** SP 96 SW, SP 95 NW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 **Date of Last Revision:**

Area: 4.7 ha 11.6 ac

Other Information: This is a new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification

A traditionally managed hay meadow on well-drained calcareous boulder clay where the hay is cut late and the aftermath grazed until the autumn. No artificial fertiliser or herbicide has been used so the sward retains a diverse array of grasses and herbs. The grassland is a rich but somewhat atypical example of the crested dog's-tail-common knapweed-lady's bedstraw sub-community, unusual for the presence of tor grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* and upright brome *Bromus erectus*. In this respect the site is similar to Sudborough Green Lodge Meadows SSSI.

Calcareous clay swards consist of a balanced mixture of many of the more common and widespread species of agricultural grasslands. Prior to the farming innovations of the last forty years they were among the most typical and widespread of the grazed lowland hay meadows but are now very scarce and restricted to a very few sites in Northamptonshire. The upright brome variant, as represented here, is of extremely limited distribution and has particular value for the study of ecological relationships between British grasslands.

The sward is composed of many grass species (over 20 are recorded) and the more abundant include: sweet vernal *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, red fescue *F. rubra*, quaking-grass *Briza media* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. Characteristic herbs with a high cover are: bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, field wood-rush *Luzula campestris* and red clover *Trifolium pratense*. There are differences in the composition of the grassland reflecting past management and the least disturbed area has a strong population of green-winged orchid *Orchis morio* - a county rarity.

Re-presentation of details approved by Council. Re-typed August 1999.