

**COUNTY:** ESSEX  
COMMON

**SITE NAME:** BLAKE'S WOOD & LINGWOOD

**DISTRICT:** CHELMSFORD

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Chelmsford District Council

**National Grid Reference:** TL 774067  
TL 778060

**Area:** 93.2 (ha.) 230.2 (ac.)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:500,000:** 167

**1:10,000:** TL 70 NE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** Part 1955  
1975

**Date of Last Revision:**

Part 1973

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1986

**Date of Last Revision:** –

**Other Information:**

Lingwood Common, together with part of Blake's Wood, is owned by the National Trust, and the latter is managed on their behalf by the Essex Naturalists' Trust.

**Description and reasons for Notification:**

Blake's Wood and Lingwood Common are located on the Danbury Ridge, south-east of Chelmsford. The soils are derived from glacial sands and gravels overlying London Clay, and this gives rise to a mosaic of woodland, heath and bog habitats. Four of the woodland types are considered to be rare in Britain.

The woods are dominated by both pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, an uncommon species in Essex. They are present as standards over hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* and sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice, while sessile oak also occurs in association with hazel *Corylus avellana*. In the stream valley in Blake's Wood, where clay is exposed, alder *Alnus glutinosa* coppice is dominant. Alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus* and wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* are also present in the woods. Sweet chestnut, birch *Betula* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* occur in areas of secondary woodland.

The woodland floor is dominated by bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* and yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*. Brambles *Rubus spp.* are abundant and Blake's Wood is one of only two Essex sites for *R. disjunctus*. Lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis* and wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides* are present and Blake's Wood also contains early purple orchid *Orchis mascula* and common twayblade *Listera ovata*. Damp areas in the wood provide a habitat for wood club-rush *Scirpus sylvaticus* and great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica*. The woodlands support a large variety of birds, including hawfinches and nightingales.

The relict areas of heath on the common support heather *Calluna vulgaris*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Lesser skull-cap *Scutellaria minor* and *Sphagnum* mosses; these areas are being invaded by birch, oak and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*. The acid grassland is dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, with creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis*, wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia* and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*. Two uncommon moths,

the silver barred *Deltote bankiana* and the rosy marbled *Elaphria venustula* have been recorded recently from lingwood common.