

File ref:

**County:** Essex **Site Name:** The Coppice,  
Kelvedon Hatch

**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 574993 **Area:** 9.43 (ha) 23.30 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 177 **1: 10 000:** TQ 59 NE

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

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

**Other Information:**

This is a new site.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

The Coppice, Kelvedon Hatch, is an ancient semi-natural broad-leaved wood, developed over a complex geology of Claygate Beds, Bagshot Beds and Head, in the small valley of a tributary of the River Roding. Two main woodland types are present, base-rich springline Alder Woodland and Oak-Hornbeam Woodland. The base-rich springline Alder Woodland is uncommon, both nationally and in Essex, and the Coppice contains a more diverse flora than other local examples of this stand type.

The base-rich springline Alder woodland is largely restricted to the valley floor, but does extend onto the drier valley sides in places. The canopy is dominated by tall Alder *Alnus glutinosa* coppice, with occasional Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Downy Birch *Betula pubescens* and Silver Birch *Betula pendula*. The shrub layer is sparse, with occasional Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Guelder Rose *Viburnum opulus*, and Blackcurrant *Ribes nigrum*. The Oak-Hornbeam woodland is dominated by tall Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* coppice, with occasional coppice stools of Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and Birch. There are a few Pedunculate Oak, Birch and Hornbeam standards. The shrub layer is sparse, with occasional Hazel, Holly, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Elder *Sambucus nigra*, and saplings of Ash, Holly and Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*.

Related to the variation in the canopy and soil moisture content is a mosaic of communities in the ground flora. Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Bramble *Rubus sp.*, Creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis* and, locally, Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* are abundant on the drier ground; cont...

### **The Coppice, Kelvedon Hatch (cont...)**

Tufted Hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula* predominate in the intermediate zones, whilst the wettest areas support Pendulous Sedge, Remote Sedge *Carex remota*, Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. There is further variation within the wet zone, with local stands of Blackcurrant *Ribes nigrum* and Tussock Sedge *Carex paniculata*, a plant which is uncommon in Essex. This mosaic of community types, which appears to be a natural response to local variations in drainage, adds significantly to the interest of the site. The small stream which runs through the middle of the site provides an additional habitat.