

COUNTY: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SITE NAME: TINGEWICK MEADOWS

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

Local Planning Authorities: Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SP652313

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 165 **1:10,000:** SP63 SW, SP63 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981 **Date of Last Revision:**

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 **Date of Last Revision:**

Area: 11.05 ha 27.30 ac

Description and Reasons for Notification

One of the last remnants of old meadowland in north Buckinghamshire. Meadows such as these were formerly more widespread, but most have been lost through drainage and grassland improvement. The two fields contain both ridge and furrow and spring-fed marshy areas with ditches, and have long been subject to low intensity grazing by cattle and horses. The resulting mosaic of grassland and fen communities, of considerable interest in themselves, contain many species which are now local or rare in the county. The meadows are bordered by old hedges which shelter and add interest to the site.

The dry grasslands have developed on neutral and calcareous-loam soils and contain meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*, meadow fescue *Festuca pratensis*, cat's-ear *Hypochoeris radicata*, goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis* and the rather local woolly thistle *Cirsium eriophorum*. The more calcareous grassland is particularly rich in species and includes many which are now uncommon in the Vale of Aylesbury, such as quaking grass *Briza media*, dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaulon*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, purging flax *Linum catharticum*, rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*.

The fen vegetation is dominated by hard and blunt-flowered rushes *Juncus inflexus* and *J. subnodulosus* and there are many local species of interest including brown and common sedge *Carex disticha* and *C. nigra*, bristle scirpus *Isolepis setaceus*, marsh arrow-grass *Triglochin palustre*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, fen bedstraw *Galium uliginosum*, greater bid's-foot trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica* and early marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata*.

The ditches, which are rich in bryophytes, also contain plicate sweet-grass *Glyceria plicata*, fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides* and the narrow-leaved water-parsnip *Berula erecta*. Further interest comes from the fact that the lime-rich water in these ditches quickly coats plant remains with a tufa-like deposit of calcium carbonate. The hedges contain ash, oak, hazel, field maple and hawthorn, with occasional aspen and wild cherry.

The calcareous grassland harbours numerous hills of yellow meadow-ant *Lasius flavus* and the whole area supports a large population of typical meadow butterflies, moths and grasshoppers. This aspect warrants closer study.