

CITATION

File Ref: C/S/15

County: Cheshire **Site Name:** Peckforton Woods
Districts: Crewe and Nantwich
 Chester
Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of
 the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended)

Local Planning Authorities: Cheshire County Council
 Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council
 Chester City Council

National Grid Reference: SJ 523577 Area: 54.33 ha 134.25 ac

Ordnance Survey Sheets: 1:50,000: 117 1:10,000: SJ 55 NW

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 13 April 1984

Date of Last Revision: 9 September 1998

Other Information:

Site boundary change – extensions and deletions.

Site Description and Reasons for Notification

Peckforton Woods lies on the scarp and dip slopes of the Triassic sandstone ridge in mid-Cheshire, 20 kms SE of Chester.

This site has been selected as the largest known tract of sessile oak *Quercus petraea* woodland in Cheshire. The ground flora is characteristic of acidic, sandy soils. Woodland of this type is rare in Cheshire.

On the west and north-facing scarp slopes of Peckforton Hill sessile oak is dominant over a sparse shrub layer which includes rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*. The ground layer is locally dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* but species such as bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, common cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense* and climbing corydalis *Corydalis claviculata* are widespread. Along the ridge-top, Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*, yew *Taxus baccata*, beech *Fagus sylvatica* and silver birch *Betula pendula* also occur.

The woodland supports locally significant breeding bird populations including pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*, wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* and redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*.