

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE/STAFFORDSHIRE      SITE NAME: NEWPORT CANAL

DISTRICT: The Wrekin/Stafford

SITE REF: 15WV1

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

Local Planning Authority: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL/STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, The Wrekin District Council/Stafford Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SJ 734192, SJ 752200      Area: 6.47 (ha.) 16 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 127

1:10,000: SJ 71 NW, NE, SJ 72 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

A length of about 2 km of disused canal which is one of the best localities for aquatic plants in Shropshire. There is a range of submerged and broad-leaved plant communities, a continuous narrow fringe of marginal swamp and, in some places, more extensive areas of fen.

The submerged aquatic flora includes four species of pondweed *Potamogeton crispus*, *P. friesii*, *P. pectinatus* and *P. perfoliatus*, fan-leaved water-crowfoot *Ranunculus circinatus*, rigid hornwort *Ceratophyllum demersum* and spiked water-milfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum*. The introduced Canadian pondweed *Elodea canadensis* is locally abundant.

The floating plant communities consist of yellow water-lily *Nuphar lutea*, floating pondweed *Potamogeton natans*, amphibious bistort *Polygonum amphibium*, ivy-leaved duckweed *Lemna trisulca* and frog-bit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*, which is an uncommon species, as well as two introduced plants, the fringed water-lily *Nymphoides peltata* (a native of the East Anglian fens) and water fern *Azolla filiculoides*. This last species often becomes dominant in warm summers.

The margins of the canal support a narrow strip of swamp composed of emergent species such as reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*, branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*, lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis*, corn clubrush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* and, locally, greater reed-mace *Typha latifolia*. Less common species in this habitat include great water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum* and flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus* and, in somewhat deeper water, arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia*.

The site includes an area of fen, dominated by reed sweet-grass and reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*, which is notable for its population of meadow rue *Thalictrum flavum* in one of very few Shropshire localities.