

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: PENNERLEY MEADOWS

DISTRICT: South Shropshire

SITE REF: 15WL8

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

Local Planning Authority: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, South Shropshire District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 357991

Area: 7.0 (ha.) 17.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 137

1:10,000: SO 39 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986

Date of Last Revision: 1987

Other Information:

Site boundary modified (extension).

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site consists of a series of meadows on the west side of the Stiperstone ridge in the parish of Worthen. The underlying rocks are Mytton Flags (Ordovician).

There has been considerable loss of unimproved grassland in south-west Shropshire and this group of fields includes all the best remaining examples in the Stiperstones area. This site complements the range of heathland and grassland habitats which occur on the nearby Stiperstones SSSI.

Pennerley Meadows are characterised by crested dog's-tail grass *Cynosurus cristatus* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*. Other grasses which are frequent or abundant in the sward include common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and red fescue *F. rubra*. Other elements of the flora are variable in abundance: for example, ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* and yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* are particularly prominent in one pair of fields, but less abundant elsewhere, reflecting differences in management.

Pennerley Meadows are noted for the uncommon species which occur in them. These include greater butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*, common twayblade *Listera ovata*, common spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, mountain pansy *Viola lutea* and moonwort *Botrychium lunaria*. Two separate fields within the site are the only Shropshire localities for field gentian *Gentianella campestris*. Among the commoner species which are present are harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, bitter vetch *Lathyrus montanus*, betony *Stachys officinalis*, cowslip *Primula veris*, autumnal hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*, pignut *Conopodium majus* and two species which are more typical of woodland, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*.

Management of these fields includes mowing for hay and grazing by sheep, horses and cattle. In some fields insufficient grazing has led to the development of scrub of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and gorse *Ulex europaeus*.