

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: FLORDON COMMON

DISTRICT: South Norfolk

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

Local Planning Authority: South Norfolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TM 183971

Area: 10.05 (ha) 24.83 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 134

1:10,000: TM 19 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1959

Date of Last Revision: N/A

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

A registered Common

Reasons for Notification:

Flordon Common is situated in the valley of the River Tas on shallow fenland peats. Springs emerge on the valley-side bearing base-rich waters from the underlying chalk and in these areas species-rich calcareous fen has developed. On higher ground unimproved pasture is present which includes a number of species characteristic of chalk grassland. Calcareous spring-fed fens are rare in Britain and the site is considered to be one of the best remaining examples in Norfolk. The Common continues to be managed in a traditional manner by light summer grazing and this has ensured the survival of many locally uncommon plants. A rare species of mollusc also occurs.

The flushed areas on the wetter parts of the fen are dominated by Bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans* and Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus* over a carpet of mosses. These species-rich areas contain a number of uncommon plants including Butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*, Bog Pimpernel *Anagallis tenella*, Fragrant Orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*, Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris* and the rare Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri*. Conditions are locally acidic and this has encouraged the recent growth of a few tussocks of Bog Moss *Sphagnum* sp.

The drier parts of the fen are dominated by Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, Blunt-flowered Rush and several species of Sedge *Carex* spp. Many characteristic fenland plants occur including Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, Marsh Valerian *Valeriana dioica*, Marsh Arrow-grass *Triglochin palustris* and Twayblade *Listera ovata*.

Grazed unimproved chalky grassland surrounds the fen on higher ground and is dominated by a variety of grasses including Sheep's Fescue *Festuca ovina*, Quaking Grass *Briza media*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* and Brown Bent-grass *Agrostis canina*. An interesting range of herb-species are present and include Cowslip *Primula veris*, Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Hoary Plantain *Plantago media*, Adder's Tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*.

Additional interest is provided by a stream, areas of tall fen dominated by Reed *Phragmites australis* with frequent Panicked Sedge *Carex paniculata*, and small areas of Alder carr woodland over a ground flora of Yellow Flag *Iris pseudacorus*, Nettle *Urtica dioica* and Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*.

The very rare Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail *Vertigo angustior* has been recorded from the site.