

COUNTY: SOMERSET SITE NAME: LANGMEAD AND WESTON LEVEL

DISTRICT: SEDGEMOOR

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

Local Planning Authority: SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL, Somerset County Council

National Grid Reference: ST 353330 Area: 168.8 (ha.) 417.1 (ac.)
ST 365335

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 182 1:10,000: ST 33 SW
ST 33 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): – Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1991 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Langmead and Weston Level form part of the nationally important grazing marsh and ditch systems of the Somerset Levels and Moors. The site is nationally important for its species-rich neutral grassland and the invertebrate community found in the ditches and rhynes.

The land lies in the flood plain of the River Parrett and many of the fields are poorly drained and seasonally water-logged. Soils are variable with peat soils in the east and silty alluvial clays mainly of the Newchurch, Chattis and Windrush series in the west.

A range of grassland types has developed including the nationally rare Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* – Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* community type, which includes species such as Crested Dog's-tail, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, Pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and Cowslip *Primula veris*. Rarer species include Quaking-grass *Briza media*, Yellow Oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum* and the nationally threatened Green-winged Orchid *Orchis morio*. Wetter meadows contain Sedges *Carex disticha*, *C. hirta*, and *C. lepidocarpa* and Rushes *Juncus* spp. The site includes two higher fields on the eastern part of Langmead which are examples of species-rich neutral grassland with a calcareous component, including Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis* and Wild Carrot *Daucus carota*.

Field ditches and rhynes contain a rich variety of wetland plants both in the water and on the banks. Species in the watercourses include Pondweeds *Potamogeton* spp and Water-starworts *Callitriche* spp with the floating species Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* and Duckweeds *Lemna* spp, and the emergent species Arrowhead

Sagittaria sagittifolia, Water-plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, Fine leaved Water-dropwort *Oenanthe aquatica* and Tubular Water-dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*.
Bankside vegetation is dominated by Reed Sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* and Rushes, together with Creeping Jenny *Lysimachia nummularia*, Brookweed *Samolus valerandi* and Water Dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*.

The terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates recorded on the site include four nationally rare species: the Great Silver Diving Beetle *Hydrophilus piceus*, the soldier fly *Odontomyia ornata* and two true flies, *Lonchoptera scutellata* and *Stenomicroa cogani*. Twenty-one nationally scarce species have been found including three beetles *Hydaticus transversalis*, *Dytiscus dimidiatus* and *Limnoxenus niger* and the Variable Coenagrion *Coenagrion pulchellum*, a Damsel Fly.