

COUNTY: CAMBRIDGESHIRE **SITE NAME:** STOW CUM QUY FEN

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

Local Planning Authorities: South Cambridgeshire District Council
East Cambridgeshire District Council

National Grid Reference: TL 515627

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 154 **1:10,000:** TL 56 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1955 **Date of Last Revision:** 1970

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 **Date of Last Revision:**

Area: 29.6 ha 73.2 ac

Other information: A large area of the SSSI as notified in 1970 has been deleted at the 1986 revision and a pond to the west has been added. Most of the site is common land.

Description and Reasons for Notification

Stow cum Quy Fen possesses areas of floristically rich calcareous loam pasture. In addition a number of pools formed on Chalk Marl are present and these support a range of aquatic plants including some uncommon species. Both the grassland and open water habitats described above are rare in the British Isles.

The fragments of floristically rich grassland also occur on Chalk Marl and are characterised by the presence of herbs such as purging flax *Linum catharticum*, cowslip *Primula veris*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and the quaking grass *Briza media*.

The pools have a good range of emergent and aquatic living plants including reed *Phragmites australis*, unbranched bur-reed *Sparganium emersum*, mare's-tail *Hippuris vulgaris* and bladderwort *Utricularia vulgaris*. The open water habitats are particularly attractive to dragonflies and damselflies including the emperor *Ajax imperator*.

A large part of the site consists of semi-improved rough pasture which is becoming colonised by herbs from the adjacent species-rich grassland. The former area is characterised by tussocks of tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and contains a wide range of other grass (*Graminae*) species.

Hedgerows and scrub, and pools on the periphery of the site, add to the general variety of habitats in the locality.

The site is additionally of importance due to its location within an otherwise intensively cultivated area where semi-natural habitats are rare.