

File ref:

County: Somerset **Site Name:** Bab Cary Meadows

District: South Somerset

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

Local Planning Authority: Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council

National Grid Reference: ST 567293 **Area:** 13.6 (ha) 33.6 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 183 **1:10,000:** ST 52 NE

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

A new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Bab Cary Meadows is one of the last remaining areas of traditionally managed unimproved neutral grassland in south Somerset and contains a rich variety of herbs.

The site is positioned to the north of the River Cary at an altitude of 30 m on flat and gently sloping ground. The underlying rocks are Lower Liassic clays upon which river alluvium has been deposited. Soils here belong to the Evesham 3 series and tend to be slowly permeable and calcareous on raised areas or seasonally waterlogged and clayey in hollows.

The plant community contains a very high proportion of herbaceous species. Grasses tend to be more abundant on sloping ground while sedges increase in frequency where hollows occur. Crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* form the basis of the sward on drier ground with quaking grass *Briza media* occurring frequently. Herb species include abundant cowslip *Primula veris*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and betony *Stachys officinalis*. Oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* and hoary plantain *Plantago media* are also abundant.

In the wetter hollows sedges such as carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, spring sedge *Carex caryophyllea*, common sedge *Carex nigra* and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca* become dominant. The herb component includes saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, creeping jenny *Lysimachia nummularia*, pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and cork-fruited water-dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* which is restricted in distribution to the south of Britain.

Areas immediately adjacent to the river bank are frequently waterlogged and contain numerous tussocks of soft rush *Juncus effusus*. Associated plants include meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis* and common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*