



Lazy Meadow SSSI Worcestershire

***Notification under section 28 of the Wildlife
and Countryside Act 1981***

Supporting Information

Issued by Natural England's West Midlands Team on 24 May 2018

Contact points and further information

This supplement is issued on request by Natural England's West Midlands Team and is intended to be read in conjunction with the notification document for owners, occupiers and other notified parties.

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Contents

Summary

1. Information used to support the selection of the Lazy Meadow SSSI
2. Explanation of how Lazy Meadow meets the SSSI selection guidelines
3. Assessment of the current condition of Lazy Meadow SSSI
4. Selection of 'operations requiring Natural England's consent'
5. Site unit map
6. Photographs

Summary

Lazy Meadow SSSI is notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The site is managed as a hay meadow and is of special interest for its nationally important species-rich floodplain grassland of the nationally rare National Vegetation Classification (NVC) type MG4 meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* – great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* grassland.

1. Information used to support the selection of Lazy Meadow SSSI

Feature	Data source	Author	Date	Content
Species-rich floodplain grassland	The changing extent and conservation interest of lowland grasslands in England and Wales: a review of grassland surveys 1930-1984. <i>Biological Conservation</i> 40 : 281-300. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0006320787901212	Fuller, R.M.	1987	Information on the national status of grassland habitats
	British Plant Communities. Volume 3: Grasslands and montane communities. Cambridge University Press	Rodwell, J.S. (ed)	1992	Grassland National Vegetation Classification (NVC)
	Grassland cards, Lazy Meadow, 4 June 1999. English Nature unpublished survey	Stephen, K.	1999	Quadrat records of grassland
	Review of coverage of the National Vegetation Classification. JNCC Report No. 302. JNCC, Peterborough. Published online: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2312	Rodwell, J.S., Dring, J.S., Averis, J.C., Proctor, M.C.F., Malloch, A.J.C., Schaminée, J.N.J. & Dargie, T.C.D.	2000	Review of NVC coverage
	Monitoring the condition of lowland grassland SSSIs. English Nature Research Report 315. Published online: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/64033	Robertson, H.J. & Jefferson, R.G.	2000	National extent of MG4 grassland
	The condition of lowland BAP priority grasslands: results from a sample survey of non-statutory stands in England. English Nature Research Report 636. Published online: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/106007	Hewins, E.J., Pinches, C., Arnold, J., Lush, M., Roberston, H. & Escott, S.	2005	Information on the national status of grassland habitats
	Lazy Meadow, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire – Grassland NVC Survey 2007. Report to Natural England	Foulds, A.	2007	NVC survey of the grassland at Lazy Meadow
	State of the Natural Environment 2008. Natural England, Peterborough. Published online: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31043	Natural England	2008	Review of the state of England's natural environment

Feature	Data source	Author	Date	Content
	Revised Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs. Part 1: Rationale, Operational Approach and Criteria for Site Selection. JNCC, Peterborough. Published online: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/SSSI_GuidelinesPart1_PUBLICATION_Dec2013v2.pdf	Bainbridge, I., Brown, A., Burnett, N., Corbett, P., Cork, C., Ferris, R., Howe, M., Maddock, A. & Pritchard, S. (eds)	2013	National selection guidelines for biological SSSIs
	Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs. Part 2: Detailed Guidelines for Habitats and Species Groups. Chapter 3 Lowland Grasslands. JNCC, Peterborough. Published online: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/SSSI_Chptr03_revision_2017(v2.0).pdf	Jefferson, R.G., Smith, S.L.N. & MacKintosh, E.J.	2014	Guidelines for selecting lowland grasslands for SSSI notification
	Grassland cards, Lazy Meadow, 21 July 2014. Natural England unpublished survey	Hackman, J. & Holmes, P.	2014	Quadrat records of grassland
	Fate of semi-natural grasslands in England between 1960 and 2013: A test of national conservation policy. <i>Global Ecology and Conservation</i> 4: 516-525 https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989415300184	Ridding, L.E. Redhead, J.W & Pywell, R.F.	2015	National study on loss rates of semi-natural grasslands within and outside protected sites
	Specialist support for notification of Lazy Meadow as an SSSI	Jefferson, R.G.	2018	Support from Natural England's senior grassland specialist

2. Explanation of how Lazy Meadow meets the SSSI selection guidelines

This section explains how the information listed in Section 1 has informed the decision to notify the SSSI, according to the *Guidelines for the selection of Biological SSSIs. Part 1: Rationale, Operational Approach and Criteria for Site Selection* (Bainbridge *et al.* 2013) and *Part 2: Detailed Guidelines for Habitats and Species Groups. Chapter 3 Lowland Grasslands* (Jefferson *et al.* 2014), hereafter referred to as 'the Guidelines'.

2.1 Species-rich floodplain grassland

Lazy Meadow SSSI is considered to be of special interest for its species-rich floodplain grassland characterised by the nationally rare National Vegetation Classification (NVC) type MG4 meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* – great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* grassland (see photographs 2-4 in section 6). This grassland community forms part of the 'lowland meadows' priority habitat, which is included on the list of habitats which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Historically the area of semi-natural grassland in the UK (including MG4) has undergone a severe decline as a consequence of post-war agricultural intensification. It is estimated that by 1984 in lowland England and Wales, semi-natural grassland had declined by 97% over the previous 50 years (Fuller 1987). More recently a 47% loss has been reported between 1960 and 2013 on sites known to have supported species-rich grassland but SSSIs were found to have retained more

grassland (91%), compared with non-protected sites (27%), thus highlighting their effectiveness as a means of protecting semi-natural grasslands (Ridding, Redhead & Pywell 2015).

Such widespread loss has led to extensive fragmentation, with remaining grasslands often isolated within the landscape. In addition to loss of habitat, the quality of unimproved grasslands has also declined. An assessment of the condition of semi-natural grasslands on non-statutory sites in England in 2002/2003 found that only 16% of lowland hay meadows were considered to be in good condition, with many lacking positive indicators in sufficient number and frequency due to neglect or agricultural intensification (Hewins *et al.* 2005). In England the remaining extent of MG4 grassland is estimated to be less than 1,500 ha (Robertson & Jefferson, 2000).

The Guidelines (Part 2, Chapter 3, section 4.10, p.7) state:

‘For those grassland communities that are now rare (less than 10,000 ha in Great Britain or less than 10,000 ha in the British lowlands, as shown in section A of Annex 1) the presumption is that all examples which are at least 0.5 ha should be selected for notification, singly or in combination.’

MG4 grassland is listed in Section A of Annex 1 of the Guidelines and is shown as a community that is rare; accordingly all examples of at least 0.5 ha should be selected. Lazy Meadow SSSI covers an area of 4.03 ha and supports MG4 grassland.

Lazy Meadows was comprehensively surveyed in 2007 (Foulds 2007) and found to be almost entirely MG4 grassland. Natural England collected further evidence in 2014 (Hackman & Holmes 2014) which confirmed that the 2007 survey continues to provide an accurate assessment.

Lazy Meadow SSSI is a single field (see photograph 1 in section 6), substantially all of which is MG4 grassland. The boundary follows identifiable features, including hedgerows, fence lines, ditches and the Merry Brook to the west.

3. Assessment of the current condition of Lazy Meadow SSSI

Site unit numbers*	Interest feature	Reported condition**	Date assessed
1	Species-rich floodplain grassland	Favourable	21 July 2014

* **Site units** are divisions used by Natural England for administrative purposes only.

** Reported condition

SSSIs are notified because of special biological or geological features. When these features are being managed so that their special nature conservation interest is being maintained they are said to be in favourable condition. This is a United Kingdom standard and the terminology and definitions are more fully described in ‘A Statement on Common Standards Monitoring (CSM)’, produced by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in 1998.

4. Selection of ‘operations requiring Natural England’s consent’

To achieve positive management of the SSSI owners and occupiers will require consent before undertaking some operations to safeguard the special features of SSSI. These operations are known as Operations requiring Natural England’s Consent.

When determining the list of operations requiring consent for individual SSSIs, relevant operations are identified from a Natural England master list. Selection is based on the likelihood that the operations may cause damage to the special features that are the reasons for notification of the SSSI. As well as selecting operations from the master list the precise wording of each operation may be tailored to suit the particular circumstances at the site.

It is not possible to predict every possible eventuality that may arise on a site but the aim is to identify all operations where it is reasonably foreseeable that, if carried out at certain times or in a particular manner somewhere within the SSSI, they are likely to damage the special interest features. The table below records at least one reason justifying the inclusion of each operation in the list for Lazy Meadow SSSI. It is not intended to be exhaustive and in most cases there will be other ways in which the specified operation is likely to cause damage.

Standard reference number	Type of operation	At least one reason for listing
1.	Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and re-seeding.	Grassland could be destroyed.
2.	Grazing and alterations to the grazing regime (including type of stock, intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing).	Features sensitive to over or under grazing, which could lead to changes in community composition.
3.	Stock feeding and alterations to stock feeding practice.	Could lead to localised nutrient enrichment or poaching which would damage grassland.
4.	Mowing or cutting vegetation and alterations to the mowing or cutting regime (such as from haymaking to silage).	Grassland sensitive to cutting or mowing, which could lead to changes in community composition if carried out inappropriately.
5.	Application of manure, slurry, silage liquor, fertilisers and lime.	Grassland sensitive to nutrient enrichment, which could lead to dominance by competitive species.
6.	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers) whether terrestrial or aquatic, and veterinary products.	Grassland and associated flora/fauna all sensitive to these, both through direct loss and changes to community composition.
7.	Dumping, spreading or discharging of any materials.	Risk of obscuring/smothering grassland.
8.	Burning.	Grassland sensitive to burning, both through direct loss and change to community composition.
9.	Release into the site of any wild, feral, captive-bred or domestic animal, plant, seed or micro-organism (including genetically modified organisms).	Could lead to unforeseen interactions with indigenous species and changes in community composition.
10.	Killing, injuring, taking or removal of any wild animal (including dead animals or parts thereof), or their eggs and nests, including pest control and disturbing them in their places of shelter.	Could lead to unforeseen changes in community composition, for instance if key herbivores, pollinators or predators affected. Direct damage to sward could result from some methods.

Standard reference number	Type of operation	At least one reason for listing
11.	Destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including (tree, shrub, herb, hedge, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf-mould or turf).	Damage to grassland habitats and constituent species.
12.	Tree and/or woodland management and alterations to tree and/or woodland management (including, planting, felling, pruning and tree surgery, thinning, coppicing, changes in species composition, removal of fallen timber).	Risk of incidental damage to grassland, direct loss and changes in community composition due to shading.
13a.	Draining (including the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).	Risk of incidental damage and direct loss to grassland.
13b.	Modification to the structure of water courses e.g. streams, springs, ditches including their banks and beds, as by re-alignment, regrading, damming or dredging.	Risk of incidental damage and direct loss to grassland.
13c.	Management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes.	Risk of incidental damage and direct loss to grassland.
14.	Alterations to water levels and water tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes). Also the modification of current drainage operations.	Grassland sward sensitive to changes in hydrology. Direct damage to grassland in the immediate vicinity.
15.	Infilling or digging of ditches, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits	Direct damage to grassland
20.	Extraction of minerals including peat, sand and gravel, topsoil and subsoil.	Direct loss of grassland.
21.	Destruction, construction, removal, rerouting, or regrading of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, including soil and soft rock exposures or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.	Direct loss of or incidental damage to grassland.
22.	Storage of materials.	Risk of obscuring/smothering grassland.
23.	Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.	Direct loss of important habitats.
26.	Use of vehicles or craft.	Risk of damage to grassland, for instance from soil compaction or wheel-rutting.
27.	Recreational or other activities likely to damage or disturb the features of special interest.	Risk of damage to grassland, for instance due to excessive trampling.
28a.	Game and waterfowl management and hunting practices and alterations to game and waterfowl management and hunting practice.	Inappropriate location and types could damage grassland, for instance nutrient enrichment around feeders.

5. Site unit map

6. Photographs



Photograph 1
Lazy Meadow
SSSI boundary shown
in red



Scale (at A3): 1:1,039

Map produced by Denise Rose,
Strategy Implementation
Date: 01/02/2018.

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Photograph 2: Lazy Meadow showing a stand of great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. June 2007



Photograph 3: Lazy Meadow showing a stand of Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* June 2007



Photograph 4: Lazy Meadow in winter, post hay cut. December 2014

