

COUNTY: CHESHIRE

SITE NAME: LITTLE BUDWORTH COMMON

DISTRICT: Vale Royal

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

Local Planning Authority: CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, Vale Royal District Council

National Grid Reference: SJ 586656

Area: 52.1 (ha.) 131.2 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 117

1:10,000: SJ 56 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1979

Date of Last Revision: 1979

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Part of the site is managed as a Country Park by the Cheshire County Council.

Reasons for Notification:

Little Budworth Common is one of the best surviving examples of lowland heath in Cheshire. The vegetation varies from open heathland to dense developing birch *Betula pendula* woodland. Several areas of wet heath and bog also occur and add considerably to the diversity and interest of the area.

The dry heathland areas are dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris* with patches of bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*. Other species present include bell-heather *Erica cinerea*, gorse *Ulex europaeus* and harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*. The boggy areas are dominated by the mosses *Sphagnum* spp. and *Polytrichum* spp. and cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*. Other notable species include hare's-tail cotton-grass *E. vaginatum*, cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus* and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*. Of particular interest are white sedge *Carex curta* and sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* both of which are now uncommon in Cheshire.

The woodland is dominated by birch with some oak *Quercus robur* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* present. Patches of bilberry occur in the generally poor ground flora.