COUNTY: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER, SHROPSHIRE

SITE NAME: MORTIMER FOREST

DISTRICT: LEOMINSTER, SOUTH SHROPSHIRE

SITE REF: 15 WG8

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

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD AND WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL, Shropshire County Council, Leominster District Council, South Shropshire District Council

National Grid Reference: *See below

Area: 6.46 (ha) 15.96 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 148

1:10,000: SO 47 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1969

Date of Last Revision: 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 18.2.92

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
Site boundary alteration (extensions and reduction). Site includes 3 previously notified SSSIs – Deep Wood Strew Section, Monstay Quarry and Sunnyhill Cottages Quarry.
National Grid References for each part of the site (see attached map):

*1 SO 459735
2. SO 472731
3. SO 473730
4a. SO 477735
4b. SO 483738
4c. SO 487738
4d. SO 489739
4e. SO 491740
4f. SO 493741
5. SO 488730
6. SO 495724–498724
7. SO 485712–489711
8. SO 473719–476717

Description and Reasons for Notification:
Mortimer Forest is exceptionally important for displaying sections through Wenlock and Ludlow Series rocks. The site includes many type sections and has yielded a rich and diverse fossil fauna.

Pitch Coppice and Monstay Quarry are of special interest for the Wenlock Series rocks they expose.

Pitch Coppice is also of Ludlow interest as the site exposes the boundary between the Ludlow Series and the Wenlock Series. The site provides the standard section for the base of the Ludlow Series. The uppermost Much Wenlock Limestone Formation is conformably overlain by the Lower Elton Formation, both containing shelly macrofauna and marine microflora. Being an international standard section Pitch Coppice is one of Britain's most important geological sites. Monstay Quarry is an important accessory site to the section at Pitch Coppice, showing a lower succession in the Wenlock Limestone. Here flaggy lower limestones yield a sparse graptolite fauna and upper, more nodular limestones contain more shelly fossils including corals, bryozoa and brachiopods. A diverse acritarch flora and chitinozoan fauna have been collected recently from this quarry.

Six other localities within this site expose Ludlow Series rocks:

Goggin Road exposes the parastratotypes of the Lower Elton Formation, Middle Elton Formation, Upper Elton Formation and lower part of Lower Bringewood Formation. These are the best exposures in the type area for the Gorstian Stage. A diverse macrofauna occurs in the Lower Elton Formation and the Much Wenlock Limestone Formation, and a graptolite fauna in the Middle and Upper Elton Formations. Marine microfloral elements are well preserved throughout the section.

Deep Wood Stream Section shows key sections in the Ludlow Series Elton Beds, in particular the Middle Elton Beds (Gorstian Stage) with a fauna of graptolites and trilobites. The deeper water siltstones contain an acritarch flora. This is the type section for the base of the Middle Elton Beds, here in the type area for the Ludlow Series rocks.

Ludford Lane Section contains key localities in the Upper Elton Formation (with graptolite fauna), Lower and Upper Bringewood Formations (with shelly macrofauna) and Lower Leintwardine to Lower Whitcliffe Formation. Extensive palaeontological collections made were at these localities by earlier workers. These sections form historical exposures for the foundation of the Ludlow Series.

Mary Knoll Valley is the stratotype section for the Lower Bringewood Formation and Upper Bringewood Formation boundary. It is the type section for the lower part of the Upper Bringewood Formation, and it contains a diverse well preserved shelly macrofauna.

Deer Park Road contains the parastratotype sections for the upper part of the Lower Bringewood Formation, Upper Bringewood Formation, Lower Leintwardine Formation and lower part of the Lower Whitcliffe Formation. It has yielded a well preserved, shelly macrofauna and marine microflora.

Sunnyhill, Mary Knoll Valley is the international stratotype locality for the base of the Ludfordian Stage of the Ludlow Series. The type section of the Lower Leintwardine Formation lies in Sunnyhill Quarry and exposures up to the Lower Whitcliffe Formation along the track to the east-south-east. The boundary between the Upper Bringewood Formation and Lower Leintwardine Formation is exposed in the quarry section. Both formations have a diverse, well preserved shelly macrofauna and a diverse marine microflora.