

County: Isles of Scilly

Site Name: Big Pool and Browarth Point (St Agnes)

District:

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

Local Planning Authority: Council of the Isles of Scilly

National Grid Reference: SV 879087 **Area:** 10.1 (ha) 25.0 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 203 **1:10,000:** SV 80 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971 **Date of Last Revision:** –

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

Other Information:

The site lies within the Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast. The site boundary has been amended by deletion. Renotification covers land above Mean High Water Mark.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Big Pool is located on the north side of the island of St Agnes in the south-western part of the Isles of Scilly archipelago. This and the adjacent Little Pool are the only areas of open water on the island; separated from the sea by narrow, mobile shingle and boulder beaches which are occasionally overtopped during winter gales. The adjacent wet grassland contains a number of rare and notable plant species. Prominent raised beach deposits are exposed at the eastern edge of the site.

Big Pool, and Little Pool to the east, are mesotrophic freshwater habitats with abundant fennel pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus*. However the occasional influx of sea water during winter storms and the exposure to salt spray has resulted in some brackish influence reflected by the presence of saltmarsh rush *Juncus gerardi* and sea club-rush *Scirpus maritimus* around the margins of both pools.

The adjacent short wet grassland contains a rich and diverse flora including western clover *Trifolium occidentale*, suffocated clover *T. suffocatum* and small adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum azoricum*. Adder's-tongue *O. vulgatum* also occurs here in the short turf with chamomile *Chamaemelum nobile*, autumn lady's tresses *Spiranthes spiralis*, bristle club-rush *Isolepis setacea* and subterranean clover *Trifolium subterraneum*. The nationally rare early meadow-grass *Poa infirma* grows in the drier grassland on the trackway in the south of the site.

The strandline vegetation at the back of Porth Killier, Porth Coose and Periglis Bay is particularly notable for the population of sea radish *Raphanus maritimus* and sea kale *Crambe maritima* growing in association with frosted orache *Atriplex laciniata* and Babington's orache *A. glabriuscula*.

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* breed along those beaches, whilst mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, coot *Fulica atra* and moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* breed at Big Pool. This is also an important wetland feeding site for birds on passage, and supports small flocks of wintering wildfowl, especially mallard, wigeon *Anas penelope* and pochard *Aythya ferina*.