

COUNTY: DORSET                      SITE NAME: PITCOMBE DOWN

DISTRICT: WEST DORSET

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

Local Planning Authority: WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SY 585897                      Area: 13.2 (ha.) 32.6 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 194                      1:10,000: SY 58 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954                      Date of Last Revision: 1977

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985                      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Site boundary amended by extension and deletion.

Reasons for Notification:

An area of chalk downland of south and west aspect. In excellent condition, the swards show some variety in species composition whilst being characteristic of chalk grassland in the south west part of the county.

Most of the grassland is of the association: Sheep's Fescue/Red Fescue *Festuca ovina*/*F. rubra* – Salad Burnet *Sanguisorba minor*. It is rich in attractive downland plants including Horseshoe Vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, Clustered Bellflower *Campanula glomerata*, Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, Small Scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, Devil's-bit *Succisa pratensis* and Betony *Stachys officinalis*. Areas dominated by Tor Grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, though not rich in herbs, give additional variety to the site.

There are good populations of butterflies including the local Chalkhill Blue *Lysandra corridon* and the uncommon Small Blue *Cupido minimus* and Adonis Blue *Lysandra bellargus*.