

File ref:

County: Nottinghamshire **Site name:** Clarborough Tunnel

District: Bassetlaw

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

Local Planning Authority: Bassetlaw District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 749826 **Area:** 8.93 (ha) 22.06 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 120 **1: 10 000:** SK 78 SW, SK 78 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1972 **Date of Last Revision:** 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

Part of the site is managed as a nature reserve by the Nottinghamshire Trust for Nature Conservation Ltd.

Reasons for Notification:

The site comprises one of the best examples of calcareous grassland in Nottinghamshire and is representative of grassland swards developed on calcareous clay soils in Central and Eastern England.

Biology:

A fine example of calcareous grassland developed on the cutting slopes, tunnel top and associated spoil heaps along a short stretch of operational railway line. The calcareous nature of the soils derives largely from a gypsum component contained in the Triassic Keuper Marl through which the tunnel has been cut. The grassland is dominated by upright brome *Bromus erectus* and tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, with red fescue *Festuca rubra* and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca* locally abundant. The sward is herb-rich containing such characteristic plants as hoary plantain *Plantago media*, cowslip *Primula veris*, bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, wild carrot *Daucus carota*, knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*, spiny restharrow *Ononis spinosa*, oxeye daisy *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* and several species of orchids. Part of the site has been colonised by calcareous scrub consisting mainly of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, together with woody climbing and rambling plants particularly rose *Rosa spp.*, black bryony *Tamus communis* and ivy *Hedera helix*. Buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus* and spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola* are also recorded. The mix of grassland and scrub habitat provides suitable conditions for a diverse breeding bird and insect fauna.