

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: BEESTON CLIFFS

DISTRICT: North Norfolk

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

Local Planning Authority: North Norfolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TG 167434 to TG 171433 Area: 11.0 (ha) 27.2 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 133 1:10,000: TG 14 SE

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

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

Other Information:

This site comprises part of former West Runton Cliffs* SSSI with an extension.

Reasons for Notification:

This is the type site for the Beestonian Stage of the Pleistocene. The cliffs provide sections in both marine and freshwater pre-Pastonian and Pastonian, Beestonian and Cromerian sediments. The Beestonian is especially well-developed with freshwater fluvial and pool deposits, and marine beach gravels and sands. Pollen spectra have been obtained from many horizons throughout this varied sequence recording the pattern of vegetational changes which occurred as the sediments were being deposited. A nationally important Pleistocene reference site.

A nationally rare plant, Purple Broomrape *Orobanche purpurea* is present in unimproved calcareous grassland on the cliff-top. The grassland sward is dominated by Timothy Grass *Phleum pratense*, Cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata* and Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*. A number of other characteristic species occur including Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Musk Thistle *Carduus nutans*, Restharrow *Ononis repens* and Knapweed Broomrape *Orobanche elatior*.