

COUNTY: DORSET SITE NAME: CORFE AND BARROW HILLS

DISTRICT: POOLE

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

Local Planning Authority: POOLE BOROUGH COUNCIL, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SZ 005973 Area: 102.8 (ha.) 254.0 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 195 1:10,000: SY 99 NE
SZ 09 NW

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

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

Other Information:

This site includes the Broadstone Golf Course because of the unusually large amount of heathland remaining.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This area of heathland lies on the Tertiary deposits immediately south of the valley of the River Stour near Wimborne Minster in close proximity to the larger heathland blocks of Canford and Upton Heaths. It provides a very good example of a type of dry heathland dominated by Ling and Western Gorse which is very local in the County. This and the wetter heathland support several uncommon animals and plants typical of the Dorset heaths.

The higher ground has dry heath, dominated by Ling *Calluna vulgaris* and Western Gorse *Ulex gallii* with smaller amounts of Bell Heather *Erica cinerea* and Bristle Bent *Agrostis curtisii*. Common Gorse *Ulex europaeus* also occurs but is most frequent on disturbed ground at the edges of the heathland where there is some invasion by Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, Birch *Betula* sp. and Pine *Pinus sylvestris*. On lower ground there is damp and wet heath largely dominated by Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* with varying amounts of Ling and Deer Grass *Trichophorum cespitosum*. The *Sphagnum* mosses *S. compactum*, *S. tenellum*, *S. capillifolium*, *S. papillosum* and the rare *S. pulchrum* are frequent. There are small populations of two scarce plants, Marsh Gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe* and Dorset Heath *Erica ciliaris*, the latter found almost exclusively on the heaths of Purbeck and here in its most northerly known location in Dorset. A small amount of typical acid oak *Quercus*/birch *Betula* woodland occurs at the foot of Barrow Hill.

The fauna of this heathland block includes some rare species, notably the two reptiles almost confined to Dorset, the Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* and Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca* which frequent the dry heath and the Dartford

Warbler *Sylvia undata*, similarly confined to the heathland of southern England. The damper areas have good populations of the local Bog Bush Cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera* and its rare relative, the Long Winged Conehead *Conocephalus discolor* has also been recorded.