COUNTY: BERKSHIRE **SITE NAME:** BOXFORD CHALK PIT

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

Local Planning Authorities: Berkshire County Council, Newbury District Council

National Grid Reference: SU431719

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 174 **1:10,000:** SU47 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1970 **Date of Last Revision:**

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** 25 March 1993

Area: 0.43 ha 1.06 ac

Other information: Within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Description and Reasons for Notification

Boxford Chalk Pit shows a unique late Coniacian to Santonian succession of tilted beds overlain by a chalk mélange. The tilted unit contains and is capped by hardgrounds, unusual in chalk of this age, whilst the mélange contains fractured and folded pieces of hardground set in a matrix of coarse-grained chalk. This is interpreted as evidence of localised, but important intra-Upper Cretaceous tectonism (probably severe basement faulting), unknown from elsewhere in Britain. Consequently, study of this site is essential in the understanding of late Cretaceous sedimentation and related tectonic controls.

In addition, thin horizons above phosphatic hardgrounds contain coprolites and many tiny fish teeth. These yield a very diverse micro-fauna of sharks, many of a species of dog-fish, all as yet undescribed.