

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** Cliff House

District: West Lindsey

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

Local Planning Authority: West Lindsey District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 965853 **Area:** 4.8 (ha) 11.8 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 122 **1: 10 000** SK 99 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1966 **Date of Last Revision:**

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

Other Information:

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site represents a fine example of calcareous grassland developed on soils derived from Eastern Jurassic Limestone. It is particularly important in North Lincolnshire in being an extensive area, consisting of long-abandoned stone pits which have become vegetated and are now grazed by sheep. Most of the remaining grassland of this type in the county is confined to roadside verges and disused quarries which are not managed in a traditional manner.

Characteristic limestone herbs are very well represented in the sheep-grazed turf. They include common rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, wild thyme *Thymus praecox*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, hoary plantain *Plantago media*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and stemless thistle *Cirsium acaule*. The turf is short in the hummocky areas of the old workings and includes a range of grasses such as sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, upright brome *Bromus erecta*, tor grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, quaking grass *Briza media*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and yellow oat grass *Trisetum flavescens*.

Several of the more uncommon limestone herbs present in some quantity within the sward include squinancywort *Asperula cynanchica*, purple milkvetch *Astragalus danicus* and clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata*.

The site is of particular interest in being one of the few locations for burnt-tip orchid *Orchis ustulata* in the county.