

COUNTY: DORSET SITE NAME: HAYDON AND ASKERSWELL
DOWNS

DISTRICT: WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL, Dorset County Council

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

Local Planning Authority: WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: SY 547925 Area: 108.0 (ha.) 266.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 194 1:10,000: ST 59 SW, SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 Date of Last Revision: 1977

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

Other Information:

Within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Site boundary amended by extension and deletion.

Reasons for Notification:

An extensive area of steep chalk slopes with all aspects, presenting an especially good example of calcareous grassland at the western extremity of the chalk.

Most of the site has a short well-grazed turf with Sheep's Fescue *Festuca ovina*, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra* and Salad Burnet *Sanguisorba minor* the most important constituents and containing many attractive chalk plants. These include Squinancy-wort *Asperula cynanchica*, Clustered Bellflower *Campanula glomerata* and a number of species particularly associated with the Western Chalk such as Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, Betony *Stachys officinalis* and Devil's-bit *Succisa pratensis*. Typical of chalk grassland in the west, there is not a great variety of orchids but Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* is very frequent and Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, Fragrant Orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* and Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* occur locally.

The sheltered parts of the south-facing downs are especially favourable to butterflies including the very local Adonis Blue *Lysandra bellargus* and Small Blue *Cupido minimus*.