

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** High Dyke

District: North Kesteven/South Kesteven

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

Local Planning Authority: North Kesteven District Council/
South Kesteven District Council

National Grid Reference: SK 991505 **Area:** 6.5 (ha) 16.1 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 121/130 **1: 10 000:** SK 95 SE, SK 94 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951 **Date of Last Revision**

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

Other Information:

The boundary of this site has been modified at re-notification by a partial deletion and extension.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The wide verges in Ermine Street, (a section of this ancient trackway is disused), along with some further roadside verges to the south, comprise a substantial area of Eastern Jurassic Limestone grassland in south Lincolnshire. This site is the locality of two nationally rare plants, at the edge of their British geographical range.

Most of the site consists of permanent species-rich calcareous grassland, managed by mowing rather than grazing. Grass species such as upright brome *Bromus erectus*, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* and red fescue *Festuca rubra* tend to dominate, with characteristic herbs including dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, field scabious *Knautia arvensis*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, and the locally uncommon saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and purple milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus*. On the roadside verges to the south, saw-wort is much more frequent and, in addition, dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria* occurs.

An additional habitat is provided by scattered scrub of elder *Sambucus nigra*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, which occurs along the boundary with adjacent arable fields. Areas of bare ground in the centre of the tract provide a habitat for arable weeds such as night-flowering catchfly *Silene noctiflora* and venus's looking-glass *Legousia hybrida*, which are now scarce in arable fields generally.