

File ref:

**County:** Lincolnshire **Site name:** Holywell Banks

**District:** South Kesteven

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

**Local Planning Authority:** South Kesteven District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SK 995157 and TF 007160 **Area:** 6.0 (ha) 14.8 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000:** 130 **1: 10 000:** SK 91 NE, TF 01 NW

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1951\* **Date of Last Revision:** 1981

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

#### **Other Information:**

- (1) \*Part of this site was notified in 1951 as Holywell Hill and was extended and re-named Holywell Banks in the 1981 revision.
- (2) Holywell Mound is a nationally important site listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' edited by D. A. Ratcliffe, Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- (3) The boundary of the site had been modified at re-notification by partial deletions and extensions.

#### **Description and Reasons for Notification:**

This site consists of permanent unimproved calcareous grassland covering two banks within larger grazed fields, a section of roadside verge and a disused quarry, all on soils developed from Eastern Jurassic Limestone. Different plant communities have developed on each part of the site owing to intrinsic differences within the site as a whole, such as slope, aspect and management regime. Several rare species occur here, some near the northern limit of their British geographical range.

Holywell Hill, the eastern part of the site, has a south-western aspect and a short turf with upright brome *Bromus erectus*, crested hair-grass *Koeleria macrantha*, downy oat-grass *Avenula pubescens*, quaking grass *Briza media* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. The many characteristic plants of limestone grassland include thyme-leaved sandwort *Arenaria serpyllifolia*, dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, purging flax *Linum catharticum* and wild thyme *Thymus praecox*. The species-rich turf includes the uncommon pasque flower *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, bastard toadflax *Thesium humifusum* and purple milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus*. cont...

## **Holywell Banks (cont...)**

Robinson's field, the western part of the site, includes a flat area dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra*, upright brome and white clover *Trifolium repens* although salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, field wood-rush *Luzula campestris* and cowslip *Primula veris* are present. The slopes have a northerly aspect and support several species of moss. Typical limestone plants such as stemless thistle *Cirsium acaule*, eyebright *Euphrasia* agg., autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, restharrow *Ononis repens*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and spring sedge *Carex caryophyllea* occur here.

The disused limestone quarry is unmanaged and the longer vegetation is valuable invertebrate habitat. Here, coarse grasses tend to dominate, apart from on quarry faces, where plants such as pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, wild basil *Clinopodium vulgare*, clustered bell-flower *Campanula glomerata* and common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* occur. The species-rich grassland of the roadside verges is mown annually. Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus* scrub occurs also.