

**County:** Dorset      **Site Name:** Corton Cutting

**District:** West Dorset

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

**Local Planning Authority:** West Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council

**National Grid Reference:** SY 637855      **Area:** 0.24 (ha)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 194      **1:10,000:** SY 68 NW

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 11 September 1997

**Other Information:**

A Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

Corton Cutting lies about 7 kilometres NW of Weymouth and consists of a series of exposures in a short road cutting which provides access from the junction with the Upwey–Portesham road to Corton Farm.

Corton Cutting shows a section through the Portland Sand Formation of Late Jurassic (Tithonian) age. The upper part of the Formation is here remarkably developed, with lime mudstones, often rich in sponge spicules ('spiculite') yielding a rich marine fauna with serpulid encrusted oysters *Nanogyra* and ammonites (the latter representing the Albani Zone). These levels are taken to be equivalent to the Exogyra Bed of Ringstead and Portland and form the type sequence of the Corton Hill Member.

The overlying West Wear sandstone is dolomitised and indicates a sudden deepening, briefly reversing the overall trend of marine shallowing through the latest Jurassic. This is a nationally important site for study of the facies and stratigraphy of the Tithonian Stage in Britain.