

Planning Inspectorate Appeal – Reference CROW/5/M/04/2485 – Thixendale

The East Yorkshire and Derwent Ramblers' Association (EY&D RA) disagree with the appellants Grounds of Appeal and make the following comments.

1. 'The vegetation cover indicates that less than 50% of the area can be classified as down.

In his report Dr Mark McLellan classifies 92% of the area as semi-improved calcareous grassland.

The information supplied previously by EY&D RA (see submission no 19K) does not agree with this. It indicates that this area is predominantly unimproved calcareous grassland. Both the Phase I and Phase II Habitat Surveys support this as does the BioDAT report.

During his visit to the site in January 2004 Dr McLellan records tor grass (*Brachypodium pinnatum*) and upright brome (*Bromopsis erectus*). These two grasses are typically found on areas of dry, relatively infertile calcareous soils especially where grazing pressures have relaxed especially after the reduction in the rabbit population in the 1950's due to myxomatosis. Because the site visit was carried out in January it is likely that some of the calcicolous indicator species would have been missed. The best time to assess grassland is early spring and summer.

We therefore disagree with Dr McLellan's classification of semi improved calcareous grassland. We believe it is unimproved calcareous grassland.

2. 'The land parcel is not of an open character, being a steep sided area surrounded by arable land.

The description of Down as applied to the Yorkshire Wolds is, 'generally within an open landscape and whilst individual land parcels might comprise enclosures of varying size, they will be part of a typical chalk landscape sometimes with open vistas across undulating countryside and sometimes comprising steep-sided scarp slopes and dry valleys with more limited views.'

The area complies with this description and is part of a steep-sided dale typical of the Yorkshire Wolds.

We believe that the information we have provided previously and the additional information supplied by Dr McLellan indicates that this area fulfils the downland criteria and should remain as open country on the provisional map.