

SCHEDULE OF QUALIFYING LAND FOR MAPPING OPEN COUNTRY

Ramblers' Association East Yorkshire and Derwent Area	North East Region 5	Sheet 1 of 1
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RA Map	Site references	Name on Map	OS Grid Ref	Area (ha)	Parcels
21	A B C F J	Thixen Dale :North, including part of Water Dale	SE 845 605	34	3
Qualifying type	Vegetation Type		Justification for inclusion		
Mountain		Heather Moor		Predominance of qualifying type (M, M, H, D) 90 %	
Moor		Rough acid grassland		Contiguous to large parcel of open country	
Heath		Calcareous grassland	√	Contiguous to existing access land or common land	
Down	√	Scattered trees or scrub		Provides clearer physical boundary to larger area	
		Bracken		Local value of small parcel (view, feature, accessible, PRoW etc)	
		Rock outcrops		Provides means of access to other access land	
				Steep sided	

This submission supports the inclusion of the area show as open country on the Draft Map and seeks extend the boundaries of open country as shown.

Comments supporting vegetation type and justification for inclusion:

The complex of valleys south of Thixendale village provides characteristic examples of a range of chalk grassland types found on the Yorkshire Wolds. Areas A, F and J are in the **Grasslands Inventory**, form part of the SSSI (1004472 Long Dale and Thixendale), were surveyed in the **Phase II Habitat Survey** (EFU30) in July 1982. All areas are subject to **Countryside Stewardship Agreements** (Chalk and Limestone).

The **Phase II Habitat** survey for **area F**, recorded 9 grasses and 57 other herbs, of which 9 were calcicolous indicator species. Analysis of the data showed that the composition of the swards corresponded to the CG3 NVC classification. The SSSI citation states that the east-facing bank (**F**) of Thixen Dale contains a higher proportion (than Long Dale) of such coarse grasses as upright brome *Bromopsis (Bromus) erecta* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, although red fescue *Festuca rubra* and sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* are also abundant. Although not as herb-rich as Long Dale, this field contains frequent clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata*, field scabious *Knautia arvensis* and lesser knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, with salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, greater knapweed *C. scabiosa* and burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*.

The opposite side of Thixen Dale, **area J**, (**Grasslands Inventory**: Thixendale NY/SE86/T05) was not in the Phase II survey, but the SSSI citation states that the grassland at the north end is mainly rather species-poor, but further south it becomes richer, with abundant rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, greater knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, and field scabious *Knautia arvensis* as components of a community dominated by tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, quaking grass *Briza media* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*.

The **Phase II Habitat** survey for **area A**, recorded 4 grasses and 29 other herbs, of which 5 were calcicolous indicator species and the plant community was classified as CG4c. The most abundant indicator species recorded were greater knapweed and saw-wort as components of a sward dominated tor-grass, and red fescue.

No detailed botanical information is available for **area C**, the steep north-facing side of the part of Water Dale that runs east of Thixendale village or for **area B**, its continuation south into Thixen Dale. Site visits in August 2002 and May 2003 and inspection of **aerial photographs** taken in 2000 suggest that the area is unimproved chalkland.

Recent surveys, including **visual inspection** in August 2002 and May 2003 and inspection of aerial photographs, shows that the site appears to be as described in 1985 and that it has not received any recent agricultural improvement.

The evidence presented here suggests that the areas outlined on the map, including that shown on the Draft Map, are predominantly unimproved calcareous grassland and should be mapped as open country.

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