

Planning Inspectorate Appeal – Reference CROW/5/M/04/2487 – Waterdale, North of Road

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.'

The evidence supplied by Dr Mark McLellan and enclosed with the Halifax Estates Management Company Appeal states that this area is 68% semi-improved grassland

The information supplied previously by EY&D RA (see submission no 18D) does not agree with this. It indicates that this area is unimproved calcareous grassland. The Phase II Habitat Survey shows that the area to the east of Dimple Hole is unimproved calcareous grassland with 14 calcicolous indicator species in this part of the dale. The Phase I Habitat Survey and the SSSI citation also support the classification of unimproved calcareous grassland.

During his visit to the site in January 2004 Dr McLellan records tor grass (*Brachypodium pinnatum*) which is often dominant on calcareous soils. He also mentions a number of other calcicolous species and it is highly likely that other species are present but because of the time of year when the visit to the site was made a number of the calcicolous indicator species have been missed. The mosses *Calliergon cuspidatum* and *Pseudoscleropodium purum* are also mentioned in Dr McLellan's report. Both these mosses are found in chalk grassland, *P. purum* is the most abundant of the chalk grassland mosses.

We therefore disagree with Dr McLellan's classification of semi improved neutral 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 is correctly mapped as open country on the provisional map.