

Planning Inspectorate Appeal – Reference CROW/5/M/04/2489 – Brownmoor Dale south to Queen Dyke

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 56% of the area can be classified as down with the remainder being improved or semi-improved grassland'.

The evidence supplied by Dr Mark McLellan and enclosed with the Halifax Estates Management Company Appeal states that this area has 56% unimproved calcareous grassland and about 35% semi-improved grassland. Part of the semi-improved grassland has been classified as neutral and part poor semi-improved.

The information supplied previously by EY&D RA (see submission no 18 C) does not agree with this. The Phase I Habitat Survey indicates that this part of the dale is unimproved calcareous grassland.

Dr McLellan visited the site in January 2004 and it is highly likely that calcicolous species were present in the area he has classified as semi-improved neutral grassland but because of the time of year when the visit was made they have been missed. Grasslands are difficult to study because many of the species can only be identified in early summer and at certain times of the year calcareous grassland can take on the appearance of neutral grassland. The mosses *Pseudoscleropodium purum*, *Hylocomium splendens*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, *Dicranium scoparium* and *Plagiothecium undulatum* are mentioned in Dr McLellan's report. All occur in chalk grassland. *P. purum* is the most abundant of the chalk grassland mosses and *H splendens*, *R.squarrosus* and *D.scoparium* can be regarded as calcicolous indicator species.[CHECK]

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 dale surrounded by arable land and improved grassland. The only views within the dales are linear rather than open.'

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.

3. 'Although on the Provisional Map this parcel has areas of open country to the North and East, they will be removed as they are less than 50% down. This particular area.....would not be a beneficial area of open country in isolation.'

We do not agree that this area should be removed because there is an assumption that the areas to the north and east will be removed because they are less than 50% down (see appropriate comments on the appeals CROW/5/M/04/2488 and CROW/5/M/04/2490). This could set a precedent for areas in similar positions.

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.