



# **Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI North Yorkshire**

***Notification under section 28 of the Wildlife  
and Countryside Act 1981***

Issued by Natural England's Yorkshire East Land Management Team on **25 September 2013**

## Contact points and further information

This notification document is issued by Natural England's Yorkshire East Land Management Team. Our address for correspondence is:

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Your contact point for enquiries relating to this notification is **Emma Leighton**.

A second document (*Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI - supporting information*) is available on request from the address above. This contains information and extracts from relevant documents that have been used in the decision to notify this SSSI.

The date of notification of Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI is **25 September 2013**

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This document explains why Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows is notified by Natural England as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 1.2 Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI is a nationally important site for its lowland meadows with species-rich neutral grassland and for the critically endangered tansy beetle *Chrysolina graminis*. Lowland meadows and tansy beetle are included on the lists of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- 1.3 The annexes to this document comprise the legal papers that detail the interest and the management required to maintain that interest. You have a right to make representations or objections to this notification. Part 3 of this document explains how to do this.
- 1.4 Natural England's consent is required by owners and occupiers before any of the operations listed in *Annex 3* can be carried out. We will work closely with owners and managers, as well as other bodies, to ensure that existing operations and new works that are not considered likely to damage the special features of the SSSI can be carried out.

## 2. The legal background

- 2.1 Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI is notified under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as substituted by Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 2.2 Part 8 of this notification document contains the following legal documents required by section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981:
  - a citation detailing the reasons for notification (*Annex 1*);
  - a statement of Natural England's views on the management of the SSSI (*Annex 2*);
  - a list of operations requiring Natural England's consent (*Annex 3*); and
  - a map identifying the land subject to this notification (*Annex 4*).
- 2.3 This notification has several effects. The key ones can be summarised as follows:
  - owners and occupiers must give Natural England notice before carrying out, causing or permitting to be carried out any of the activities in the list of operations at *Annex 3*;
  - owners of land included in the SSSI have a legal obligation to notify Natural England within 28 days if the ownership or occupancy of the land changes;
  - it is an offence for any person intentionally or recklessly to destroy or damage the special features of the SSSI or to disturb any of the fauna; and
  - other public bodies must consult Natural England before carrying out or authorising any works that may damage the SSSI.

If you require any further information or advice on how this notification affects you, please do not hesitate to contact Natural England at the address shown at the beginning of this notification document.

## 3. Making representations

- 3.1 You have a legal right to make objections and representations about this notification. Any representations or objections should be made in writing by **27 January 2014** to Natural England's Yorkshire East Land Management Team at the address shown on page 2. You may wish to seek legal or independent advice and your representative may wish to write to us on your behalf.

- 3.2 The Yorkshire East Land Management Team will consider your objections or representations and will try to resolve them. Any unresolved objections or representations will be considered by the Board of Natural England within nine months of this notification. If you wish to emphasise any of your objections or representations to the Board in person, you should tell us when you write to us. You will then be advised of the date and location of the Board meeting. Following consideration of objections and representations, the Board of Natural England may confirm or withdraw all or part of this notification.
- 3.3 Natural England has a policy of openness, which reflects our obligations under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This legislation provides a legal right of access to information held by public bodies. This means that we will provide information on how we make our decisions on SSSIs to any person on request. This includes details of objections and representations received. We will assume, therefore, that your representation or objection can be made publicly available unless you indicate with clear and valid reasons which (if any) part(s) of these you wish to be excluded from this arrangement. However, you should be aware that the requirements of the legislation may mean that we cannot comply with your request that this information be withheld. We do, however, respect people's privacy and will take all reasonable steps to consult you before reaching a decision on disclosure of the information.

As an individual with an interest in Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI, your information will be stored and processed on a computer database that will be operated within the Data Protection Act 1998. This Act gives individuals the right to know what data we hold on them, how we use it and to which third parties it is disclosed. For the purposes of the Data Protection Act, the data controller is Natural England, Suite D, Unex House, Bourges Boulevard, Peterborough PE1 1NG.

## 4. Reasons for notification

- 4.1 Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI is of special interest for the following nationally important features:

- **Species-rich neutral grassland**

The fields support species-rich neutral grassland, predominantly of the rare National Vegetation Classification (NVC) types MG4 meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* – great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* grassland and MG8 crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* – marsh marigold *Caltha palustris* grassland, with communities transitional between these NVC grassland types. The MG4 grasslands include various expressions and atypical varieties (compared to the published account in Rodwell 1992<sup>1</sup>). These vegetation communities form part of the 'lowland meadows' habitat, which is included on the list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The species-rich communities described above form a mosaic with other neutral grassland communities and tall-herb fen. The precise distribution and juxtaposition of the communities is determined by a range of factors, including land management practices, topography, drainage, nutrient enrichment, and the pattern and frequency of flooding.

- **Tansy beetle *Chrysolina graminis***

The SSSI is a key area for the critically endangered tansy beetle *Chrysolina graminis*. The tansy beetle is nationally restricted to a stretch of land (approximately 45 km) along the River Ouse to the north and south of York, including the section which passes through the SSSI. Clifton Ings has been noted as a stronghold for the species since Victorian times and significant numbers are found on the adjacent Rawcliffe Meadows. Tansy beetle is included on the list of habitats and species which are of

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<sup>1</sup> Rodwell, J.S. (ed.) 1992. *British Plant Communities Volume 3: Grasslands and Montane Communities*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

## **5. Site boundaries and relationships with other SSSIs**

- 5.1 Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI is situated north-west of York on the floodplain of the eastern bank of the River Ouse. The site is formed of two fields containing unimproved neutral grassland, with small areas of broadleaved woodland and tall-herb fen. The boundary has been drawn to include land supporting the features of special interest and those areas required to ensure the long-term sustainability of these features.
- 5.2 The SSSI extends across two alluvial floodplain fields to the east of the River Ouse. The boundary of the SSSI has been drawn to follow the nearest physical feature on the ground where possible. A variety of easily identifiable features have been used to define the boundary, including floodbanks, river bank, cycle tracks, ditches, fences, walls and hedgerows. Further details of boundaries are given in the supporting information document. Further clarification of the precise location of the boundary in specific parts of the SSSI can also be obtained from Natural England's Yorkshire East Land Management Team at the address on page 2 of this document.
- 5.3 The nearest SSSI to Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI is Fulford Ings SSSI, which lies approximately 3.5 km to south-east (notified for its fen meadow, lowland neutral grassland and swamp).
- 5.4 One other SSSI – Ancaster South Ings has been notified for the beetle. This site, notified in 1988 for its MG4 - *Alopecurus pratensis* - *Sanguisorba officinalis* grassland, comprises two flood meadows next to the River Ouse and lies approximately 8km south of Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows. The beetle is also known to occur in several other SSSIs along the Ouse to the south of York but is not a notified feature of them.

## **6. Management of the SSSI**

- 6.1 This notification includes at *Annex 2* a statement of the management that Natural England considers is needed to conserve and enhance the features of special interest. Different management may be appropriate in different parts of the site and this statement is not intended to detail the exact requirements at specific locations. The statement is intended to explain how we can work with and support owners and managers in continuing to achieve positive management of the SSSI.
- 6.2 This notification also includes a list of the operations requiring Natural England's consent at *Annex 3*. Some of the operations may already be taking place and where they do not cause any damage they will be given consent. We will work with landowners and managers to agree lists of such existing and planned activities, which can be approved.
- 6.3 Where an operation has been granted a consent, licence or permission from another public body a separate consent will not generally be required from Natural England. However, other public bodies are required to consult Natural England before such consents, licences or permissions are issued.
- 6.4 In particular, we recognise the important roles of the owners and managers of the land in managing this site. We will continue to work with them to develop means to secure the sustainable management of Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI.

## **7. Supporting information**

- 7.1 The detailed information, which has been used to assess the importance of this SSSI, is available on request from the address on page 2 of this document.

## **8. Legal documents**

- 8.1 Attached at *Annexes 1 - 4* are the legal documents, which are required by section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



## ***Annex 1***

### **Citation**

This is a legal document on which you have a right to make objections or representations, as explained in part 3 of this notification document



**Site name:** Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows **County:** North Yorkshire

**District:** City of York

**Status:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as substituted by Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

**Local Planning Authority:** City of York Council, North Yorkshire County Council

**National Grid reference:** SE582533 **Area:** 56.15 ha

**Ordnance Survey Sheets:** 105 **1:10,000:** SE 55 SE

**Notification date:** 25 September 2013

#### Reasons for notification:

Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI is a nationally important site for: species-rich neutral grassland, predominantly of the rare National Vegetation Classification (NVC) types MG4 meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* – great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* grassland (with various expressions and varieties represented) and MG8 crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* – marsh marigold *Caltha palustris* grassland, with communities transitional between these NVC grassland types; and the critically endangered tansy beetle *Chrysolina graminis*.

#### General description:

Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows comprises two floristically-diverse fields supporting unimproved neutral grassland on river alluvium soils. The meadows are within the floodplain adjacent to the River Ouse and would have traditionally been subject to seasonal flooding. The presence of large river embankments now reduce this but the meadows still become flooded when river levels are high and the area is operated as a washland, storing water to reduce the risk of flooding in the City of York. The fields are managed by hay cutting, with aftermath grazing. Unimproved neutral grasslands have suffered substantial decline nationally due to agricultural intensification and Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows represents a large, rare surviving example.

The species-rich neutral grassland communities form a mosaic with other neutral grassland communities and tall-herb fen. The precise distribution and juxtaposition of the communities is determined by a range of factors, including land management practices, topography, drainage, nutrient enrichment, and the pattern and frequency of flooding. The majority of the grassland is characterised by a diverse range of grasses and herbs. Grasses such as meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, smooth brome *Bromus racemosus* and red fescue *Festuca rubra* occur, with characteristic herbs such as great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, meadow rue *Thalictrum flavum*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, and locally abundant patches of common bistort *Persicaria bistorta*.

In the wetter areas the grasses are characterised by species such as creeping bent, meadow foxtail, red fescue and rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, and there are areas locally dominated by brown sedge *Carex disticha* and common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*. The herbs in these areas are characterised by species which include marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, meadowsweet, cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis*, meadow rue and amphibious bistort *Persicaria amphibian*.

The tansy beetle, an iridescent green leaf beetle is highly restricted in range, with a stretch of the River Ouse from Newton-on-Ouse to Barlby now thought to support the only remaining populations in the British Isles. Riparian areas of Clifton Ings have been a stronghold location for tansy beetle since Victorian times and the species is also found on the adjacent Rawcliffe Meadows. Both larvae and adults of the tansy beetle feed almost exclusively on the plant tansy *Tanacetum vulgare* which is prevalent in patches along the river banks of Clifton Ings and in Rawcliffe Meadows.



## ***Annex 2***

### **Views about Management**

This is a legal document on which you have a right to make objections or representations, as explained in part 3 of this notification document.





## Views About Management

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 28(4) as inserted by  
Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

### **A statement of Natural England's views about the management of Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

This statement represents Natural England's views about the management of the SSSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the site's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Natural England has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of SSSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the SSSI. Also, there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest.

This Statement does not constitute consent for any of the 'operations requiring Natural England's consent'. The written consent of Natural England is required before carrying out any of those operations. Natural England welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the SSSI to ensure that the management of this site conserves and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

#### **Management principles**

##### **Neutral hay meadows**

Neutral hay meadows require active management if they are to retain their conservation interest. In order to maintain a species-rich sward, each year's growth of vegetation must be removed. Without such management the sward becomes progressively dominated by tall and vigorous grasses which, together with an associated build up of dead plant matter, suppress less vigorous species and reduce the botanical diversity of the site.

In neutral hay meadows, this is traditionally achieved by closing the fields to stock in the autumn and cutting the resultant growth as hay, usually in early July. The precise timing of the cut depends on local factors, including past management and the prevailing weather conditions, but should be after ground-nesting birds have fledged their young and any short-lived, characteristic plants have set seed. The aftermath is then grazed in late summer/autumn. Aftermath grazing is important for maintaining a species-rich sward, both through controlling competitive grasses and through hoof-prints providing suitable sites for seedlings to establish. Heavy poaching must, however, be avoided. Any surrounding, well managed hedgerows may considerably add to the habitat in providing shelter for invertebrates. The application of pesticides including herbicides or fertilizers would be damaging but occasional dressings of lime may be acceptable.

For the damper meadows, regular and careful maintenance of surface drainage including ditches and drains may be necessary to prevent adverse changes in the plant species composition of the sward. Deepening of surface drainage should be avoided.

##### **Tansy beetle *Chrysolina graminis***

The tansy beetle relies almost exclusively on tansy *Tanacetum vulgare* plants growing in the riparian fringe for all of its life cycle requirements. Adult beetles hibernate in the soil at the base of tansy plants from October to April when they emerge, feed, mate and lay eggs on the tansy leaves before they die off. The eggs soon hatch and larvae feed on the tansy before entering the topsoil at any time between mid-April and early June to pupate. From July the new generation of adults emerges to feed before hibernation, with the peak abundance being in August.

Management of tansy beetle habitat needs to be undertaken in a way that is sympathetic to the life cycle of the tansy beetle and the occurrence of tansy plants. Mowing of the riverbanks at a time when larvae or newly emerged adults are above ground could lead to death or damage to individuals and removal of their food supply. Ideally, mowing of the riverbanks and other locations where tansy beetle occurs should be undertaken in the autumn when the beetles are hibernating. If mowing cannot be delayed until the autumn then it should be undertaken during the pupation period from mid-June to early July with any large patches of tansy plants being left uncut.

**Date notified: 25 September 2013**

## ***Annex 3***

### **List of operations requiring Natural England's consent**

This is a legal document on which you have a right to make objections or representations, as explained in part 3 of this notification package.



## Operations requiring Natural England's consent

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 28 (4)(b) substituted by Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The operations listed below may damage the features of interest of Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows SSSI. Before any of these operations are undertaken you must consult Natural England, and may require our consent.

It is usually possible to carry out some of these operations in certain ways, or at specific times of year, or on certain parts of the SSSI, without damaging the features of interest. If you wish to carry out any of these activities please contact a Natural England Adviser who will give you advice and where appropriate issue a consent. Please help us by using the form sent to you with the notification documents to ask us for consent to carry out these operations.

In certain circumstances it will not be possible to consent these operations, because they would damage the features of interest. Where possible your Natural England Adviser will suggest alternative ways in which you may proceed, which would enable a consent to be issued. To proceed without Natural England's consent may constitute an offence. If consent is refused, or conditions attached to it, which are not acceptable to you, you will be provided with details of how you may appeal to the Secretary of State.

<b>Standard reference number</b>	<b>Type of operation</b>
1	Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and re-seeding.
2	Grazing and alterations to the grazing regime (including type of stock, intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing).
3	Stock feeding and alterations to stock feeding practice.
4	Mowing or cutting vegetation and alterations to the mowing or cutting regime (such as from haymaking to haylage or silage).
5	Application of manures, slurry, silage liquor, sewage sludge, fertilisers and lime.
6	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers) whether terrestrial or aquatic, and veterinary products.
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.
8	Burning.
9	Release into the site of any wild, feral, captive-bred or domestic animal, plant, seed or micro-organism (including genetically modified organisms).
10	Killing, injuring, taking or removal of any wild animal (including dead animals or parts thereof), or their eggs and nests, excluding pest control, and disturbing them in their places of shelter.
11	Destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, herb, hedge, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf-mould or turf.
12	Tree and woodland management and alterations to tree and woodland management (including planting, felling, pruning and tree surgery, thinning, coppicing, changes in species composition and removal of fallen timber).
13a	Draining (including the use of mole, tile, tunnel, or other artificial drains).
13b	Modification to the structure of water courses (streams, springs, drains and ditches), including their banks and beds, as by realignment, re-grading, damming or dredging.

<b>Standard reference number</b>	<b>Type of operation</b>
13c	Management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes.
14	Alterations to water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes). Also the modification of current drainage operations.
15	Infilling or digging of ditches, dykes, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.
20	Extraction of minerals, including hard rock, sand and gravel, topsoil and sub-soil.
21	Destruction, construction, removal, re-routing or re-grading of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hard-stands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, including soil and soft rock exposures, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.
22	Storage of materials.
23	Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.
26	Use of vehicles or craft.
27	Recreational or other activities likely to damage or disturb the features of special interest or their habitats.
28	Game and waterfowl management and hunting practices and alterations to game and waterfowl management and hunting practice.

### **Notes**

- i. This is a list of operations appearing to Natural England to be likely to damage the special features of the SSSI, as required under section 28 (4) (b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 substituted by Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- ii. Where an operation has been granted a consent, licence or permission from another authority separate consent will not be required from Natural England. However, other authorities are required to consult Natural England before such consents, licences or permissions are issued.
- iii. Any reference to 'animal' in this list shall be taken to include any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish, or invertebrate.

Date notified: 25 September 2013

National grid reference: SE582533

## ***Annex 4***

### **Map showing the land notified**

This is a legal document on which you have a legal right to make objections or representations, as explained in part 3 of this notification document.



Insert detail map here  
1 x A3 colour