

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Red Hill



Location & Access

OS: 122 • **GR:** SK 264 806 • 27.3ha (67.60 acres) • Freehold 1967

Habitat type: Grassland

The reserve adjoins the Glouceby-Raithby road, about 1.5km (0.9 miles) south-west of the Bluestone Heath Road. Parking places are provided at the top end and to the east of the reserve.

Lincolnshire's Coronation Meadow

On 5 June 2013, Red Hill nature reserve was named as one of the 60 Coronation Meadows across the UK to mark the 60th anniversary of The Queen's Coronation.

The initiative came from HRH The Prince of Wales after reading Plantlife's report on the scale of the local loss of wildflower meadows. The UK has lost 97% of its wildflower meadows since the 1930s, with every county across the UK losing, on average, a wild flower every two years - the majority of these are meadow and grassland species.

The scale of the loss has left the remaining wild meadows fragmented and wildlife isolated and even more vulnerable. Even common hay meadow plants, like yellow rattle, eyebrights and greater knapweed are in decline. These flowers, along with many others, can all be found at Red Hill nature reserve.

Red Hill is one of the most attractive and interesting fragments of ancient 'sheep walk' downland which once covered much of the chalk wolds. Part of the site used to be a barley field. Now an extension to the SSSI, it is one of the best chalk downland meadows in Lincolnshire.

Description & Management

The area comprises 1.6ha (4 acres) of steep chalk escarpment grassland with some scrub and 1.6 hectares (4 acres) of old plateau grassland, and a disused quarry with a famous exposure of Red Chalk, which is rich in fossils, particularly belemnites and brachiopods. Below the Red Chalk there is a considerable thickness of Carstone, here a coarse, pebbly sandstone, and above it a thin capping of the white Lower Chalk.

The plateau grassland is probably an ancient fragment of Lincolnshire Wold downland, and there is a rich assemblage of chalk plants here and in the quarry, including localised species such as felwort, yellow-wort, basil thyme, kidney vetch and pyramidal and bee orchids. Owing to the dominance of tor-grass the hillside vegetation is less varied.

The commoner grassland butterflies and moths, including an abundance of sixspotted burnet moths, are present. There are scarce insects among other orders and an exceptionally high spider population.

The meadow pipit, a localised breeding species inland in Lincolnshire, nests in

the reserve. Common lizard and grass snake occur.

Some mowing of grassland and verges is undertaken, but when possible the hillside and plateau grassland are grazed by sheep to maintain floristic diversity. The chalk cliffs are friable so that erosion easily occurs: they should not be climbed. For the same reason some areas are fenced off in order to reduce wear.

Red Hill extension

The Red Hill extension is approximately 23ha (57 acres).

The eastern part of the reserve is former arable land purchased in 1996 and returned to grassland. The aim is to try and recreate the kind of open grassland landscape that dominated the Wolds until the mid 19th Century. Results are encouraging and chalk downland plants are colonising the new area from the quarry and the well established part of the reserve.

Grazing is an important management tool for this part of the reserve and sheep are often present. For this reason dogs are not permitted on the areas to the east of the road.

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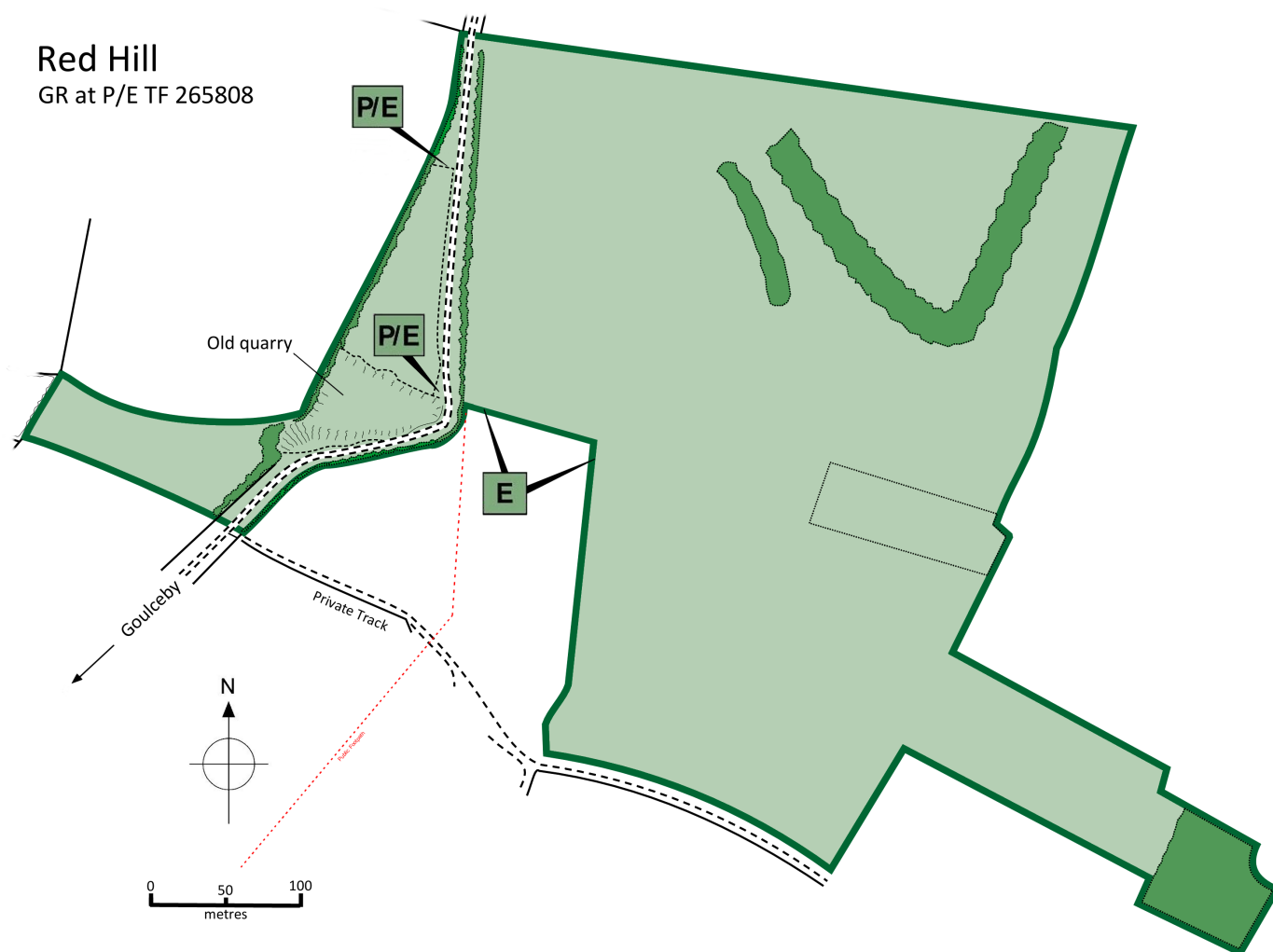
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GR at P/E TF 265808



P Parking space **E** Entrance **H** Bird Hide