

Meeting	Parks & Open Spaces
Date	11 th October 2022
Report Title	Cliffords Meadow
Agenda Reference	7
Author	Laura Cutter, Deputy Clerk & Services Manager

Officer's Recommendation:

1) To note the response from a recent complaint to Natural England regarding potential breaches arising from lack of maintenance and potential failure to protect the SSSI status at Cliffords Meadow.

Background

On Monday 3rd October, the Parish Council submitted a complaint and requested Natural England to progress with an investigation into the potential breaches and threat of Cliffords Meadow losing its SSSI status.

Since the time of the complaint, there has been some improvement, for example, cattle grazing in the meadow, contact with the local resident farmer, signage displayed and temporary maintenance to the fence to protect the cattle.

Maintenance Concerns Reported

The residents reported that their main concerns were the lack of maintenance, and the gaps in the stock fencing which is allowing members of the public to trespass on the land.

The hedges around the meadow are now over 20ft tall and haven't been cut for 3 – 5 years. The meadow has not received a hay cut this year and it is assumed it is too late for maintenance to be carried out now. Councillor R Ross gave the Land Agent details of a contractor who could help, but no contact was made. It was thought that a contractor has not been available due to the current costs of fuel, resourcing and local farmers do not want to put their cattle or sheep in the meadow due to safety risks from dogs.

Response From Natural England

See separate letter.