

COUNTY: SURREY SITE NAME: UPPER COMMON PITS

DISTRICT: GUILDFORD

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 084499 Area: 2.82 (ha.) 6.97 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 187 1:10,000: TQ 04 NE and TQ 05 SE

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1991

Other Information:

This is a new site and is to be included within a Geological Conservation Review. It is within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons for Notification:

These pits are excavated in the celebrated Netley Heath Beds, originally thought to be Pliocene, but now regarded as of early Pleistocene, possibly Calabrian age. Near the base of these sandy deposits numerous marine fossils occur. These are of considerable importance since they have Red Crag affinities. They have been variously reported as occurring in an iron pan formed in-situ, or within detrital blocks of foreign material. It has even been suggested that they may be glacially emplaced. The very considerable difference in elevation between these beds and the Red Crag of East Anglia is an important consideration in the reconstruction of early Pleistocene events, and suggests differential warping. A fuller understanding of the Netley Heath deposits is clearly vital, and these pits provide the greatest potential for future investigations.