

Definitions of Favourable Condition for designated features of interest



These definitions relate to all designated features on the SSSI, whether designated as SSSI, SPA, SAC or Ramsar features.

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Name of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
SHORN CLIFF and CASWELL WOODS SSSI	
Names of designated international sites	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	WYE VALLEY WOODLANDS
Special Protection Area (SPA)	N/A
Ramsar	N/A
Relationship between site designations	
Shorn Cliff and Caswell Woods SSSI is a component SSSI of the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	

Version control information		
Status of this Version (Draft, Consultation Draft, Final)		Final
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Quality assurance information		
Checked by	Name Peter Holmes	Date 3 January 2014
	 Signature	

Definitions of Favourable Condition: notes for users

Definitions of Favourable Condition

The definitions comprise one or more condition definitions for the special interest features at this site. These are subject to periodic review and may be updated to reflect new information or knowledge. They will be used by Natural England to determine if a site is in a favourable condition. The standards for favourable condition have been developed and are applied throughout the UK.

Standards for favourable condition are defined with particular reference to the specific designated features listed in Table 1, and are based on a selected set of attributes for features which most effectively define favourable condition as set out in Tables 2, 2a and 3. When an SSSI's features meet these attributes, then they are said to be in 'favourable condition'.

Explanatory text for Tables 2 and 3

Tables 2, 2a and 3 set out the measures of condition which we will use to provide evidence to support our assessment of whether features are in favourable condition. They have been tailored by local staff to reflect the particular characteristics and site-specific circumstances of individual sites. Quality Assurance has ensured that such site-specific tailoring remains within a nationally consistent set of standards. The tables include an audit trail to provide a summary of the reasoning behind any site-specific targets etc. In some cases the requirements of features or designations may conflict; the detailed basis for any reconciliation of conflicts on this site may be recorded elsewhere.

Use under the Habitats Regulations

The Definitions of Favourable Condition (DFCs) are used to periodically measure and assess the condition of both notified SSSI features and designated European Site features.

Where SSSIs also form part of a European Site (such as a SAC or SPA), a separate document containing specific European Site Conservation Objectives will have been prepared. These objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority is required to make an 'appropriate assessment' of the likely effects of a proposed plan or project on the integrity of a European Site under the relevant parts of the respective legislation. The European Site Conservation Objectives are available at www.naturalengland.org.uk.

The concepts of 'site integrity' and 'favourable condition' are similar and the assessment of a feature's condition will measure attributes that also represent aspects of a site's ecological integrity. However, the periodic determination of a feature's condition is separate from a judgement about the effect upon a site's overall integrity. This is because the DFCs do not represent a comprehensive or definitive list of all of the elements that might contribute to site integrity, merely those that are most appropriate to monitor in order to rapidly determine the present condition of a feature. The full range of factors that are components of a site's integrity, and which may need to be considered by an appropriate assessment, will be specified in the European Site Conservation Objectives. Some of the information contained within the DFCs may however contribute to such assessments.

Table 1 Individual designated interest features

BAP Broad Habitat type / Geological Site Type	Specific designated features	Explanatory description of the feature for clarification	SSSI notified interest features	SAC qualifying interest features	SPA qualifying interest features dependency on specific habitats			Ramsar criteria applicable to specific habitats			
					Annex 1 species	Migratory species	Waterfowl assemblage	1a Wetland characteristics	2a Hosting rare species &c	3a 20000 waterfowl	3c 1% of population
Broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland	W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> (W7c <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> sub-community)	Shorn Cliff and Caswell Woods overlie the Carboniferous Limestone and Old Red Sandstone of the eastern slopes of the lower Wye Gorge. They form part of a continuous belt of semi-natural woodland stretching from Brockweir to Tutshill, containing an exceptional number of stand types and several rare or uncommon plant species. These two woodlands are ranked fifth and tenth for their nature	*								
	W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W8b <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> , W8d <i>Hedera helix</i> , W8e <i>Geranium robertianum</i> and W8f <i>Allium ursinum</i> sub-communities)		*	*							
	W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W12a <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> sub-		*	*							

BAP Broad Habitat type / Geological Site Type	Specific designated features	Explanatory description of the feature for clarification	SSSI notified interest	SAC qualifyi	SPA qualifying interest features dependency on specific habitats			Ramsar criteria applicable to specific habitats			
	community) W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Betula spp</i> - <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>	conservation importance in the Wye Valley Woodland report (Bolt, 1979).	*	*							

NB. Features where asterisks are in brackets (*) indicate habitats which are not notified for specific habitat interest (under the relevant designation) but because they support notified species.

Table 2 Habitat extent objectives

Extent - Dynamic balance	To maintain the designated features in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to a balance of habitat extents (extent attribute). Favourable condition is defined at this site in terms of the following site-specific standards.
	On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each habitat type (either designated habitat or habitat supporting designated species). Maintenance implies restoration if evidence from condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent.

Habitat Feature (BAP Broad Habitat level, or more detailed level if applicable)	Estimated extent (ha) and date of data source/estimate	Site Specific Target range and Measures	Comments
Broadleaved, mixed & Yew woodlands	67.33 (based on area digitised on GIS)	No loss of woodland habitats (which include rides and coppice coupes). Areas of W7 & W14 extremely small – target is simply to retain presence on site.	Estimate is equal to site size and includes old railway track.

Audit Trail
Rationale for habitat extent attribute (Include methods of estimation (measures), and the approximate degree of change which these are capable of detecting).
Rationale for site-specific targets (including any variations from generic guidance)
Based on data from 1998 NVC survey by Eco Tech
Other Notes
Area on citation is 69.2ha and on ENSIS is 67.33ha and may be taken as approximately equal and a reflection of the different methods of measurement.

Table 3 Site specific Habitat condition objectives

To maintain the Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew woodland at Shorn Cliff and Caswell Woods SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition is defined at this site in terms of the following site-specific standards:
Site-specific details of any geographical variation or limitations (where the favourable condition standards apply)

Site-specific standards defining favourable condition

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> (W7c <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> sub-community)	Habitat extent	Field survey and/or aerial photography, in relation to baseline map.	No loss of ancient semi-natural stands. At least current area of recent semi-natural stands maintained, although their location may alter. No loss of ancient woodland.	Stand loss due to natural processes e.g. in minimum intervention stands may be acceptable. Stand destruction may occur if the understorey and ground flora are irretrievably damaged even if the canopy remains intact. Loss can be defined as at least 0.5 ha or 0.5% of the stand area, whichever is the smaller. 20% canopy cover is conventionally taken as the lower limit for an area to be considered as woodland.	Yes
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W8b <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> W8d <i>Hedera helix</i> , W8e <i>Geranium robertianum</i> , W8f <i>Allium ursinum</i> sub-communities)					
W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland					

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
(W12a <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> sub-community)					
W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Betula</i> spp- <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>					
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> (W7c <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> sub-community)	Structure and Natural processes	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects.	Understorey (2-5m) present over at least 20% of total stand area (except in parkland). Canopy cover present over 30-90 % of stand area. At least three age classes spread across the average life expectancy of the commonest trees. Some areas of relatively undisturbed mature/old growth stands or a scatter of large trees allowed to grow to over-maturity/death on site (e.g. a minimum of 10% of the woodland or 5-10 trees per ha). A minimum of 3 fallen lying trees >20 cm diameter per ha and 4 trees per ha allowed to die standing.	In coppiced stands, a lower canopy cover (of standards) can be accepted Note that assessment of dead wood targets may be difficult to carry out and caution should be exercised in judging condition for this element.	Yes
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W8b <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> W8d <i>Hedera helix</i> , W8e <i>Geranium robertianum</i> , W8f <i>Allium ursinum</i> sub-communities)					
W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland (W12a <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> sub-community)					
W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Betula</i> spp- <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>					

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>-<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> (W7c <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> sub-community) W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-<i>Acer campestre</i>-<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W8b <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> W8d <i>Hedera helix</i>, W8e <i>Geranium robertianum</i>, W8f <i>Allium ursinum</i> sub-communities) W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>-<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland (W12a <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> sub-community) W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>-<i>Betula spp</i>-<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>	Composition	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects.	At least 95% of cover in any one layer of site-native or acceptable naturalised species. Minimum levels of particular native tree/shrub species (where important and appropriate – see text) Death, destruction or replacement of native woodland species through effects of introduced fauna or other external unnatural factors not more than 10% by number or area in a five year period.	Where cover in any one layer is less than 100%, the 95% target applies to the area actually covered by that layer. Factors leading to the death or replacement of woodland species could include pollution or new diseases. Damage to species by non-native species that does not lead to their death is not necessarily unacceptable. Excessive browsing/grazing, even by native ungulates, may be undesirable if it causes shifts in the composition/ structure of the stand. Sycamore, Buddleia and Himalayan Balsam are not acceptable naturalised species on this site.	Yes
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>-<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> (W7c <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> sub-community) W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-	Indicators of local distinctiveness	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects, or as appropriate to feature.	80% of ground flora cover referable to relevant NVC community Maintain conditions for: Wood Fescue <i>Festuca altissima</i> ,	This attribute is intended to cover any site-specific aspects of this habitat feature (forming part of the reason for notification) which are not covered adequately by the previous attributes, or by separate	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
<i>Acer campestre</i>-<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W8b <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> W8d <i>Hedera helix</i>, W8e <i>Geranium robertianum</i>, W8f <i>Allium ursinum</i> sub-communities) W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>-<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland (W12a <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> sub-community) W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>-<i>Betula spp</i>-<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>		Tufa flush	Whitebeam <i>Sorbus spp</i> (see 2001 report by Houston et al for locations) Fingered Sedge <i>Carex digitata</i>, Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress <i>Cardamine impatiens</i>, Lily-of-the-Valley <i>Convallaria majalis</i>, Upright Spurge <i>Euphorbia serratula</i> Maintain at least current extent (as of 2006)	guidance. For notable species it is not intended to set a target for detailed species monitoring, rather to provide a rapid indication of presence/ absence and/or approximate extent, allowing for natural fluctuations in population size. Location of these additional features should be included in a map for this FCT.	No
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>-<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> (W7c <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> sub-community) W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-<i>Acer campestre</i>-<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W8b <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> W8d <i>Hedera helix</i>, W8e <i>Geranium robertianum</i>, W8f <i>Allium ursinum</i> sub-	Regeneration potential	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects.	Signs of seedlings growing through to saplings to young trees at sufficient density to maintain canopy density over a 10 yr period (or equivalent regrowth from coppice stumps). No more than 20% of areas regenerated by planting. All planting material of locally native stock. No planting in sites where it has not occurred in the	A proportion of gaps at any one time may develop into permanent open space; equally some current permanent open space/glades may in time regenerate to closed canopy. Regeneration may often occur on the edges of woods rather than in gaps within it. The density of regeneration considered sufficient is clearly less in parkland sites than in high forest; in coppice most of the regeneration will be as stump	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
communities) W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland (W12a <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> sub-community) W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Betula spp</i> - <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>			last 15 years.	regrowth. The minimum level of regeneration to be acceptable from a nature conservation viewpoint is likely to be much less than that needed where wood production is also an objective.	

Audit Trail
Rationale for limiting standards to specified parts of the site
Rationale for site-specific targets (including any variations from generic guidance)
Many targets still appear to be non-specific and it is recommended that an attempt be made on the next ISA visit to assess the suitability of this FCT.
Rationale for selection of measures of condition (features and attributes for use in condition assessment) (The selected vegetation attributes are those considered to most economically define favourable condition at this site for the broad habitat type and any dependent designated species).

Other Notes

A map showing the location of the tufa flush and the named plant species in the table above is recommended to facilitate identification during assessment visits.

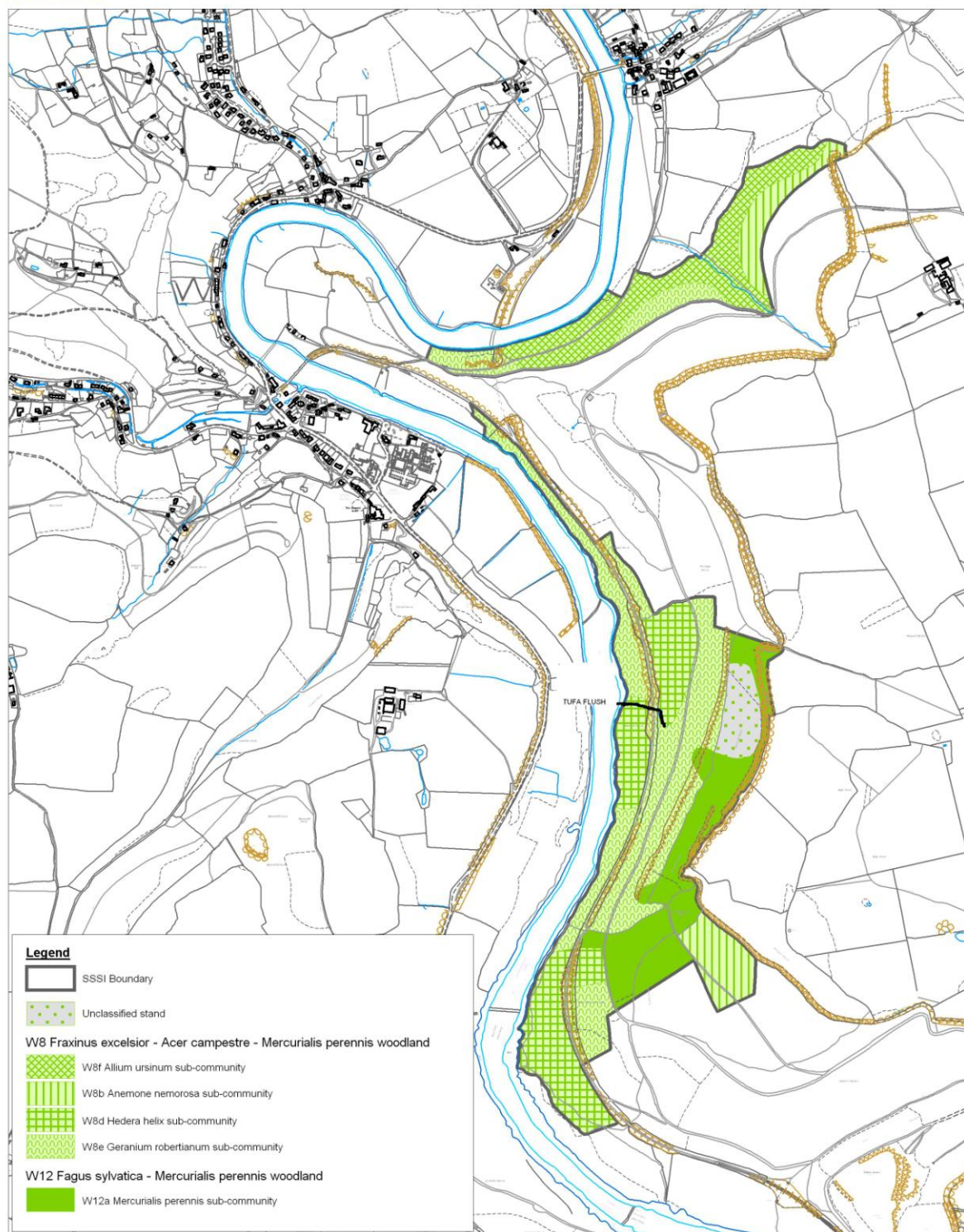
The whole site supports a variety of uncommon plants, including several Nationally Rare species such as Wood Fescue *Festuca altissima* and Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress *Cardamine impatiens*. Some of the woodland rides are particularly rich floristically, especially along their margins.

On the lower slopes, there are stands of W7 alder woodland and several tufa springs. In the latter, the ground flora is dominated by the moss *Cratoneuron communis*, some sub-species of which are Nationally Rare.

Annex 1 Map of key areas for monitoring



Conservation Objectives for Shorn Cliff & Caswell Woods SSSI



Scale 1:10000 Map 1 of 1
0 200 400 600m

Drawn by: Andrew Marchant
Date: 11/6/2008
Ref: ST540990
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Annex 2 Location of features by unit

Features	units	1	2
W8		x	x
W12		x	x

Only W8 and W12 mapped on above NVC map in Annex 1. The other notified features of W7 and W14 woodland do not appear to be located on this map (although it is known that they occupy very small areas).