

## Views About Management

### **A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Laycock Railway Cutting Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).**

This statement represents English Nature'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. English Nature has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the 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.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation. English Nature's written consent is still required before carrying out any operation likely to damage the features of special interest (see your SSSI notification papers for a list of these operations). English Nature 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**

Disused quarries and road and rail cuttings form a very important part of the geological resource of England for two reasons. Firstly, many of these sites are in areas where natural geological exposures are rare or absent. Secondly, these sites often provide much better exposure of geological features than comparable natural exposures, as they reveal vertical rock sections not visible in natural outcrops.

Most disused quarries need active management to maintain exposure of the important geological features. This is because erosion rates are usually too low to ensure that fresh geological exposures are maintained naturally. Management usually involves periodic clearance of vegetation and rock debris. Vegetation growth is a particular problem for geological conservation in many inland disused quarries.

It may not be always practical or entirely necessary to maintain full exposure of the geological features on a site. Site management will often involve defining specific areas that need to be kept clear of vegetation.

The main threats to the conservation of disused quarries, pits and cuttings are landfill and developments which obscure the geological features. Such developments should be avoided where possible. However, where authorised landfill or development is

planned, it may be possible to maintain a conservation face on the site. Similarly, restoration plans for quarries that have closed in recent years may also include the maintenance of a conservation face. In such cases, the conservation face should be maintained clear of vegetation and build-up of rock debris.

Collecting of geological specimens may be acceptable if undertaken in a responsible manner. However, there are some sites where the geological interest is very finite in nature and over-collecting can result in damage or destruction of the interest.

Similar principles apply to road and rail cuttings. Management of vegetation is often required to maintain the geological exposures. Any development or activity that leads to concealment of the interest features is likely to damage the site.