

Views About Management

A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Coombe Hill Hollow 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 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

Free-draining, acidic soil is the key requirement of the grassland communities at this site, but their maintenance also depends on active management. If neglected, the sward becomes dominated by tall, vigorous grasses or bracken which, together with an associated build up of dead plant matter, suppress less vigorous species and reduce the botanical richness of the site. Eventually the sward reverts to scrub and even woodland which is usually of lower nature conservation value than the grassland which preceded it. Traditionally, management has consisted of stock grazing and this remains the most appropriate management tool. Grazing, through the removal of plant matter and nutrients, helps to maintain an open sward of small tussocky grasses. It also, through disturbance and trampling, creates areas of open ground suitable for colonization by the lichens, ephemeral plants and invertebrates that are often characteristic of this type of grassland. Rabbit grazing, though difficult to control, can be a useful management tool in some situations. Occasional management of invasive scrub and bracken may be necessary but no other management should be routinely required. The application of pesticides including herbicides, lime, or fertilizer would be damaging and should be avoided.