

## Views About Management



### **A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Horringer Court Caves 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

### **Mixed assemblage of hibernating bats**

Hibernating bats require a range of environmental conditions within the hibernation site as different species have different temperature requirements, which vary through the winter. The internal conditions within the hibernation site should remain consistently cool (between 6 and 10 °C) and dark away from the entrances with stable ventilation. Emergence points and flight lines should be maintained as unobstructed and free from artificial light, though vegetated cover around the entrance is desirable. The illumination of the caves, their entrances and surrounding habitats should be avoided as this is likely to reduce the number of bats using the hibernation site.

It is important to avoid disturbance to the bats while they are hibernating. Entrances to the site should be secure to prevent uncontrolled or unauthorised access during the winter months in particular, but should remain unobstructed enough to continue to be accessible to bats. Activities of any kind within the site should be largely avoided during the general period of September – April each year to minimise the risk of disturbance to bats during the sensitive period of hibernation. Building or engineering works taking place within or around the area should be avoided, as should the use of

vehicles or machinery that would be likely to produce noise, fumes or heat near roosting sites or access points that may disturb hibernating bats.

The maintenance of some woodland and scrub cover in the vicinity of the hibernation site will provide sheltered and secured access to commuting routes as well as valuable feeding habitat for the bats. This will be important in the spring following hibernation when emerging bats will need to build fat reserves prior to the breeding season. Maintaining hedgerows, uncultivated field margins and extensively managed pasture near the roosting site will also provide appropriate commuting routes and foraging areas to support the bat population.