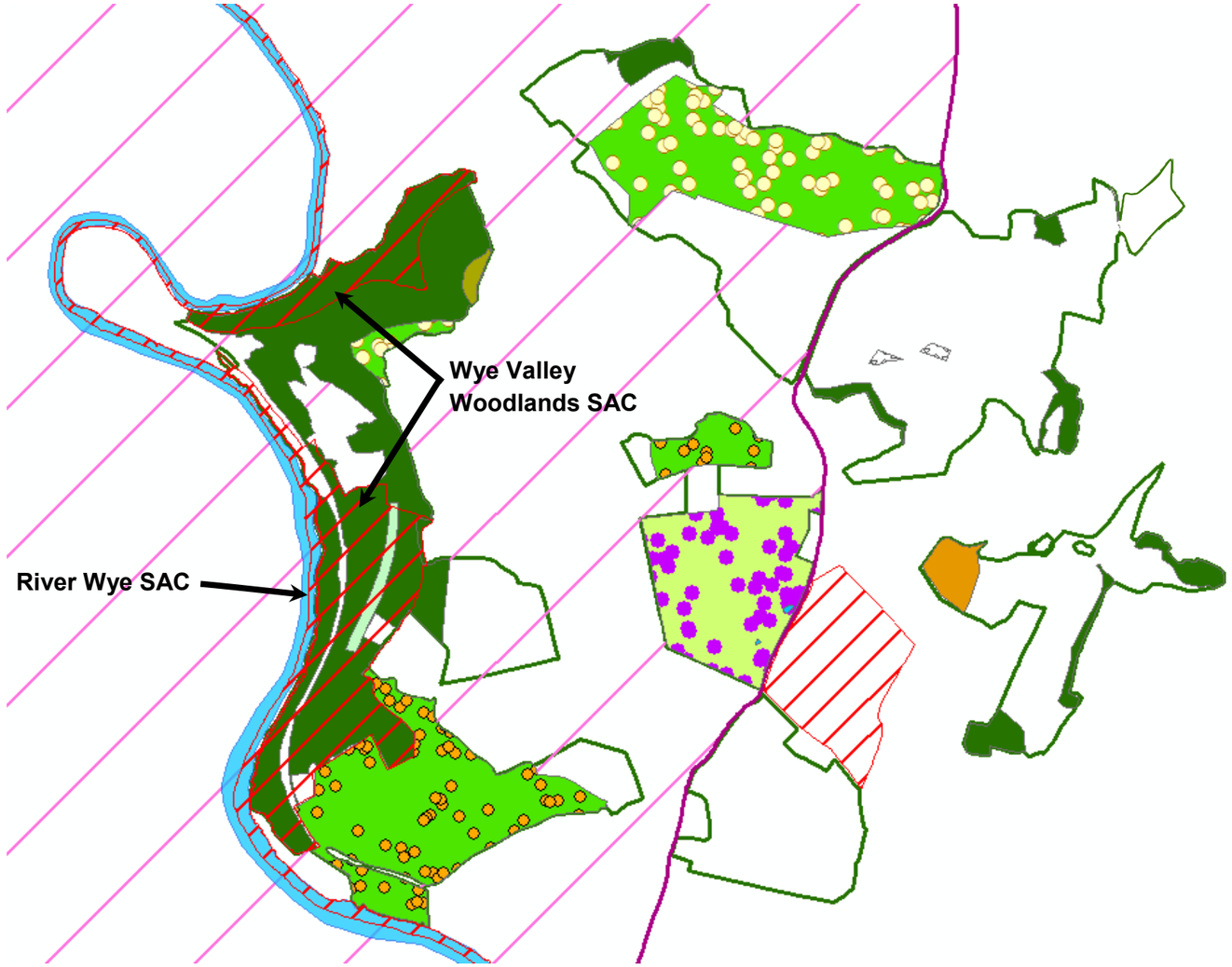


Conservation - Habitats

Legend

- Wye Valley AONB
- SSSI
- ASNW Floral
- ASNW Floral and mammal
- EPS - **Great Crested Newt**
- Floral - **Martagon Lily**
- Limestone Pavement
- Lowland Heath and Wet Woodland
- Semi-natural grassland
- Sorbus Species
- mammal
- River Wye
- ASNW
- Management Area

Bat habitat

Railway tunnel entrance

Above: The coupe design process has taken into account use of the tunnel by bats. As the larch will be clearfelled, coupe design has retained the approximate area ringed in red, although this larch maybe thinned at the time of felling where accessible. This maintains linkages from the tunnel entrance to the woodland enabling bats to move from the tunnel entrance to woodland. Broadleaves along either side of this retention will also be kept and are shown in yellow. In the case of an SPHN being issued for *Phytophthora,* only the larch easily accessible would be felled. The area to the north shown in blue indicates the crop only contains a scattering of larch that should be felled and left in situ or ring-barked and left standing.

Arial photograph far right: This shows the position of both the north and south entrance to the tunnel in relation to the larch and RC to be clearfelled. Once the clearfell has been completed the photo shows the tunnel entrance is not left isolated; the light green area represents the remaining surrounding woodland once the clearfell has taken place.

Conservation - Features

Right: Pocket Windblow in Caswell Wood offers opportunity for age and species structure to develop through natural regeneration and deadwood.

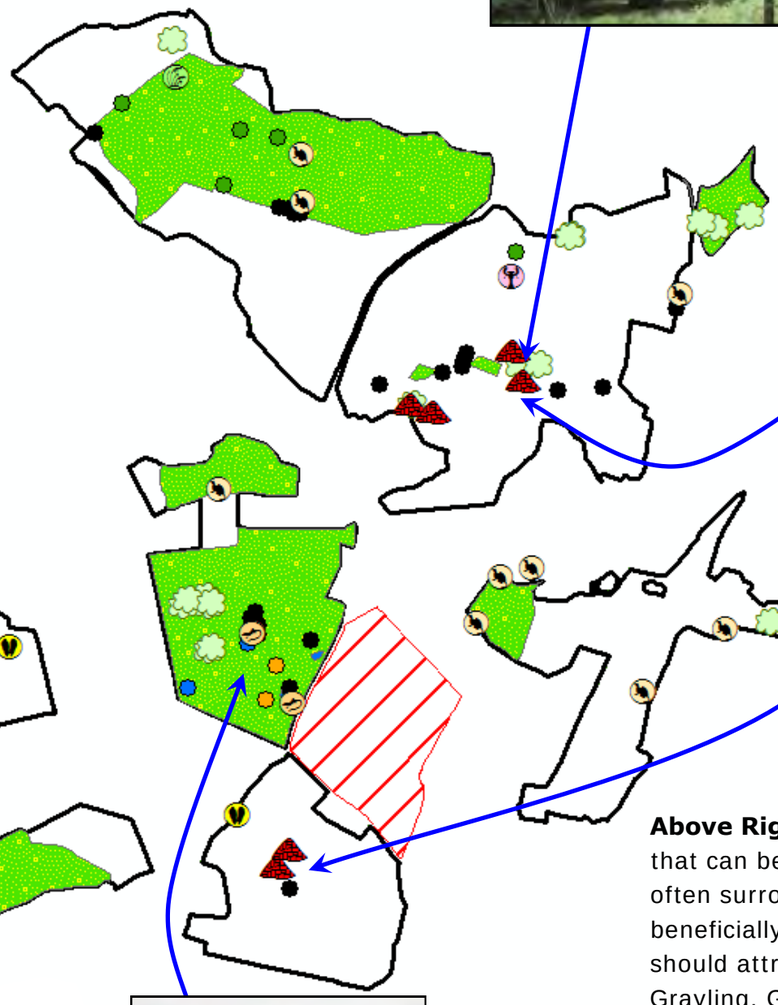
Far right: Railway tunnel in the north west corner of Caswell Wood is no longer in use and provides roosting for Lesser and Greater Horseshoe bats.

Photo courtesy of Dean Green Team

Left: Martagon Lily in Lippets Grove. Key Wildlife Species. Herb Paris is also found here too.

Left: Example of a magnificent Yew tree known as the King Yew can be found in East Wood. Past management has ensured a gradual opening up maintaining dapple shade around the crown of the yew minimising the chance of dieback.

Right: Natural cave on side of path within SSSI suitable for bats to use for roosting and a tentative possibility for hibernation of lesser and greater horseshoe bats?



Above Right : Showing examples of Limestone pavement that can be found within Eastwood and Parsons Allotment, often surrounded by Hazel, and Yew. Some areas could beneficially be opened up to promote open habitat that should attract a range of flora and Lepidoptera such as Grayling, Grizzled Skipper, and historic records of PBF exist, as well Orchids as Adders. Semi-natural grassland with frequent common-spotted orchid is present adjacent to many of the more open tracks in East Wood. These areas provide opportunities for significant enhancement of species rich open space. This can be achieved through ride widening and management of adjacent tracks that would provide diverse, species rich links across the woodland, linking with open areas of limestone pavement (including GWT East Wood area) and linkage to the wider countryside. Planning of harvesting and conservation work should investigate and incorporate these ideas where practical.

Above: Tufa stream alongside old railway line. Woodland must maintain the stream in dappled shade. NE must be consulted about any tree works likely to affect the fragile feature.

Above: Coppice along the Wye in the process of being recut. 5Ha were re-coppiced during 2002-2015. This work will continue during the next 10 year plan.

Left: The old railway line runs east to west before curving northward to follow the curvature of the River Wye. There are opportunities here to enhance rideside habitat for Lepidoptera and a range of flora and fauna dependant on sunny, sheltered conditions.

Photo courtesy of Dean Green Team

Above: Priority Habitat, The Park has the largest area of lowland heath in Gloucestershire. Enhancing habitat for both Nightjar and Adder.

Legend

- Dormouse (EPS)
- Bat (EPS)
- Reptile
- Invertebrate
- Flora
- Tree of Special Interest
- Geological feature
- Birds
- Insects, Spiders, Mites
- Plants, Mosses, Liverworts
- Reptiles, Amphibians
- County Wildlife Site
- Tree of Special Interest
- Flora
- Great Crested Newt
- SSSI
- Special Area of Conservation
- River Severn and River Wye

Forestry Commission England

Shorncliff and Caswell Wood SSSI plan 2017 - 2027

Forming part of the 2017-2027 Forest Plan

West England Forest District

Author: Francis Raymond-Barker

FCE File Ref: OP10/37

Agreement

Forest District:	West England FD	
SSSI name (s)	Caswell Wood Shorncliff	
Nearest town, village or locality:	Tintern Brockweir	
OS Grid reference:	Caswell Wood Shorncliff	SO 539 004 ST 540 990
Commencement date of Plan	2017 on sign off of the Forest Plan	
Period of plan	10 years	

SSSI	compartment	Area in Ha
Caswell Wood	Cpt 3720 Cpt 3721	8.5 9
	Total area	17.5 Ha
Shorncliff	Cpt 3723 Cpt 3724 Cpt 3725 Cpt 3727 Cpt 3728	15.5 7 19 4.0 7.0
	Total area	52.5 Ha

Agreed on behalf of

Forestry Commission England

WEFD Forest Management Director .....

Date .....

Agreed on behalf of

Natural England

Glouc, Wilts and West England .....

The signing of this plan by Natural England gives the necessary consent under section 28(6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended, for the works detailed to be undertaken.

List of Contents

Shorn Cliff and Caswell Wood SSSI

Introduction

The Shorn Cliff and Caswell Woods SSSI lie 4 miles north of Chepstow within the Wye Valley AONB and is outside of the Statutory Forest of Dean. The sites cover about 70Ha and overlie Carboniferous Limestone and Old Red Sandstone of the eastern slopes of the Lower Wye Gorge. They form part of the continuous belt of woodland that stretches from Brockweir to Tutshill.

The woodlands are part of the Wye Valley Woodland SAC notified for Tilio-Acerion Ravine Woodland and Asperulo-Fagetum Beech Forest and are noted for their variety of limes and rare Whitebeam Species. The woodlands also support a variety of uncommon plants including the nationally rare Wood fescue and Narrow leaved-bitter cress. Locally uncommon species include: Southern wood rush, Wild madder and lily-of-the-valley, Upright spurge and Finger sedge.

Virtually the whole woodland area is noted on the Ancient Woodland Inventory as ASNW with only 2 or 3 Hectares noted as Plantation Ancient Woodland (PAWs). All of the SSSI area falls within naturalness class 1 containing over 80% of native species.

From left: 1-Typical steep slopes and mixed native wood within Shorn Cliff
2– Northeast corner of Shorn Cliff lies Devils Pulpit an historic view point overlooking Tintern and Wye Valley.
3– Cave entrance in the rock face within Shorncliff will provide roosting/hibernation opportunities for bats.
4– showing the track and a section of the cliff face that needs keeping in Dappled shade.

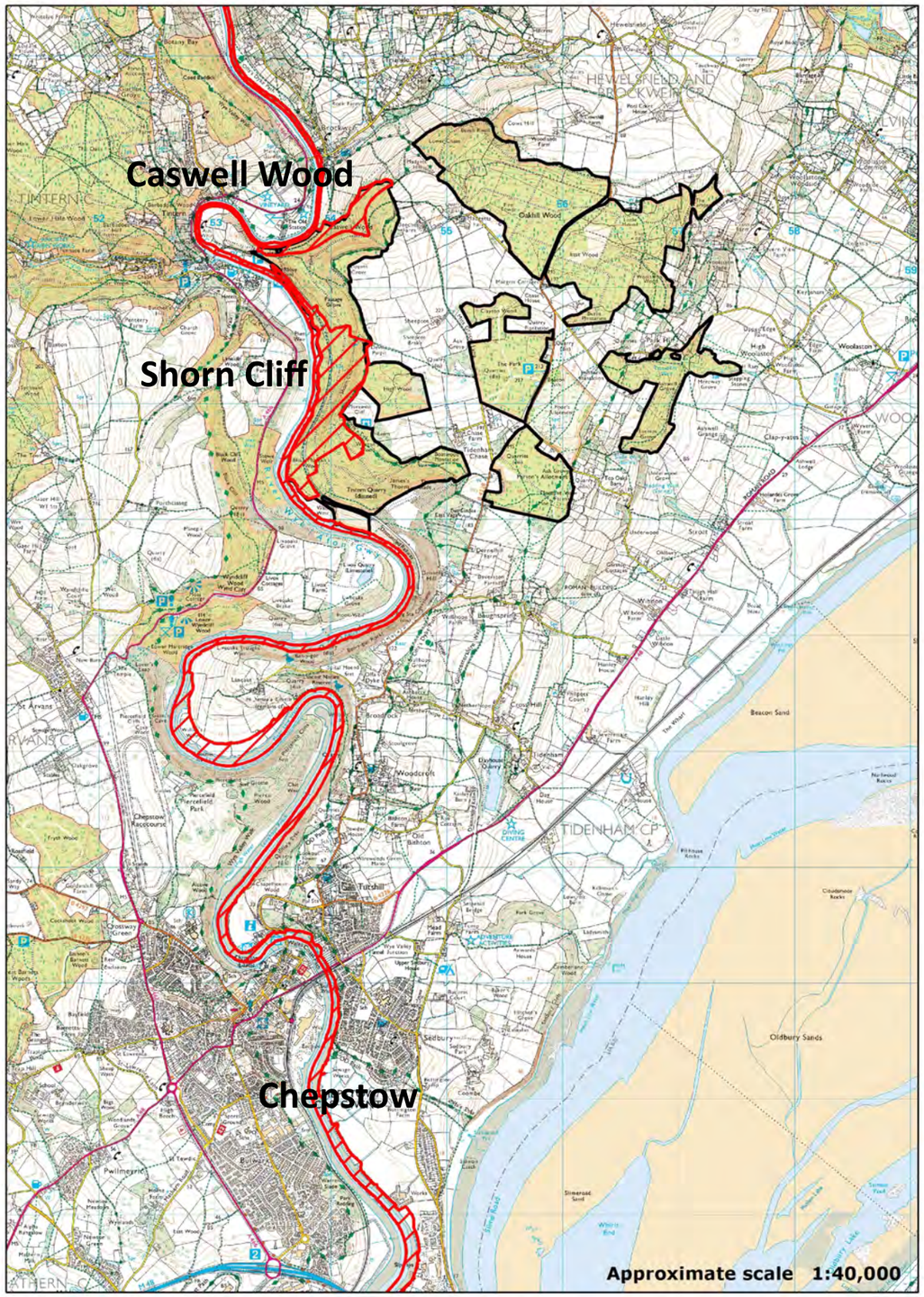
Access

Vehicular access can be found from the B4228 at Tidenham chase opposite Parsons Allotment along Boatwood Lane onto a stoned track that takes you to the Forest entrance at James Thornes.

A number of Public Rights of Way are located within the woodland including the long distance Offa's Dyke footpath that adjoins Shorn Cliff SSSI along its eastern boundary and easterly tip of Caswell Wood.

Other Designations

The Offa's Dyke shares the eastern boundary of Shorn Cliff and the north-eastern corner of Caswell wood and is designated as a Scheduled Ancient monument, including Devil's Pulpit in the north east corner of Shorn Cliff. Historic England must be consulted if the SAM is likely to be involved in any forest or conservation operation proposals.



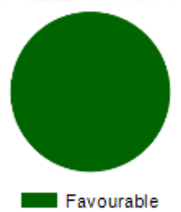
Natural England Condition Assessment, Favourable Conditions Table and Summary

Main Habitat	Responsible Officer	Unit Number	Unit Id	Area (ha)	NNR Overlap Area (ha)	Latest Assessment Date	Assessment Description	Comment
Shorn Cliff and Caswell Woods SSSI - GLOUCESTERSHIRE (FOREST OF DEAN)								
BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND - Lowland	KATEY STEPHEN	001	1013469	52.6619	0.00	20/05/2011	Favourable	Extent still as at notification. Structural attributes (canopy, shrub layer, variation in ages classes) all pass. Local signs of deer browsing entirely within acceptable limits as regrowth from coppice is good and regeneration, where open space permits, is good including Beech. Non-natives Sycamore and Buddleja are very local with cover well within acceptable limits but former needs monitoring. No signs of die-back or disease. Tufa springs still looking good. Notable ground flora species seen including Euphorbia stricta, Cardamine impatiens, Festuca altissima. Conditions still good for others including rare whitebeams.
BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND - Lowland	KATEY STEPHEN	002	1013470	15.9847	0.00	07/07/2011	Favourable	Extent of woodland maintained. Structural attributes include: canopy (mean of c75%); understory (c50%); mix of age classes; large trees being allowed to grow beyond maturity though very few are ancient; and reasonable amount of fallen (but little standing) dead wood - all pass. Where suitable gaps exist there is good regeneration. There are some signs of browsing but not at all excessive. One area has good coppice regrowth and no tree planting has taken place. Sycamore is very locally frequent with occasional Buddleja but both within acceptable limits. No dieback noted. Ground flora not disrupted. Only rare species seen in this compartment was Cardamine impatiens (unit 1 has most of the rarities). Also Neottia nidus-avis and Carex strigosa.

Attributes	Measures	Targets
Area	Extent/location of stands	• No loss of ancient semi-natural stands • No loss of ancient woodland area
Natural processes and structural development	Age/size class variation within and between stands; presence of open space and old trees; dead wood lying on the ground; standing dead trees	• At least the current level of structural diversity maintained (structural diversity = the relationship of trees and shrubs in space and time) • Understorey (2-5m) present over at least 20% of total stand area • Ground flora present over at least 50% of area • Canopy cover present over 30-90% of stand area • At least 3 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 (a minimum of 10% of the woodland or 5-10 trees per hectare) • Open space (open space = an area devoid of tree and/or shrub layers of vegetation) • A minimum of 3 fallen lying trees >20cm diameter per ha and 4 trees per ha allowed to die standing
Species, habitats, structures characteristic of the site	Ground flora type Distinctive and desirable elements Patches of associated habitats and transitions	• 80% of ground flora cover referable to relevant NVC community (W8 and W12/14) • *Festuca altissima, Cardamine impatiens, Tilia platyphyllos* (*Euphorbia serrulata* – if populations established following management) populations maintained (at current levels and where appropriate, in current locations) • Tufa springs/stream – Tufa areas maintained in extent with dappled tree shade • Valley alderwoods – areas of alder woodland retained
Regeneration potential	Successful establishment of young stems in gaps or on the edge of a stand	• High forest & minimum intervention areas Signs of seedlings growing through to saplings to young trees in canopy areas. Coppice areas – un-browsed re-growth from coppice stumps reaching 1.5m within 2 years on 95% of cut stumps. • All restocking by natural regeneration and including re-growth from coppice stools (or if planting is required using only native species characteristic to the site obtained from the site)
Composition	Cover of native versus non-native species (all layers)	• At least the current level of site-native species maintained • At least 90% of cover in any one layer of site native or acceptable naturalised species. Sycamore, buddleja and Himalayan balsam are not acceptable naturalised species on this site. • No introduction of new areas of non-native species • 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, (squirrels, deer)

Condition Summary

	Sites	Units	Units Assessed
Total number	1	2	2
Total area (ha)	68.65	68.65	68.65



	% meeting area of favourable or unfavourable recovering	Favourable	Unfavourable - Recovering	Unfavourable - No change	Unfavourable - Declining	Partially destroyed	Destroyed	Not Assessed
Area (ha)	68.65	68.65						
Percentage	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Shorncliff and Caswell Wood SSSI Citation

Notification Date: 16 July 1986

COUNTY: GLOUCESTERSHIRE SITE NAME: SHORN CLIFF & CASWELL WOODS

DISTRICT: FOREST OF DEAN SITE REF: 15 WK6

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

Local Planning Authority: GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, Forest of Dean District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 540005, SO 540990 Area: 69.2 (ha.) 171.0 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 162 1:10,000: SO 50 SW & ST 59 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): – Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
New site. Within the Wye Valley AONB.

Description and Reasons for Notification:
The woodlands of the lower Wye Valley form one of the most important areas for woodland conservation in Britain, comparable with the Caledonian pine-woods, the oceanic oakwoods of western Britain, the New Forest and the mixed coppices of East Anglia. Semi-natural woodland is abundant and virtually continuous along the gorge. The woods are a mixture of many types, some of which are very localised, for example the lime-sessile oak stands on limestone, beech stands on both acid and alkaline soils in which lime *Tilia* spp., elm *Ulmus* spp. oak *Quercus* spp. and other species share dominance. Most woods are a rich mixture of stand types which are believed to be similar in composition to the original natural woods of the valley. Many rare and local species are present, including some of the rarest native tree species, for example large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*, whitebeams *Sorbus* spp. and trees close to the edge of their European range, for example hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* and beech *Fagus sylvatica*. Furthermore these woods sit in a matrix of unimproved grassland and other semi-natural habitats which, together with the woods, make the Wye Valleys one of the most diverse, rich and attractive areas in southern Britain.

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 woodland which stretches from Brockweir to Tutshill. It contains an exceptional number of semi-natural woodland stand types and several rare or uncommon plant species.

On the upper slopes the woodland is generally dominated by beech, often in the form of ancient coppice. On the calcareous soils it is accompanied by small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and yew *Taxus baccata*. Where occasional areas of more acidic soils occur, silver birch *Betula pendula* and oak accompany the beech. Ground vegetation under the mature woodland is generally very sparse, dominated by ivy *Hedera helix* and calcicolous species such as spurge laurel *Daphne laureola*. Where recent coppicing has been carried out the additional light has resulted in a dense growth of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.

The lower slopes have less beech and support two main types of woodland. Coppiced ash and small-leaved lime with occasional field maple *Acer campestre* forms one type (rare in the country as a whole) while the second is distinguished by the dominance of wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, much of it now dead or dying as a result of Dutch Elm Disease. Shrubs such as hazel *Corylus avellana*, wayfaring-tree *Viburnum lantana* and guelder-rose *V. opulus* occur on these slopes. Here the ground flora is more varied with, in places, numerous ferns. These include hart's-tongue fern *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, soft shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum* and hard shield-fern *P. aculeatum*.

Left:

Typical Tilio-Acerion woodland within the Shorn Cliff and Caswell Wood SSSI made up from Beech, Lime, Oak, Ash, Birch, Yew as well as Elm and several rare Whitebeam species.

A small area of alder *Alnus glutinosa* is present over wetter soils adjacent to the River Wye in Caswell Wood (Lynweir Grove).

Some of the woodland rides are particularly rich floristically, especially along their margins. On the lower slopes of Shorn Cliff Woods are a number of base-rich springs and seepages. These provide a suitable environment for damp loving plants such as great horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*, hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum* and pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* as well as supporting an interesting bryophyte flora.

The whole site supports a variety of uncommon plants. These include the nationally rare wood fescue *Festuca altissima* and narrow-leaved bitter-cress *Cardamine impatiens* with the locally uncommon southern wood-rush *Luzula forsteri*, wild madder *Rubia peregrina*, lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis* and tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum*. Upright spurge *Euphorbia serrulata* occurs in this part of the Wye Valley and martagon lily *Lilium martagon* is present in adjacent replanted woodland.

The exposures of bare limestone rock provide breeding sites for birds such as kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*.

Left:

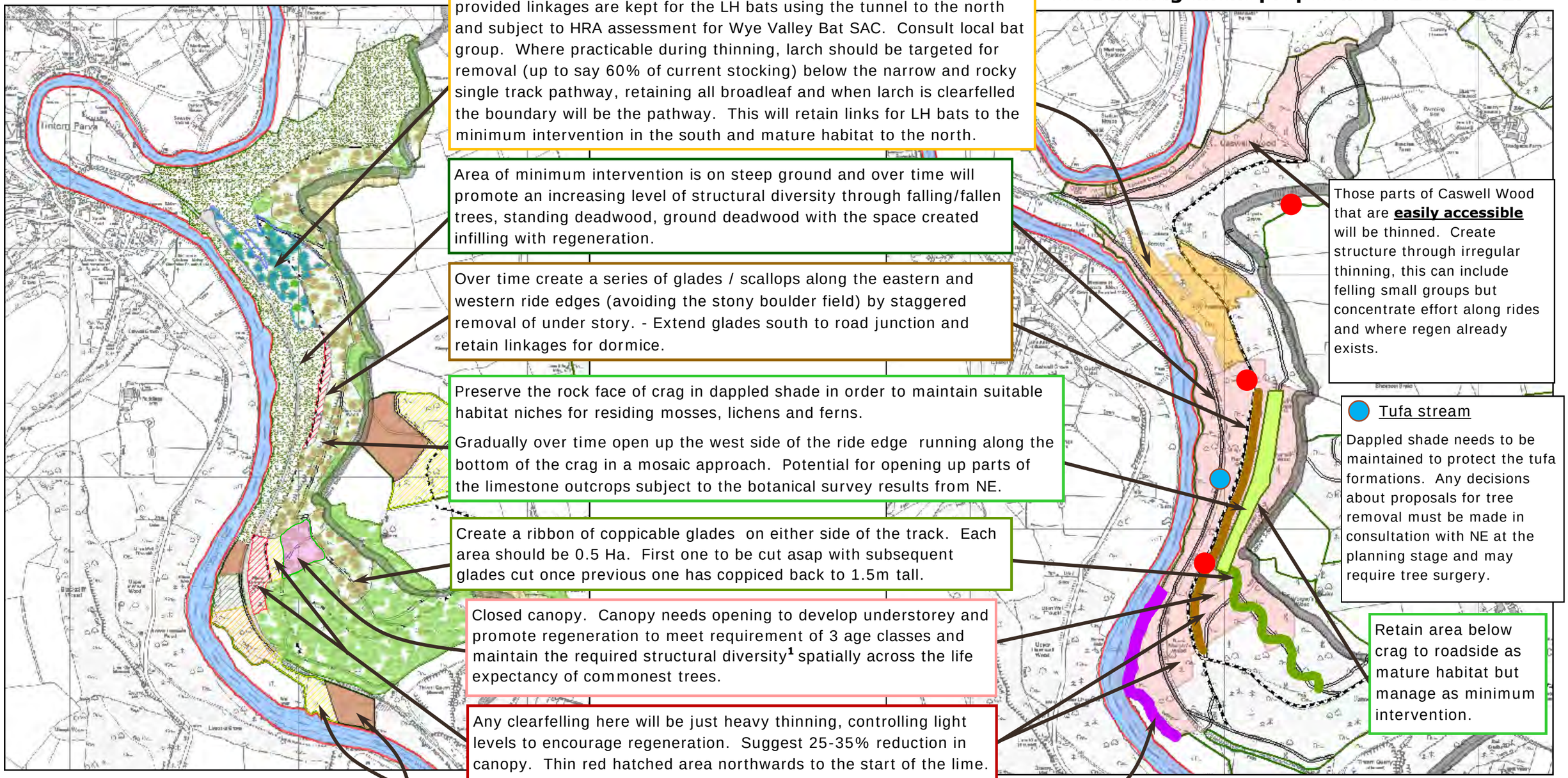
With variable soil but quite often fertile conditions, the steep slopes give rise to tall/drawn up trees; in time leading to pockets of wind throw. This allows more light in that encourages regeneration, increases structure and adds to the diversity of deadwood. Some of these steep areas are managed under minimum intervention.

Shorn Cliff and Caswell Wood SSSI

Site analysis and management proposals for 2017-2027

Management coupes from 2005-2015 FP

SSSI management proposals for 2017-2027



Although outside SSSI, in principle NE agree with clearfelling larch provided linkages are kept for the LH bats using the tunnel to the north and subject to HRA assessment for Wye Valley Bat SAC. Consult local bat group. Where practicable during thinning, larch should be targeted for removal (up to say 60% of current stocking) below the narrow and rocky single track pathway, retaining all broadleaf and when larch is clearfelled the boundary will be the pathway. This will retain links for LH bats to the minimum intervention in the south and mature habitat to the north.

Area of minimum intervention is on steep ground and over time will promote an increasing level of structural diversity through falling/fallen trees, standing deadwood, ground deadwood with the space created infilling with regeneration.

Over time create a series of glades / scallops along the eastern and western ride edges (avoiding the stony boulder field) by staggered removal of under story. - Extend glades south to road junction and retain linkages for dormice.

Preserve the rock face of crag in dappled shade in order to maintain suitable habitat niches for residing mosses, lichens and ferns.

Gradually over time open up the west side of the ride edge running along the bottom of the crag in a mosaic approach. Potential for opening up parts of the limestone outcrops subject to the botanical survey results from NE.

Create a ribbon of coppicable glades on either side of the track. Each area should be 0.5 Ha. First one to be cut asap with subsequent glades cut once previous one has coppiced back to 1.5m tall.

Closed canopy. Canopy needs opening to develop understorey and promote regeneration to meet requirement of 3 age classes and maintain the required structural diversity[1] spatially across the life expectancy of commonest trees.

Any clearfelling here will be just heavy thinning, controlling light levels to encourage regeneration. Suggest 25-35% reduction in canopy. Thin red hatched area northwards to the start of the lime.

Those parts of Caswell Wood that are **<u>easily accessible</u>** will be thinned. Create structure through irregular thinning, this can include felling small groups but concentrate effort along rides and where regen already exists.

<u>Tufa stream</u>

Dappled shade needs to be maintained to protect the tufa formations. Any decisions about proposals for tree removal must be made in consultation with NE at the planning stage and may require tree surgery.

Retain area below crag to roadside as mature habitat but manage as minimum intervention.

Coppice areas adjacent to stream to be coppiced in 2027 and 2030. As the woodland edge goes right up to the mudflats of River Wye, it is important to retain a buffer along the mudflats that won't be coppiced to prevent any sediment run off to the river.

[1] NE definition of Structural diversity taken from favourable conditions = The relationship of trees and shrubs in space and time. The conditions go on to say 30-90% canopy cover achieving 2-5m tall u/s across 20%< stand area with 50%< ground flora.

<u>Recorded Dormouse activity</u> Any thinning or felling must incorporate considerations for dormouse activity, maintaining linkage points over roads and rides, connecting areas of habitat. Gradual coppicing and thinning will encourage an expansion of habitat.

Operations likely to damage the special interest

Site name: Shorn Cliff and Caswell Woods

OLD1002428

Ref. No.	Type of Operation
2	The introduction of grazing and changes in the grazing regime (including type of stock or intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing and cessation of grazing).
3	The introduction of stock feeding and changes in stock feeding practice.
6	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers).
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.
8	Burning.
9	The release into the site of any wild, feral or domestic animal*, plant or seed.
10	The killing or removal of any wild animal*, other than pest control.
11	The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, herb, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus and leaf-mould.
12	Tree and/or woodland management+.
13a	Drainage.
13b	Modification of the structure of watercourses (eg streams or springs), including their banks and beds, as by re-alignment, re-grading and dredging.
14	The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation (including storage and abstraction from existing water bodies).
20	Extraction of minerals, including topsoil, subsoil, limestone and spoil.
21	Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.
22	Storage of materials.
23	Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.
24	Modification of natural or man-made features including clearance of loose rock and battering, buttressing or grading rock-faces and cuttings and infilling of quarries.
26	Use of vehicles likely to damage or disturb features of interest.
27	Recreational or other activities likely to damage the woodland.
28	Introduction of game management and changes in game management and hunting practice.

* 'animal' includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate.
\+ including afforestation, planting, clear and selective felling, thinning, coppicing, modification of the stand or underwood, changes in species composition, cessation of management.

SSSI work programme 2017-2027

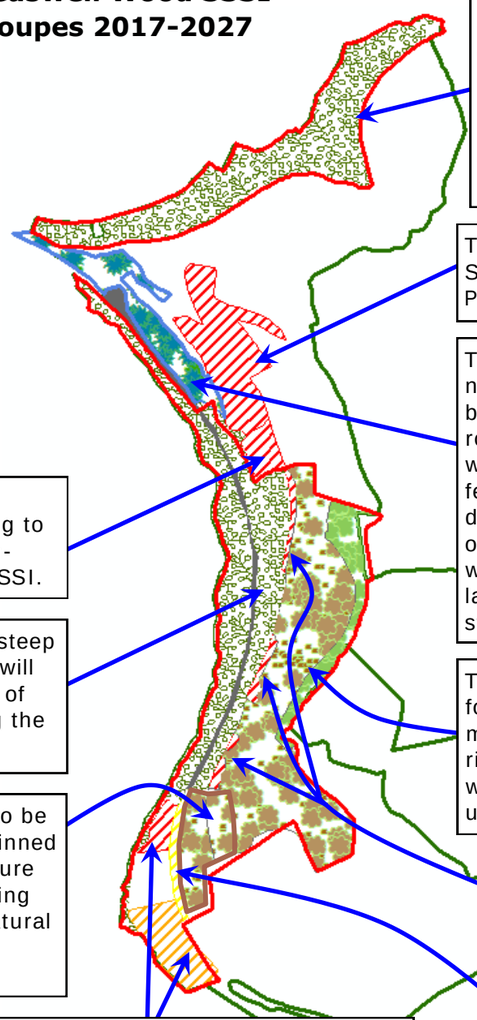
Management Prescription \ Year of plan	2017 / 18	18 /19	19 /20	20 /21	21 /22	22 /23	23 /24	24 /25	25 /26	26 /27
	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR 4	YR5	YR 6	YR 7	YR 8	YR9	YR 10
Gradual creation over time of a ribbon of irregularly shaped glades along the ride between compts 3727 and 3728. The second glade should not be created until the first is a minimum of 1.5m tall.	◆					◆				◆
In a mosaic approach, gradually over time open up the west side of the ride edge running along the top of Shorncliff crag ensure dappled shade is maintained on the outcrops on the eastern side of the ride. - Subject to the botanical survey results from NE. subsequent glades should not be created until the first is a minimum of 1.5m tall.			◆	◆	◆					◆
Investigate and plan the potential opening up of parts of the limestone outcrops similar to what has been done at Seven Sisters in High Meadow (yr1) complete work in liaison with NE (yr2/3) and will also be Subject to the botanical survey results from NE. Maintain cut areas as open (yr10).			◆	◆	◆	◆				◆
For consideration, evaluate thinning of easily accessible parts of Caswell Wood to begin creation of structure through irregular thinning, this can include felling small groups but concentrate effort along rides and where regen already exists.					◆	◆				
Create a series of coppice coupes along the old railway line coppicing will that are at a scale to maintain dappled shade but at the same time provide rotational habitat for wildlife and flora.	◆					◆				◆
Ensure that any forest or conservation work on and around the Tufa outcrop does not impact on the quality of the Tufa habitat. All work around this habitat must be consulted on with Natural England.	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Only where practical, consider continued removal of remnant scattered conifer from along the Offa's Dyke through operational thinning programmes.						◆				◆
Monitor and maintain view points from the Offa's Dyke to Tintern Abbey, the old railway bridge and Tintern Parva.	◆					◆			◆	◆
Any work carried out either as part of routine forest management or as part of the management for the SSSI **must identify and safeguard all** Whitebeam species.	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

Prescribed Management for Shorn Cliff and Caswell Wood SSSI

MATURE HABITAT In accessible areas of high forest within the SSSI, continuous cover 'shelterwood' systems with retentions will allow for trees at all stages of development to grow within the same area of forest, permitting long rotations and retention of dead/dying trees and their associated habitat alongside that of timber production. A single tree or group approaches can be taken although gaps will not exceed 0.5Ha to avoid a fragmented appearance in the wider landscape. Gaps created by timber felling or tree-throw will support natural regeneration; larger gaps encourage light demanders whilst single tree working favour shade tolerant species. Thinning will help to promote growth of higher quality timber where this doesn't conflict with woodland conservation objectives.

COPPICE Simple coppice management is recommended for part of the woodland, with the shortest economic rotation being approximately 20 years where ground conditions allow easy extraction of timber. On steeper ground this may need to be extended to 30 years in order to enable timber operations to break even. Some areas previously identified for coppicing within the 2008-2013 SSSI Plan and its contemporary Forest Plan contain valuable mature habitat including *Tilia, Quercus, Fagus* and *Ilex* species. In these areas, rather than coppicing them, it is proposed that they should be thinned to encourage an understory structure to develop that may include a coppice element from the thinning but also that of natural regeneration.

Shorn Cliff and Caswell Wood SSSI management coupes 2017-2027



Caswell Wood has steep ground with a rich native species composition incl. rare species of Whitebeam. Thinning may take place but only in easily accessible areas and will concentrate on the creation of structure through irregular thinning. This can include felling small groups no more than 0.5Ha concentrating efforts along rides and where regen already exists.

This area of predominantly larch is adjacent to SSSI and will be clearfelled reducing risk of Phytophthora. Any broadleaves to be retained.

This area has scattered larch towards the northern end, with high proportions of native broadleaves. It sits on steeper ground below a rocky single-track that characterises the native woodland of this area. This area will not be felled as felling & extraction would prove difficult and extreme, threatening the character of the Wye Valley bat SAC and native woodland. In case of Phytophthora scattered larch here will be ring-barked and left as standing deadwood or felled and left in situ.

This area contains the limestone outcrops that form Shorncliff and Plumweir cliff. Areas maybe thinned to create dapple shade along ride edges promoting ground flora and deeper within the wood regen of native species either using single tree selection or group systems.

3 small coppice areas on east side of the forest road and the most northerly one on the west side is adjacent to Red Cedar in 3724g. All have been ground truthed and total 1.2Ha.

Red Cedar in 3724g will be removed through clearfelling to remove risk of invasive non-natives regenerating into SSSI.

Natural Reserve, generally steep ground, any likely thinning will be concentrated either side of the old railway line or along the forest roadside.

Area was previously down to be coppiced but will now be thinned due to high content of mature native tree species, increasing light levels to encourage natural regeneration and diversify structure.

Continuing the coppicing alongside the River Wye and old railway line with retained standards to add structure. Buffer of minimum intervention to be retained along river bank.

Coppice strip along either side of the old railway line, retaining and regenerating of lepidopteran and Dormouse habitat.

SSSI management objectives

Nature conservation

- Maintain the native broadleaf woodland types and associated flora and fauna characteristic to the site in favourable condition.
- Conserve Dormouse habitat that includes Dormouse boxes within Shorn Cliff to carry out long-term monitoring.

Archaeological conservation

- Prevent damage to the Offa's Dyke SAM through tree throw by regular monitoring and removal of trees at risk.
- Encourage regeneration of ground cover through selective thinning whilst controlling scrub and natural regeneration of woody species.

COPPICE AND AWKWARD TERRAIN Some areas especially those in sub cpt 3723c & 3723f coppicing is prescribed along roadsides and will only coppice understory elements with a small percentage of canopy trees, this excludes the boulder fields that will be left. Within the Forest Plan, coppice coupes have tried to identify where such an approach can be taken. Despite being ground truthed they may inadvertently incorporate elements of bouldered ground, so the final coupe size may vary and be smaller or fractionally larger (not more than 15%) than that indicated within the Forest Plan and will be dependant on the Beat staff looking at what is feasible and in line with such an approach.

CALCAREOUS SPRING LINE AND TUFA In order to safe guard the watercourse understorey and herbaceous vegetation, all forest Operations likely to impact on the area of the Tufa habitat must be planned and implemented in consultation with Natural England. Tufa areas will be maintained in extent with dapple tree shade; no trees should be felled into the area.

NATURAL RESERVE All of Caswell Wood and the area of Shorncliff below the forest road down to the banks of the River Wye have been identified to be managed as Natural Reserve. Under the West England FD NR strategy forestry operations will only take place when, and for as long as, thinning can be clearly demonstrated to have a higher conservation or biodiversity value than not thinning. Relevant examples of when thinning would be appropriate include removal of invasive species, thinning to create structural diversity of both age and native species, manage dormouse habitat, manage veteran trees or for other tree safety reasons; otherwise NR areas will be managed by minimum intervention.

INVASIVE SPECIES Sycamore, Buddleja, Himalayan Balsam are not acceptable naturalised species on these sites. Any thinning operations should target the removal of Sycamore. Areas of Balsam or Buddleja should be removed through cutting and or spraying/stump treatment.

DEER MANAGEMENT Focus on protection of coppice areas will be primarily through shooting. Dead-hedging may not be so effective but may reduce damage and fencing would not be ruled out but would be considered a last resort. The Deer Initiative are not targeting activity in this area in the short-term, but it is in one of the focus areas for them, so this might change.

FOREST ROADS The forest road network should be capable of taking 44 tonne haulage vehicles. Routine maintenance should be undertaken to ensure a road infrastructure that is capable of meeting management objectives is maintained. Stone for maintenance will be locally sourced from Clearwell/Stowfield quarries. Graders/excavators are the likely machinery to be in use.

RIDESIDES Control of rideside vegetation and woody scrub maybe carried out periodically through mechanical means to maintain habitats in favourable condition and will contribute to temporary open habitat on a cyclical basis of future coppicing and scrub clearance that will help promote structural diversity within the woodland.

SURVEY AND MONITORING NE staff shall continue to provide the main input with FE being responsible for the management of the woodland.

Shorn Cliff and Caswell Wood SSSI

Views about management

A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Shorn Cliff and Caswell Woods 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

There may be several different ways in which the wood can be managed to best conserve its value for wildlife - by promoting an appropriate woodland structure, by ensuring regeneration and by looking after the things that make this wood special particularly the rare of rare or otherwise notiable plant species. The attached notes give broad views on a range of regimes that may be appropriate on your site.

A diverse woodland structure with some open space, some areas of dense understorey, and an overstorey of more mature trees (which may be the standard trees under a coppice-with-standards regime) is important. A range of ages and species within and between stands is desirable.

Some dead and decaying wood such as fallen logs, old hollow trees or old coppice stools is essential for providing habitats for fungi and dead wood invertebrates. Work may, however, be needed to make safe dangerous trees where they occur in areas of high public access.

Open spaces, either temporary gaps created by felling or coppicing or more permanent areas such as rides and glades, benefit other groups of invertebrates such as butterflies. They should be of sufficient size to ensure that sunny conditions prevail for most of the day. Rides and glades may require cutting to keep them open.

Above:

Ride along bottom of the Shorn Cliff limestone cliffs showing dappled shade.

Below:

Cave in rock face suitable for bat roost and possible hibernation site

Felling, thinning or coppicing may be used to create or maintain variations in the structure of the wood, and non-native trees and shrubs should be removed at this time. To avoid disturbance to breeding birds the work is normally best done between the beginning of August and the end of February. Work should be avoided when the ground is soft, to prevent disturbing the soil and ground flora. Wet woodland by streams, springs and flushes is often best left undisturbed. Normally, successive felling, thinning or coppicing operations should be spread through the wood to avoid too much disturbance in one area. However, where there is open space interest (e.g. rich butterfly populations) adjacent plots may be worked to encourage the spread of species that are only weakly mobile.

Natural regeneration from seed or stump regrowth (as in coppice) is preferred to planting because it helps maintain the local patterns of species and the inherent genetic character of the site.

Deer management and protection from rabbits or livestock are often necessary. Whilst light or intermittent grazing may increase woodland diversity, heavy browsing can damage the ground flora and prevent successful regeneration.

Parts of the wood should be left unmanaged to benefit species that do best under low disturbance. In addition, lack of management allows for the operation of natural processes such as windblow. Within these areas some trees will eventually die naturally and dead wood will accumulate.

Where they are a threat to the interest of the wood, invasive introductions such as *Rhododendron ponticum* or Himalayan balsam should, where practical, be controlled.

Open cliff and rock scree habitats within this site support very specialised flora. These habitats should be retained as far as possible.

A brief photographic record of condition 2016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1 View from Offa's Dyke over Tintern

2 View from Devils Pulpit

3 Offa's Dyke Path

4 Offa's Dyke Path

5 Typical Woodland cover

6 Typical tree failure

7 Tufa stream in Shorncliff

8 Old railway line along western edge of Shorncliff

9 Typical tree failure

10 Ride along top of Shorncliff / bottom Plumweir


7


8


9


10

Heritage Features

Wyeside and the Tidenham woods contain numerous ancient monuments and features both scheduled and unscheduled. All forest operations will avoid impact to these features and where appropriate seek advice from Gloucestershire County Council archaeological department.

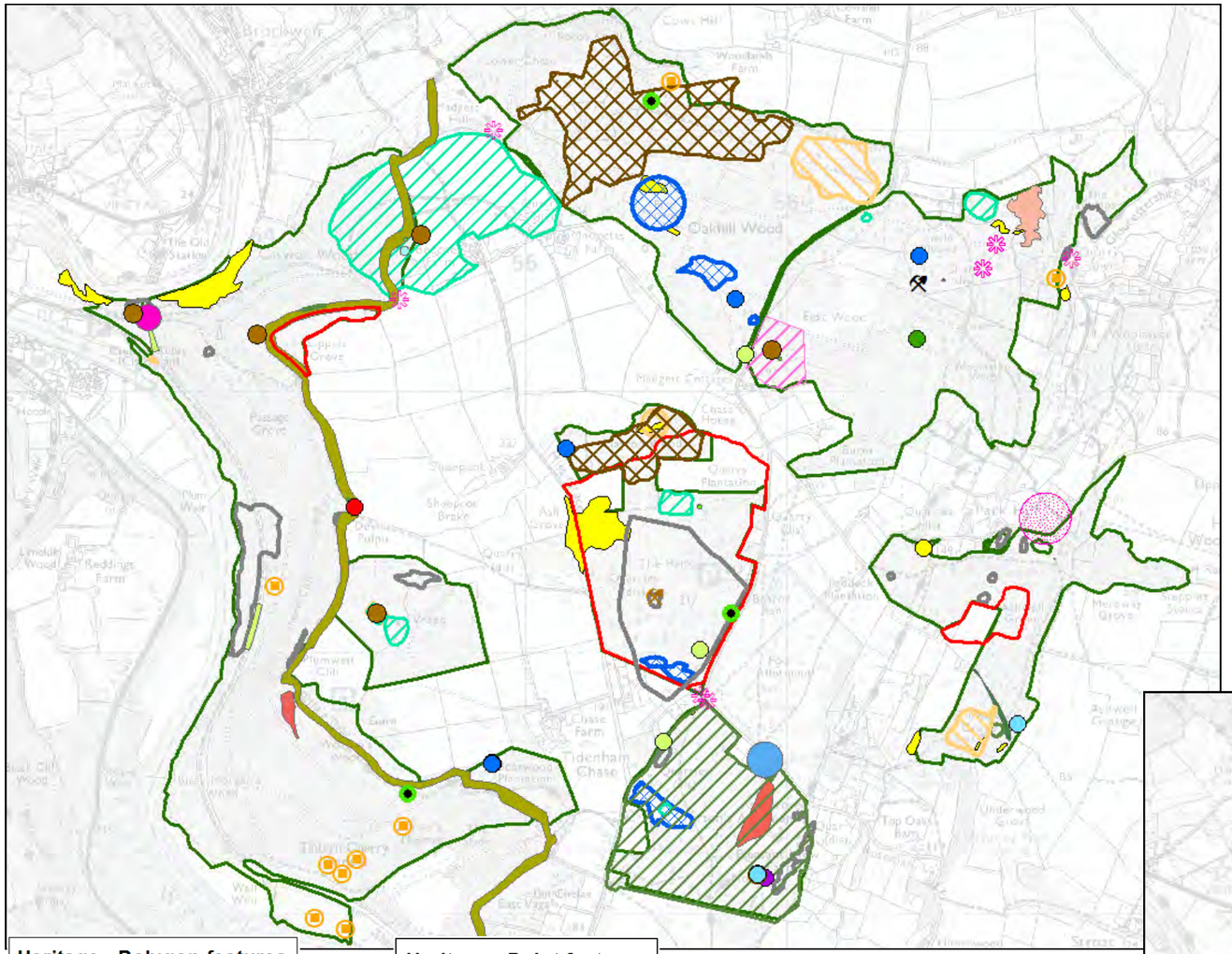
Scheduled monument(s) within the plan area:

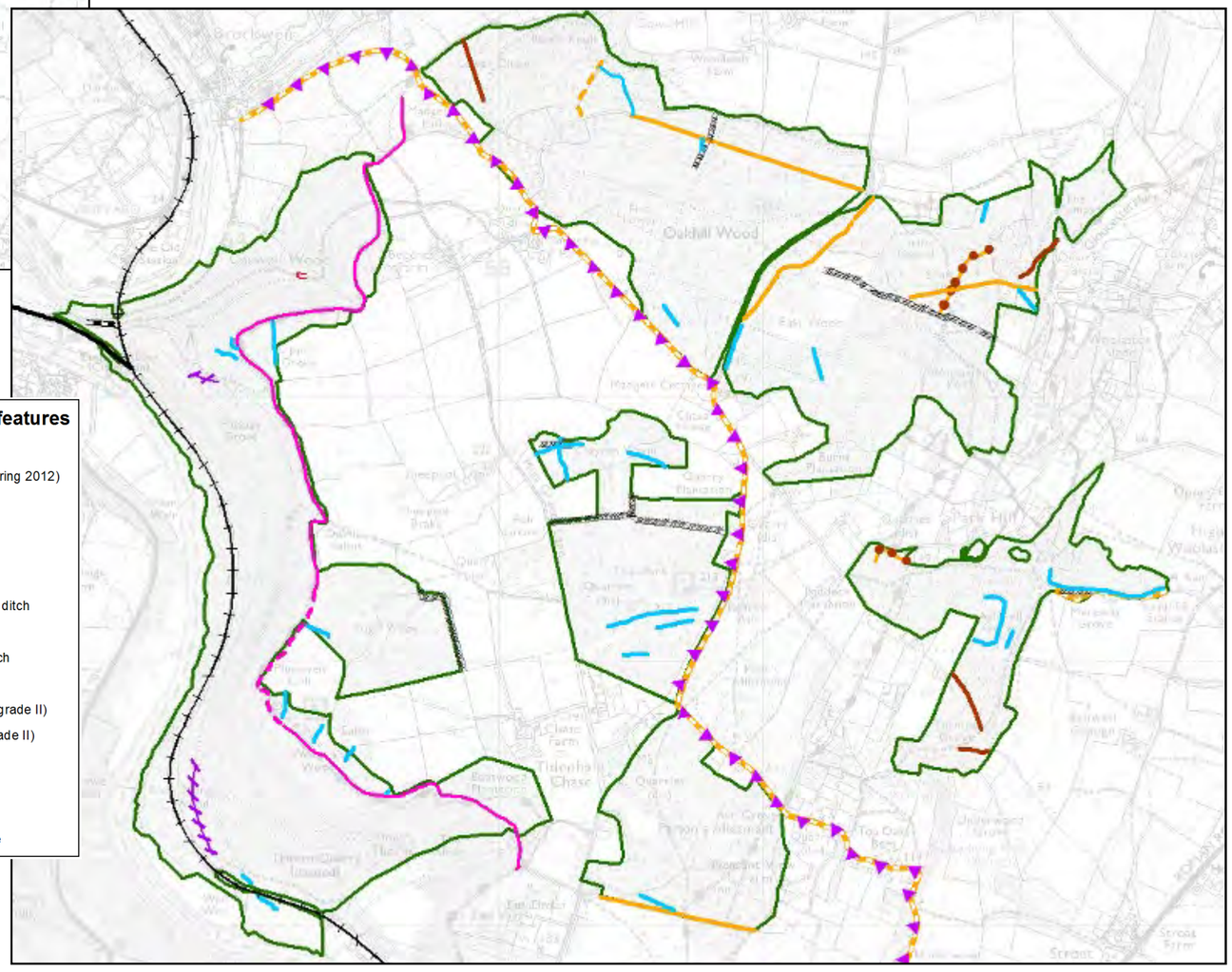
- Offa's Dyke

This SAM will be managed in accordance with the 2013-2018 management plan drawn up by Gloucestershire County Council archaeological department who have consulted and had agreement from Historic England. The plan contains extensive advice about managing tree cover within the SAM area.

Historic England should be notified of any forestry operations likely to affect the SAM.
Further advice if needed should be sort from Gloucestershire County Council archaeological department.

The Offa's Dyke SAM also coincides with both Caswell Wood SSSI and Shorncliff SSSI and any forestry operations likely to affect the SAM should also seek advice from Natural England and be compliant to the SSSI plan for these designated areas.





Heritage - Polygon features

- Surveys
- Finds
- Place Name
- Offas Dyke
- Roman Pavement
- Settlement (post-medieval)
- Barrow
- Area of earthworks
- Enclosure
- Field system
- Mound
- Quarry
- Hollow
- Terrace
- Holloway
- Bronze age hoard
- General
- Listed Structure
- Railway
- Ring Cairn
- Roman Altar
- Coal shaft
- Well

Heritage - Point features

- Well
- Lime kiln
- Roman Altar
- Earthwork
- Platform
- Jubilee Stone
- Stone feature
- Stone marker
- King Yew
- Mineshaft
- Quarry
- Finds
- Feature
- Unidentified Feature
- 2011 survey

Heritage - Linear features

- Offa's Dyke
- Offas Dyke (monitoring 2012)
- Saxon boundary
- Holloway
- Terrace
- Inclosure bank
- Inclosure bank and ditch
- Wood bank
- Wood bank and ditch
- Stone wall
- Railway bridge(LB grade II)
- Old Railway (LB grade II)
- Road
- Road (destroyed)
- Trackway
- Unidentified feature

Recreation and Public Access

The plan area is probably best known for a 3 mile stretch of the historically renowned Offa's Dyke that runs along Wyeside's eastern boundary, and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)
(Labelled **A-B-C** on the map)

The Offa's Dyke enjoys far reaching views across the valley into Wales especially from a natural outcrop of Limestone, known as Devils Pulpit lying just north of Shorn Cliff, it overlooks Tintern and its historic Cistercian Abbey and is a well frequented stopping point for visitors walking the historical Offa's Dyke.

There are six sections of the Offa's Dyke SAM crossing FC land. Almost 1.5 miles of this are split into five sections that are currently listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. Although work in the last few years has been undertaken to protect the monument and during the next few years more work is scheduled. All this work will improve the condition of the monument and remove remaining sections of the SAM on FC land from the HAR.

Other viewpoints have compelling panoramic views deep into the valley across the flanks and plateau of Hale Wood on Barbadoes Hill behind Tintern; whilst at the north-western tip of Caswell Wood there are fine views across the River Wye and Tintern Parva.

Wyeside also hosts natural limestone cliff face known as Shorn Cliff and form part of Shorn Cliff SSSI. These crags are of good quality and well frequented by the climbing fraternity, by both league climbers and outdoor pursuit groups, being well documented in the local climbing guide. FC will continue to maintain emergency access and BMC will continue to report any issues.

The whole of the plan area is well furnished with Public Rights of Way that give good access for ramblers and walkers and is the main recreational focus for the plan area; with one main carpark situated at the main access point to The Park, and several informal parking areas available at the main entrances to most of the woodlands within the plan area.

The Park is well frequented by naturalists who enjoy The Park for the open habitat and range of birds and wildlife. Walkers also enjoy the Park, with its Trig Point views of the surrounding countryside.

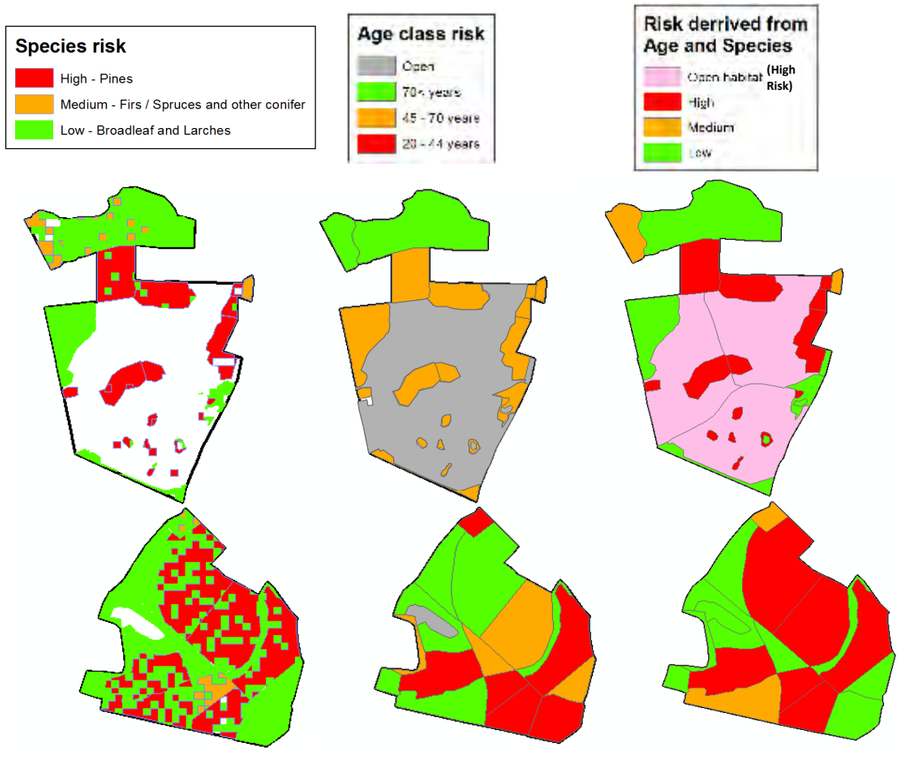
The remaining woods have less infrastructure, but are equally enjoyed by members of public for dog walking, horse riding but less used by mountain bikes. There are no official mountain bike or horse riding tracks or trails provided, although the use of hardstone tracks and bridal paths is permitted.

Left: A section of the Offa's Dyke that was resurfaced in the last few years in order to protect the SAM and minimise erosion issues damaging the monument.

Recreation and Public access

- Public footpath
- Bridleway;
- Byway (BOAT/RUPP)
- Car Park
- Cultural Site
- View Point
- Shorn Cliff - Climbing
- River Wye
- FP Management Area

Fire Risk for Tidenham Chase and Parsons Allotment



Wildfire Management

Wildfires are relatively rare however their impacts can be disproportionately large and costly to society and their frequency are predicted to increase due to increased land pressure and climate change. The ferocity and extent of a fire can be determined by the nature of the site, its topography, land use and vegetation type as well as tree health and weather conditions at the time. The vast majority of wildfires are caused by people, accidentally or deliberately. The risk of this is increased by periods of dry hot weather. The Plan area experiences a sustained but moderate level of visitor numbers throughout the year. Sites close to car parks and popular trails are therefore at greatest risk of experiencing the initiation of a fire event and will be targeted with signage during periods of high-extreme risk.

Mitigation and adaptation due to wildfire risk can be achieved by managing vegetation and fuels, creating fire breaks and belts, improving forest design and silvicultural diversity and the management and education of people. The key principles outlined follow the FC Practice Guide (2014).

Fire breaks are located in conjunction with other fire resistance liner features, such as roads, rides or rivers to aid the effective management of wildfires. Vegetation on one side or on both will be managed as part of standard forest operations and maintenance. **Fire belts** already exist in places and predominantly consist of fire retardant broadleaves. The criteria for location and extent of these is much the same for fire breaks and they offer an alternative form of wildfire mitigation. Clearance of windthrow and deadwood in high risk areas as well as remaining wood residues and products will contribute to lowering the fuel load factor and minimising the risk of ladder fires.

We will work with local the Fire and Rescue Service when considering controlled burning in order to manage risk. Uncontrolled fires will be dealt with in line with the West District Emergency Incidents Management Plan. Education as well as provision of practical information are the key factor to wildfire mitigation, this will be focused around areas of highest recreational footfall. Vegetation management around recreation facilities notably Tidenham Chase car park and along popular trails will lower the fuel load and thus the risk of fire ignition.

Existing and proposed open habitats

Tidenham contains a variety of heathland species classed at high risk : Heather, Gorse, Bracken, Grasses and Birch punctuated by high risk tree species (Pine). Bracken should be targeted for removal in order to reduce fuel loading and in turn lower the risk of fire ignition.

The council road and roadside broadleaves in Poor's Allotment (GWT) break up the open area helping reduce Fire Risk.

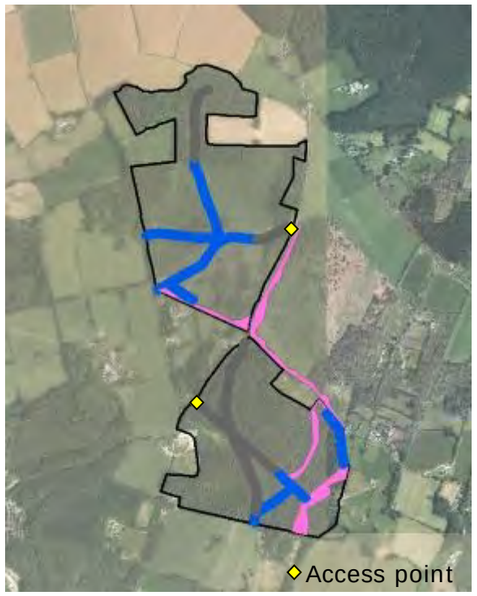
Woodland in Poor's Allotment (GWT) is predominantly Broadleaf, helping break up the open area lowering the Fire Risk.

The overall combination of tree species, vegetation types present along with their age and structure mean the open habitat at Tidenham should be considered as **medium to high risk** with a **medium hazard** rating giving an overall **moderate fire danger** that will rise to a **high danger** rating in periods of high temperature and/or in spells of prolonged dry weather. Prolonged periods of High temperatures and dry weather **may** increase fire danger to Extreme.

Existing / proposed open habitats

- ponds
- Exisiting Open Habitat / Heathland
- Heathland restoration Clearfell in 2026
- GWT heathland - Open Habitat
- GWT heathland - Roadside Broadleaves
- GWT heathland - Wood Heath
- GWT heathland - Woodland

Wildfire management zones



- Fire Belt
- Fire Break
- Road/Ride
- Zone A - Asset Zone
- Zone B - Buffer Zone
- Zone C - Low-risk Zone
- Zone D - Fire exclusion Zone

Management Practice	Zone A - Asset Zone Protect human life & infrastructure	Zone B - Buffer Zone A buffer areas around Zone A and major roads	Zone C - Low-risk Low to medium risk area for normal management	Zone D -Fire exclusion Zone Protect habitats
Vegetation management	Vegetation and other combustible materials should be minimised	Fuel loading and deadwood should be reduced	Conventional vegetation management practices	
Fire Belt	30-40 metres	20 metres	20 metres	20 metres
Fire Break	3 x vegetation height	1 x vegetation height	1 x vegetation height	3 x vegetation height