

Views About Management



A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Ashwell Springs 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

Groundwater springs are sometimes the vital sources of streams and rivers and, with their associated pools, can also be important in their own right and as habitats for specialist invertebrates.

It is vital that the supply of water is maintained at natural levels and that it is not contaminated by pollutants or nutrients. Management should aim to minimise the impacts of abstraction and deep drainage that can adversely affect spring flows, as well as limiting potential sources of pollution including run-off from roads and agricultural land. Dumping of waste items and materials (e.g. spoil) should be avoided and such items should be disposed of off-site.

Spring-fed pools and streams should be allowed to maintain their natural profiles. They should not be deepened, widened or otherwise physically modified. Spring-fed pools can become over-shaded by trees and areas of open canopy should be maintained or created to allow light to penetrate.

Areas of fen adjacent to spring-fed pools and streams may require some management (for example by mowing or grazing) to maintain their open character and prevent

encroachment by trees. Adjacent wetland habitats also need to be protected from diffuse pollution, and the dumping of waste.

Spring-fed pools are vulnerable to excessive siltation as a result of disturbance to the surrounding soil layer. It is desirable that the banks where springs emerge are stabilised, preferably by vegetation, though in more urban situations some artificial protection may be needed. Trampling of the surrounding area may destabilise soils and increase siltation, therefore access areas for people or livestock may need to be carefully sited.