



## Views About Management

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 28(4) as inserted by  
Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Natural England has a duty to inform the owners and occupiers of land within the **Oridge Street Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** of its views on how to manage the habitats and species of interest for nature conservation. This statement sets out our views on how the SSSI's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced.

Please be aware not all of the management principles outlined in this statement will be equally appropriate to all parts of the SSSI. There may also be other management activities, not outlined here, which could be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest.

Also be aware that this statement does not provide consent for any of the 'operations requiring Natural England's consent'. You need to have written consent from Natural England if you want to carry out any of those operations. Natural England welcomes discussion with owners, occupiers and users of the SSSI to ensure that the management of this site conserves and enhances the habitats and species of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

### Management Principles

Neutral hay meadows and pastures require active management if they are to retain their conservation interest. In order to maintain a species-rich sward, each year's growth of vegetation must be removed. Otherwise the sward becomes progressively dominated by tall and vigorous grasses that, together with an associated build-up of dead plant matter, suppress less vigorous species and reduce the botanical diversity of the site.

In neutral hay meadows, the above objective is traditionally achieved by closing the fields to stock in the autumn and cutting the resultant growth as hay, usually in early July. The precise timing of the cut depends on local factors, including past management and current weather conditions, but should be after ground-nesting birds have fledged their young and any short-lived, characteristic plants have set seed.

The aftermath is then grazed in late summer/autumn. Aftermath grazing is important for maintaining a species-rich sward, both through controlling competitive grasses and through hoof-prints providing suitable sites for seedlings to establish. Heavy poaching must be avoided, however.

On land managed as pasture, the conservation objectives are achieved by grazing. The precise timing and intensity of grazing will vary according to local conditions and requirements (such as the type or availability of stock or the needs of individual plants or animals of conservation concern) but should aim to keep a relatively open sward without causing excessive poaching. Light trampling can be of benefit by breaking down leaf litter and providing areas for seed germination.

Any surrounding, well-managed hedgerows may considerably add to the habitat in providing shelter for invertebrates. The application of pesticides including herbicides or fertilizers would be damaging but periodic dressings of well-rotted farmyard manure and occasional dressings of lime may be acceptable.

Regular and careful maintenance of surface drainage including ditches and drains can be necessary to prevent adverse changes in the plant species composition of the sward. Deepening of surface drainage should be avoided.

The principles set out above describe the broad management requirements of the habitats for the long term. At the time of notification, the northern field (north of the road) is recovering from being ploughed. Whilst it remains in a recovery phase, the management principles may need some tailoring to meet the particular circumstances at the time. For instance, this could include one or more hay cuts each year in the first few years, with or without periods of grazing, to aid the establishment of species characteristic of lowland meadows. If grazing is to take place during the recovery phase, then particular attention will need to be given to its timing and intensity.

**Date notified:** 10 January 2019