



## **Views About Management**

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 28(4)

### **A statement of Natural England's views about the management of Pinkworthy and Driver Farm Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

This statement represents Natural England's views about the management of the SSSI for nature conservation. It sets out, in principle, our views on how the site's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Natural England 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.

This Statement does not constitute consent for any of the 'operations requiring Natural England's consent'. The written consent of Natural England is required before carrying out any of those operations. Natural England 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**

#### **Lowland dry acid grassland and rush pasture with an assemblage of grassland fungi**

It is essential that grassland with a diverse community of grassland fungi is managed using sympathetic and generally traditional methods. Applications of lime, manure, artificial fertilisers, herbicides and fungicides should be avoided.

Grazing and/or mowing should keep the grassland short. Without such management or intervention the sward becomes progressively dominated by tall and vigorous grasses which, together with an associated build-up of dead plant matter, suppress less vigorous species, reduce botanical diversity and may compromise the fungal diversity of the site. Any clippings should be removed from the site.

At Pinkworthy and Driver Farm the grassland on some of the flatter areas is managed in most years by taking a hay or silage cut in the summer with aftermath grazing alongside the areas which are too steep to cut, through late summer and into winter. The timing of these activities will depend on local factors, including past management and current weather conditions. Management should ensure that the season's vegetation growth is removed and the sward kept relatively short through the autumn and winter which is the peak fruiting period for the grassland fungi. Stock tends to be removed in winter with flexibility to graze spring growth before shutting up for the hay sometime in spring.

Steeper areas of grassland are treated as pasture and maintained by longer periods of grazing. In general, 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 species of plant or fungus) but should aim to keep a relatively open sward. Although a short sward needs to be maintained, grazing should be at low levels or cease during the peak time of fungal fruiting. This is usually mid-September to mid-November, but may start from late summer depending on the weather and species concerned.

Where fields contain areas which are cut and grazed, care should be taken to ensure that the steeper areas are sufficiently well-grazed. Shutting up pasture areas along with the hay/silage meadows may lead to a build-up of coarse vegetation and bracken which is not then adequately grazed off in late summer. It is important that these slopes receive enough grazing as it is here that much of the important fungal interest is located.

Application of manure or fertiliser to the areas cut for hay/silage should be avoided as it will tend, over time, to reduce the species-richness of the acidic grassland and rush pasture. Any run-off of manure or fertiliser onto the steeper slopes is likely to cause serious harm to the fungi assemblage.

Light trampling can be of benefit by breaking down leaf litter and providing areas for seed germination, but excessive trampling that causes noticeable poaching of the grassland should be avoided at all times.

**Date notified: 7 January 2021**