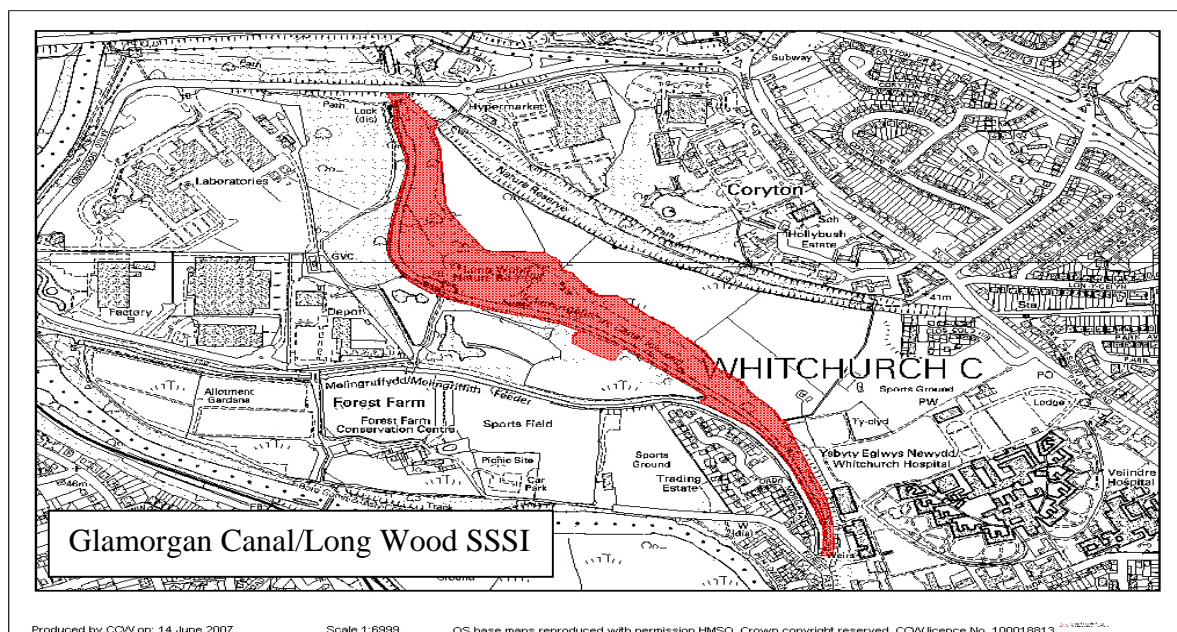


GLAMORGAN CANAL/LONG WOOD SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Picture of Glamorgan Canal/Long Wood



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YOUR SPECIAL SITE AND ITS FUTURE

Confirmed SMS February 2008

‘Your Special Site and its Future’ is part of our commitment to improve the way we work with Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) owners and occupiers. In it, we explain what is special about the wildlife on your site, and what care is needed to look after its wildlife into the future.

All SSSIs are considered to be of national importance and we recognise the crucial role that owners and occupiers play in their management and protection. We need you to share your views and knowledge of this site with us, to help us safeguard it.

We hope that you will find ‘Your Special Site and its Future’ interesting and helpful. Please contact us if there is anything about the site and its management that you would like to discuss.

What is ‘special’ about the wildlife at Glamorgan Canal/Long Wood SSSI?

Glamorgan Canal/Long Wood has two special features:

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland is present at Glamorgan Canal/Long Wood as several different woodland types. Many of the woodland species indicate that the woodland is many centuries old and may have even been a wooded area since the last ice age. The dominant tree is beech, together with much ash, some oak and alder in the wetter areas. There is a diverse range of woodland plants including dog’s mercury, wood anemone, bluebells, ramsons and yellow archangel. The woodland mostly occurs on a steep escarpment above the canal, with the wetter woodland occurring at the base of the slopes.

and

Standing water within Glamorgan Canal is nutrient-rich, open water that supports plants and animals that are typical of such water bodies. The animals include at least two native newt species, 14 species of dragonfly and kingfishers. The plants include arrowhead, yellow flag, marsh marigold, common spike-rush and some species of stonewort.

What do we want Glamorgan Canal/Long Wood to look like?

The following is a description of how we would like to see Glamorgan Canal/Long Wood :

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland

Broad leaved woodland covers at least 70% of the site. The woodland types found on the site are being maintained and are typically dominated by beech, oak and ash. The woodland structure is varied and the canopy contains a mixture of trees of all ages. Natural regeneration of the trees is visible, as saplings are found throughout the woodland. Standing and fallen dead wood is retained to provide habitats for invertebrates, fungi and other dependent species.

The remainder of the site is other semi-natural habitat including scrub and bracken. The presence of non-native species such as himalayan balsam is under control and will cover less than 10% of the woodland area.

Standing water

Along the length of the canal there is between 40% and 50% open water and no more than 50% of heavy shading. Submerged, floating and emergent plants are found along the length of the canal. Algae are not dominant and introduced species such as japanese knotweed and himalayan balsam are present in less than 10% of the canal.

What management is needed on Glamorgan Canal/Long Wood SSSI and why?

Although Glamorgan Canal/Long Wood is an excellent place for wildlife it will only remain so if the necessary management continues. CCW's priority is to work with you to ensure that this management is carried out.

What does this mean in practice?

- **Woodland management**

The semi-natural broadleaved woodland at Glamorgan Canal needs little management to maintain its special features. Some active management of the site has taken place over recent years, which has mainly centred on selective thinning and the control of Sycamore in parts of the woodland. However, it is anticipated that the desired woodland state will be achieved through a management policy of limited intervention, centred on the control of non-native species where necessary. Allowing the natural woodland processes to continue will achieve many of the objectives for the site. Canopy gaps have appeared as trees have been felled or fallen down and left where they have fallen. As a result, the presence of dead wood increases the biological diversity of the woodland. In addition, natural regeneration is occurring throughout the woodland, both underneath the canopy and within the gaps.

- **Invasive species**

Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam are present in some areas of the SSSI. These invasive species can spread rapidly, shading out native plants and so reducing diversity. Himalayan Balsam is a particular problem in at least one part of the woodland. An organised programme to control and preferably eradicate Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam is required.

- **Recreational use**

The SSSI is a well used recreational resource and part of a larger Local Nature Reserve popular for rambling, dog walking and mountain biking. Regular maintenance of the footpaths, bridleways and towpaths is essential to stop them spreading onto adjacent habitat and to stop the walls of the canal collapsing. We will continue to work with Cardiff Council to ensure that the recreational use of the site is managed to meet the needs of the local community without damaging the features.

- **Canal management**

The water in Glamorgan Canal is very slow moving, which allows both silt and vegetation to build up. The silt must be removed periodically otherwise it would build up and eventually the canal would dry out. Vegetation should be regularly cleared from the canal as this traps the silt, accelerating the drying out of the canal and maintains areas of open water. The overhanging tree canopy should also be managed and bank side vegetation cut to prevent excessive shading of the water. Small sections of the canal are de-weeded every year, with the aim of de-weeding the whole canal length over around 10 years. Pollution incidents have occurred in the past but pollution control measures already in place will ensure there are no losses of water quality that are damaging to the wildlife of the canal. The Nant y Fforest stream is the major source of water to the Glamorgan Canal. Occasionally the water supply becomes blocked or diverted resulting in a rapid lowering of the water levels in the canal.

The canal is not actively stocked or regularly fished and fish populations have plummeted following droughts. Large numbers of fish have also had to be removed by the Environment Agency Fisheries Protection staff to protect the invertebrate population of the canal in the past. We will work with the Environment Agency to monitor fish populations, to ensure that their numbers are not damaging to the SSSI.

Finally

Our knowledge and understanding of wildlife is continually improving. It is possible that new issues may arise in the future, whilst other issues may disappear. This statement is written with the best information we have now, but may have to change in the future as our understanding improves. Any information you can provide on the wildlife of your site, its management and its conservation would be much appreciated.

If you have any concerns about your SSSI, you should contact your local CCW office.

**Your local office is;
CCW (Cardiff and Newport Team)
Unit 7
Castleton Court
Fortran Road
St Mellons
Cardiff**

Tel: 029 20772400