

# **BIRDHILL QUARRY SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**



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## **YOUR SPECIAL SITE AND ITS FUTURE**

‘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 geology on your site, and what care is needed to look after its geology 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 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 geology at Birdshill Quarry SSSI?**

Birdshill Quarry SSSI has one special feature:

Exposures of Ordovician limestones attributed to the Ashgill Series.

This is an important site showing the sequence of the Birdshill Limestone at the site, which gave it its name. This Ashgill aged sequence of limestones was formed as shallow-water deposits on the margin of a deep-ocean sometime between 455 and 440 million years ago (Ashgill Epoch), at approximately 30° latitude, in the southern hemisphere. These ancient sediments and their contained fossils typify the latest part of the Ordovician rocks of southwest Wales.

## **What do we want Birdshill Quarry SSSI to look like?**

The following is a description of how we would like to see the feature at Birdshill Quarry SSSI:

*Our aims for this site will be focussed on maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the current level and continuity of rock exposure, as well as keeping all existing rock outcrops visible and accessible. In seeking to achieve our aims, we will thereby ensure that the geology at Birdshill Quarry will continue to be one of the best localities in Wales for the study of these important fossil-bearing Ordovician rocks.*

## **What management is needed on Birdshill Quarry SSSI and why?**

Birdshill Quarry SSSI is an excellent place for the study of Ordovician fossil-bearing rocks and sites such as this are vital for furthering our understanding of geological science and Wales’ geological heritage. However, it will only remain so if the necessary management continues and CCW’s priority is to work with you to ensure that this management is carried out.

## **What does this mean in practice?**

There are a number of different factors that could damage the special feature at Birdshill Quarry SSSI if they are not properly managed. These are the ones we regard as most important:

- **Accessibility**  
Researchers and students need access to study the sedimentary rocks and their characteristic fossils present in the quarry sections. However, the site lies on private land and access to the sections for the purpose of study and research is entirely at the discretion of the landowner.
- **Visibility**  
In one small area, the present owner has cleared vegetation and revealed previously concealed parts of the geological feature. This is an important enhancement of the scientific interest and, with the landowner’s permission, CCW may wish to carry out further site clearance operations, for example ahead of any future research initiative. In addition, we may request permission

to carry out supervised scientific exploration and controlled digging where gaps exist between existing rock exposures.

### **Finally**

Our knowledge and understanding of geology 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 geology of your site, its management and its conservation would be much appreciated.

**If you would like to discuss any aspect of your SSSI, or have any concerns about your SSSI, please contact your local CCW office.**

**Your local office is;**  
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