

**CAEAU PANT Y BRYN  
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 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 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 Caeau Pant y Bryn SSSI?**

This site has one special feature:

Marshy grassland

As well as the marshy grassland, Caeau Pant y Bryn has other habitats, which are important to the wildlife interest of this site, including unimproved neutral grassland, wet heath and hedgerows. These support a strong population of whorled caraway, which is a characteristic plant of damp grasslands on the South Wales coalfield. Fragrant orchid, meadow thistle and lesser-butterfly orchid are also found at the site. The diversity of habitats supports a wide range of other species and is a key component of the special interest of the site. Unless it is specified below, management of this site should aim to look after these habitats and species as well as the listed features of interest.

## **What do we want Caeau Pant y Bryn SSSI to look like?**

The following is a description of how we would like to see the feature at this site.

*The marshy grassland should ideally occupy at least 60% of the site with purple moor grass the main dominant species, accompanied by grasses and herbs such as sweet vernal grass and tormentil. An uncommon species-rich form of marshy grassland should occupy about 25% of the site, marked by the presence throughout of the herbs meadow thistle, devil’s bit scabious and whorled caraway and short sedges such as flea sedge and carnation sedge. The marshy grassland sward should be variable in height (mainly about 8-30 cm) as well as in community structure. Rushes such as sharp-flowered rush should be present locally, but should not be allowed to spread significantly.*

*The unimproved neutral grassland will occupy about 2% of the site and include characteristic plants such as birds-foot trefoil, knapweed and red clover. The large expanse of wet heath should be dominated by cross-leaved heath and heather community (both dwarf shrubs) with a scattering of another sub shrub (petty whin) throughout. This community type should dominate the extreme southern and western enclosures of the site, and should occupy about 40% of the total site area. Other species characterising this community include lousewort, devil’s-bit scabious plus grasses such as sweet vernal and sheep’s fescue, which should be commonly found throughout the sward.*

## **What management is needed on Caeau Pant y Bryn SSSI and why?**

Although this site 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?**

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

## **Grazing**

Both over and under grazing will lead to a deterioration in vegetation structure and species composition of the grassland.

Ideally, cattle or horses should graze this site from spring to mid-autumn to create a mosaic of vegetation with a patchwork of long and short vegetation (no longer than 30 cm, no shorter than 8cms). Grazing with sheep is not ideal, as they graze the smaller flowering plants rather than the tougher grasses and scrub. Burning to remove the rank vegetation is not recommended as tussocks of moor-grass are fire-resistant and will grow back more vigorously after a burn if not adequately grazed. If necessary, topping can be carried out, but only limited areas should be cut at any one time. This is best undertaken during late summer or during hard frosts in the winter period when machinery can be taken out onto the land. Over grazing should be avoided as this leads to poaching and promotion of ragwort as well as loss of important plant species.

## **Scrub**

The spread of scrub may be indicative of insufficient grazing and a loss in the extent and species composition of the marshy grassland habitat. Scrub control management may be necessary to maintain the rich and varied range of flowers and plants of the site. Scrub should in general not encroach more than a few metres from the field boundary. The correct level of grazing should control the scrub encroachment in the long term.

## **Nutrient Enrichment**

Fertilisers should not be used on the site, as this would damage the marshy grassland by encouraging agricultural species. Where possible, fertiliser use on fields adjoining the SSSI should be limited, to avoid enriching water draining on to the marshy grassland from outside the site. Other activities that could lead to enrichment problems, such as supplementary stock-feeding or storage of cut vegetation, should take place on adjoining land.

## **Drainage**

The marshy grassland is dependent on the maintenance of a natural or traditional drainage pattern. No new drainage systems should be put in place, and any maintenance of the existing drainage system should be done carefully with guidance from CCW.

## **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 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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