

S I T E

Management
Statement



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CHICHESTER HARBOUR
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

[REDACTED]
(land managed by [REDACTED])

April 1997



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[REDACTED]

1. INTRODUCTION

Some of the land belonging to [REDACTED] (part of Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest) is an important site for wildlife. This management statement aims to:

- Explain what is special about the land and identify objectives necessary for the land to remain of special scientific interest.
- Identify [REDACTED] objectives in managing the land
- Summarise the common objectives.
- List what is agreed to manage the land for wildlife enhancement.
- State whether or not the agreed management is likely to achieve English Nature's conservation objectives.

It also identifies a contact at English Nature who is available to advise on nature conservation management. English Nature hope that the management statement will help both parties to understand each other's interests and that it will help build a positive relationship in managing the site.

2. NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest is an estuarine basin which has extensive areas of inter-tidal sand and mud exposed at low tide. The coastline is long and varied, contributing to a wide range of inter-tidal and terrestrial habitats which are important for birds, plants and other wildlife.

International importance

Together with Langstone Harbour, the site has been designated a **Special Protection Area** for wild birds (EU Birds Directive) and a **Ramsar site** (wetland of international importance). The inter-tidal mudflats are the feeding grounds of internationally important numbers of waders and wildfowl, including ringed plover, grey plover, redshank, black-tailed godwit, dunlin, sanderling, curlew, shelduck, teal and dark-bellied brent goose.

The estuary is also included within the possible **Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** under the EU Habitats & Species Directive because of its high quality, semi-natural habitats and the wildlife they support.

Areas of unimproved pasture behind the sea wall are used by waders and wildfowl as roosting and feeding sites. Some of the pastures are rich in wild plants such as adder's tongue fern and green winged orchids. Freshwater marshes such as Thorney Deeps provide further habitat diversity.

Saltmarsh can be found around the estuary and is often dominated by cord grass but there are also significant areas of sea lavender/sea purslane saltmarsh. Shingle spits and islands are largely devoid of vegetation but remain important as breeding grounds for ringed plover, black-headed gulls and three species of tern.

An extensive sand dune system is present at East Head, supporting the characteristic marram grass.

The SSSI is of high value for a number of invertebrate species, including three nationally scarce crickets (long-winged conehead, short-winged conehead and the grey bush cricket) and a number of nationally scarce moths, including the sand dart and the shore wainscot. Chichester Harbour SSSI also supports a species of weevil listed in the Invertebrate Red Data Book and only recorded from a few coastal sites in Western Europe.

The area of Chichester Harbour SSSI owned [REDACTED] includes coastal and woodland habitats. The woodland is comprised of well-spaced oaks with the occasional beech, holly and yew. The north-east corner of the woodland on Tournbury Fort supports a heronry. Storm damage has resulted in the loss of the canopy in many places. The semi-natural broadleaved woodland and scrub areas are valuable for breeding birds. Behind the coastal bank there are areas of brackish marsh as well as occasional pools influenced by saltwater.

3. NATURE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

English Nature's objectives are to sustain the various habitats and their communities of plants and animals that make Chichester Harbour of special interest and of international importance. To achieve this involves the maintenance (and where appropriate, enhancement) of the following habitats and species on the land.

- a) Population of overwintering, migratory and breeding birds
- b) Coastal and inter-tidal habitats (brackish ditches, brackish marsh/grassland, water bodies influenced by saltwater) by allowing natural coastal processes to operate where possible and appropriate
- c) Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland (including elements such as wet woodland, ground flora, dead wood habitat, heronry, woodland fauna)
- d) Populations of plants, particularly nationally scarce or rare species
- e) Populations of invertebrates, particularly nationally scarce or rare species

4. OBJECTIVES OF [REDACTED]

- a) To run the estate economically as a profitable concern. This will facilitate future conservation management.
- b) To maintain the area for shooting purposes. To protect against coastal erosion. To conserve the woodland and manage the land in sympathy with the wildlife interest.

5. AGREED OBJECTIVES

To work in partnership and to manage the land in sympathy with wildlife and as a financially viable concern taking into account the nature conservation interest where possible.

6. AGREED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS (See Management Statement Map 1)

6.1 Woodland management

a) Rides

Rides to be mown twice a year, once in March and once in September. Cuttings should be removed if at all possible, in order to avoid nutrient enrichment of soils. Removing the cuttings will enhance the ground flora along rides.

b) Woodland tracks

These are mainly earth tracks and where waterlogging and rutting occurs, limited infilling of ruts with rubble is acceptable in order to allow continued vehicular access. Gradual change or upgrading of tracks is not acceptable from a nature conservation point of view and the earthen/unimproved character of the tracks should be retained as far as possible.

c) Saplings

Oak, beech, ash, cherry and yew saplings were planted to ensure future woodland canopy trees following the storm of 1987. On-going management with regard to these saplings includes:

- i. removal and replacement of broken sapling shelters
- ii. replanting and sheltering of blown over saplings
- iii. sky-lighting of saplings in shelters
- iv. maintaining light levels to saplings by managing/topping intervening scrub
- v. clearance of vegetation from around base of saplings by hand or mechanical means

No new planting is envisaged, though a Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme may be appropriate to help with ongoing and annual management costs. English Nature would support a scheme which was favourable to nature conservation.

d) Dead wood and timber extraction

Fallen and standing dead wood is to be retained as far as possible. Where standing dead wood presents an unacceptable hazard it can be made safe and either removed or left in the woodland where it will provide a habitat for dead wood invertebrates and fungi. Where fallen trees block access, they can be cleared as necessary. Where removal and cutting up of timber is necessary, whenever possible, the butts and root plates of the trees should be left in situ. This provides benefits for wildlife but is also important for the conservation of archaeological features.

e) Prevention of further spread of rhododendron

There are several clumps of rhododendron in the south of the woodland. This species is non-native and spreads easily, smothering and replacing native ground flora. Additionally, the wildlife it supports is minimal and it therefore presents a threat to wildlife nature conservation. If necessary, steps will be taken to prevent the further spread of this species.

5.2 Domestic curtilage and amenity area consent (area outlined in red on attached map)

The house and its immediate surroundings should have been excluded from the original designation. Consultation with English Nature is not required, subject to the following conditions:

- i. domestic plants and animals need to be adequately contained to ensure that the wildlife and character of the surrounding SSSI is not eroded
- ii. no shooting
- iii. creation of wildfowling ponds (and duck feeding) cannot be consented to
- iv. peripheral hedges and trees will be retained subject to any tree surgery required to make them safe.
- v. operations having a negative impact on the surrounding SSSI should be avoided where possible
- vi. all land to the east of point 'c' is the business amenity area, consent is not required for operations provided that points i, iii, and iv above are met, however this area excludes the 'Bury' and heronry
- vii. If the local planning authority decide that planning permission is required because a change of use has occurred on area E, the curtilage consent will lapse unless it can be proved that Area E was a raised, garden area in the past, prior to notification. Area E may have been subject to land raising with earth in the past and may also have been used as a garden area. Recent works have occurred (land raising and re- seeding). In the event of planning permission being required, it will need to be proved to the local planning authority that the land has been raised prior to notification and was used as a lawn prior to notification.

6.3 Shooting and associated operations

a) Pheasant feeders

These will be limited to their existing number in order to avoid any deterioration in ground flora. No straw or feed will be scattered around them, thus ensuring a higher quality ground flora.

b) Pheasant pens (marked 'a' and 'b' on map)

These will be restricted to two in number, and located as shown on the accompanying map. Use of straw will be kept to a minimum in order to allow some natural ground flora to survive. The pens will be maintained as necessary but kept to their current size, the smaller ('b') being located in the south west corner of the area.

c) Shooting

Shooting is restricted to approximately 5 or 6 shoots per season, with 3 – 5 guns on each occasion. Shooting will not be carried out in the proximity of the coastal bund and associated wet/marshy habitats. The heronry will also be avoided towards the end of the shooting season in order to minimise disturbance to any nesting herons. (Close season begins 1st February).

d) Feeding of pond

This will not be carried out in the close season of 1997 in order to allow vegetation to establish itself. Subsequently feeding of the pond will be kept to minimum and suspended if monitoring indicates that natural vegetation is not establishing itself. Feeding of the pond is not ideal and is consented to (within the shooting season) only at levels which allow aquatic and semi-aquatic vegetation to recolonise the pond naturally.

6.4 Ponds (Marked as numbers 1 and 2). See also accompanying map.

a) Regrading

The recent works to restore the main pond (marked as number 1) have created a water body which has far too steep sides to be of optimum benefit to wildlife. It is agreed that the western and north-western banks will be re-profiled by pushing some soil inland and some into the water in order to create a shallow gradation from water to land. This will allow a range of aquatic and emergent vegetation to grow and provide more diversity of habitat. The central island will also be taken down to a lower height than the current 1.5 metres (approx). In principle, the excess soil could be used to make alterations or improvements to the coastal bank (see also **proposed management actions** below). However such use has not yet been consented to and will have to await the go-ahead for the coastal works.

b) Natural colonisation by aquatic vegetation will be allowed to take place.

c) The two ponds will be stocked with mallard and the numbers maintained at approx. 70 birds in total

6.5 Tracks (other than woodland earth tracks)

The tracks marked in green on the accompanying map have been up-graded with limestone scalplings to allow access to the coastal bank and to the cottage. Further up-grading of these tracks will not be carried out. Repair and maintenance of the track to the house to the existing specification is acceptable.

6.6 Conservation of archaeological features - Tournerbury Fort

Tournerbury Fort is a scheduled ancient monument. To conserve the feature requires appropriate woodland management. This will involve a policy of no new planting on the earth bank feature and sensitive treatment of existing mature trees already growing on the bank. Wind-blow can be detrimental to archaeological sites because the ripping up of root plates can alter and damage man-made features. It is therefore appropriate to remove dead or weakened timber whilst leaving the root plate and stump of the tree in situ.

██████████ (Field Monument Warden - English Heritage) has visited the site (February 1997) and endorsed the existing management as appropriate. As a Scheduled Ancient Monument, any further planting would require Scheduled Monument consent ██████████

6.7 Coastal bank - Interim measures only.

English Nature consent to short-term, interim repair measures which do not involve expansion of the coastal bank inland, into the harbour or in height. Soil (from pond restoration) can be used to repair holes and gaps in the existing coastal bank only. Coastal bank highlighted blue on accompanying map.

6.8 Fencing

Repairs to boundary fencing as necessary. Avoiding heronry from February to July if possible.

Annex 1

PROPOSED COASTAL BANK WORKS - (NOT YET CONSENTED)

(See attached plan)

One of English Nature's objectives is to maintain coastal and inter-tidal habitats by allowing natural coastal processes to operate where possible. Natural processes are compromised by the presence/enlargement of sea walls. However, it may be possible to achieve a degree of coastal defence which protects against erosion of the land whilst maintaining natural habitats and wildlife communities.

The following scheme has been discussed as a possible way forward at a site meeting between [REDACTED] (consultant), [REDACTED] (land manager/son of owner) and [REDACTED] (shooting manager/warden).

As the works represent an alteration and enlargement of the existing coastal bank and also fall within a declared Special Protection Area they will be subject to agreement from the relevant authorities (Local Authority, Environment Agency, English Nature, Chichester Harbour Conservancy). If work is proposed below mean high water, a FEPA licence (issued by Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food) may be necessary. (FEPA = Food and Environmental Protection Act).

The proposed works are as follows (see also attached plan):

- i. Creation of earth and brick rubble bund c. 4 metres wide and at approximately the same height as the existing coastal bund. Earth to be profiled back on the inland side. Spoil to be locally derived where possible (e.g. from re-profiling works on main pond - see 6.4 above). Coastal bank works to extend no further than extent of existing coastal bank and not onto higher ground to the west, though [REDACTED] would like this considered at a future date.

Occasional (if infrequent) over-topping of the bank will help maintain brackish water habitat inland and also make the coastal bank less prone to erosion from high energy waves in times of high water/storms. As such, an increase in the height of the coastal bank is not necessarily desirable, though this will need to be a subject of future discussions as [REDACTED] wishes the sea wall to be raised in height.

- ii. Limited re-profiling and adequate facing of sea-ward slope using an appropriate material and in a method approved by Chichester Harbour Conservancy, English Nature, Environment Agency. Dredging/raking back of gravels and estuary sediment is unacceptable from a nature conservation viewpoint and also adds to tidal energy (and erosive power) in front of the coastal bank.
- iii. Creation of new brackish ditch habitat.
As a 4 metre wide bund would involve loss of a tidal influenced ditch, it is proposed that a new ditch is dug and the sediment from the original ditch transferred to the new one. In conjunction with water level control (see below), the new habitat will allow the conservation interest to be maintained.
- iv. Water level control measures.
Renewing the tidal flap which leads through the coastal bank, will allow controlled inundation of the ditch system and low lying ground situated between the woodland edge and the coastal bank. This will be essential in making the coastal bank repair/enhancement works environmentally acceptable. A control structure is required (using tidal flap and/or sluice boards as necessary) which enables brackish water to be maintained at a predetermined level (within 30 centimetres of ground level is often recommended because it favours conditions for feeding waders such as redshank).
Some over-topping (albeit very infrequent) will be necessary to maintain brackish inland ditches.

You have consent for the management activities listed above (6.1 - 6.7). Any additional activities (including the possible coastal bank works - see Annex 1) listed as 'OPERATIONS LIKELY TO DAMAGE THE SPECIAL INTEREST' in the notification documents, require consultation and agreement from English Nature prior to undertaking the work.

Should you have any queries about the SSSI, or if we can be of help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact:


English Nature
1 Southampton Road
LYNDHURST
Hampshire
SO43 7BU

Tel: 01703 283944
Fax: 01703 283834

7. MANAGEMENT RECORDS

It is helpful to keep a record of management on the SSSI in case subtle changes affect the plants and animals. English Nature encourage land managers to make a note of the date, location and nature of specific management operations.

8. EFFECTIVENESS OF AGREED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Bearing in mind the points listed below, the agreed management actions should be effective in maintaining the conservation and archaeological interest of the area.

1. It will be important for the **main pond** to be managed in a way which allows natural vegetation and wildlife to colonise and survive as well as being of value for shooting.
2. **Herons** may start to nest towards the end of the shooting season and it will be important to try and avoid end of season/late shoots in the vicinity of the heronry for this reason.
3. Maintaining **coastal habitats** such as brackish ditches will rely upon effective consultation over proposed measures to control coastal erosion (see Annex 1). Given sufficient mitigation measures and full consultation with interested parties, the measures proposed should be effective in maintaining the conservation interest.
4. Applying for a **Countryside Stewardship Grant** (Waterside Landscapes) may be a way of funding the coastal work (erosion protection and habitat creation) which you may like to consider. Information from: Stewardship Adviser, ADAS Statutory, C Block, 98 Epsom Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2LD. Tel 01483 452050.

SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT
(Plan to accompany Annex 1)

north

south

New brackish ditch/wetland
habitat to be created

Earth and brick rubble coastal
bank reinforcement

facing

Sluice boards to retain brackish water

Tidal flap can allow limited salt water incursion if necessary to maintain brackish water levels
(one sluice already repaired/completed, the other awaiting agreement)

---- = proposed re-profiling

— = current profile



SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT
(Plan to accompany pond re-profiling works. See 6.4)

(not drawn to scale, measurements approximate)



earth may need to be pushed back 2 metres into scrub (sallow/oak), in order to achieve appropriate gradient of pond bank

earth will need to be pushed forward into water to help achieve gentle gradient



western and northern banks to be re-profiled to gently shelving slope rather than steep sided bank

shallow gradation to be created to allow aquatic and emergent vegetation to develop

(currently c. 1.2m bank to be lowered to c. 0.5 bank at highest point)

CURRENT PROFILE



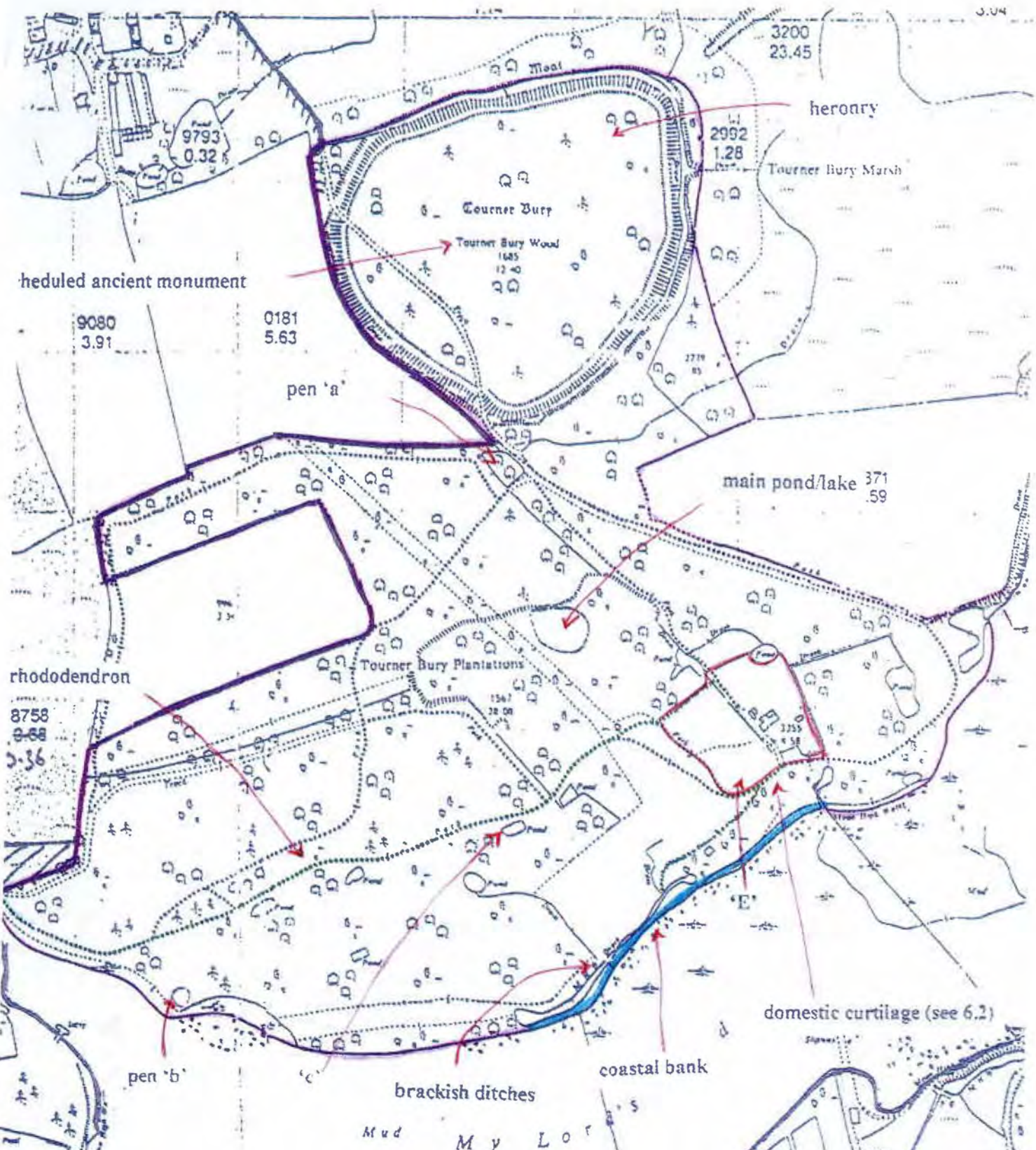
DESIRED PROFILE



SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT - MAP 1

owner: [REDACTED]
(managed by: [REDACTED])

CHICHESTER HARBOUR SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST



Boundary of land notified as being of special scientific interest

Boundary of land owned by [REDACTED] within SSSI