



Events such as this meadow owners' open day are one way the SNCI Initiative can support landowners, giving the chance to exchange advice and share good management practices.

Who Should You Contact?

Ben Rainbow, Assistant Ecologist at West Sussex County Council, coordinates the SNCI Initiative.

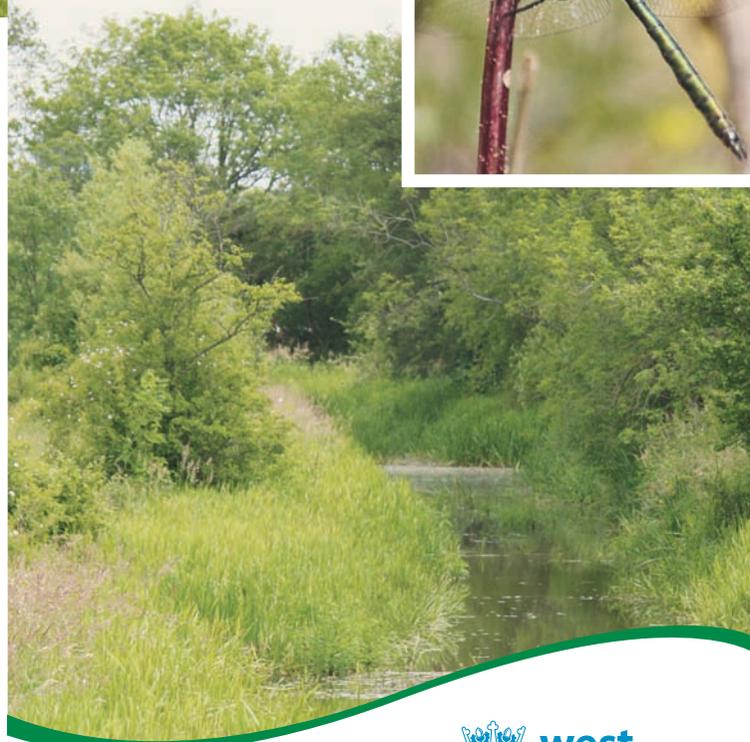
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Further information is available on the West Sussex County Council website.

Our wetlands not only provide us with clean water, but are important for biodiversity. Our rivers support much life, such as this brilliant emerald dragonfly.



West Sussex Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

A Guide for Landowners



What Assistance is Available to Landowners?

Should you be fortunate enough to be a custodian of an SNCI, the following assistance may be available to you:

-  Free expert advice on management, including production of land management plans.
-  An ecological survey and explanation of the wildlife value of your land.
-  Assistance and advice on appropriate grant schemes, such as those available from Natural England and the Forestry Commission. SNCI status can assist in attracting grant aid.
-  Practical assistance with appropriate management.

Many of these important wildlife sites exist because they have a long history of traditional or sympathetic management. The SNCI Initiative encourages owners to manage their land in a wildlife friendly manner to ensure these sites are safeguarded for the future.

What are SNCIs?

Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) are amongst the best sites for wildlife in the County. They are the jewels in our West Sussex countryside.

SNCIs:

-  Contain species and habitats that are uncommon in West Sussex and sometimes further afield.
-  Form a comprehensive suite of wildlife sites outside other statutory site designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
-  In an urban context, can be used for the appreciation of nature, education and community involvement.
-  As non-statutory sites, do not place any obligations on owners; they do not provide additional access where none already exists.



Heathlands are rare habitats that have declined due to changes in land management on our commons and other sandy places. Cattle grazing is being re-introduced to heathland sites in West Sussex to help restore this threatened habitat.

Who Coordinates the SNCI Initiative?

West Sussex County Council takes a lead role in coordinating the SNCI Initiative. Amongst others, partners include The Sussex Wildlife Trust, Natural England, District & Borough Councils and local wildlife specialists.



Ghyll woodland is characteristic of the Weald landscape and supports a unique plant community. The rare Coralroot is found in several ghyll woodland SNCIs.

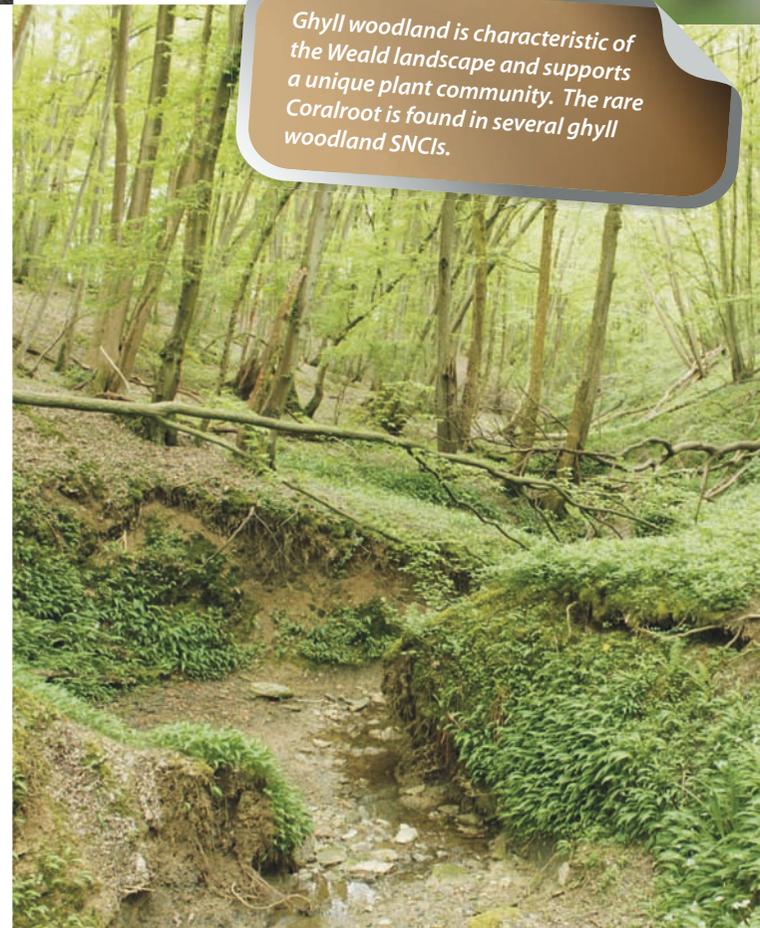
Why are SNCIs Important?

Our environment has always been a constantly changing place, but perhaps not at the rate it is changing today.

SNCIs:

-  Are strongholds for our rare and threatened wildlife.
-  Highlight the importance of the site to the landowner.
-  Provide stepping-stones and networks for wildlife to move around the landscape - essential to restore and reconnect our fragmented countryside.
-  Help us monitor, protect and enhance our rich biodiversity.
-  Are important for sustaining a healthy and diverse environment for people and wildlife.

The West Sussex SNCI Initiative was launched in 1992 and, with just under 300 sites, covers 5% of the County. We undertake reviews every few years to ensure SNCIs still represent the most important areas of the County for wildlife.



The attractive Duke of Burgundy butterfly has become very rare due to its specialist habitat requirements, but has a stronghold in several West Sussex SNCIs.

