

HOG CLIFF NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

SITE SAFETY STATEMENT



Hog Cliff National Nature Reserve consists of four separate parcels of land, referred to as Hog Cliff Bottom, Glebe Farm, Southfield Down, and Park Wood (see maps below). For the purposes of this site safety statement the risks are assumed to be common to all four land parcels, unless otherwise stated. In February 2023 Glebe Farm land was acquired, a total of approximately 140 acres of land, linking directly to Hog Cliff Bottom.

STEEP DOWNLAND SLOPES & UNEVEN GROUND

Many parts of the NNR include calcareous grassland that is on a steep slope. The ground can be uneven as well as steep and so appropriate footwear (stout walking boots) should be worn and care taken when walking on the reserve. **Permission is required from Natural England if vehicles or machinery are to be taken onto the site.** The ground can easily be damaged by taking vehicles onto site if the ground is wet and this can also be a hazardous activity, particularly on the steeper slopes.

CONCEALED SINK/SWALLOW HOLES/RABBIT WARRENS/BADGER SETTS

Small and large holes in the ground are often concealed within areas of scrub, or may be present within the open grassland or woodland. Particular care should be taken if driving vehicles off established tracks and use of a banksman/prior survey is recommended. Always be aware of the possibility of holes when walking across the reserve. Badgers and rabbits can undermine ground which may appear quite stable but can be prone to sudden collapse if walked or driven over. At Southfield Down in the 'hay field' there is an old quarry area which forms a significant depression in the ground particular care needs to be taken if driving in this part of the site.

LIVESTOCK

Cattle, Sheep and ponies are used to graze the NNR all year round. All stock are non-aggressive breeds but particular care should be taken if accompanied by a dog, especially where cows and calves are involved. If challenged by cows let go of the dog and quietly walk away. In the presence of sheep, dogs must be kept on a lead at all times.

FENCES, GATES AND ACCESS INFRASTRUCTURE

Stock fencing surrounds the perimeter of the NNR but there are also a number of internal fences. Stock fencing is standard sheep netting with 2 strands of barbed wire. Jumping or climbing over fences is not recommended because of the risk of personal injury from barbed wire and also because this may damage the fence. There may be old dilapidated fencing and loose barbed wire hidden in scrub or fencelines. Glebe Farm land fencing requires significant overhaul with much of the fencing infrastructure worn out or missing.

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AREAS RECENTLY CLEARED OF SCRUB

In recently cleared areas of scrub there may be old stumps that have been cut above ground level as well as other debris. This can present a hazard to machinery and vehicles or a trip hazard to the unwary walker.

WATER TANK

At Park Wood in the woodland there is a small water tank that feeds one of the water troughs. The tank is fenced off and covered and checked regularly for condition or hazards.

UNMANAGED WOODLAND & TREES

Much of the woodland present on site is overstood coppice or mature woodland that has not been managed for a number of years. There is a significant amount of dead wood and unmanaged trees away from public rights of way may present a hazard. It is not recommended that woodland on the NNR is accessed during periods of high wind or stormy weather. Fallen timber may be found in the woodlands or on the downland and can be unstable. It is important to walk around, not over or under fallen timber. Ash dieback has affected many of the Ash trees in the woodland areas and unless these are adjacent to or over a public right of way or permissive access these trees are not managed for public access or safety. Affected trees may be hazardous with falling branches and/or brittle timber posing a hazard to anyone attempting to fell these trees.

OVERHEAD POWER CABLES

Overhead power cables and associated telegraph poles cross the NNR at various points. Always be aware of any overhead power lines or cables, especially when felling trees – if in doubt seek advice!

ACCESS TO SITE FROM MAIN ROAD/PARKING AREAS

Access to Hog Cliff Bottom is off the main A37. Care should be taken when pulling on/off this main road. If parking ensure that vehicles are a safe distance from the main road before unloading or getting out of the vehicle. The pull off from the A37 includes an area of loose gravel which is on a slight slope and this can cause skids. The track leading from the A37 to Hog Cliff Bottom is largely unsurfaced, quite steep and can be rough – drive slowly and carefully, engaging low gears and differential lock.

UNDERGROUND/SURFACE WATER PIPES/WATER TROUGHS

Precise locations of underground pipes are not known but some overground pipes are visible. There are a number of water troughs across the reserve, these are uncovered and regularly checked for leaks and condition.

DISUSED BUILDINGS

Some old buildings and structures are present on/near the NNR. Please keep well clear of these. A small pill box is located on Glebe Farm land adjacent to NE's boundary, this is not considered to be located on NE land.

AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

An agricultural barn used for storing hay is located at Southfield Down, in the 'hay field'. There is a H&S sign that warns to use walking boards if accessing the roof of the barn. Otherwise the barn is checked annually for safety and poses no hazards.

OLD REDUNDANT FENCING, WIRE AND GATES

Old redundant fencing, wire and gates that have not been removed can present a hazard and are found across the NNR in both woodland and grassland areas. Please inform Natural England if you come across any - we are working to remove it.

TICKS

Ticks can be a serious problem on Hog Cliff NNR all year round. Large numbers are sometimes encountered throughout the grassland, scrub and woodland areas, particularly during the spring and summer months. Ticks can carry Lyme disease so if you are bitten and feel unwell contact your doctor. Wear appropriate clothing, tuck trousers/clothing in and wear insect repellent.

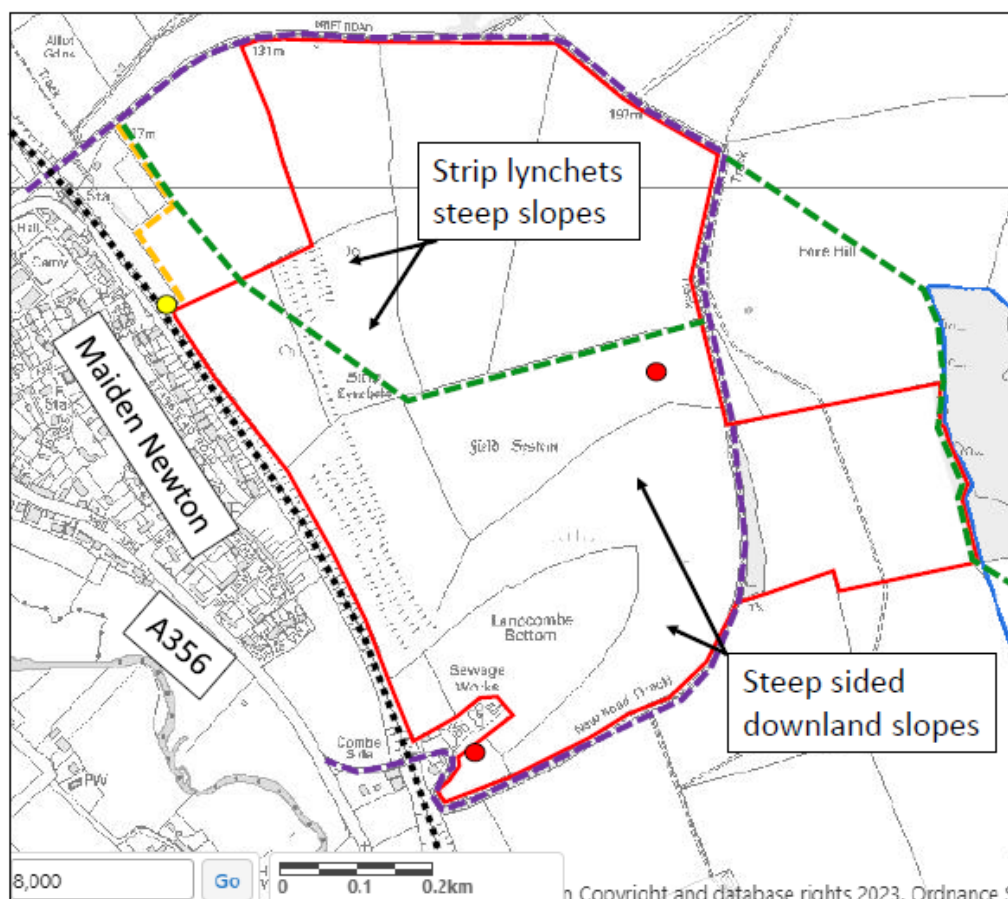
PONDS/STANDING WATER







At Southfield Down there is an area of standing water which is likely to be a historic 'dew pond'. This is located below the hay field and is only wet following wet weather and during the winter months. The area of standing water is not deep.

WASTE DUMP

A small area on Glebe Farm land is a historic waste dump, with material having been buried by a previous landowner. The area is approximately 5mx5m in size, location shown on the Glebe Farm hazard map below. Investigations are underway to ascertain if the waste is inert, and subsequent work may be required to clean up this area and remove waste, or fence the area off. To the south of the site there is also an area to the south of the sewage works where rubble and aggregate has been dumped, as well as some inert asbestos sheeting. This will be removed as soon as possible. Visitors are asked to steer clear of these areas.

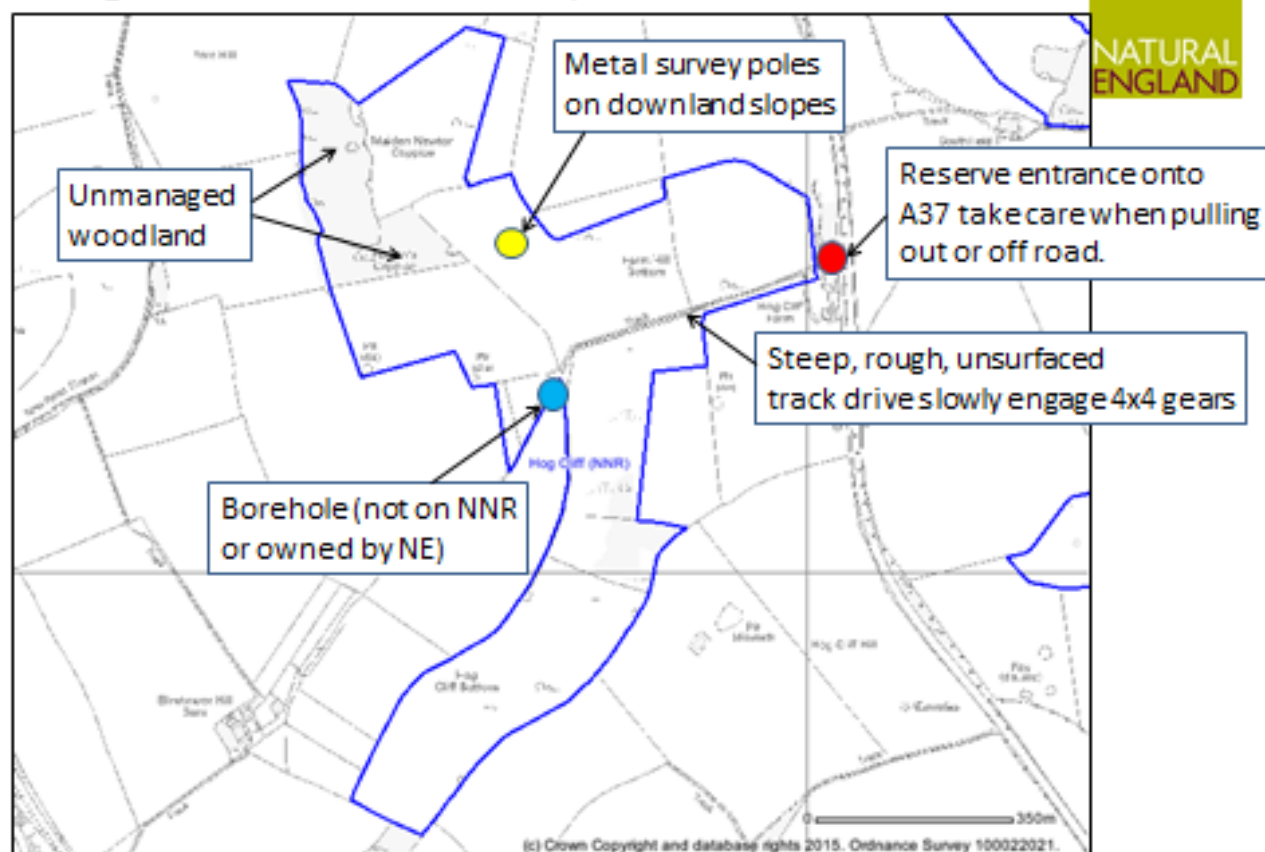
Glebe Farm Hazard and access map



-  Glebe Farm
-  Hog Cliff NNR
-  Footpath
-  Bridleway
-  NE right of access
-  Trainline
-  Waste dump
-  Pill box (not considered to be NE land)

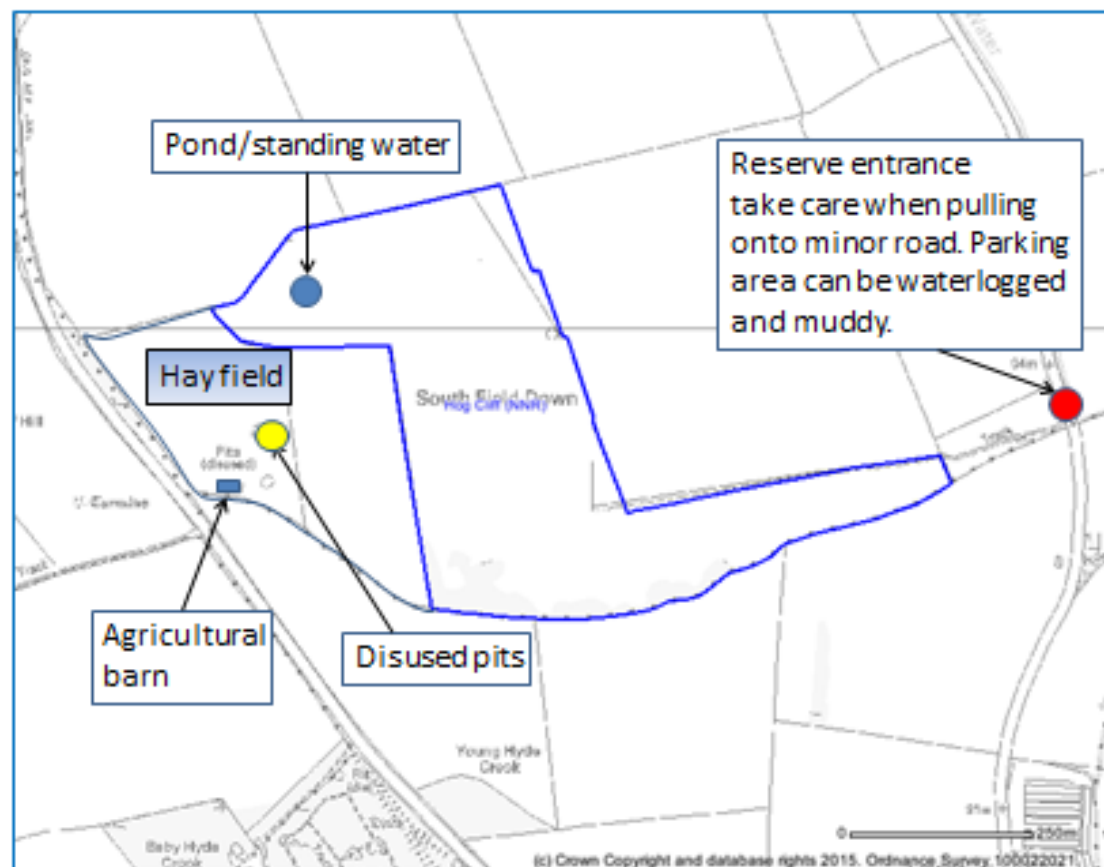
Hog Cliff Bottom – Hazard Map

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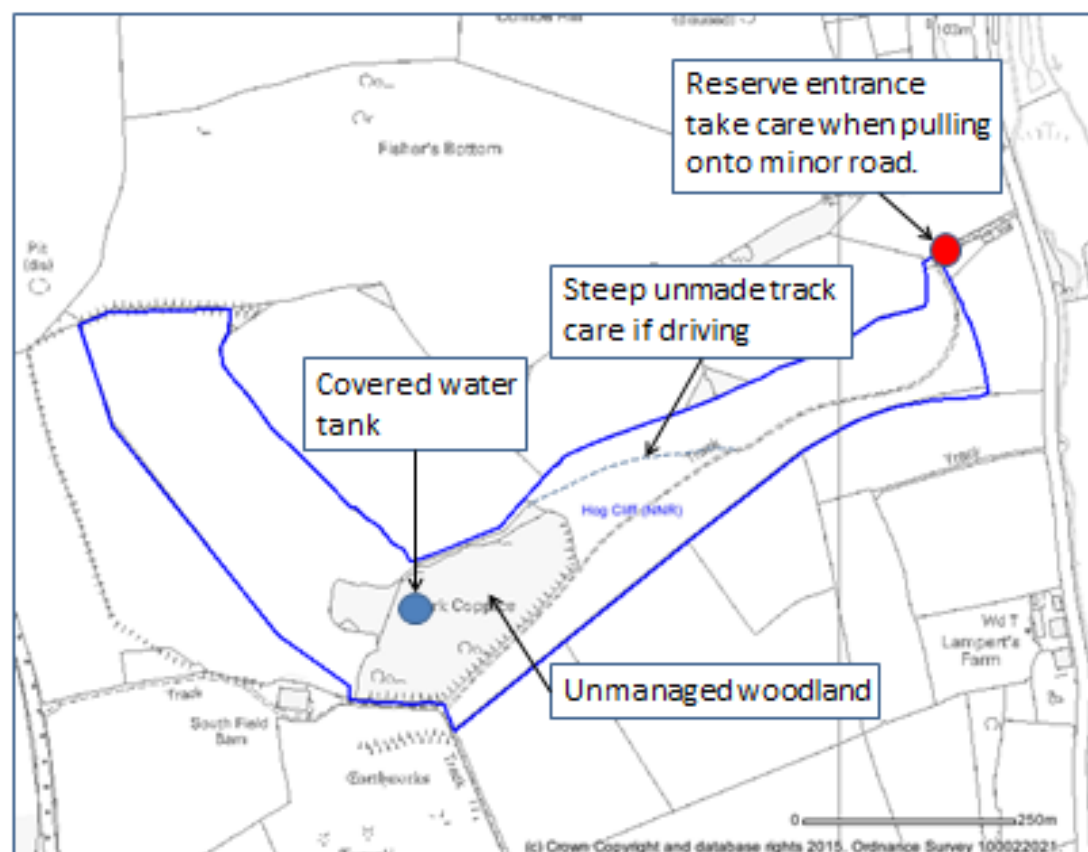
Southfield Down – Hazard Map

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Park Wood – Hazard Map

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