

Justification for HLS agreement

This agreement involves a very significant area of SSSI/SAC/SPA moorland including blanket bog, dry heath, upland fens and flushes and semi natural woodland.

Management has been tailored to bird species known to be present: GP, RO, CU, LW, SC, WE and species known to be in the area but for which there are no current breeding records - Merlin, SEO, Nightjar.

Recognition has been given to the need to improve Semi-natural woodland within the valley but this will be managed mainly by an NIA project to replace the coniferous woodland with scattered semi natural mixed oak woodland. Some woodland works have been included in this HLS - woodland edge softening at Lady Cannings. In general though, woodland areas have been excluded and will be managed under EWGS.

Opportunities will be taken to improve management for Lapwing/Curlew on some of the inbye fields. There is also scope to restore BAP grassland in some of these fields.

Burbage valley is significant in terms of its archaeology/historic interest. The HLS will fund a number of HAPs to further investigate this interest and inform moorland management and prevent inadvertent damage to features currently under heather cover. It will allow a detailed conservation plan on the Hill fort - Carl Wark and deliver on site interpretation for what is one of the most visited but poorly understood sites in the EPDM.

The HLS provides consent for a limited burning rotation (on dry heath only) which is considered necessary to help break up some of the more homogenous blocks of mature heath and create a wider range of opportunities for vegetation and birds.

It also consents controlled grazing and bracken management.

The HLS provides the mechanism for restoration of a section of dry, heather dominated blanket bog around a network of grips by means of a capital project overseen by the National Trust themselves. The work should provide some re-wetting and move the BB towards favourable condition.