

# Alderney Community Woodland 2019 Action Plan

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**Report Compiled by: Connor Stapleton Goddard**

**Reviewed by: Roland Gauvain and Lindsay Pyne**

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Alderney Wildlife Trust  
48 Victoria Street  
Alderney, GY9 3TA  
Channel Islands  
[conservation@alderneywildlife.org](mailto:conservation@alderneywildlife.org)  
[www.alderneywildlife.org](http://www.alderneywildlife.org)

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# 1. Introduction

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The history and natural history that can be found within the Alderney Community Woodland (ACW) is the result of many thousand years of human activity. The landscape around which the ACW has been formed holds remnants of pre-historic, Victorian and German (WWII) culture (Fig. 1).

The natural habitat present over much of the site prior to the ACW commencing was largely mixed scrub, common on Alderney. Areas of naturally developing regenerative woodland can be found immediately to the west and east of the area, making the site a natural location of a woodland restoration project such as the ACW. Through the ACW project, the Alderney Wildlife Trust (AWT) aims to develop large native woodland in the centre of the island, acting as a nexus between wildlife, cultural heritage and the local community.

This document has been created to outline the management actions needed for the present year, 2019, in line with the previous aims and objectives described in the Alderney Community Woodland Management Plan 2014-2018 (Gonzalez 2014), as approved by The General Services Committee in April 2014 and the ACW Management Plan 2019-2023 (Goddard 2019), currently undergoing public consultation.



Figure 1 The Alderney Community Woodland, displayed in green

## 2. Background

The Alderney Community Woodland Management Plan 2019-2023 (Goddard 2019) will be the primary management tool for the ACW, building on work from the previous Management Plan (Gonzalez 2014). The ACW is largest single Community Woodland project in the Channel Islands and an important island resource. The overall management of the Woodland is defined by three core aims:

1. **Wildlife.** To create a native broadleaved woodland of high ecological and landscape value, rich in wildlife and accessible to the Community.
2. **Amenity.** To develop the educational and recreational value of the ACW through the provision of facilities and opportunities that promotes a greater understanding and enjoyment of the natural and cultural wealth of Alderney.
3. **Resource.** To involve the island's Community in the ACW promoting woodland culture and recovering traditional skills, whilst at the same time, it is increased the socio-economic value of the woodland as a source of sustainable material for the future.

The ACW project itself began in 2009, and was then developed under the Alderney Community Woodland Development Plan 2011-2014 (Henney et al. 2011). Initial work mainly consisted of the planting of approx. 10,000 native broad-leaved trees (Fig. 2). Subsequent work included the establishment of the Greenwood and Children's Area, the creation of a Woodland Trail and the restoration and maintenance of the historical features and footpath network (Fig. 3).

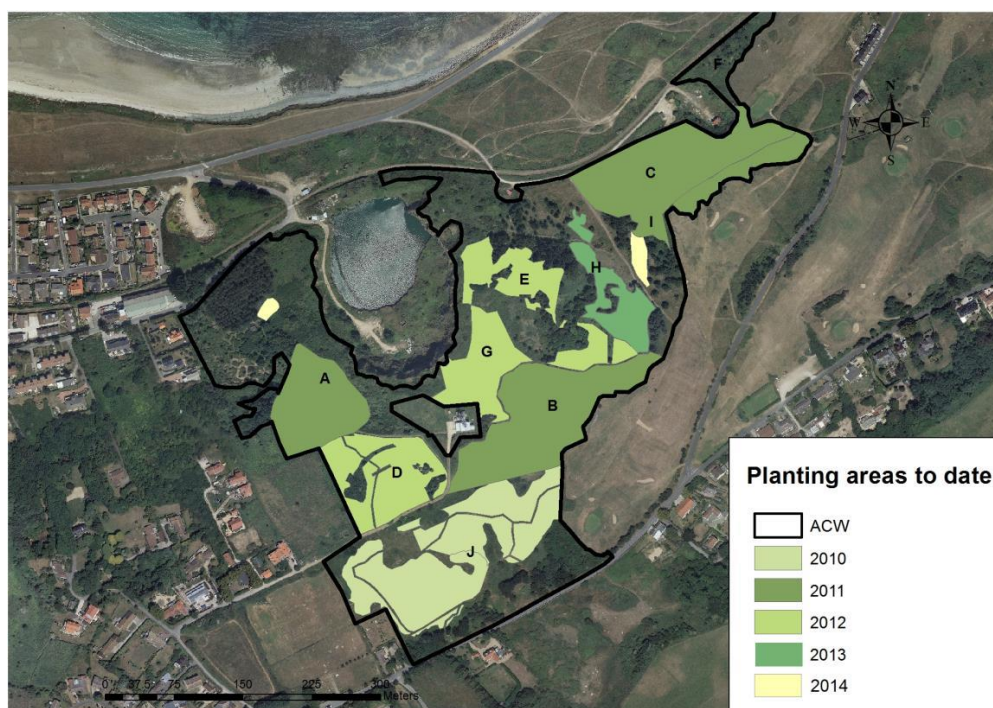


Figure 2 Areas of the ACW planted to date



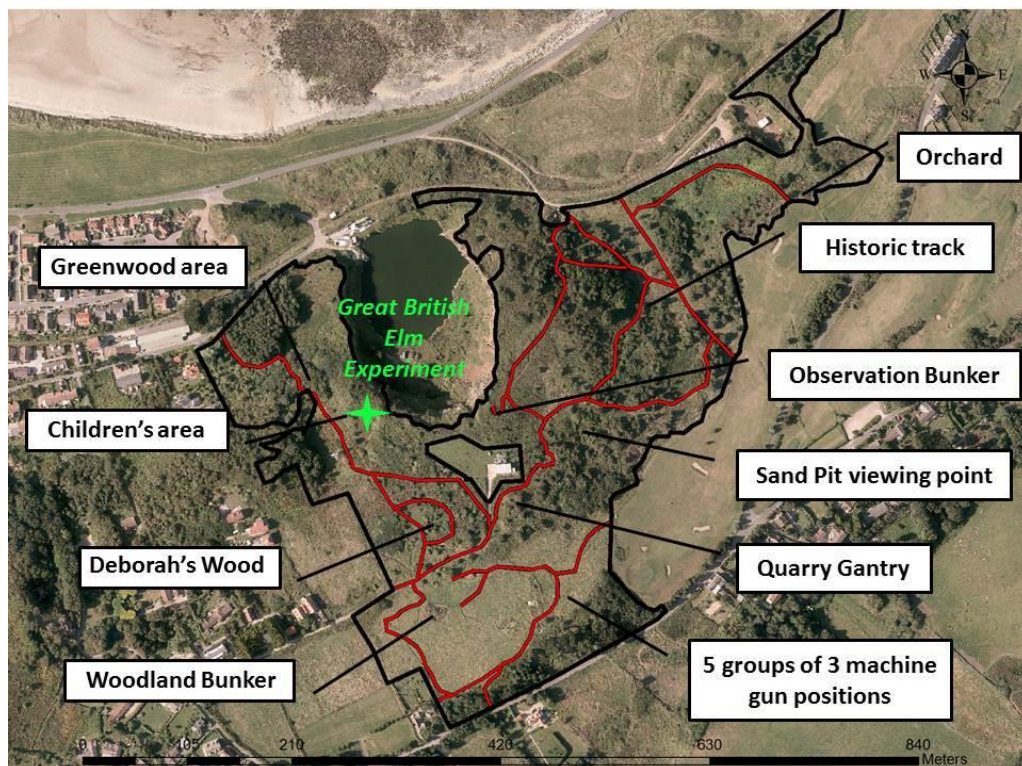


Figure 3 Notable features and footpaths within the ACW

## 3. Objectives

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The overall management of the ACW is guided by the following key objectives (Goddard 2019). This action plan will lay out a series of actions for 2019 to achieve the fulfilment of these objectives.

**Objective 1.1 Maintain the structural diversity of the site**

**Objective 1.2 Maintain and manage the spread of dense scrub**

**Objective 1.3 Develop and implement a grazing plan with the Alderney Grazing Animals Project herd**

**Objective 1.4 Continue aftercare and monitoring of planted trees**

**Objective 1.5 Collect ecological data about the site for measuring past successes and to inform future management**

**Objective 1.6 Enhance areas of native woodland**

**Objective 2.1 Undertake surveys of both residents and tourists to develop an understanding of the use of the site**

**Objective 2.2 Maintain and improve existing memorial features**

**Objective 2.3 Create provisioning for future memorial features**

**Objective 2.4 Maintain and improve historic features**

**Objective 2.5 Maintain footpaths and access to the site**

**Objective 2.6 Provide amenity and recreational facilities in the ACW**

**Objective 3.1 Develop and implement and Economic Harvesting Plan for the ACW**

**Objective 3.2 Using survey data, increase the success of outreach and community engagement**

**Objective 3.3 Maintain a safe environment in the ACW**

The achievement of these objectives will be reviewed at the end of 2019.

## 4. Work Programme

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Below are listed a series of management actions to be achieved in 2019. A Gantt chart detailing timings for each of these actions is listed Appendix 1; avoiding key sensitive times for wildlife.

### 4.1 Managing the glades

The glades are an important florally diverse habitat within the woodland and require constant management to prevent scrub encroachment. Historically the AWT has performed this via mechanical cutting late spring and summer.

Actions for 2019:

- Perform a cut of the glades in spring and later summer using either the topper or flail collector, effort should be taken to remove cuttings from the site to prevent soil enrichment
- Using the Alderney Grazing Animals Project (AGAP) herd, graze the glades at low intensity over winter.

### 4.2 Tree Aftercare

The insides of tree guards can quickly become swamped with grass and brambles; hindering the development of the sapling. Conversely many trees are now at a stage where the guards can be removed.

Actions for 2019:

- Regularly use Conservation Volunteers to clear grass from in and around tree guards and remove guards from well-established trees
- Assess the necessity of tree guards by monitoring the areas of saplings planted without guards during Arbor Day 2019.
- Remove turf from around the trees in the orchard in spring. The turfed areas should then be mulched with seaweed and closely monitored to assess the effect on trees

### 4.3 Managing areas of scrub

Dense scrub is an important habitat in its own right, as well as forming a natural barrier to hazards such as Battery Quarry. However, the spread of scrub needs to be controlled to prevent it swamping other growth and becoming dominant.

Actions for 2019:

- Maintain current areas of dense scrub
- Prevent the spread of scrub into grasslands and notable features using mechanical or manual methods where appropriate

#### **4.4 Controlling noxious/invasive species**

The woodland contains a number of invasive or injurious species that can present a risk to the development of planted areas and humans and animals.

##### **4.4.1 Bracken**

Bracken can spread rapidly through the rhizome and requires constant cutting to keep growth low. Bruising and crushing appears to be the most effective method of controlling the spread of bracken. Consequently, using the topper and hand lashers may be the most recommended control.

Actions for 2019:

- Cut back bracken as necessary as part of managing the scrub in spring, summer, and autumn; taking care to avoid sensitive times

##### **4.4.2 Brown-tail moth**

The larvae of the brown-tail moth can cause extremely adverse allergic reactions in people and animals. The hibernating structures of the larvae are very obvious and easy to remove.

Actions for 2019:

- Remove and incinerate brown-tail moth tents in early spring before the larvae emerge or autumn/winter at the beginning of hibernation. The tents should be removed wherever possible, particularly around footpaths

##### **4.4.3 Ragwort**

Ragwort (*Senecio jacobea*) is classed as a 'Mauvaise Herbe' and under Alderney law its control must be undertaken by the land manager. The plant can be extremely noxious to humans and animals if ingested. As part of its management of the site the AWT undertakes control of ragwort to maintain the amenity use of the site for dog walkers and horse riders particularly.

Actions for 2019:

- Hand-pull ragwort during the flowering season (May-July), particularly before seed set, and remove from site. Pulled shoots can be composted under tarpaulins to prevent spread or preferably incinerated.

#### **4.5 Collecting ecological data**

Collecting ecological data can be extremely beneficial in informing more targeted conservation actions in the future. Working with the terrestrial ecologist surveys on several key species will be undertaken in 2019. Details of the established transects and survey points are detailed in Appendix 2.

#### **4.5.1 Bats**

National Bat Monitoring Program (NBMP) surveys have been conducted in the woodland previously and should be continued along the existing routes

Actions for 2019:

- Conduct regular bat surveys along the established route following guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust literature (Appendix 3)

#### **4.5.2 Bees**

The BeeWalk survey was introduced in 2017 following the established UK Butterfly Monitoring Survey Transects (Appendix 2). However only 1 of the 5 transects was completed in 2018 on the Blaye-Vau de Saou area.

Actions for 2019:

- Complete the BeeWalk in the ACW as part of the island wide effort using volunteers and in conjunction with the Terrestrial Ecologist
- Follow standardised procedures as set out by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust; performing transects once a month on sunny a sunny day through the summer, counting and identifying bumblebees noted on the transect.

#### **4.5.3 Butterflies**

Staff and volunteers have previously undertaken regular butterfly surveys along the transects set out in the ACW

Actions for 2019:

- Perform UKBMS transects as often as possible; following the guidance in Appendix 4

#### **4.5.4 Owls**

There is a continued owl survey effort throughout the island with several survey points within the ACW. Long-eared owls have historically been recorded and a monitoring effort should be maintained to assess the owl diversity in Alderney.

Actions for 2019:

- Perform surveys for long-eared owls in February and March using playback at the established sites
- Liaise with the Terrestrial Ecologist to further develop the owl surveys

#### **4.5.5 Ash dieback**

Ash dieback was noted on the island in 2018, possibly coming with imported trees. If the ACW has a serious infection, then future management may consider replanting large areas of ash with other species.

Actions for 2019:

- Survey ash trees during the summer; noting for signs of ash die back such as withering leaves and lesions



- Begin to estimate the levels of infection and mortality and create possible plans for any necessary mitigation actions

#### **4.5.6 Floral**

The glades previously showed particularly high floral diversity. Collecting baseline data about these areas can inform future management actions as suggested in the Management Plans (Goddard 2019). This data can also be used to chart the effectiveness of these changes over time

Actions for 2019:

- Perform a floral survey of species diversity and abundance before introducing the AGAP herd into the glades
- Survey the glades post grazing, if possible. Noting the sward height, level of soil disturbance and any remaining dominant species

#### **4.6 Enhancing native woodland**

Most of the large scale planting for the ACW was completed by 2013 (Fig. 2) and today most of the work aimed at enhancing these areas and extending further small-scale planting in areas cleared of non-native species.

Actions for 2019:

- During Arbor Day replant in the areas opened up by felled pine trees. Some of these trees will be planted without plastic tree guards to assess their necessity to establishing saplings
- Coppice 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the sycamores in the 'Greenwood Area' to begin a coppice rotation.
- The AWT has planning permission to remove 5 non-native pines from the area off Newton Road. These trees should be carefully selected to maintain the aesthetic and sheltering value of this area. The trees will be removed in winter 2019 and the value of the timber assessed as part of the Economic Harvesting Plan (Action 4.7).

#### **4.7 Developing an Economic Harvesting Plan**

One of the founding principles of the ACW was to create a woodland of high socio-economic value. The economic potential has thus far been underdeveloped.

Actions for 2019:

- Develop an Economic Harvesting Plan for the woodland
- Develop a range of products from current features of the wood such as jams from the orchard and benches from non-native conifers
- Develop new products from other under developed features in the woodland. For example liaising with local bee keepers to keep bees along the edges of the glades

#### **4.8 Maintaining important features**

Maintaining the access and notable features of the ACW is an important part of managing the woodland as a community resource.

#### **4.8.1 Footpaths**

Footpaths can become overgrown with grass and scrub if not constantly managed throughout the year. Steps are also prone to erosion and slumping without remedial works

Actions for 2019:

- Perform a full footpath cut in early spring, late summer, and autumn, avoiding sensitive breeding times
- Reactive maintenance should be undertaken in the spring/summer using the powerscythe and effort should be made to avoid disturbing breeding animals
- Repair steps as necessary

#### **4.8.2 Amenity Features**

Figure 3 depicts some of the amenity features present in the ACW. Maintaining features such as the Woodland Bunker and Children's Area is an important responsibility undertaken by the AWT to keep these areas safe and available for the public.

Actions for 2019:

- Maintain and update signage where necessary
- Maintain the infrastructure of sites such as the Woodland Bunker and Children's area, eg. rooves and fences
- Action 4.8.1 applies here

#### **4.8.3 Historic Features**

The historic features of the woodland, such as the Kommandant's Bunker and Quarry Gantry are important parts of the ACW and a reason why many people visit.

Actions for 2019:

- Clear out bunkers and fortifications of vegetation and litter on a reactive basis
- Action 4.3 applies here

#### **4.8.4 Memorial Features**

Memorial features are not only important for their intrinsic value but also as a means of building and maintaining good community relationships.

Actions:

- Clear around memorial features like benches where necessary
- Actions 4.2 also apply to the memorial hazel copses

#### **4.9 Community engagement**

An important aspect of the ACW is engaging the local community in the project. The AWT hosts regular events throughout the year; namely Arbor Day and Woodland Week, to involve local people in the management of the woodland.

Actions for 2019:

- Continue with the established engagement events

- Undertake a survey of locals and tourists in the summer to assess their use of the site and areas where community outreach and publicity for events can be improved

## 5. References

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Goddard, C. S. (2019). *Alderney Community Woodland Management Plan 2019-2023*. Alderney Wildlife Trust. (Unpublished)

Gonzalez, C. (2014). *Alderney Community Woodland Management Plan 2014-2018*. Alderney Wildlife Trust

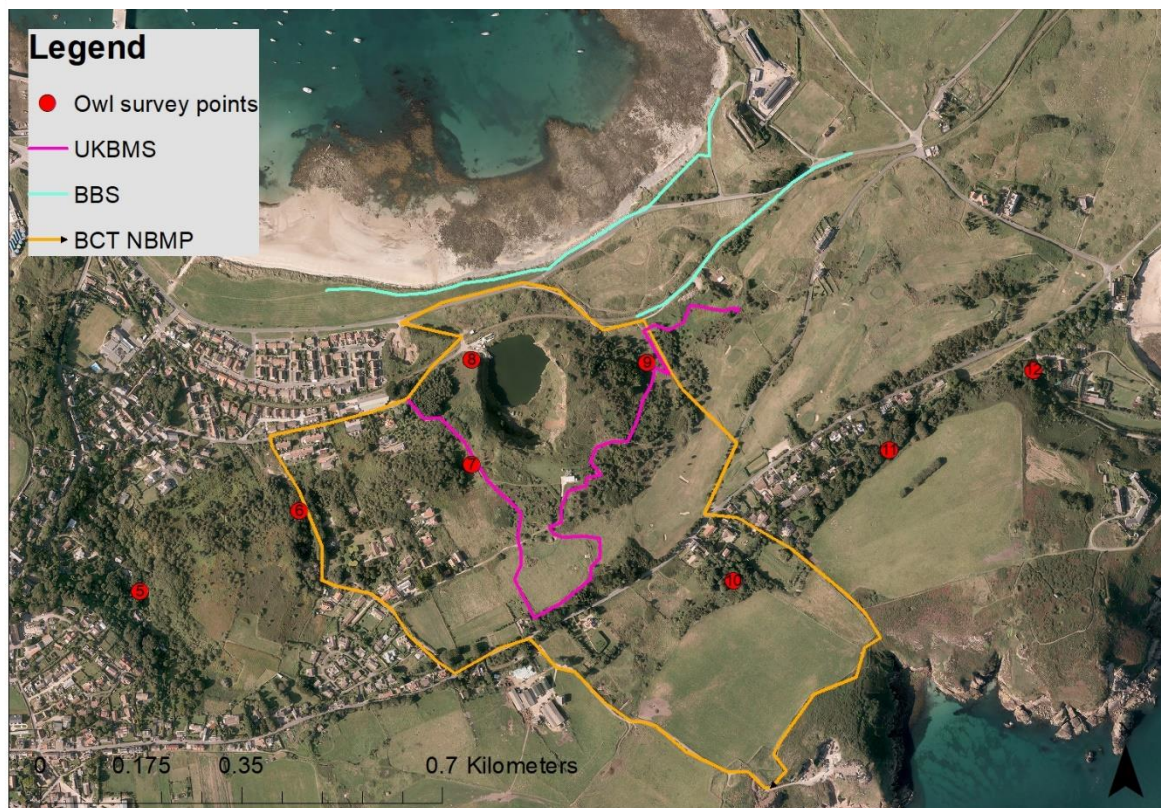
Henney, J.M., Gauvain, R. and Pyne, L. (2011). *Alderney Community Woodland Development Plan 2011-2014*, Alderney Wildlife Trust.

## 6. Appendix

**Appendix 1 Timing of conservation actions in the ACW**

Action	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Management</b>										Cut/AGAP Grazing		
<b>Tree Aftercare</b>												
<b>Scrub Management</b>												
<b>Noxious Species Control</b>	Brown-tail moth				Ragwort					Brown-tail moth		
<b>Ecological Surveys</b>												
<b>Enhancing Native Woodland</b>		Arbor Day								Conifer thinning/coppicing		
<b>Footpath Maintenance</b>			Breeding season: avoid tractor use									
<b>Maintaining Important Features</b>				Reactive maintenance								
<b>Community Engagement</b>				Survey effort								

## Appendix 2 Established survey transects in and around the ACW for the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and National Bat Monitoring Program surveys



## Appendix 3 Bat Conservation Trust guidelines in how to participate in the National Bat Monitoring Program

### Field Survey card (noctule, serotine, pipistrelle)

#### Planning your survey

- Survey dates: 1st to 15th July; 16th to 30th July
- Materials: route map, spot descriptions, survey form/notebook
- Ensure that you have read the health & safety checklist, walked your route during daylight & secured permission from relevant landowners
- Be in position to start the survey approximately 20 minutes after sunset at ..... pm (see sunset timetable & pencil in the start time here)

#### Starting your survey

- Just prior to starting, record the following details:  
Temperature  
Weather conditions (cloud, wind, rain)  
Date  
Start time
- Don't forget to record the make of bat detector that you have used & your experience/skill level on the survey form

For convenience you can refer to this card instead of your instruction booklet.

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## Methodology

- Begin the first walk with your detector tuned to 25kHz.
- Listen for noctules/serotines only. Pause to check identification if necessary & then resume.
- If it is unclear whether a bat is a noctule or serotine, record as 'unsure'. Record results as Walk 1.

Ignore ALL other species.

- At first spot, re-tune detector to 50kHz and record pipistrelle activity - common (45kHz) & soprano (55kHz) - for two minutes.

- If you cannot identify the species of pipistrelle, record as 'unsure' under Spot 1.

Ignore ALL other species.

- At the end of two minutes, re-tune your detector to 25kHz and commence Walk 2. Repeat the method until you have completed your route.

- After completing Spot 12, stop the survey and record your finishing time.

- Note any changes that you have made to the route.

- If abandoning the survey at any time, record the point at which you stopped & the reason for stopping.

## Appendix 4 Guidance on how and when to carry out UK Butterfly Monitoring Survey transects

### WHEN TO MAKE TRANSECT COUNTS

**Time of year:** A full season's transect counts take place once a week for 26 weeks from the beginning of April to the end of September. Week 'one' runs from 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> April, week 'two' 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> April and so on, until week 'twenty-six' which runs

from 23<sup>rd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> September. You can record earlier than 1<sup>st</sup> April (25<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> March is week 0, 18<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> March is Week -1 etc.)

or after September (30<sup>th</sup> Sept- 6<sup>th</sup> Oct is Week 27, and so on). If the weather conditions are suitable, you should record

even if there are not likely to be any butterflies present (e.g. early/late in the season) – a negative result is still a result.

**How many weeks:** As many weeks should be walked as possible, as gaps reduce the quality of the data and too many

can render it virtually useless. The more gaps the less species-indices can be calculated. Where it has been decided that

a transect is aimed a single, usually rare, species (or sometimes for two or three species) then weeks should be walked

that cover the flight period(s), with zero counts at either end.

**Time of week:** You can record on any day of the week, but should aim to walk the transect on the first opportunity that

the weather is suitable (some weeks you may not get a second chance!). You only need to record more than once a week

if the weather on your first walk did not meet the criteria.

**Time of day:** Transect counts should ideally be made between 10:45 and 15:45 hours, though between 10:00 and 17:00

hours is usually allowable, though butterfly activity may drop off rapidly during the late afternoon so later times should be avoided.

**Weather conditions:** Transect walks should only be carried out in warm and at least bright weather, with no more than

moderate winds and not when it is raining. The minimum criteria are either 13-17°C with at least 60% sunshine, or if there

is no sunshine the temperature must be 17°C or above. Windspeed (Beaufort scale) should be no more than 5 unless the

transect route is sheltered from the wind. Do not record if the temperature is below 13°C except in northern upland areas

where, if butterflies are active, they may be recorded in temperatures down to 11°C. Check that conditions are suitable before you start the transect, and that if the temperature is less than 17°C there is likely to be sufficient sun.

**Recording butterflies:** walk at a slow, steady pace counting all butterflies seen within a fixed distance – the recommended distance is 2.5m either side of the transect line and 5m ahead. In some habitats e.g. along sea cliffs or woodland rides, it is acceptable to record at a width of 5m along one side only of the transect line. A wider area is recorded on part or all of some transects (e.g. 10m instead of 5). Always stick to the limits established when the transect was set up. Try to avoid double counting where possible e.g. when an individual butterfly repeatedly flies in and out of your recording zone. However, if you lose sight of an individual, and later regain sight of the same species do not assume this is the same individual. Do not count butterflies behind you. Try to identify and separate all species you encounter, including where possible 'difficult' species such as Small and Essex Skipper, whites and the fritillaries. If similar species such as Small White and Green-veined White are flying together at a site you may want to net a sample (a small clear plastic pot can be very useful to temporarily confine the butterfly so it can be examined more easily – hold pot in the shade), to determine the proportion of each species present -