

Cotswold Water Park confirmed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest

- Lakes created through gravel extraction have been a boon for birds, plants, and recreation
- Natural England's move to extend the SSSI designation to cover more than 170 lakes is now complete
- Park is a notable example of nature thriving alongside recreation and business
- Natural England will work with stakeholders to ensure these activities can all continue

Natural England has today confirmed Cotswold Water Park as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its rich array of waterbirds and aquatic plants.

The decision was taken by Natural England's Board at a public meeting and marks the last step in the designation process after the site was notified as a SSSI in January. Notification was followed by a 5-month consultation period to allow any interested party to make representations to Natural England.

A number of objections and representations of support were received by Natural England, all of which were considered by the Board.

Cotswold Water Park SSSI encompasses more than 170 lakes created by mining for the gravel industry which are now popular spots for leisure activities such as water-skiing, sailing, canoeing and swimming. Spread across 20 square miles on the Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire borders, the lakes have become home to around 35,000 waterbirds over the winter, including rarer species such as great crested grebe, little egret and little ringed plover.

Following the Board's decision, Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, said:

The manner in which wildlife has seized the opportunity presented by these man-made lakes shows that nature recovery really is within our grasp. Working with partners at this landscape scale is the key to establishing a Nature Recovery Network.

I recognise that whilst many have welcomed the designation some people have strong concerns about our decision, which reflects the complexity, scale and importance of this site. I would like to assure everyone that Natural England is committed to continuing to work with them. This is a working landscape, and indeed it is gravel extraction which is the principal reason for the creation of the interest here. We wish to see this, and all current uses of the water park – wildlife, access, recreation, mining, farming and military – continue and will put in place an agreed framework to enable this to happen.

This designation will enable the various interests of the Cotswold Water Park to be developed in a more strategic way. It gives nature a seat at the table, alongside other factors, when big decisions about land use change are made. This is about making sure that space for nature is at the heart of the site's future.

The Board met in public on 15 September 2021 to consider the notification and heard a number of representations. It adjourned the meeting for 2 weeks so that it could consider the matter in more detail. When the meeting was resumed the Board decided to confirm the SSSI designation with some minor modifications to boundaries to remove areas not meeting the high scientific threshold.

Today's decision is the culmination of 7 years of work by Natural England staff to assess the evidence for SSSI status and work with local people who have an interest in the site, including businesses, landowners and the Ministry of Defence, which operates two international air bases nearby. Natural England is committed to maintaining these important relationships and meeting the future needs of stakeholders, including a framework so that bird hazard management which is essential to air safety can continue to take place in a setting that is also of high value for nature on a landscape scale.

The first Cotswold Water Park SSSI was designated in 1994, covering just 10 lakes. Since then the area has attracted growing numbers of birds, leading to the recent expansion of the SSSI which now covers just under 2,000 hectares and is the UK's largest marl (lime-rich) lake system.

The lakes – a series of shallow and deep open waters – are also supported by a range of other habitats including sparsely-vegetated islands, gravel bars and shorelines, reedbed, marsh, wet ditches, rush pasture, semi-natural and improved grasslands and woodland. This provides valuable nesting, resting and feeding conditions for nationally important populations of birds in the breeding and non-breeding seasons.

Breeding birds in the park include scarce species such as nightingale, alongside large numbers of ducks of several species, mute swans, greylag geese, coot and herons. The scrub and reedbed are full of breeding warblers including reed, sedge and Cetti's warblers, blackcaps and willow warblers. Important aquatic plants are also found there including starry stonewort, lesser bearded stonewort and pointed stonewort.

Notes to editors

The SSSI designation means the park and its wildlife have legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, so that Natural England must be consulted on any new proposals that could significantly affect the wildlife interest.

As the Government's conservation adviser, Natural England has a duty to notify SSSIs when it considers that an area of land is of special interest for its flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features. Selection of

SSSIs is carried out in accordance with published guidelines and once notified, the special interest features of a SSSI are given protection against operations that are likely to damage them.

Natural England received 54 objections to the SSSI notification and a further 16 representations, 13 of which expressed support for the SSSI.

Cotswold Water Park (CWP) is a 40 square mile complex of lakes formed by gravel workings along the upper River Thames on the borders of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire. There are 2 principal blocks of lakes: a larger one in the west centred on Ashton Keynes and a smaller eastern one centred on Fairford, with stepping-stones formed by recent workings in between.

Just 10 lakes covering 135 hectares within CWP were designated as being of Special Scientific Interest for their aquatic plants back in 1994. The park has since become of national importance for its bird and plant populations. The new designation covers 1,919 hectares and more than 170 lakes, protecting the large populations of breeding and wintering birds that live there, as well as the aquatic plants.

As wildlife declines across the country, areas such as CWP are increasingly important to ensure sustainable populations can thrive.

Recreational activities are abundant across the park, including swimming, sailing, angling, water-skiing, paddle-boarding, and windsurfing.

Working Tax Credit customers must report changes to working hours

During the pandemic, Working Tax Credit customers have not needed to tell HMRC about temporary short-term reductions in their working hours as a result of coronavirus – for example if they were working fewer hours or were furloughed. It is one of several measures HMRC introduced to help those facing uncertainty around their hours.

If a Working Tax Credit customer's hours temporarily fell because of coronavirus, they have been treated as if they were working their normal hours.

Customers do not need to tell HMRC if they re-establish their normal working hours before 25 November 2021, but from then, they must do within the usual one-month window if they are not back to working their normal hours shown in their Working Tax Credit claim.

[Myrtle Lloyd](#), HMRC's Director General for Customer Services, said:

We introduced this measure last year to help support working families. It is vital that Working Tax Credit claimants who have benefitted from it update HMRC with their working hours if they have reduced, and they won't return to their normal level before 25 November.

Anyone who is no longer eligible for Working Tax Credit due to a change in their circumstances may be able to apply for other UK Government support, including Universal Credit.

Customers should continue to tell HMRC about any permanent changes to their circumstances within one month – for example if they are made redundant, lose their job or their hours change permanently during this time.

This will ensure only those who are entitled to tax credits receive them, otherwise those ineligible or due a lower rate of payment will have to pay them back later.

Any changes can be [easily reported online on GOV.UK](#), where customers can also [check their current Working Tax Credit claim details](#).

If customers receive tax credits they are not entitled to as a result of a change they will need to [repay this money](#) and may also have to pay a penalty if they do not let us know within one month.

HMRC is also reminding claimants that Post Office card accounts are closing. From 30 November 2021 HMRC will stop making payments of Child Benefit, Guardians Allowance and tax credits into Post Office card accounts.

Child Benefit and tax credits customers who use Post Office card accounts to receive their payments will need to notify HMRC of their new bank, building society or credit union account details. HMRC is encouraging customers to act now so they do not miss any payments once their Post Office account closes. They can contact HMRC's helplines (0345 300 3900 for tax credits or 0300 200 3100 for Child Benefit) or use their Personal Tax Account.

Find more information on [Working Tax Credit](#).

Customers can get further help and information about their tax credits:

- using our webchat service, by going to GOV.UK and searching 'tax credits general enquiries'
- by tweeting [@HMRCcustomers](#) or posting on [our Facebook page](#) with general queries
- by calling the tax credits helpline: 0345 300 3900

Tax credits is being replaced by [Universal Credit](#). Customers cannot receive tax credits and Universal Credit at the same time.

Tax credit and Child Benefit customers, who use a [Post Office card account](#) to

receive their payments, must notify HMRC of their new bank account details before 30 November 2021. If they miss the deadline their payments will be suspended until a valid bank account is provided.

To find out how to open a bank account, visit [Citizens Advice](#).

HMRC's scams advice

Stop:

- take a moment to think before parting with your money or information
- don't give out private information or reply to text messages, and don't download attachments or click on links in texts or emails you weren't expecting
- do not trust caller ID on phones – numbers can be spoofed

Challenge:

Protect:

People can also follow the National Cyber Security Centre's 6 essential steps to keep themselves and their businesses secure online by visiting [CyberAware.gov.uk](#).

Follow HMRC's Press Office on Twitter [@HMRCpressoffice](#).

[Join our Force with a Difference](#)

As the MDP approaches its 50th Anniversary on 1 October, a new generation of officers are invited to apply and start a unique career in policing, training to be Authorised Firearms Officers right from the very beginning.

With lots of opportunities to develop your career in a specialist policing role at sites of national importance across the UK, the MDP really is a 'force with a difference'. We offer a different route into policing which is focused on protection, working in unique environments alongside and together with a variety of partners.

Visit our [new recruitment website](#) to find out more on who we are and what we do. You'll find information on:

We value difference in our force with a difference

We know that a diverse workforce is essential to a strong future for the MDP, and we're keen to encourage applications from candidates who may have never considered a career in armed policing before.

To join the MDP you do not need any previous experience in policing or

firearms. We're more interested in personal qualities, and we welcome people from a range of backgrounds and experiences, with some new recruits that join us having recently left education and others changing their career later in life.

Representation within our workforce of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, women, and LGBT+ people is currently lower than we would like it to be. This is something that we want to change for the benefit of the communities we serve, and for the growth of our organisation.

Our people are our greatest asset and we're committed to supporting everyone in an inclusive environment where people can bring their true selves to work, with a culture that respects, values and celebrates all our differences.

We want everyone who works with us to feel proud to be themselves. Different ways of thinking and different life experiences, be those in relation to age, personality, cultural background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, education or faith (to name but a few), are important to enable us to develop and enrich our work – both in policing and in nurturing talent in our MDP family, so that everyone can be the best they can be.

Staff networks play an important part in supporting an inclusive culture in the MDP. Our Gender, REACH (Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage), LGBT+ and Disability and Wellbeing networks work closely with our Diversity and Inclusion team, to support staff and make sure that their voices are heard. This work includes providing advice and support throughout the recruitment process for those underrepresented in our organisation.

To find out more: visit our [Diversity and inclusion page](#) or email MDP-PositiveActionGMB@mod.gov.uk.

Interested in joining us? Visit www.mod.police.uk and [Apply Now](#).

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[Global offshore wind](#)

I am delighted to join you here today at Global Offshore Wind to deliver my first live speech since taking up my exciting new role as Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change Minister.

Having been recently Trade Minister, it's appropriate that we're meeting here on the Royal Victoria Dock – a symbol of our rich trading history, exporting goods across the world. The UK has long been a seafaring nation, creating prosperity through our ability to navigate the high seas.

Fast forward to the 21st century and we are, once again, using our maritime expertise, to create economic growth, while providing clean power for our homes, and boosting coastal communities.

We are now only 32 days away from the start of COP26, where we will look to accelerate global action, to tackle the climate crisis.

It's no exaggeration to say offshore wind will be a linchpin in our efforts to reach net zero.

Last year, the Prime Minister set out his ambitious 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. It's no coincidence that Offshore Wind took prime position in his vision.

Whilst I may be new to this position, as Minister for Energy and Climate Change, I am not new to offshore wind. I have long been an ardent enthusiast in government and beyond.

As Chief Secretary to the Treasury in 2015, we moved the parameters of pending, and the CfD process, decisively, in favour of offshore wind.

And as Trade Minister since 2016, I have always pushed the sectors export capability, whether in Taiwan, Korea, or Vietnam, and attracting foreign direct investment.

And I am personally thrilled to see that our country has the world's largest installed offshore wind capacity.

And not content with being world number 1, we are projecting a quadrupling of that capacity within just 10 years.

I want to highlight a few of these areas where we have been working together to push forward deployment.

This morning we published the Joint Government and Sector Task Force's 'Strategy and Implementation Plan', outlining the first interim solutions for the mitigation of interference with military radar.

This will inform projects bidding into this year's Contracts for Difference round, providing confidence on how deployment can co-exist, with military radar.

Our next generation radar innovation competition has been a huge success, and is ready to move to phase 2.

The standard of applications to this phase was so high, that we are increasing the funding available, awarding £3.8 million to 7 projects this month. When this phase completes in early 2023, BEIS will have invested £5.9 million in developing next-generation radar technologies.

Acceleration of offshore wind deployment needs to be environmentally sustainable, and my department is working with DEFRA, The Crown Estate and the Offshore Wind Industry Council, to gain a greater understanding of the

impacts of deployment, and find strategic solutions to manage and mitigate them. And I know my colleague Rebecca Pow will be speaking later, about the work we have been doing together, to ensure that deployment is sustainable and protects the marine environment.

We are cooperating right across Whitehall to focus on delivery – I am looking forward to working through the new Ministerial Delivery Group, to determine how we can address the tensions between our decarbonisation, economic and environmental protection ambitions, and develop a truly strategic vision, of how to prioritise activities within the sea-space.

This sits alongside the work being done by government on reform of the National Planning Policy Statements, and Project Accelerate.

To enable this large increase in offshore wind, we need the right infrastructure ready, and in place. And we need to ensure that local economies and communities benefit from offshore wind, while mitigating any disruption.

The Offshore Transmission Network Review is looking at how we can reach our wind targets, while reducing the environmental and local costs associated with offshore wind infrastructure.

In the near term, we are working with a number of developers through our Early Opportunities workstream on potential Pathfinder projects, delivering early coordination. And we are keen to see high ambition and strong cooperation between developers to maximise benefits.

For the longer term, we are moving towards a more strategic approach and yesterday, we published a consultation on high-level approaches to an Enduring Regime, and will use the responses to develop detailed policy proposals. I'm looking forward to discussing this with many of you.

Ensuring that we make the most of the broader economic benefits from offshore wind deployment, as part of our Green Industrial Revolution, is a critical part of our strategy.

In March we announced £95 million of government investment for two major offshore wind ports, the Able Marine Energy Park on Humberside and the Teesworks Offshore Manufacturing Centre on Teesside.

We are also investing in manufacturing – building or extending facilities which will create thousands of jobs in the UK. I was delighted to visit Hartlepool, yesterday, no coincidence that my first ministerial visit was to see offshore wind, to announce JDR Cables investment in a new state-of-the-art high-voltage subsea cable facility to be built in Blyth, referred to by Dan. This is the 6th manufacturing facility that we have provided grant funding to, just this year. Alongside the 2 dedicated offshore wind ports we have supported, that represents £1.5 billion of investment securing and creating up to 3,600 jobs with:

- Siemens Gamesa
- GRI Renewable Industries

- Seah Wind
- Smulders Projects UK Ltd at Wallsend
- GE Renewables

We are absolutely committed to backing the development of the sector across the whole of the UK, and the supply chain, for both fixed bottom, and floating, offshore wind. And they highlight our status as an attractive destination for inward investment, and a leading hub for the offshore wind supply chain.

Floating wind will become increasingly important to help us meet both Carbon Budget 6 and net zero.

I am excited to see how many new floating wind projects will be brought forward by Crown Estate Scotland's 'ScotWind' leasing process and The Crown Estate's planned leasing round, in the Celtic Sea.

Building a strong UK-based floating infrastructure and supply chain will allow us to deploy here and to capitalise on a growing export market. Our 1GW by 2030 target for floating wind is a steppingstone to a much greater scale deployment in the 2030s.

That's why we have proposed a minimum of £24 million in the next Contract for Difference auction for floating wind.

We are also supporting innovation projects up to a total cost of £20 million over 4 years, delivering cost reduction and innovative floating wind demonstration projects. We will announce winners in the coming weeks.

I am also pleased to announce that BEIS has joined the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult's Floating Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence, which I was also able to visit yesterday. BEIS is providing the Centre with £2 million over 4 years to further accelerate innovation in the UK's floating wind sector.

I am so impressed with how far the offshore wind sector has come in just a short time.

As we drive forward to 2030, Carbon Budget 6 and net zero, there are even greater opportunities. We're working to ensure the UK can continue to lead the way in delivering offshore wind. I am excited about this, and I know you will be too. Thank you.

[UN Human Rights Council 48: UK](#)

statement on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests

World news story

The UK delivered this statement during the panel discussion on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests.



UK Government

Thank you, Madam President.

The United Kingdom welcomes today's discussion.

Peaceful protests play a positive role in the development of open societies, contributing to the effectiveness of democratic systems and processes. They are an important form of exercising the rights to freedoms of peaceful assembly, expression and association.

The UK Government is concerned about the repression of peaceful protests around the world in recent months, including the unlawful use of force by law enforcement officials, and the criminalisation of those who have organised, taken part, or reported on peaceful protests. While the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights allows for restrictions of freedom of

peaceful assembly and of movement in order to protect public health, these must be targeted, time-limited, and subject to regular review to ensure they remain necessary.

The UK considers a free, open, peaceful and secure internet as a fundamental tool for promoting human rights. We share the Council's concern about the use of internet shutdowns and measures to limit the ability to organise, facilitate and conduct assemblies, and to prevent individuals from accessing or sharing information during key political moments.

The UK works closely with our international partners to promote the freedom of peaceful assembly, including the ability to protest peacefully.

Madam President,

We would welcome the panel's views on what steps we as States must take to ensure this right is protected.

Thank you.

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