

Swanscombe Peninsula gets national recognition as an SSSI

A valuable green space in the shadow of the M25, abundant in wildlife and with huge benefits for people, has today been designated a SSSI in recognition of its national importance for rare wildlife.

The 250 hectare site, alongside the Thames Estuary, forms a corridor of habitats connecting Ebbsfleet Valley with the southern shore of the River Thames between Dartford and Gravesend.

The site has an incredible assortment of grassland, scrub, wetlands, grazing marsh and saltmarsh habitat in a relatively small area, providing ideal conditions for a unique variety of wildlife.

The area is home to over 1,700 invertebrate species, which includes over a quarter of the UK's water beetle species and more than 200 species that are considered of conservation importance. It is one of just two places in the UK where the critically endangered distinguished jumping spider is found.

The rich and varied habitats on the peninsula also provide great conditions for breeding birds such as marsh harrier and bearded tit, and for nationally scarce plants threatened with extinction in Great Britain, such as the divided sedge and the slender hare's ear.

Divided sedge – picture: John Martin

Positioned close to major towns and with a large population living close by, Swanscombe Peninsula has enormous value as a green space and refuge for people as well as wildlife. The England Coast Path, once opened, will run around the northern boundary of the site, and with existing rights of ways, provide people with important places to enjoy nature.

James Seymour, Sussex and Kent Area Manager, Natural England, said:

The designation of Swanscombe Peninsula as an SSSI is great news for one of the richest known sites in England for invertebrates, ensuring essential refuge for many rare and threatened species that sadly are not able to thrive in the wider landscape.

Right on the doorstep of some of our most densely populated towns and cities, this new SSSI will also offer wonderful opportunities for people to connect with nature via the England Coast Path. This area is living proof that some of our most important species can thrive hand in hand with businesses and transport infrastructure. Special places like this will form the vital backbone of a national nature recovery network.

The new Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI incorporates the previously designated Bakers Hole SSSI, which covered 6.9 hectares with geological and archaeological features. These are vital for understanding past glacial periods and the use of the area by earlier Stone Age populations.

There are over 4,100 SSSIs in England, covering around 8% of the country's land area. More than 80% of these sites (by area) are internationally important for their wildlife and also designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites. Many National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are also SSSIs.

Natural England recognises that there is interest and consideration of potential development opportunities in the Swanscombe area. Designation of this site for its nationally important wildlife features is an important step towards ensuring that its environmental value is recognised and taken due account of in any future planning decisions.

The government has laid out its ambition in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) for a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife, and has also [recently committed to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030](#) which will result in over 4,000 square kilometres of new land in England being designated.

Natural England's People and Nature survey has shown that almost 9 in 10 adults in England during lockdown reported that protection of the environment is important to them, and today's move will help ensure that local communities in Swanscombe and the surrounding areas continue to benefit from these wildlife-rich green spaces long-term.

Further information

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is one of the country's very best wildlife and/or geological sites. SSSIs include some of the most spectacular and beautiful habitats: wetlands teeming with wading birds, winding chalk rivers, flower rich meadows, windswept shingle beaches and remote upland peat bogs, as well as much loved woodlands, meadows, heathlands and wetlands close to where people live in our towns, cities and villages.

Natural England is the government's adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. Natural England is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It is Natural England's responsibility to notify an area as a SSSI when it believes the wildlife or geology is of special interest.

As of 11 March 2021, the SSSI has been formally notified to landowners and occupiers and other interested parties. There will be a 4 month period in which anyone can make representations or object to the notification. If all objections are resolved or none are submitted, the designation will be confirmed. If there are unresolved objections the Natural England Board will hear all of these; they must then decide whether to confirm the designation

(with or without reductions). If the notification is not confirmed within 9 months of the date of notification, the notification falls.

[The Secretary of State has reappointed John Wood and Peter Gooderham as Members of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives](#)

News story

John Wood and Peter Gooderham have been reappointed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as Members of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives for a four year period from 22 January 2021 to 21 January 2025.



John Wood joined Herbert Smith (now Herbert Smith Freehills LLP), the city and international law firm, in 1972 and was a partner from 1982 to 2007. From 2008 to 2014 he was a legal board member of the Charity Commission for England and Wales and its interim chair in 2012. He continued as a board consultant to the Charity Commission from 2014 to 2017. He was a member of the Advisory Council on Business Appointments from 2015 to 2020. He has a long standing interest in early 20th century literature and journalism.

Peter served as a British diplomat for 30 years, and retired from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in April 2013. His last overseas position was as UK Ambassador to the UN and WTO in Geneva, from 2008-2012. On return from Geneva, he was seconded to the Ministry of Justice as its International Director in 2012. Peter was appointed as a member of the Senior Directing Staff at the Royal College of Defence Studies in October 2013. In April 2014 he left RCDS to take on the position of Director of the International Chamber of Commerce (UK). He returned to RCDS, in the same position, from October 2015-September 2017, and then again from September 2018 – July 2020.

These roles are remunerated at £386 per day. These reappointments have been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#), the process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. John Wood and Peter Gooderham have not declared any activity.

Published 11 March 2021

[The Secretary of State has appointed Derek Wilson as Chair of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority](#)

News story

Derek Wilson has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as Chair of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority for a three year period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024.



Derek has been a specialist sports architect for 30 years, shaped from an early stage by his passion for sport. His career in stadium design and Olympics and Paralympics forged his special interests in safety, accessibility and major events.

Derek's knowledge spans private and public sector roles, having owned and run successful architectural practices, and worked on the board of the FLA/SGSA. He has extensive experience of stadium design spanning 3 decades, including winning several major design awards.

Beyond this he has worked internationally including Australia, Malaysia,

Japan, the Middle East, Europe and the USA. He has also worked on 5 Olympic and Paralympic games since Sydney 2000, including helping bring the 2012 Olympics to London, going on to be the Head of Design and Overlay for London 2012. Additionally, he brings operations experience from being part of the team that delivered 9 NFL Super Bowls.

As well as his previous tenure on the SGSA board, Derek has contributed to numerous standards and safety guidance and currently also works for the Premier League as an accessible stadia consultant.

This role is remunerated at £36,260 per annum. This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#), the process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Derek Wilson has not declared any activity.

Published 11 March 2021

[The Secretary of State has appointed Professor Steven Gunn as Academic/Research Trustee of the Royal Armouries](#)

News story

Professor Steven Gunn has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as Research/Academic Trustee of the Royal Armouries for a four year period from 1 March 2021 to 28 February 2025.



Steven Gunn is Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Oxford and Fellow and Tutor in History at Merton College. His books include Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c1484-1545 (1988), Early Tudor Government, 1485-1558 (1995), War, State and Society in England and the Netherlands, 1477-1559 (2007), Henry VII's New Men and the Making of Tudor England (2016) and The English People at War in the Age of Henry VIII (2018).

He is currently writing a book on everyday life and accidental death in sixteenth-century England. He has made regular contributions to radio and television history programmes, publishes in history magazines and speaks to Historical Association branches and local history societies.

This role is not remunerated. This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#), the process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Steven Gunn has not declared any activity.

Published 11 March 2021

[Call for evidence on the Insolvency Rules](#)

Press release

Stakeholders are being asked to share their views on the legal framework that provides the basis for insolvency procedures.



The government has launched a call for evidence seeking stakeholders' views on the Insolvency Rules that set out the detailed requirements for company and individual insolvency procedures in England and Wales.

Stakeholders are being asked to share their views on the Insolvency Rules as they currently stand, including whether they provide an appropriate framework for the UK's insolvency regime and whether any improvements could be made.

The Insolvency Rules were last updated and implemented in 2017 and responses are welcome from insolvency practitioners, the legal profession, company directors, creditors, business and consumer groups and any other interested parties.

Dean Beale, Chief Executive of the Insolvency Service, said:

The Insolvency Rules are an integral part of the UK's insolvency framework, ensuring our insolvency processes operate efficiently and effectively.

We welcome responses from all interested stakeholders on how effective the Insolvency Rules have functioned since their modernisation in 2017, and with suggestions as to how they can be further improved or strengthened.

The Insolvency Rules 2017 set out the detailed procedure for the conduct of company and individual insolvency proceedings under the Insolvency Act 1986.

[Stakeholders can access the call for evidence here](#). Responses must be received by 30 June 2021.

The Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016 set out the detailed procedure for the conduct of the company and individual insolvency proceedings contained in the Insolvency Act 1986. Insolvency law is fully devolved as regards Northern Ireland and part devolved for Scotland. Each of those jurisdictions has its own rules in respect of the devolved elements of the law.

The current Insolvency Rules represent a consolidated and modernised version of the earlier Insolvency Rules 1986 and the accompanying legislation that had developed in the intervening period.

Published 11 March 2021