

EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Kingley Vale
Unitary Authority/County: West Sussex
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: SU824110
SAC EU code: UK0012767
Area (ha): 208.05
Component SSSI: Kingley Vale SSSI

Site description:

The site lies on three geological formations: the Upper Chalk of the steep escarpment, the clay-with-flints capping of the plateau above the escarpment, and the valley gravel and coombe deposits of the valley floor. This geological variation is reflected in the various habitat types, including the largest area of yew *Taxus baccata* woodlands in Britain, chalk grassland, chalk heath, juniper scrub and yew scrub. An important feature of the site is the presence of all stages in the development of the chalk flora from grassland via scrub to mature yew woodland.


The yew woodlands have developed chiefly on the chalk escarpment and they show the full range of habitat structure and function. In yew woodlands elsewhere the stands are either less extensive or mixed in with other taller species. The dense yew canopy precludes the development of a significant field layer, but open areas support upright brome *Bromopsis erecta* and wild strawberry *Fragaria vesca*.

Areas of chalk grassland at this site are rich in flowering plants and are dominated by sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, meadow oat-grass *Helictotrichon pratense* and salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*. Among the species which are abundant in the sward are chalk milkwort *Polygala calcarea*, wild thyme *Thymus praecox* and squinancywort *Asperula cynanchica*.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles. (Yew-dominated woodland)*
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)

Annex I priority habitats are denoted by an asterisk (*).

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.
Register reference number: UK0012767
Date of registration: 14 June 2005
Signed: 
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs