

7. West Moors NEW203

7.1 Location *(See Location Map)*

The forest covers a total area of 145 hectares and lies immediately to the north east of West Moors Village. The entire western boundary of the woodland lies adjacent to residential development and the Castleman Trailway runs along the northern boundary separating West Moors Plantation from Gundry's Inclosure which lies to the north of the trailway. A discrete block of woodland known as Three Legged Cross Nursery lies further to the north close to Three legged Cross village and adjacent to the B3072 and the Ministry of Defence petroleum depot.

7.2 Landscape Context

The woodland is entirely flat and views are limited to the western edge where the woodland margins can be seen from the residential area. The western edge of Three Legged Cross Nursery is visible from the B3072.

7.3 Current Woodland Structure *(See Habitat Structure and Age Structure Charts)*

The woodlands lie on predominantly pozolic soils and are therefore dominated by Corsican and Scots Pine. A limited number of broadleaves are present, mainly occurring as pockets of birch which have naturally regenerated amongst the pine. The woodland was established from the early 1940s through to the early 1960s and some restructuring has taken place over the last decade, both as a consequence of some felling and replanting as well as small scale forest fires which tend to be a common occurrence in this woodland.

Open space exists throughout the plantation both as a result of ride widening which has been carried out over the past decade and through the provision of open glades which have been maintained close to the residential area. Gundry's Plantation contains part of Holt and West Moors Heaths SSSI and a programme of heathland restoration is progressing as part of the SSSI plan.

Three Legged Cross Nursery contains an active Scots Pine seed orchard and a former Norway Spruce Christmas tree plantation which is gradually reverting to high forest.

7.4 Conservation *(See Site Designation Map)*

Gundry's Inclosure contains part of Holt and West Moors Heaths SSSI which has been designated for its heathland plant communities and the rare species associated with these habitats. The plan depicts a gradual removal of conifers adjacent to the SSSI to extend and consolidate the heathland habitat.

There are a number of more localised site of nature conservation interest associated with the predominantly heathland habitat which have been noted by the Dorset Wildlife Trust. These are shown on the design concept map together with rides that will be managed to create heathland links between the sites.

7.5 Recreation

West Moors Plantation lies adjacent to residential areas of West Moors Village and the forest is used heavily by the public for informal recreation. The Castleman Trailway runs along the northern boundary and many people access the Trailway from West Moors Plantation or divert through the forest from the Trailway. Opportunities exist to further develop this woodland as a community resource and the Forest Design Plan aims to develop this potential.

7.6 Archaeology *(See Site Designation Map)*

There are no known archaeological sites in West Moors or Gundry's Inclosure. There is one unscheduled archaeological site, a Bronze Age Barrow (funerary monument) in Three Legged Cross Nursery which is located on the western boundary within the seed orchard. The site will be protected during any operations associated with seed collection or maintenance of the seed orchard.