

BLUEBELL *HYACINTHOIDES NON-SCRITPA* SPECIES ACTION PLAN**1. INTRODUCTION**

The bluebell is an internationally important species with a high proportion of its European population in Britain. It is an excellent symbol of woodland conservation and a species for which the UK has a genuine global responsibility. It has been identified as a locally important native flowering plant in Caerphilly county borough, but as populations vary with the amount of ancient woodland remaining it is important Caerphilly maintains its proportion of the European population.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	S
EC Habitats Directive	-
Conservation Regs 1994	-
Berne Convention 1982	-
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CI TES 1975	
WCA 1981	Part I, Section 13 Sch. 8



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2. CURRENT STATUS**2.1 UK and Wales**

Bluebell woodlands are a speciality of the British Isles and the Atlantic fringe of northern France. The moist oceanic climate of the UK evidently provides ideal conditions for the bluebell and it holds a third of the world's population²⁷.

The bluebell has been identified as a locally significant species found in woodlands, hedgerows and pasture (derelict woodland).

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

The bluebell is an attractive and well-known flowering plant indicative of ancient woodlands. In Caerphilly county borough it is also associated with hedgerows, colliery spoil and under bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) on heathland and ffridd/coedcae. In spring hillsides with carpets of blue can be seen throughout the county borough. Bluebells have been recorded on the following SIN C sites⁸ (Map 16.1):

30:	Llwyn-Bach Woodland	35:	Pen y Waun
40:	Pen-y-Fan Fach Grassland	52:	Cefn Hengoed Hillside
63:	Blackwood Riverside Woodlands	126:	Maescwmmer Meadows
127:	Mynydd Bach Slopes	133:	Craig y Prisiad Woodlands
148:	Cwm Gofapi Woods	152:	Darran Woodland
166:	Pont-y-Pandy	170:	Cefn Onn Ridge
182:	Tudor Gardens Quarry	183:	Coed Cefn-Pwll-Du
190:	Thornhill Quarries		

2.3 Links with Habitats

- **Deciduous Woodlands**
- **Wildlife Corridors** (hedgerows, roadside verges)
- *Common Land*
- **Ffridd/Coedcae**
- *Heathland*
- *Post-Industrial Land* (broadleaved woodlands on spoil tips and quarries)
- *Urban Habitats*

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Although apparently abundant in some locations, the species has been declining due to loss of habitat, for example loss of woodland through the replanting of broadleaved woodland with conifers, and hedgerows.
- A decline in traditional woodland management can lead to shading out of bluebells.
- Physical damage to bulbs and leaves by trampling, heavy grazing and shading.
- Urban encroachment and a 'tidy park' mentality can threaten bluebells in urban locations, for example through regular mowing, including during flowering period.
- In some areas bluebells have been commercially removed. The inclusion of the species into the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 was specifically to legislate against this.
- Picking bluebell flowers is undesirable and can weaken colonies.
- The planting of the Spanish bluebell in gardens and parks has led to cross-pollination and hybridization of the native bluebell. This is a very real problem in urban and suburban woods and hedgerows.
- Trampling in woodlands and other habitats in areas open to the public. Bluebells are affected by trampling which occurs where there are large numbers of visitors. Seed production is harmed, but damage can be minimised by persuading visitors to use set paths around the edges of bluebell stands¹.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 The forestry Authority produce guidelines and brochures to raise awareness of the wildlife value of woodland.
- 4.2 Existing woodland management schemes generally cater well for the requirements of the bluebell.
- 4.3 Records have been collected by Glamorgan and Gwent Wildlife Trusts, and also by CCBC as part of the SINC surveys.
- 4.4 Ancient woodlands, species-rich secondary woodlands and ffridd are SINC selection criteria; this will include many woods and slopes with bluebells⁸.

- 4.5 Coed Cymru are actively promoting good woodland management practice in Caerphilly county borough, and ground flora improvements accompany good management.
- 4.6 The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 have brought hedgerows into the planning process¹¹ and ensure the retention of a number of ancient and species-rich hedges.
- 4.7 CCBC Parks Services regularly include the bluebell in designs and tenders.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

Not applicable to this species.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

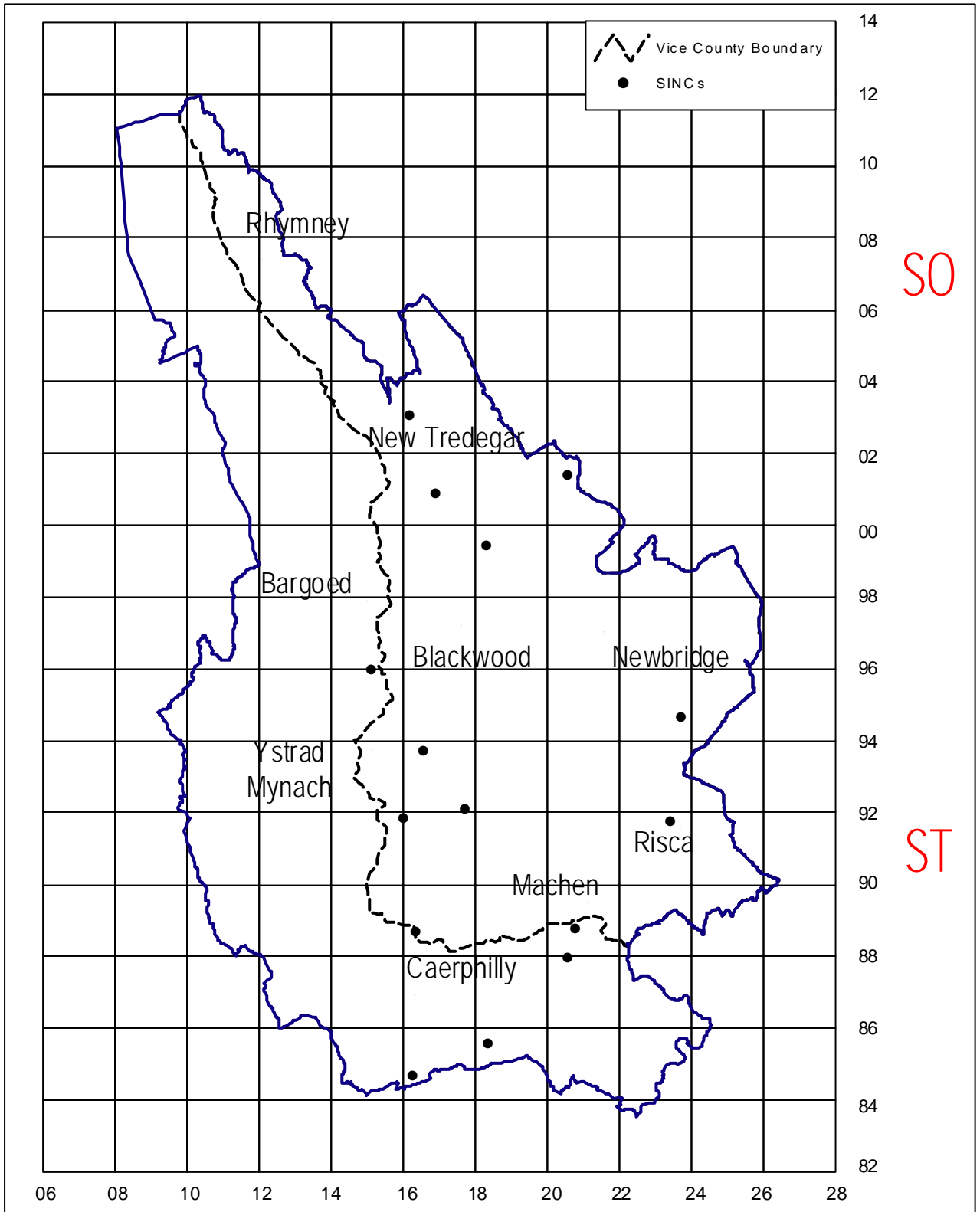
- 5.2.1 Maintain the present population and distribution of bluebells, and encourage the spread to new native woodlands (Target: ongoing).

6. ACTION AND KEY PARTNERS

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.1 Policy and Legislation											
6.1.1 Seek to designate all ancient woodland bluebell sites >2 ha as SIN C.	CCBC	-									✓
6.3.2 Seek to designate areas of ffridd / coedcae and heathland with significant stands of the bluebell as SI NC.	CCBC	-									✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Manage all Council owned bluebell sites sympathetically.	CCBC	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.2 Identify ownership of all ancient woodland sites.	CCBC	CCW FC Coed Cymru	✓	✓	✓						
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Encourage ancient woodland landowners to enter woodland grant schemes.	CCBC	Coed Cymru		✓	✓	✓					
6.3.2 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.2 Ensure appropriate management of woodlands, ffridd, heathland and hedgerows, including the modification of existing woodland management plans to stop work in the spring and early summer bulb-recharge period.	FC	CCBC Coed Cymru		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.3 Species Management and Protection (continued)											
6.3.3 Re-plant suitable former ancient woodland sites with appropriate structure and ground flora.	FC	Coed Cymru CCBC			✓	✓	✓				
6.4 Advisory											
6.4.1 Raise awareness of landowners and managers of the bluebell and their appropriate management, the damage to woodlands caused by deer and other livestock, and the need for fencing.	CBP	landowners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Monitor known bluebell sites in the county borough to improve baseline data and trends.	BSB I	-	✓					✓			✓
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
6.6.1 Generate publicity highlighting the threats to bluebells and how local people can help, in particular reporting sightings of uprooting to the Police.	CBP	Gwent Police	✓	✓	✓						
6.6.2 Encourage members of the public to check the source when purchasing bluebell bulbs.	CBP	Garden Centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.6.3 Emphasise the importance of people staying on paths when walking in woodlands.	CBP	landowners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

MAP 16.1 – BLUEBELL



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Atgynhychwyd o fapiad yr Arolwg Ordnans gyda chaniatad rheolwr Llyfifa ei Mawhydi hawffraint y Goron. Mae atgynhychu heb awdurdod yn torri hawffraint y Goron. Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, LA09004L, 2001.