**Jewels Hill Temporary Restricted Access**

* There will be restricted access to the area from April 1st to late summer dependant on status of ground nesting birds and other flora & fauna of interest.
* Earliest the are would be open would be July 31st
* Beacon Hill is a 135 hectare/335-acre site, with parts designated as a SSSI and SAM. Designated since 1959.
* Jewels Hill is 4.3 ha/10.63 acre – which equates to 3.1% of the total park.
* Total SSSI heathland area of Beacon is roughly 27.1 Ha. The main Beacon heathland SSSI is 22.8 ha/56.41 acre. Therefore, Jewels Hill accounts for 18.8% of the total Heathland
* The habitat is Lowland heath with acidic grassland
* Only 20% of lowland heath has survived since the enclosure act of 1808
* 2% of Leicestershire’s habitat is Heathland, with most found within Charnwood (**please double check**)
* The UK has an important proportion (about 20%) of the international total of this habitat. - [https://web.archive.org/web/20071206140814/http://www.ukbap.org.uk/UKPlans.aspx?ID=15](https://web.archive.org/web/20071206140814/http%3A//www.ukbap.org.uk/UKPlans.aspx?ID=15)

**Associated species:**

Birds

* Nightjar
* Yellow hammer
* Sky lark
* Willow warbler
* Hobby
* Tree Pipit
* Meadow Pipit

Reptiles

* Common Lizard
* Adder
* Slowworm

Plants

* Crossed leafed heather
* Bilberry
* Heathbed straw
* Broom and Gorse

But also:

* Moses, lichens, array of insects, butterflies and moths.

**Other supporting evidence:**

Taken from English Natures own management views on Beacon (document attached):

**Dry lowland heath**

Heathland supports the greatest diversity of plants and animals (including a diverse invertebrate fauna and a number of characteristic bird species) where management maintains the open nature of the heath, and promotes a varied structure of uneven-aged stands of native heathers and other characteristic plants. It is generally beneficial if all stages of the heather life cycle are present. Without such management heathland becomes progressively dominated by bracken, gorse and/or scrub and trees.

Low intensity grazing is a suitable means of managing dry heath. By feeding selectively in different areas and on different plants, free-roaming livestock help to maintain variation in the vegetation composition and structure. They can also suppress scrub encroachment and provide some light poaching to create small pockets of bare peat and sandy ground that are of benefit to a variety of specialised plants, invertebrates and reptiles. Sheep, cattle or hardy ponies can be used. An appropriate stocking rate should take into account local conditions and the timing and length of grazing, but an off-take of between 30-40% of the current growth increment is desirable. Care must be taken to avoid damage to the heather by trampling.

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**Lowland acid grassland**

Free-draining, acidic soil is the key requirement of the grassland communities at this site, but their maintenance also depends on active management. If neglected, the sward becomes dominated by tall, vigorous grasses or bracken which, together with an associated build up of dead plant matter, suppress less vigorous species and reduce the botanical richness of the site. Eventually the sward reverts to scrub and even woodland. Traditionally, management has consisted of stock grazing and this remains the most appropriate management tool. Grazing, through the removal of plant matter and nutrients, helps to maintain an open sward of small tussocky grasses. It also, through disturbance and trampling, creates areas of open ground suitable for colonization by the lichens, ephemeral plants and invertebrates that are often characteristic of this type of grassland. However, rabbit grazing, though difficult to control, can also be a useful management tool in some

Wildlife trust website:

[**https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/heathland-and-moorland/lowland-heath**](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/heathland-and-moorland/lowland-heath)

“The level of recreational use of some heaths also presents challenges (including arson, trampling and disturbance to ground nesting birds) and on urban heaths in particular the needs of recreation and wildlife conservation need to be carefully balanced.”

* The large influx of visitors has had a detrimental effect on the Heathland and habitat at Beacon

**RSPB:**

[**https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids/facts-about-nature/facts-about-habitats/heathland/**](https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids/facts-about-nature/facts-about-habitats/heathland/)

“One fifth of all the lowland heath in Europe is in the UK but it usually exists in small bits surrounded by towns or farms. This means that many plants and animals that live there are trapped. Only one sixth of the old heathland remains in the UK”

* Therefore it essential that we protect, enhance and restore as much of this important habitat as possible.