

Iron Age hillfort secured at Ham Hill following purchase of land

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73 acres of historic land at Ham Hill in Somerset, which includes extensive archaeological remains, has been secured for the nation.

Image



It has been purchased by South Somerset District Council with £235,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), along with funding contributions from the Friends of Ham Hill and a capital grant from the District Council.

The land makes up the southern and western portion of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and has a significant place in both national and local history. Occupied since the Bronze Age, significant settlements and fortifications existed on the site during the Iron Age and there is evidence of later Roman occupation as well as the remains of a Victorian [stone] quarry.

The transfer of ownership of the land, which South Somerset District Council have been maintaining as part of the Ham Hill Country Park, means that, a longer term maintenance programme can be developed which will direct the work that the rangers and volunteers do.

As part of the future management and maintenance of the land, rangers will consult with advisors from Natural England, Historic England and the South West Heritage Trust over the conservation and preservation of the Iron Age ramparts, native woodlands and other heritage assets.

Katy Menday, Leisure and Recreation manager at South Somerset District Council, said: “We have been pleased to work with the land owner to enable the purchase of this important heritage and community land. We realise the huge importance of access to natural greenspace for people’s wellbeing and know that its permanent inclusion in the Country Park, with the SSDC ranger team responsible for its management, will safeguard its assets and stories for future generations. Our thanks must go to the National Heritage Memorial Fund for their significant funding support for this important purchase”.

Sir Peter Luff, Chair of NHMF, said: “Ham Hill’s archaeological and natural heritage is of national significance. But its historical social and cultural connections with the local community, dating back to before records began, make it particularly special. We at The National Heritage Memorial Fund felt it essential that it should be secured as part of the wider Ham Hill Country Park, ensuring it can be enjoyed today and in the future.”

Rangers from South Somerset District Council are delighted that the 73 acre piece of land is now preserved for everyone to enjoy. The team look forward to working with the Friends of Ham Hill on future projects and we would encourage visitors to keep an eye out for details of an exciting pop up museum and activity centre that will open on the site for July and August of this year, where you can come to find out more about the sites special history.