



## **PRESS RELEASE**

27 January 2015

### **Heavy horses used for tree work at St Catherine's Hill**

Sometimes the old ways are the best, and that's certainly true at St Catherine's Hill in Christchurch where heavy horses have been used to extract felled timber.

Following public consultation and the adoption of a ten-year management plan at the site in 2012, selective tree felling has been taking place there this winter.

The plan is being overseen by a Management Steering Group including site managers, West Christchurch Residents Association, ward and parish councillors, Natural England and the Friends of St Catherine's Hill.

This work has been carried out to improve and protect the important heathland and woodland habitats, wildlife and archaeological features found on site. Priority for the felling was given to areas where early recovery is required to allow further work to take place, where trees were already in poor condition or to enable future access.

Selected trees were felled and then taken to a nearby location for chipping. In most cases, extraction has been carried out by machinery and all parts of the trees have been chipped on site using a large mobile chipping unit. However, on steeply sloping ground, where access was not possible, timber was extracted using Percheron heavy horses.

Costs for the tree felling have been largely met through grant funding, through Higher Level Stewardship agreements with Natural England and chip has been taken off site to be used as a biofuel.

