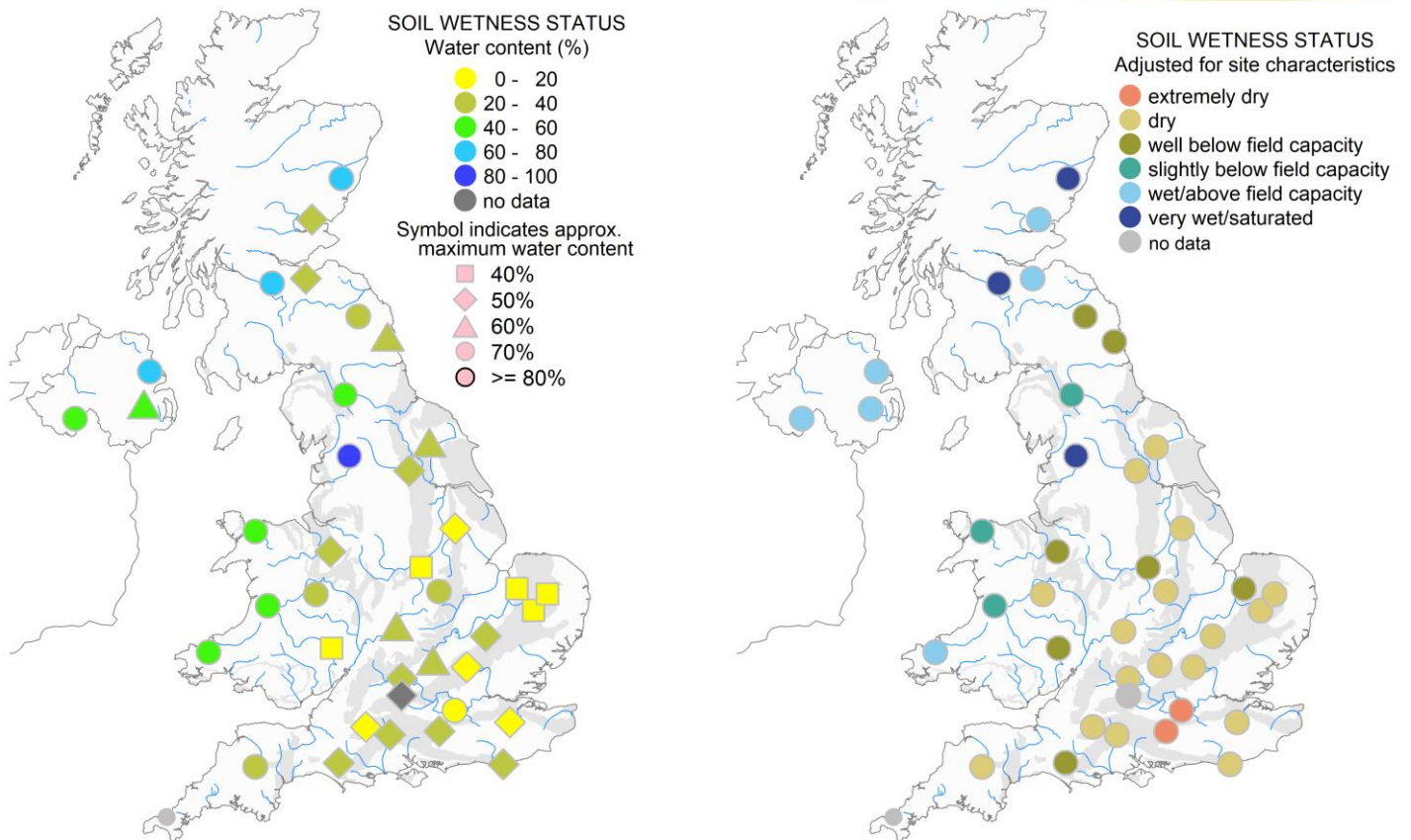




Soil moisture on 30 Sept 2026 (see back page for explanatory comments).

Overall, soil moisture increased across the western and north-western regions of the UK in September 2026, while much of England remained drier than usual for the time of year, reflecting the month's contrasting rainfall patterns.

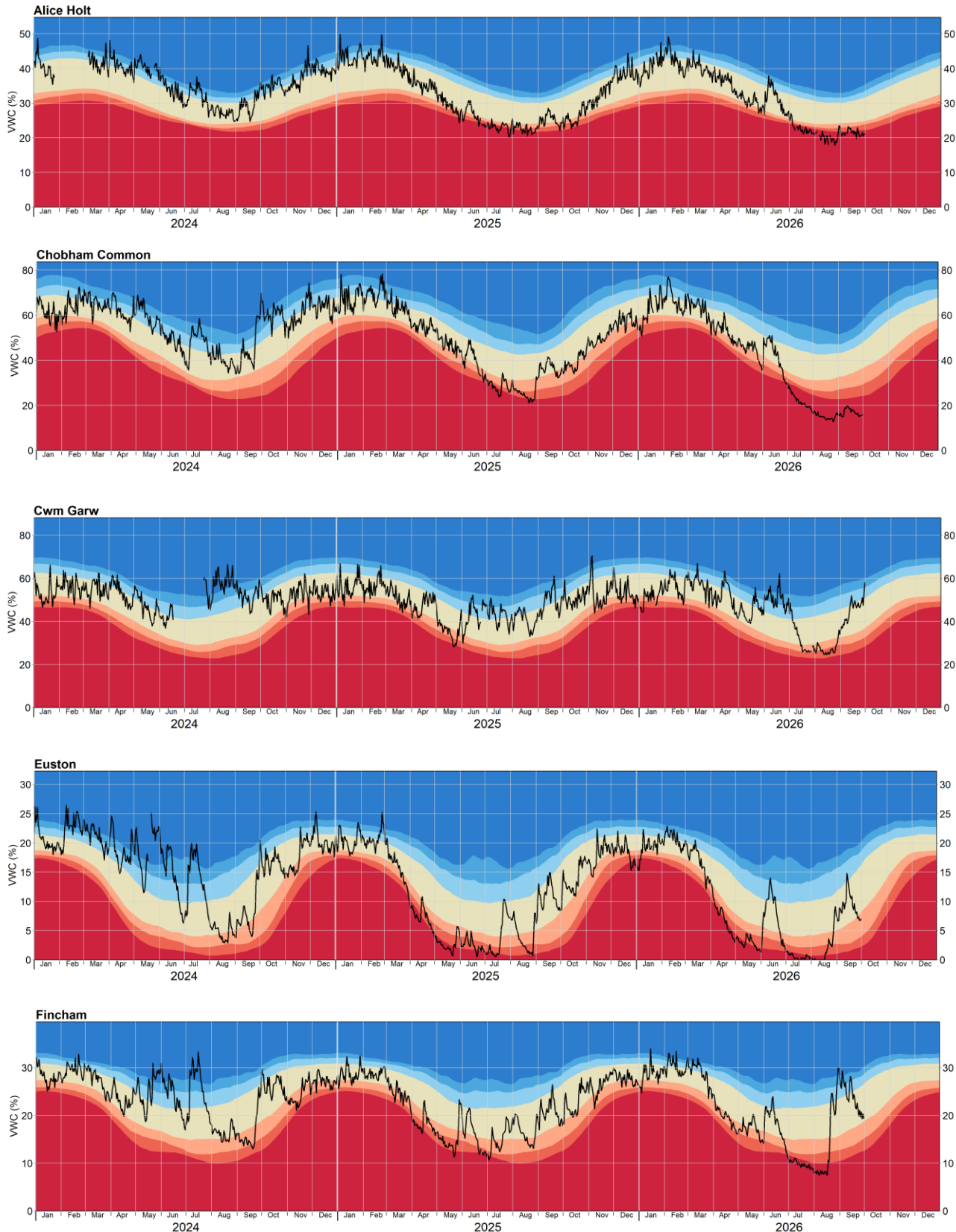
Provisional data indicate that September 2026 featured a marked west-north-west to south-east rainfall contrast, with much of England and Wales drier than average (68% of normal rainfall), while Scotland and Northern Ireland were notably wetter, receiving 137% of normal rainfall. Temperatures were also above average across the UK, with East Anglia, southeast and central south England reaching 2.4°C above the long-term average, resulting in the joint 4th warmest September on record, despite regional rainfall differences.

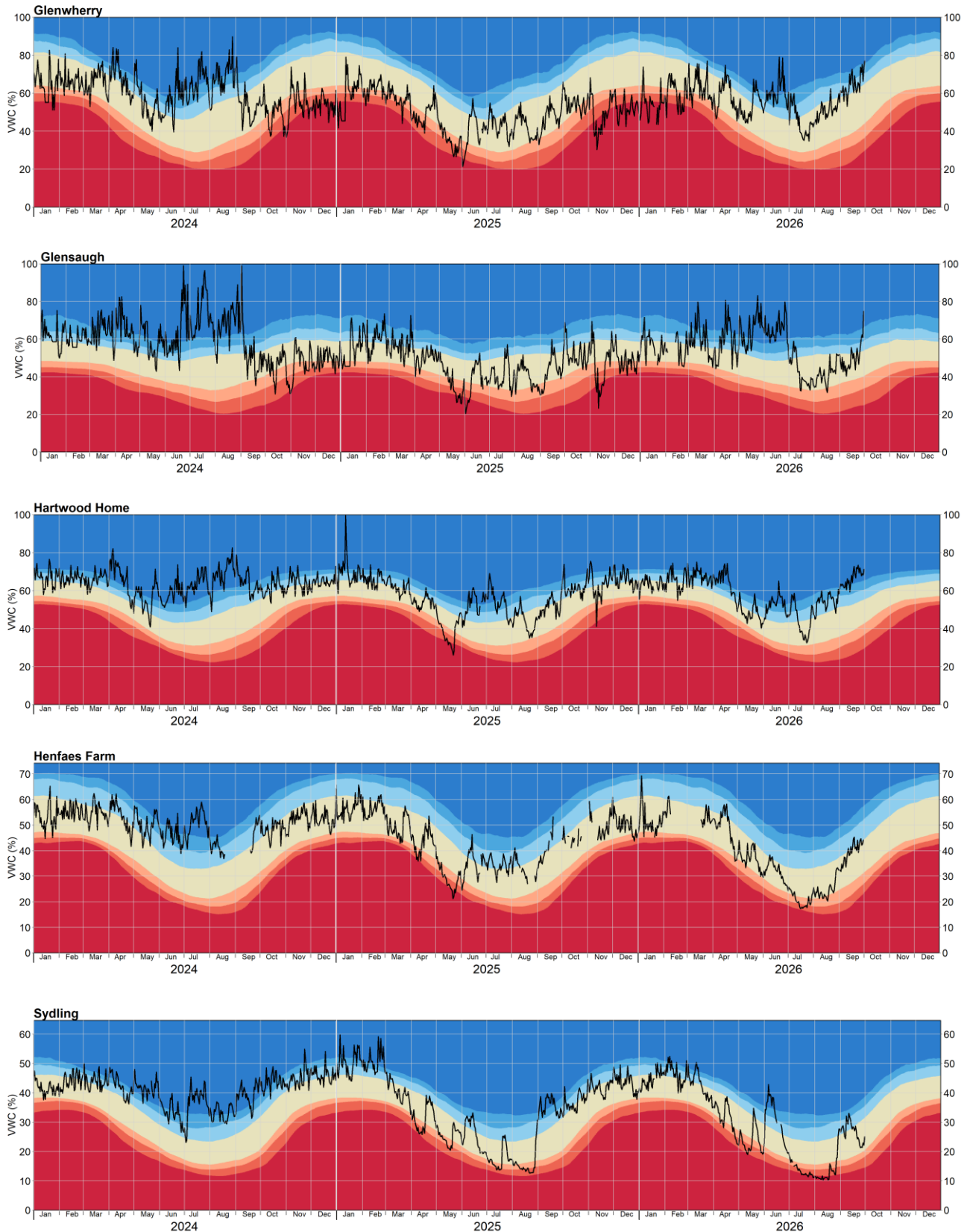
Soil moisture reflected these contrasting conditions. Sites in southern and eastern England remained well below field capacity, with some locations classified as dry or extremely dry (e.g. Alice Holt, Chobham Common). In contrast, soils in Scotland, Northern Ireland and parts of Wales were close to or above field capacity for much of the month (e.g. Glenwherry, Hartwood Home, Henfaes), with wetter conditions during the month leading to near-saturated soils at some sites by the end of September (e.g. Cwm Garw and Glensaugh). Despite some short-term improvements (e.g. Euston, Fincham and Sydling), much of central, southern and eastern England remained drier than usual for the time of year.

By the end of September, soils remained generally wet across Scotland and western regions of the UK, while much of England remained drier than usual for the time of year. This trend is likely to continue as the long-term forecast for the UK indicates ongoing wetter weather in the northwest and drier in the southeast.

Network news

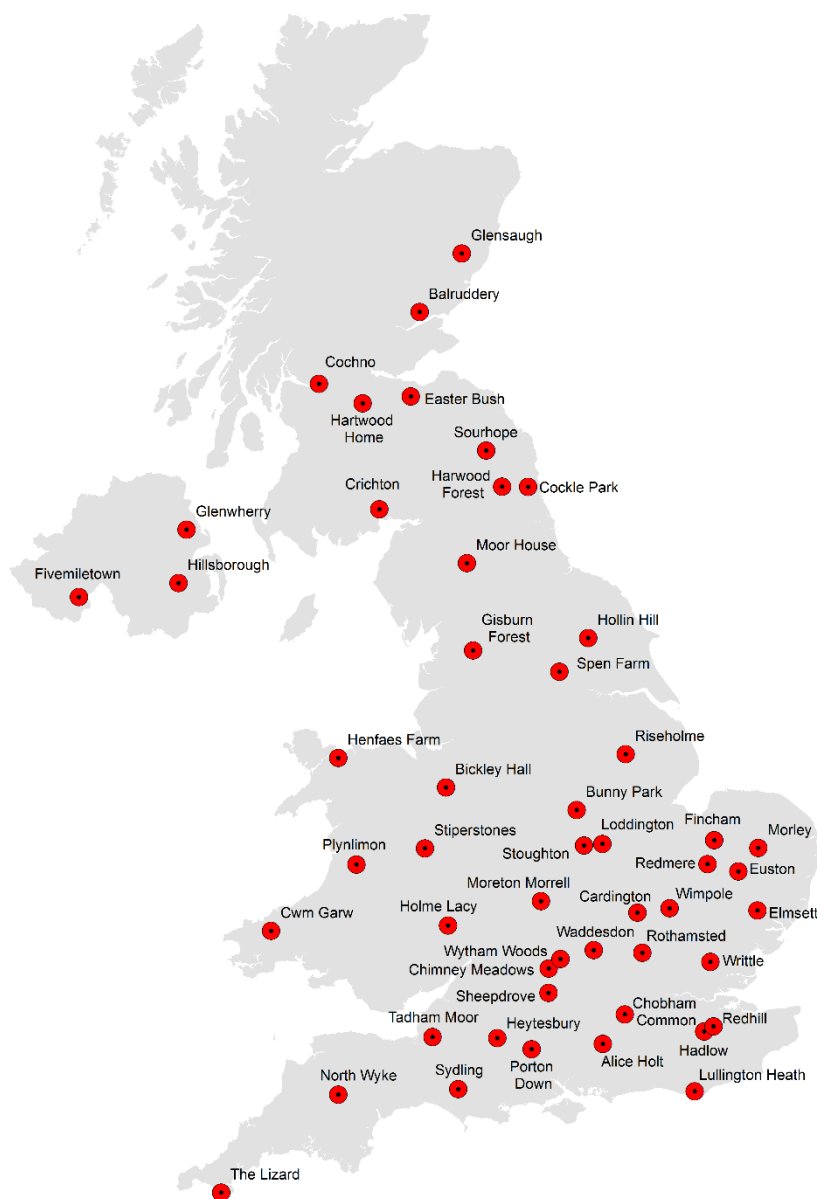
Preventive maintenance site visits are nearly complete, with only the scheduled revisits to Glensaugh this week and Wimpole at the end of October remaining outstanding.







Issued on 12 October 2026



About the maps on page 1: The maps show daily mean soil moisture on the last day of the month. Colours indicate wetness as in the legends.

The map on the left shows wetness as the volumetric water content (VWC) of the soil which is constrained by soil type, i.e. some soils are able to hold more water than others as indicated by the shape of the symbol.

The map on the right presents soil wetness adjusted for site specific characteristics, i.e. taking account of the possible range of soil wetness at each site. Field capacity (FC) is a key point in this range. When soil moisture is below FC soil moisture is said to be in deficit, i.e. there is a (positive) soil moisture deficit (SMD).

Grey shaded areas on these two maps represent principal aquifers.

About the graphs on pages 2 and 3: The black line shows VWC. The coloured bands indicate how VWC compares to historical variability for the site and time of year.



About soil moisture: Soil moisture varies in the short term (hours to days) with rainfall and as water drains through the soil. Longer term variation is driven by the seasonal difference between rainfall and evaporation. Thus soil moisture decreases in the summer when evaporation exceeds rainfall but increases when this is reversed. In most winters under UK conditions, soil moisture reaches a relatively constant value, known as the field capacity. Field capacity is a measure of how much water the soil can hold against gravity and is strongly dependent on the soil type. Soils are expected to be around field capacity after being wetted to above field capacity and the excess water (e.g. from macropores) has drained away under gravity, which can take several days after heavy rain, to reach a near steady state. Differences in soil type and weather patterns cause variations in soil moisture between sites including when the soil returns to field capacity in autumn/winter and when soil moisture decreases in the spring/summer.

About COSMOS-UK: COSMOS-UK is supported/partially supported by NERC, through the UKCEH National Capability for UK Challenges Programme NE/Y006208/1.

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