

**REPORT ON SCOPING
OF
PROPOSALS TO REMOVE FOREST FROM BROADWATER
WARREN, EAST SUSSEX**



for birds
for people
for ever

Report prepared for the Forestry Commission by the RSPB April 2008

1. The reasons an assessment was called

The RSPB proposals for the removal of conifer plantation at Broadwater Warren is deemed a relevant project under Environmental Impact Regulations (Forestry)(England and Wales) Regulations 1999, and thus requires formal consent from the Forestry Commission.

Since the scale of felling works required to remove the conifer plantation, is above the thresholds set out under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry)(England and Wales) Regulations 1999, the Forestry Commission was asked to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment was required.

The Forestry Commission’s decision was based on the principles outlined in schedules II and III of the Statutory Instrument (1999 No. 2228).

In summary:

- **Schedule II** outlines the thresholds for projects likely to have a significant impact on the environment. In this case, the 120 ha of deforestation proposed exceeds these thresholds very significantly.
- **Schedule III** provides selection criteria for projects, which are likely to have a significant impact on the environment. In this case, the following elements suggest the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on the environment:

Characteristics of the project: The size of the project is very significant (particularly in the complex and intimate landscape of south east England).

Location of the project: The High Weald is particularly sensitive due to: -

- the high woodland cover in the area (it is one of the most densely wooded parts of England)
- the area is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the basis of its landscape character
- the south east is very heavily populated and this site is very close to Tunbridge Wells and is heavily used by local people for informal recreation
- the High Weald is a landscape of considerable historical, cultural and archaeological significance.

Characteristics of potential impact: The impacts of the proposals are potentially complex, as illustrated by the issues outline in the table below, and as such careful and objective consideration of the impacts of the proposals would assist in minimizing and ameliorating any adverse impacts and optimizing positive impacts.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Ancient woodland | Parts of the site are designated Ancient Woodland but in parts of the High Weald there was a matrix of heathy wood, woody heath and heathland within which the exact locations of the trees changed over time. It will be important to identify the core areas of woodland (if any) and consider how such a matrix habitat might be re-created and maintained. It is crucial that this process and concept is very carefully assessed so as not to compromise the protection of Ancient Woodland. The site also contains some high quality areas of wet woodland (a priority habitat), which may not be ancient woodland. |
|------------------|---|

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Public access | While most attendees at the screening meeting were supportive of the proposals there were strong concerns about maintaining access, maintenance of the compartments of 'large' conifers, potential impacts of fencing, dogs and wild birds, horse-riding and the proposed car park (which would probably require planning permission). The site is heavily used for informal recreation and lies close to the major town of Tunbridge Wells. |
| Bats, reptiles amphibians | There is a need to identify whether parts of the site are used by 'deep forest' bat species such as Barbastelles and Bechstein's as if present the design of the site would need to maintain wooded corridors for these species. |
| Archaeology | Like so much of the High Weald there is a long history of management and relatively undisturbed sites such as this have the potential to retain a diverse archaeological record. Hence, a careful assessment of the site is essential to influence the final design. |
| Loss of habitat woodland species | It will be essential to assess the relative value of the site in its current form, as environmentally sensitively managed 'productive' woodland and as a matrix of heath and woodland. The significance of the impact on affected species will need assessing in the local, regional and national context. |
| Hydrology | The effect that the deforestation will have on watercourses on site and down stream off site will need careful consideration. |
| Landscape Impacts | The proposals will have an effect on users, neighbours and the wider landscape |
| Direct impacts neighbours properties | Any plans will have an impact on views, screening and wind protection. |

It was felt that the project did require such an assessment, and this Environmental Statement has been produced accordingly. On approval, this document will be used in conjunction with an application to the Forestry Commission for a Felling Licence to commence the restoration project.

In order to assess the impact of the proposals on local users and on the existing habitats and species, the RSPB and the Forestry Commission carried out a screening and scoping process with local stakeholders.

2. Screening meeting report

On 7th March 2007 an on-site Screening Meeting was organised.

Invitees included:

| Title | First Name | Last Name | Company |
|----------|-------------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| Mrs | Liz | Akenhead | British Horse Society |
| Mr | Allan | Argue | Neighbour |
| Mr | Andrew | Best | Neighbour |
| Mr | Philip | Bohane | Neighbour |
| | Gail | Clarkson | Neighbour |
| Mr | Richard | Cowser | Sussex Ornithological Society |
| Mr | Chris | Hannington | Wealden District Council |
| Mrs | Philippa | Hewes | Frant and Wadhurst PC |
| Mr & Mrs | Vincent and Carol | Hills | Neighbour |
| Dr | Rick | Hodges | Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group |
| Ms | Louise | Hutchby | Natural England |
| Mr | Tony | Hutson | Sussex Bat Group |

| Title | First Name | Last Name | Company |
|----------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Mr | Casper | Johnson | East Sussex County Council |
| Mr | Barry | Kemp | Sussex Amphibian and Reptile Group |
| Mr | Malcolm | McDonnell | Ramblers Association |
| Ms | Jane | Mortimer | Natural England |
| Mr & Mrs | Robert and Gay | Park | Neighbour |
| Ms | Wendy | Rogers | Kent County Council - Archaeologist |
| Mr & Mrs | Andy and Jenny | Scott | Neighbour |
| Mrs | June | Spencer | South View Riding School |
| Mr | Nigel | Symes | RSPB |
| | Mary | Symes | Neighbour |
| Mr | Alex | Tait | East Sussex County Council |
| Mr | Richard and Colleen | Thirkell | Neighbour |
| Mr | Adrian | Thomas | RSPB |
| Mr | Patrick | Todd | Eridge Estate |
| Mr | John | Tucker | Woodland Trust |
| Mr | Mark | Underhill | RSPB - Brighton (Regional Office) |
| Mr | Tony | Whitbread | Sussex Wildlife Trust |
| Ms | Sheila | Wright | Sussex Bat Group |
| Mr | Dave | Bonsall | Woodland Trust |

Other invitees did not attend:

| Title | First Name | Last Name | Company |
|-------|------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Ms | Jenny | Bacon | Sussex Amphibian and Reptile Group |
| Mr | John | Bee | Eridge Estate |
| Mr | Michael | Brown | Neighbour |
| Ms | Judith | Feline | Kent County Council |
| Ms | Mary | Harris | Kent & Sussex Courier |
| Mrs | R | Leppard | Withyham Parish Council |
| Ms | Sally | Marsh | High Weald AONB Unit |
| Mrs | Jackie | Rowland | British Horse Society |
| Mr | David | Scully | Tunbridge Wells Borough Council |
| Mr | Nigel | Sloan | Ramblers Association - Sussex |
| Mr | Eddie | Thompson | Neighbour |

Sussex Wildlife Trust sent apologies and a written submission, supportive of the Project.

Thirty-seven stakeholder representatives attended the meeting, which was organised by Forestry Commission and RSPB staff, and took the form of a two hour guided walk of the site and discussion of proposals..

The general response from the screening meeting was positive, several of those present expressed some concerns, but there was no opposition to the core aims of the Project. The Forestry Commission felt that an Environmental Impact Assessment would be needed The Forestry Commission's decision was based on the principles outlined above.

3. Report on scoping meetings

The aim of the scoping meetings was to bring together interested parties and identify all of the issues that are relevant to local people. Since Broadwater Warren straddles the boundary of Frant and Withyham parishes, two public scoping meetings were organised.

3.1 Scoping meeting of 27 July 2007 at Groombridge Village Hall

Attendance: 33 members of the public

Format of the event:

- Attendees welcomed and presented with a small pack of 6 A5 sheets explaining:
 1. Introduction
 2. History of Broadwater Warren
 3. Heathlands
 4. The 10-year plan
 5. Environmental Impact assessment
 6. What can you do?
- Introduction from Adrian Thomas – RSPB’s communications Officer for South East England
- Presentation on the history of the site by Mike Chapman from the High Weald AONB Unit
- Presentation from Caroline FitzGerald – RSPB’s Site Manager Broadwater Warren
- (Supplemental explanation of the EIA Regulations by Matthew Woodcock FC’s G & R Manager for SEE)
- Displays provided:
 - One to one questions with RSPB staff over tea and biscuits.



Questions raised by attendees

- What will the transition from the areas of retained woodland to heathland look like?
- How will the heathland be maintained?
- Particular concern about level of natural regeneration of trees
- Impact on access by the public
- Impact of the grazing animals as both a direct impact on people and dogs and by fences associated with managing grazing
- Increased levels of access by 'twitchers'
- Query about the increased numbers of people who may be drawn to the site
- Concern that visitors would be restricted to designated paths
- Concern about proposals to exclude cyclists from the site
- Concern about reducing number of car parking points available to users and restricting car parking to one car park (attendees appreciated the range of car parking points)

currently available as these provide alternative walking opportunities within the site, they felt that restriction to one car park would reduce choice)

- Will paths be 'made up'? (related to proposals for all ability access)
- Ongoing funding of site management (concern about best use of EU funding).
- Concern about loss of productive woodland.
- Query about definition of ancient woodland.
- Query about how quickly heather re-grows following tree clearance.
- Request for a location on the RSPB's website to which comments can be submitted.

RSPB repeatedly asked attendees to write down their concerns on cards at the back of the room or send them in.

Notes compiled by Matthew Woodcock, FC Grants & Regulations Manager 29th July 2007

3.2 Scoping Meeting Frant Village Hall on 31st July 2007

Attendance - 25 people at the start of the meeting, rising to 31 by the end.

Attendees were presented with a pack of information sheets on arrival and were invited to look over the display panels situated at the rear of the hall before the start of the presentation.

Presentation

Introduction to the RSPB by Adrian Thomas - RSPB communications officer for South East England

Introduction to the site, reason for purchase, summary of proposed operations and reasons for them, EIA and consultation process by Caroline FitzGerald - RSPB Broadwater Site Manager.

Information regarding informative walks on the site with the RSPB was given at this point.

Summary given by Adrian Thomas, followed by questions.

There were 18 questions from members of the audience, which were fielded by the RSPB. A summary of the main points raised is as follows:

Questions raised by attendees:

- Will there be forestry operations all year round (with reference to bird nesting seasons. A good deal of concern regarding parking and access to the site including:
- What will the parking capacity be? People felt that 20 places would not be enough during busy periods.
- Will the car park be visible from the road?
- Will parking be restricted at other access points? There is a lot of concern over the closure of other access points off Broadwater Lane.
- Access for horses, would it be restricted to one entrance? and would the permit system still operate?
- There were questions relating to the effects of the operations on specific species (wood ants, cross bills, deer)
- Will the RSPB increase/upgrade the number of forest rides and tracks?
- Particular interest in the retention of the mature Scots Pine In the centre of the site (as highlighted at the screening meeting) (compartment 22)
- What will the restoration of the lake involve - is it being done to attract specific species, what precautions are being made to ensure existing habitat protected?

- Will the boundary with the SWT site be fenced or marked in any way?
- Will there be any restriction on dogs?
- Enquiry as to whether the site could continue to be used by local orienteering group.
- Are the RSPB proposing to build hides or viewing areas?

All questions were answered to the satisfaction of the members of the audience. The major concern of the evening was access and parking, with strong feelings that several access points should be maintained.

Generally, participants seemed happy at the end of the meeting and grateful of the chance to comment on proposals. Participants were encouraged to put comments on the forms at end of the meeting and information packs were offered to those arriving slightly late. It was made clear where people could find out more about the project (website) and how to stay in contact.

Notes compiled by Richard Everett, FC Woodland Officer for East Sussex – 6th Aug 2007



Frant Village Scoping Meeting



Frant village meeting RSPB displays

4 The further public consultation exercise.

In addition to the scoping meeting, the RSPB information pack on the proposals for habitat restoration at Broadwater Warren was made available on the RSPB website. This had downloadable forms for comments.

The page went live 17 July 2007

| Month | Page view | Download info pack | Download comments form |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Jul-07 | 41 | 23 | 1 |
| Aug-07 | 147 | 74 | 22 |
| Sep-07 | 76 | 42 | 11 |
| Oct-07 | 92 | 22 | 5 |
| Nov-07 | 52 | 22 | 1 |
| Dec-07 | 45 | 10 | 1 |
| Jan-08 | 64 | 22 | 8 |
| Total | 517 | 215 | 49 |

4.1 Walks and open days for the local public

A series of outreach events were organised

22nd August 2007 Public Guided Walks

12 local people and 5 dogs came on a guided walk to see the plans for the new reserve. (See photographs)

8th September 2007 "Meet the RSPB" open day on the reserve.

An open day was also organised (see photographs) RSPB staff met the public to advise on the changes that were to be made on the nature reserve and distributed information packs. 74 adults, 10 children, and 53 dogs were engaged, only about 4 of these people had been to the village hall meetings and very few had come along specially; 3 horse riders and 6 mountain bikes also came along. Three guided walks were held during the day.

At all of the meetings the RSPB asked that people put their concerns about the project in writing so the process would be properly recorded.



RSPB Open Day Broadwater Warren

5. Written feedback to public consultation exercise

5.1 Received 27 July by hand from Carol Navis

I am a permit holder for horse riding in the Warren, I am very keen on discussing with you our access points as we don't like riding along roads. We used to access the woods next to Rose Cottage. This was closed to us last year. Ideally, access as close to Rose Cottage is ideal. I am also concerned about much of the Forest would be fenced off and inaccessible to us on horses.

5.2. Received 27 July by hand from Tom Butler

I am too old for scouts but I enjoy a ride in the woods but if plans continue I won't be able to cycle there. Is there a cycle permit system? Would it cost much or at all?

5.3. Received 31 July 2007 by hand from Alison Adams

I would like to volunteer!

5.4. Received 31 July 2007 by mail from Gwen Butcher

1. Notice of meeting. Publicity for the meeting was very poor. I had not been to The Warren for a little while and first happened to go a few days ago when I saw the notice pinned to the stile. There was no general publicity in the village, the area most affected by the proposed change of use of the site.
2. The meeting: The meeting was billed as a public meeting but there was a strong feeling that general discussion was avoided. You ask for written comments but surely direct questions should be put, in public, to the officials concerned.
3. Access: From the proposed plan it would appear that access to the site will only be possible from the proposed car park. One of the great advantages of the small parking areas round the site is that there is not a concentration of people in one area. People are generally lazy and will not walk very far.
4. Dogs: I walk my dogs in the Warren. I felt that, in time, access for people will become more and more restricted. The presence of grazing animals will make dog exercising very difficult. My experience with the RSPB is that, in general, you do not like dogs running free, even under control.

As a general comment I would like to say that on the whole the RSPB does a very good job – don't forget people.

5.5. Received 3 August by mail from John Champney

On the whole very good

We prefer to walk from where the lanes diverge starting down the main track and then going to where the C.P. will be. It is the natural entrance from TW end. We hope RSPB will not be too 'prissy' about parking in the lanes. You are sure to get that anyway – see Halls Hole road with Dunesham (?). We really would like the existing entrances kept, especially the one we mention (it makes for more diverse walking)

5.6. Received 3 August 2007 by mail from Susan Stewart

My husband and I are horrified at the plans to ruin this woodland. Whilst we were pleased the RSPB acquired this site, we were shocked and horrified at your plans. If you want heathland, then don't buy lovely woodland. I walk in these woods at 6.30am and the birdsong is deafening. It is cool in summer and protected in the bad weather. Whilst I agree the rhododendrons and bracken need sorting and some of the trees, I and a lot of Groombridge are 100% against what you are doing. I do not believe once this is done we will have the pleasure of our dogs running loose and happy there. I think the work you propose is criminal and will withdraw my membership the minute the work begins. Just tidy them up and encourage the lovely birds we have their and believe me early AM you see and hear lots of them. We have a huge area of heathland just up the road at Ashdown Forest, but we do not have a lot of beautiful woodland and sadly you propose to take what we have away.

One car park may be difficult a couple of small ones better although if you start to demolish this wood, I will not be able to watch. I have walked in the beautiful woods for 10 years and it will end if you go ahead with these awful plans. Rethink and look after all the beautiful birds we already have their.

5.7. Received 6 August by mail from Gillian Taplin

Could any of the spare chippings or timber be given to the local schools as most of the schools have wild life gardens which need their chippings replaced regularly.

5.8 Received 6 August 2007 by mail from John Cubb

1. My wife and I attended the Groombridge meeting last week. We (and others) felt it was a tactical error to try to restrict audience participation to completing the comments forms. There were people keen to make constructive comment or ask for clarification. We believe a reasonable discussion period backed by these forms would make for a better atmosphere and be more constructive generally

2. It is very impressive the work being planned BUT I do question the cost/benefit ratio for birds. Ashdown Forest providing much the same attractions for birds is very close. You are going to spend a great deal of money creating much the same environment for, presumably, the same species of bird. Those who subscribe to the RSPB to help birds might well question this – I feel the money could probably be better spent improving bird protection facilities – such as elimination of pests such as squirrels, magpies and jays
3. Car park. At present there are about 6 small points of entry. They need very little improvement to make them totally suitable for a small number of cars. Then visitors would be able to explore the whole Warren on a series of visits, whereas with one car park the elderly in particular may not be able to cover the whole area.
4. Eridge Rocks. The Sussex Wildlife Trust bought the rocks area primarily to preserve rare lichen. Apart from the elimination of Rhododendrons they have done little else. The two areas combined would make a fascinating and neat whole – could you not offer to take it over from them (for cash presumably) and guarantee to love and nurture the rare lichens at the same time.
5. Mr & Mrs Best. When they bought that land, I understand that it was primarily to cut down conifers to let in more light to their property on the other side of the road. It might be worthwhile approaching them to see if they would sell it back to you with a covenant guaranteeing not to plant big trees there. It would again square off your site. Incidentally the map on sheet 1 shows the Best's rectangular piece in somewhat the wrong place – the map on Sheet 4 is OK.
6. I hope you are right about controlling the regeneration of birch and conifer by livestock. I believe you would have a severe problem providing the livestock with enough grazing. There is hardly any grass about the place and, where the ground is open, Bracken is rampant. And that takes a lot of killing. Also nearly 200 years of conifers has produced a huge density of cones – I counted over 200 in one square metre. I hope I am wrong!
7. Winter felling. Why the obsession with winter felling? Is it to do with sap? You yourselves stated that most of the conifers are fit only for pulp – so perhaps summer felling would be ok, say from June to October clear of nesting times. Certainly the environmental damage would be much less. A recent felling in this area took place in August so, does it really matter when the trees are felled?
8. I think the Information Pack is of excellent value – useful work. May I suggest you include a summary in the Groombridge and Frant/Eridge Parish magazines. I know the latter goes to every household in the parish.

5.8. Received 6 August 2007 by mail from John Evans

I am 100% in favour of all your plans for this site

Parking is an issue and I think you should consider more than one site – I assume that Broadwater Warren will be open to RSPB members and non-members..

I think access should be restricted to walkers (with or without dogs) and to horse riders (by permit). No forms of wheeled transport should be allowed, and the site should not be used for orienteering etc.

I am happy to volunteer to help with any work you need in the restoration of Broadwater Warren. Get in touch if you need to.

5.9. Received 6 August 2007 by mail from Mrs Howell

I am delighted with what the RSPB is trying to do with the Warren. As a regular dog walker, I am particularly pleased that dogs will still be permitted though I would like to know about the ground-nesting birds, and how to avoid disturbing them. I would also like to see pedestrian access continue from various points and not just the planned car park.

5.10. Received 6 August 2007 by mail from Jill Robinson

I am currently a riding permit holder. The limit of 20 permits is too restrictive and the scheme is operated in favour of the local riding school. I hope you will consider working with TROT (Toll Riders Offroad Trust) who organise access over a wide area of Kent, Surrey and Sussex and operate their scheme very fairly. I have never seen another rider in the forest, so I am sure you could increase the number of permits without damage and perhaps add day permits. I have ridden in the forest for 30 years and welcome the RSPB's new stewardship. It has been an area for riders for centuries – one of the very few in the area. There are very few bridleways locally and the roads are very dangerous for horses as the traffic speeds too fast.

5.11 Received 6 Aug 2007 by mail from R FitzPatrick

I would appreciate all-weather path surfaces. Crushed rock is my preferred material (not tarmac please)

Concerned about loose dogs worrying walkers (me) not the birds who can look after themselves

5.12. Received 6 Aug 2007 by mail from Sue Ware

As a regular walker on Broadwater, I welcome the RSPB's plans for the future of the site but feel it's estimation of the number of car parking spaces is inadequate. On any day there will be a minimum of 15-20 cars parked at the various openings/inlets into the site, especially along its northern and northwestern boundaries. The demand for car parking spaces will obviously increase as the site/area becomes more attractive to birdwatchers. I suggest another car parking space at the western edge of the area for at least another 20 cars.

I appreciate the aim of keeping this as a quiet enjoyment site (therefore no visitors centre, toilets etc) but feel that some animal/dog waste bins at various entries to the area would help encourage dog walkers (and I am one) to pick up after their dogs and dispose of the waste from the main paths. At the moment, various paths in from the road, notably at Gate I rather like 'shit alley'!

I feel the RSPB's overall plan for the area is excellent and I look forward to seeing the continuing development of the site, especially in 10 year's time.

5.13 Received 7 August 2007 from Sarah Butler by mail

We have been cycling in Broadwater Warren as a family ever since we came to Groombridge fifteen years ago. It is a wonderful quiet place and we were extremely upset to learn that we won't be allowed to cycle there anymore now that it is an RSPB reserve. The best way to arrive at the Warren is by bike – there's no need to drive as it is so close, and there is very poor access by foot. (The road in from Groombridge is very dangerous for pedestrians as gars go extremely fast along it; there is a path from Lealands Farm to Birchden but it is waterlogged in winter; there used to be access from Park Corner until a couple of years ago but the owners of the forest there have closed the path – a shame as it was a great link from Harrison's Rocks/Birchden Wood into the Warren).

We're wholeheartedly in favour of the RSPB owning the Warren – it's great that it will be safe from development, and that the wildlife there will have its habitat maintained and improved.

We don't think that your plans will in any way be compromised by allowing cyclists to continue to use the Warren. There are relatively few of us at the moment (I've never actually encountered another cyclist there) and it is unlikely that more people will come in future as you will be promoting it as a nature reserve, not a cycling venue.

I suggest that you allow cycling to continue as now. If after a year you find that numbers have increased, you could introduce a permit system so that locals can continue to visit the Warren by bike.

It seems to me that there is a great fear of cyclists, which is not necessarily grounded in fact – the Warren hasn't suffered from cyclists in the past, so it seems unfair to ban us in the future. Please rethink your ban.

5.14 Received 7 August 2007 by mail from Tam Thompson

In common with others at the meeting in Groombridge last week. I agree with a main car park at Gate 2. it would also be helpful to have parking for 2 or 3 cars with pedestrian plus dogs access (style?) at opposite ends of the Warren - ie gates 3 or 4 and the lay-by. Beside locals being able to walk their dogs from different areas it would also mean that the whole 'Warren' would be covered and anything untowards could be reported back to you. RSPB notices with phone numbers on gates and styles.

5.15 Received 7 August 2007 by mail from Peter Taylor

I am broadly supportive of the RSPB initiative.

My main concerns are

Heathland/Woodland balance. The stated balance of 65:35 and, if the valley mire is counted in woodland then probably nearer 70:30. This is a dramatic change in the C20th landscape and needs sensitive handling in the locality

Car parking. The current proposals for 20 spaces at the A26 end of the site is in my view too little and in the wrong place. If we count the access from Park Corner and Eridge Lane, there are frequently more than 20 cars parked at the various gateways and access points especially early in the day and at week-ends. If a new set of visitors is attracted by RSPB activities more space will be required, preferably an additional car park at the Birchden Farm end of the site.

Grazing. The restoration of lowland heath is obviously important and its maintenance by grazing is essential. However, dogs do like to run off a leash (naturally under proper control) and provision for this is important.

Infrastructure. The site is bounded on 3 of 4 sides by narrow rural roads. Careful thought needs to be given to congestion/accidents particularly during the period of site improvement when heavy vehicles will need to travel over unsuitable roads

Coppice. What plans are there for coppice woodland

Can I end by saying that your communications strategy needs review. The public meeting at Groombridge was poorly advertised and one notice "drop in any time between 7.30pm - 9.30pm" misleading as many people came too late for the slide presentation. Could I suggest you consider using 'Church and Village' local village magazine for updates and reports

5.16. Received 7 Aug 2007 by email from Peter Miall

Delighted to hear that the RSPB have acquired Broad Water Warren. I have walked there for over fifty years and have such happy memories of the place - somewhere there is a photo of me as a child on the army vehicle by the cross roads!

You must know all the local history - the pine plantation went in after the war; I once met a man who took out the old timber which he said was very impressive.

Very glad to hear that the nightjars are back. We used to watch them on warm summer nights until an outdoor discoteque at the Crest and Gun pub, one very hot summer about 20 years ago, frightened them away.

Good luck with the restoration. Get in touch if my memories are of any use

5.17 Received 11 Aug 2007 by email from Howard Wright

I think that, on the whole, your plans for the area are very good. A car park to aid access will be well received from users, but I'm glad that no buildings are planned. However, I would like to see access maintained for cycling because this encourages the use of the forest and facilitates exercise and good health. I am not familiar with the impact that cycling has on the area, but am not aware of any damage being caused at the present time.

In fact, because of the size of the forest, I think that cycling is an excellent way of getting to see the whole site, and encourages responsible use of the area. There are few places locally where off-road bike use is possible, and it would be a shame to lose this area.

5.18 Received 13 Aug 2007 by post from Alan Mayhew

The plan presented by the RSPB appears to be sensible and well balanced, combining the needs of a nature reserve with the wishes of existing users (eg dog walking, etc). Consideration should be given to leaving the existing parking places as well as the newly planned parking. The problem of dumping can perhaps be tackled by making the parking places only accessible to small cars.4.

6. Analysis of responses from public consultation exercise

The table is a mixture of questions and concerns raised by participants. The number of communications has been arrived at by analysis of the written responses and the notes from the screening and scoping process.

Many of the written responses will be from people who also raised the issue at one of the meetings also.

The table is thus only a broad measure of the levels of concern about various issues. Where the issue raised is a question that has been answered, the level of concern is scored as zero. E.g. Will hides be built on site? Has been raised three times, but as no hides are planned, this is scored as an issue of zero concern.

Table 6. 1

| Issue | Sub issue | No. Of times issue raised by public | No. Of times concern on issue shared by the public | Score of the importance of issue |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Dog walking | Will there be restrictions on dogs? | 4 | 6 | Concern that plans will adversely affect dog walkers Scored as 7 Participants opposed to access by dogs Scored as 2 Dog walking scored as 9 |
| | Fencing & grazing will make dog walking difficult | 3 | 3 | |
| | I don't like loose dogs threatening me when I am walking. | 1 | | |
| | I want dog waste bins provided | 1 | 2 | |
| | Dogs will disturb the ground nesting birds | 1 | | |
| Public Access | Plans will increase public access to the site | 3 | 3 | Fears that plans will increase visitor numbers Scored as 4 |
| | Concern that "Twitchers" will be attracted to the site | 1 | | |
| | I want orienteering clubs to be allowed | 2 | | Wanting to use the site for orienteering 1 Not wanting the site used for orienteering 2 Concerns around orienteering Scored as 3 |

| Issue | Sub issue | No. Of times issue raised by public | No. Of times concern on issue shared by the public | Score of the importance of issue |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | I don't want orienteering clubs to be allowed | 2 | 2 | |
| | Concern that grazing and fences will impact on public access | 1 | | |
| Paths | Concern that there will be stiles not gates. | 2 | 2 | Concerns around paths Scored as 6 |
| | Concern that people be restricted to designated paths? | 2 | 2 | |
| | Concern that the paths be re-surfaced | 1 | | |
| | I want surfaced paths | 1 | | |
| Car Parks | Concerns about reducing the number of car parking points | 7 | 7 | Concerns over reducing the number of car parking points, Concerns that capacity of car park not enough Scored as 23 |
| | Concerns over capacity of the proposed car park not being big enough | 4 | 4 | |
| | Will the car park be visible from the road? | 1 | | |
| | One car park will concentrate people into one area of the Warren | 5 | 6 | |
| | We want to park in the lane as we do now | 4 | 4 | |
| | We want two car parks | 3 | 3 | |
| | The car park should be closed at night | 3 | 3 | Car park will be closed at night Scored as zero |
| Cyclists | Concerns over excluding cyclists | 6 | 5 | Wanting to cycle on the site 6 Opposed to cycling being allowed on site 2 Scored as 8 |
| | Cycling should not be allowed | 2 | 2 | |
| Horse riding | Will the riding permit system still operate? | 4 | 4 | Concerns around being allowed to horse ride on site Scored as 9 |
| | Can there be more access points for horses and riders | 2 | | |
| | 20 horse riding permits are not enough there should be day permits | 1 | | |
| | I am concerned that the forest will be fenced off and inaccessible to us on horses | 1 | | |
| Habitat management | Concerns that regenerating trees cannot be controlled | 3 | 4 | Concerns about re-generating trees Scored as 3 |

| Issue | Sub issue | No. Of times issue raised by public | No. Of times concern on issue shared by the public | Score of the importance of issue |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| | Ashdown Forest is close and has the same species, is the proposal worth the cost | 3 | 3 | Concern that the proposals are not cost effective Scored as 4 |
| | The money would be better spent controlling grey squirrel, magpies and jays | 1 | | |
| | Concern over welfare of grazing animals | 1 | | Concern over welfare of grazing animals scored as 1 |
| | Concern over removal of conifers plantations | 1 | | Concern over removal of tree cover scored as 1 |
| | There will be wind blow on the trees that are left | 3 | 3 | Concern about wind blow Scored as 3 |
| What will the effect be on? | Concern for Deer | 1 | | Concern for specific species Scored as 6 |
| | Concern for Cross-bills | 1 | | |
| | Concern for Wood-ants | 1 | | |
| | What about the birds that use the conifer? | 3 | 2 | |
| | Will the decoy pond be restored (compt.37) | 4 | | Question scored as zero |
| Landscape/ visual impact | Wanting to keep the block of thinned conifer Compt.22 as a visual amenity | 3 | 4 | Concerns around visual impact Scored as 4 |
| | What will the transition from woodland to heathland look like? | 1 | | |
| Others | Is the project the best use of EU funds | 1 | | Scored as best use of funds? above Scored as 1 |
| | What about the supply of softwoods | 1 | | Scored as concern for specific species |
| | RSPB plans will ruin the site for birds | 1 | | Question scored as zero |
| | Could chippings from the site be used on the paths or given to local schools? | 1 | | Question scored as zero |
| | Will hides be built ? | 3 | | Question scored as zero |
| | Could RSPB take over SWT Eridge Rocks Reserve | 1 | | Question scored as zero |
| | Could RSPB talk over Andrew Bests land? | 1 | | Question scored as zero |
| | What will be the effect on water downstream? | 1 | 2 | Concerns around hydrology Scored as 1 |
| | Will the boundary with SWT be fenced? | 1 | | Question scored as zero |
| Support RSPB proposals | I support the RSPB's plans | 8 | | In support of plans 10 |
| | I want to volunteer | 2 | | |

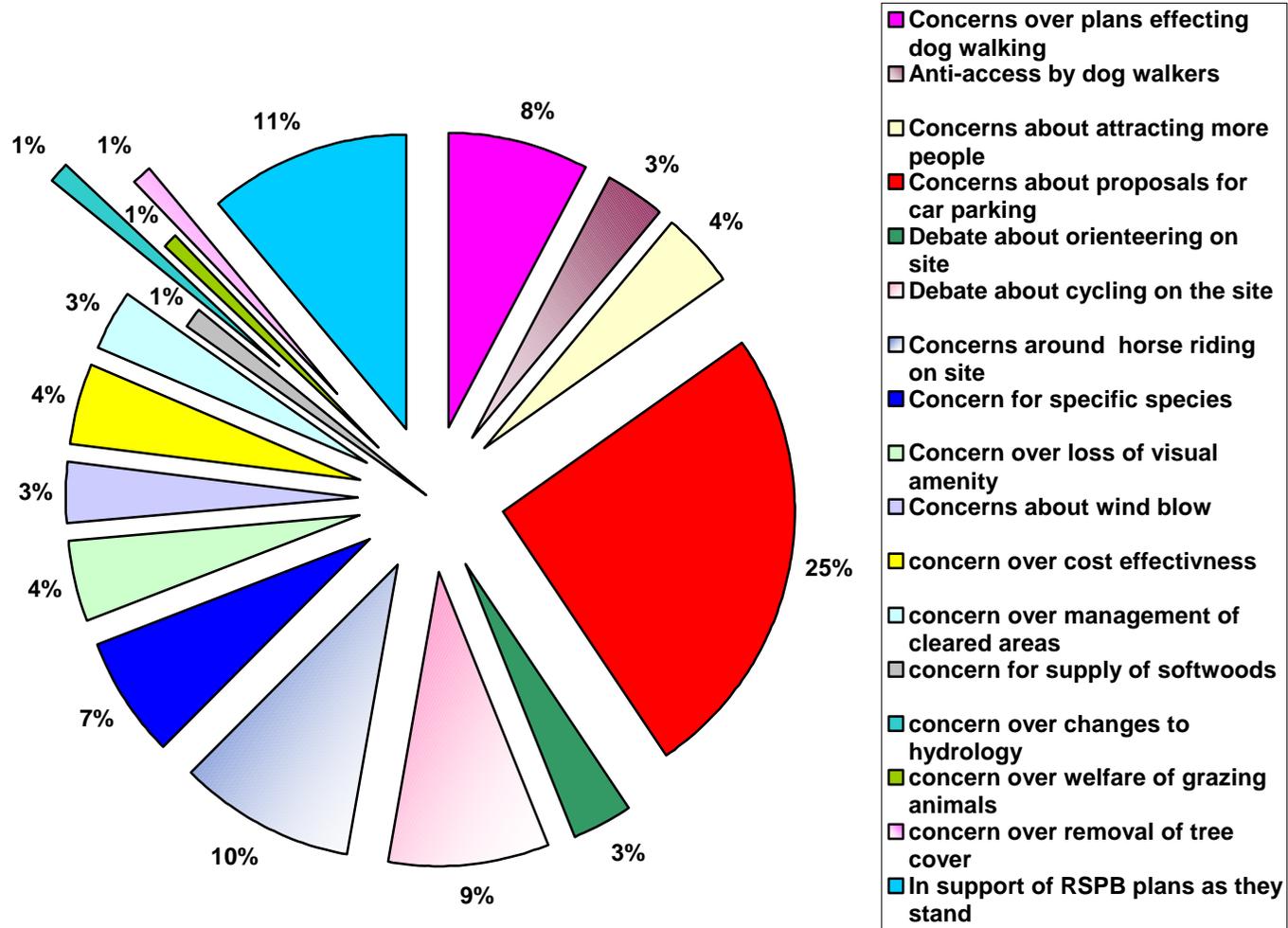
The information from table 6.1 is used to produce table 6.2 which is a broad measure of the level of concern expressed

Table 6.2

| Concern | Level of concern |
|--|-------------------------|
| Concerns over plans adversely effecting access for dog walking | 7 |
| Views opposed to dog walking being allowed on site | 2 |
| Concerns that plans will attract more people to the site | 4 |
| Concerns over reducing the number of car parking points | 23 |
| Concerns around orienteering being allowed on site | 3 |
| Wanting cycling to be allowed on site | 6 |
| Wanting cycling not to be allowed on site | 2 |
| Concerns around being allowed to horse ride on site | 9 |
| Concern for specific species | 6 |
| Concern around management of cleared areas | 3 |
| Concerns about wind blow to remaining trees | 3 |
| Concern around visual amenity | 4 |
| Concerns that plans are not cost effective | 4 |
| Concerns over changes to hydrology | 1 |
| Concern over welfare of grazing animals | 1 |
| Concern over the removal of tree cover | 1 |
| Concern over supply of softwood | 1 |
| Support for RSPB proposals as they stand | 10 |

Represented visually as below: **Table 6.3**

Levels of concern expressed at scoping



Thus, the scoping process revealed that local users were principally concerned about their access to the site. Most of these concerns were centered around changes proposed to the current ad hoc parking at the reserve. Issues around dog walking, cycling and horse riding were important to local people.

7. Conclusions of the scoping process.

The EC Directive 97/11/EC requires that for the purposes of the Environmental Impact regulations account must be taken of the potential impacts on the following factors:-

- a) human beings, fauna and flora
- b) soil, water, climate and the landscape
- c) material assets and the cultural heritage, and
- d) the interaction between the above factors

The purpose of the scoping process is to identify those issues that should be addressed in the Environmental Statement. During the course of the scoping meetings, from the written submissions and in subsequent discussions with interested parties, a variety of issues were raised. These have been grouped together under the above factors, and ranked as to their relative importance (Table 7.1)

The criteria used to determine the importance of each issue were as follows

- a) statutory requirements
- b) potential severity of impact
- c) degree of concern raised during scoping
- d) number of individuals or interests sharing that concern

This means that an issue of moderate concern to a wide variety of parties could score more highly than one that was felt by a single individual to be of vital importance.

After the scoping meeting, there was some discussion with the Forestry Commission to determine which of the issues raised should be examined in the Environmental Statement

The final list of issues is shown below as table 7.1

Please note that many of the major issues highlighted by the scoping process have been broken down into several smaller "sub-issues".

The column "relative importance of impact" refers to the importance as identified through the scoping process

| Factors | Issues raised at scoping, outlining potential impact on factors | Relative importance of impact. | |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------|
| Human beings | Impact of proposals on public access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on dog walking • Impact of increased visitor numbers | Medium | |
| | | Medium | |
| | Impact of proposals on mountain biking | High | |
| | Impact of proposals on horse riding | Medium | |
| | Impact of proposals on orienteering | Medium | |
| | Visitor Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking • Surfacing of paths | High Medium | |
| | Management of visitor access to prevent damage to site | High | |
| Neighbours | Privacy of neighbours | High | |
| Fauna | Impact on heathland birds | High | |
| | Impact on bat habitat | High | |
| | Impact on existing fauna | High | |
| | Impact on Herptiles | High | |
| | Impact on Invertebrates | Medium | |
| | Impact on small mammals | High | |
| | Impact on woodland birds | High | |
| | Impact on deer population | Medium | |
| | Flora | Impact on woodland flora | Medium |
| | | Impact on heathland flora | High |
| Impact on fungi, | | Medium | |
| Impact n lichens, bryophytes | | Medium | |
| | | | |
| Soil | Impact of clearance of the plantations on soil erosion | Medium | |
| | Management of woodland clearance to avoid soil pollution | Medium | |
| Water | Potential change in water table following woodland clearance | Medium | |
| Climate / Air | Difference in carbon sequestration between woodland and heath | Medium | |
| Landscape | Visual impact of proposals on local landscape | High | |
| | From key viewpoints (internal and external to the site) | Medium | |
| | From neighbouring properties | Medium | |

| Factors | Issues raised at scoping, outlining potential impact on factors | Relative importance of impact. |
|-------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Material assets | Harvesting of the timber Safety for operators and the public Stacking areas and haulage routes Vehicle movements generated by the o operations Pollution protection from machinery and disposal of "lop and top" | High Medium Medium Medium |
| Cultural heritage | Impact on archaeological features Impact on social history of site | High Low |
| Interaction | Interaction between grazing animals and public access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare of grazing animals • Impact of access with dogs on wildlife | High Medium |

The Environmental Statement will expand upon and address these issues.

