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RSPB Coombes and Churnet Valleys Nature Reserve,
Six Oaks Farm,
Bradnop,
LEEK,
Staffs,
ST13 7EU
Tel/Fax: 01538 384017
E-mail: jarrod.sneyd@rspb.org.uk
03/11/2009

Dear Sirs

RSPB COOMBES VALLEY NATURE RESERVE – PLANNING APPLICATION

This letter with photograph is submitted to provide additional information for the attached planning application.

REASON FOR WORKS

At present, some land within the Nature Reserve is grazed occasionally and on rotation to manage specific habitat and enhance biodiversity. The grazing involves fewer than 20 cows each year at any time and only between March and November. Cattle are brought onto the reserve by local graziers at the main entrance, to an existing cattle pen by the Visitor Center. This is an unsatisfactory arrangement with close proximity to visiting public so an alternative site for the access and cattle pen is proposed.

PROPOSED SITE

One of the grazed fields has a boundary of 110 meters alongside Apesford Lane at the northern edge of the reserve. At the mid-point on this boundary, there is a gap in an old hedgerow – see photograph enclosed. By removing a single hawthorn tree a new access from Apesford Lane can be created. The boundary is marked by a dilapidated dry stonewall, part of which will be removed and new wall ends created.

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It is proposed to surface the access (which will lead to a new cattle pen) with 'MOT' Type 1 Limestone (40mm to dust) aggregate compacted to form a cohesive surface. The access will be 10.5 meters long to the pen entrance to ensure that all vehicles and trailers can on / off load without obstructing Apesford Lane. It will also allow two vehicles onto the access for times when the vet or other inspection is required but no parking of vehicles will be allowed. This part of Apesford Lane is straight and level for over 50 meters in either direction from the new access allowing full visibility for the safety of road users and those using the access.

The new cattle pen will be constructed from standard 150mm diameter fence posts with 5 timber rails to give a height of 1.7 meters. The area within the pen will not be provided with any surfacing material, as its use will be occasional only. It is assumed that the construction of this pen does not require specific planning permission but details are included in the application should a consent be deemed necessary.

OPERATION OF THE ACCESS AND CATTLE PEN

Please note that all visits to the cattle pen by the graziers or others will be by prior arrangement with the Site Manager of the Nature Reserve (except in the case of an emergency). RSPB personnel will be in attendance at all access times to supervise and control the use of this facility.

Yours faithfully,

Jarrod Sneyd - Site Manager

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