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Lings Local Nature Reserve Community Consultation Report



Photograph: Nathalie Hueber, The Wildlife Trust

May 2010



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Contents

SUMMARY

1. Brief introduction to the Lings Local Nature Reserve Community Consultation
2. Key Recommendations

MAIN REPORT (available upon request)

3. Introduction to the Lings Local Nature Reserve Community Consultation
 4. Recommendations
 5. Considerations
 6. Results and analysis of public surveys
 7. Results and analysis of stakeholder consultation
- Appendix 1. Consultation documentation

SUMMARY

1. Brief introduction to the Lings Local Nature Reserve Community Consultation

Lings is an 18.5 ha (46 acre) Local Nature Reserve, located in the eastern district of Northampton. A mixture of habitats is present, including woodland, acid grassland and wetland (two ponds). Originally the area was comprised entirely of heathland, which was subsequently planted with non-native timber species in the 1940s. Lings Local Nature Reserve is very much an urban site. Surrounded by housing it is popular with dog walkers and local children use it as a cut through on their way to school. Due to its location the reserve is known to suffer from fly-tipping and general littering, as well as other forms of anti-social behaviour.

The Wildlife Trust believes that the longevity of sites like Lings cannot be achieved without involving a wide range of people, and it is therefore essential to effectively engage with local communities to find out how they currently view Lings Local Nature Reserve and how they would like to see it used in the future. This had never been done on a significant scale before and so a period of consultation, forming part of The Great Outdoors Project, was deemed appropriate.

The community consultation comprised onsite and offsite consultation with the general public, as well as consultation with key local stakeholders. Public consultation comprised both onsite and offsite surveys, as well as informal discussions and attendance by project staff at external meetings. Stakeholder consultation comprised completion of stakeholder surveys and one-to-one meetings with key individuals.

2. Key recommendations

Listed below are the summarised key recommendations for Lings Local Nature Reserve. These are examined in more detail in the main body of this report. Note that these are the recommendations that have been formed as a result of the community consultation. It may not in reality be appropriate or possible to implement all recommendations due to restrictions on the site as its designation as a Local Nature Reserve.

2.1. Access and Interpretation

Carry out any necessary maintenance work to all onsite seating. Further seating to be explored.

Carry out maintenance of all site entrance signs and onsite interpretation boards, making sure they are free of graffiti and other forms of vandalism.

Utilise notice board at Lings House.

Placement of interpretation at Spring Pond and the Scrape.

2.2. Site management

Formation of a voluntary litter-picking group (could be combined with volunteer team, see 2.3)

Report and deal with incidents of fly tipping as quickly as is practicable.

Temporary interpretation should be used when any major works are occurring onsite, detailing what is happening and why.

Regular check of all-access track around the reserve to ensure it is in a suitable condition.

2.3. Events, Activities and Engagement

Promote existing opportunities at Lings, in particular the health walk and Greenwatch groups.

Set up monthly volunteering task onsite

Organise family-friendly events to coincide with school holidays

Increase opportunities for adult learning and participation through guided walks and workshops.

Expand and build upon existing relationships with other local organisations.

2.4. Communications

Continue to build relationship with local media through The Wildlife Trust communications team.

Produce regular email bulletin with forthcoming events and issues relevant to Lings.

Utilise onsite notice board, local libraries and other outlets such as shops and community centres.

For more information or to request the full report please contact Louise Tuffin, Community Involvement Officer. louise.tuffin@wildlifebcnp.org or 01604 405285.