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Mike Greenway
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By Email

21st September 2018

Dear Mike,

RE: Ditchford Lakes Rushden – Otter Fencing

Thank you for asking for our response to your report for your Finance and Performance Sub-Committee about the proposal to install otter fencing around the lakes that form part of the Ditchford Lakes Nature Reserve.

As you know and make clear in your report, the Wildlife Trust objects to the proposal. Our objection relates principally to the impact fencing out a large area of the nature reserve will have on the ability of our members and the public to continue to enjoy the nature reserve, as a result of both reduction in access and because of the visual intrusion that fencing of the type necessary to exclude otters will inevitably have on the reserve.

We accept that excluding otters from the lakes is unlikely to have an impact on the status of otters in the Nene Valley as a whole. We simply feel that it is inappropriate to deliberately exclude iconic wildlife from an area set aside by the Council as a nature reserve.

We understand that Natural England have reviewed the proposals, and are of the opinion that they will not impact on the features for which the SSSI section of the nature reserve is designated. We agree with that opinion. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SSSI, which the designated parts of Ditchford Lakes fall within, is designated for breeding and wintering birds, and floodplain woodland, which would not be affected by the proposals.

We also accept that, with careful siting, the fence could help to focus public access on the nature reserve away from areas where recreational disturbance could affect wintering birds to some degree. We are grateful to both the Council and the fishing syndicate proposing the fencing for their upfront consultation with us about the fencing, and for their willingness to modify the proposals to reduce the impact on site. Fencing is however not considered necessary to maintain the level of bird interest on the site

Responding to the early consultation the Council have undertaken with us, we have highlighted that, should the Council decide to proceed with the fencing, our current agreement with the Council would need to be modified to ensure that the Wildlife Trust does not become responsible for the maintenance of a fence whose construction we object to, as would be the case under the current agreement.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Jackson
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