

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

COUNCIL HELD ON 27 August 2020

QUESTION from Dorothy Skrytek, Derby and South Derbyshire Friends of the Earth re Destruction of public footpath signs and blocking of footpaths.

“Please relate this question to the Derbyshire Dales District Council, as a public question,

Relating to members living in Derbyshire Dales who have reported to us the cutting down of a public footpath sign on Marjory Lane, Boylestone, Ashbourne (now a Radbourne Construction sign) and the blocking of public footpaths in the area, how can Derbyshire Dales district council enable members of the public to exercise their rights to walk in the countryside?”

ANSWER

Thank you for your question.

Officers have not previously been made aware of this issue. Marjory Lane forms the boundary between Derbyshire Dales District Council and South Derbyshire District Council. Discussions with our Planning team have suggested that this issue might actually lie within the area of South Derbyshire District Council. However, if you are able to provide more details about this matter we will look into it further.

QUESTION from Ciaran Guilfoyle, on the review of statues in the District of Derbyshire Dales.

“Is the Council reviewing (or planning to review) the statues that are currently erected around the district, in light of the recent controversies relating to racism and the slave trade? If so, can you provide further information about the review, regarding key dates, how the public might contribute to the debate, etc.?”

ANSWER

Thank you for your question.

In response to a motion debated at full Council on 2 July 2020 the District Council has compiled a list of all its assets and put this out to be reviewed by 2 independent persons. We are currently awaiting comments from one of these. Once this review has been completed the results will be reported back to Council. Again, this debate will be in public and members of the public will be able to feed into the debate through public participation.

STATEMENT from James Miles, on behalf of Hathersage Rewilding Group and Hope Valley Climate Action. Statement in support of on the biodiversity of Road Verges and Public Open Space.

“We write to support the recommendations of this report and to encourage the council to adopt the report in full and with enthusiasm.

Wildflowers and the pollinators that they sustain are in serious decline in the UK. We believe that the methods discussed in the proposed DDDC project are likely to significantly improve the biodiversity of Derbyshire Dales.

We strongly support recommendation 2. Rural verges are a very large area of land that could become a substantial wildlife reserve. Where verges are left to grow and wildflowers become established they provide a haven for wildlife, enhance the landscape and increase the natural beauty of Derbyshire Dales which will benefit tourism as well as improving the wellbeing of residents. We encourage DDDC to press DCC to review their mowing regime and to strongly prioritise wildlife in all of their future plans for verges.

We believe that the public consultation proposed in Recommendation 6 should begin as early as possible and certainly in time for discussions with DCC regarding future verge management. As a group of residents of Hathersage we are running a trial project on one section of verge in the village in collaboration with Hathersage Parish Council and this has provided a way to engage with the community. Where the DDDC project involves trial areas we encourage DDDC to include at least one in a gritstone area as well as limestone areas.

We would like to extend our work and we are keen to collaborate and consult with DDDC's Working Group on the proposed project.”

ANSWER

Thank you for the support of the Biodiversity report. The proposed working group would be interested in finding out more about the work Hathersage Rewilding Group and to learn from their trial verge project and support it where we can.

QUESTION from Sue Bliss a Matlock Resident, on biodiversity and practices within the Derbyshire Dales District.

“Along with numerous others I fully support this motion and I am very pleased that (if passed) DDDC will be taking action on this extremely important issue.

(Point 6 of the recommendations)

How will DDDC:

- Engage the community in identifying potential 're-wilding' spaces?*
- Use and channel interested community members (unemployment will rise) who could help establish, develop, promote and maintain these areas?*
- Educate the community in promoting biodiversity? I've been told consistently that the community wants sanitised mono-culture lawns and verges.”*

ANSWER

The working group has not met yet so we cannot give definite answers at the moment. However we would work with local interest groups within the District, use the media to ask for the public's help in identifying wildlife road verges and consult and work with Town and Parish Councils.

The Council would support volunteer groups who want to be involved in establishing and managing wildlife areas on DDDC land or that we manage.

Education is a vital part of the project and whilst we accept that not all residents share the same view, we have received quite a number of positive comments from the public about leaving the verges uncut. We will widely promote the work of the project and inform residents on the importance to local wildlife.

STATEMENT from Gillian Beer a Great Hucklow Resident, on biodiversity and practices within the Derbyshire Dales District.

“As a local resident formerly involved in the Peak District National Park Authority's road verge reserve project 2006/7, when I surveyed several road verges throughout the Park, I am very pleased to hear about the proposal to diversify road verges and about the link with Plant Life. More recently, I have been surveying flowers on the road verges near Windmill (near Great Hucklow) every two weeks during lockdown and would like to make the following comments on your proposals:

- The proposed Working Group would benefit from including a local wild flower expert, e.g. the PDNPA ecologist Rebekah Newman (if willing), or a representative of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.*
- While perhaps pre-empting the Working Group, I feel strongly that any wild flowers sown on rural verges should be native to the Peak District. Yellow rattle is a relatively common and beneficial plant and would be a natural way to enhance road verges if cost permitted - though it seems to favour already poor soil so may not grow well in all locations. On the other hand, I have never seen any of the flowers in the 'cornflower mix' in the wild in the Peak District and would suggest their use be restricted to urban areas, if used at all.”*

ANSWER

The working group will consult with ecologists from organisations like PDNPA and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Where we do create wildlife verges in rural areas then we would use native wildflower seeds from a local source where possible. A cornflower mix would only be used in urban areas.

QUESTION from Dr Sheila Evans, on behalf of Derbyshire Dales Climate Hub, the Non Traditional Homes Improvement Scheme and on biodiversity and practices within the Derbyshire Dales District.

Background

I am a member of the recently formed Derbyshire Dales Climate Hub, a sub-group of Derbyshire Climate Coalition. The Hub is a group of residents supporting the District Council in their commitment to reducing the community's carbon footprint. Before the lockdown the group drew on the professional expertise of a number of members to undertake a survey of residents' views on climate change. The results provided compelling evidence of both the extensive actions residents are taking to mitigate the impact of climate change and their views on what local councils' need to prioritise. Please see <https://derbyshiredalesclimatehub.wordpress.com/questionnaire/>

for a summary.

In light of covid, the Hub has now adapted and extended the questionnaire. The intention is that the results will be used to help us decide where to place our energies, and to inform local government initiatives (District and County). We plan to, in the first instance, post the questionnaire online through various means, including inviting community groups to signpost members to it, and advertising it on social media and in the press. In doing so we hope to gain evidence from a wide spectrum of the local population (not just the usual suspects). Currently the questionnaire is being piloted on people living outside the District. They are not affiliated to any environmental group. Please contact me for a copy of the questionnaire.

Question

- Would the Council promote the questionnaire through your online networks (e.g. website, email lists, newsletter etc.)?*

ANSWER

Thank you for your question. We have made tackling the issue of climate change a key priority for this Council and we would be happy to promote work that meets this priority. However, before agreeing to this specific request we would need to see the contents of the questionnaire and I would be grateful if you provide us with a copy so that we can respond properly.