

CONSULTATION ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CANNOCK CHASE COUNTRY PARK HEATHLAND



REPORT

BY RESOURCES FOR CHANGE LTD

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SUMMARY

Staffordshire County Council, as the owner and manager of Cannock Chase Country Park, is currently reviewing the Country Park Plan, in consultation with partners in the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). An important aspect of the plan is the management of wildlife habitats, especially the continued restoration and ongoing management of lowland heath, involving control of some vegetation.

Changes in land use and historic practices over two centuries led to a widespread loss of heathland in Staffordshire. As a major landowner of some of the remaining areas of heathland at Cannock Chase, now of both national and international importance, the County Council has a legal duty to restore and maintain this key wildlife habitat. Recent progress in the field of heathland restoration has required that the County Council now considers a more sustainable, long-term management approach, which has included commissioning a detailed study on the feasibility of re-introducing domestic livestock onto the Country Park. Such livestock would be used to graze the area, helping to control the spread of some of the more invasive types of vegetation, such as scrub and bracken.

Resources for Change were appointed to carry out a consultation with people who have an interest in the Country Park on current heathland management practices and the possible future re-introduction of grazing animals, to feed into the review of the Country Park Management Plan.

After the different groupings of people with an interest in the Country Park (the stakeholders) were established, a variety of methods were chosen to consult the wide range of individuals and organisations identified, which attracted nearly 600 responses. The early stages of the consultation were used to identify the main issues associated with current and proposed heathland management practice, whilst later stages focused on testing and refining these issues.

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The **main findings** include:

- The Country Park, as part of the larger AONB, is highly valued for both recreation and conservation in almost equal measures, though most respondents are recreational users
- A large majority support current methods of restoring and maintaining the heathland in the Country Park
- There are concerns about bracken spraying and tree felling
- There is good support for re-introducing grazing
- There are specific concerns about grazing, the main issues being
 - Fencing and access
 - Management of animals and their impact on other users
 - Lack of familiarity and fear of change.
- Methods of addressing the main issues raised include;
 - More engagement between those delivering management policies and interested members of the public (including local businesses)
 - Developing the role of volunteer
- A majority of respondents want to be more involved or better informed than they are at present.

The different options being considered for re-introducing grazing will need to involve good public information and engagement of interested stakeholders, but there is a high level of goodwill and support to build on.

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The main purpose of this consultation has been to contact key interest groups for their views on the future management of the heathland within the Cannock Chase Country Park, including a consideration of re-introducing grazing livestock (sheep, cattle or ponies). The consultation examined current and new management options that would enable the County Council to meet its statutory obligations as regards the parts of the Country Park included in the Cannock Chase Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Only when these consultations were completed would the review of the management plan for the Country Park begin. The consultation findings will also help guide the development of future policy and practice for the Country Park, as well as provide opportunities for further discussion and exchange of ideas with key interest groups.

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The public consultation focused specifically on the management options for the heathlands, including grazing, leading on from the relevant targets and action points highlighted in the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2004-9. It was not intended to cover the same ground as the AONB Plan consultation, which covered a much wider range of issues over a significantly larger area, including Cannock Forest.

Staffordshire County Council appointed Resources for Change to conduct the consultation as an independent agency experienced in undertaking public consultations.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The report documents the findings of the consultation, including detailing the main issues that have emerged and suggesting ways forward to address these. It shows the methods used to contact different groups of stakeholders and shows the interest groups that have been contacted and given opportunities to respond.

The information in the report and appendices will be a resource for Country Park managers to inform future heathland management practice, showing where there is broad public support for some activities but also where there are concerns or a lack of understanding. It also suggests ways in which local people can be engaged in order to address their concerns. The report includes a stakeholder analysis which will be a useful tool for future involvement and consultation activities.

BACKGROUND

4.1 GENERAL

Cannock Chase Country Park consists of around 1,300 hectares of open heath with trees, gorse, grassland, bracken, small areas of wetland and valley mire and fringe woodland. It contains the majority of the Cannock Chase SSSI, notified in 1987, and most of the Cannock Chase SAC, designated in 2005 and conferring European legal protection on this area for its heathland habitats.

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The County Council had been undertaking small-scale heathland restoration work on the Country Park between 1974 and 1997, by which time it had become clear that despite these activities, the nature conservation value of these heaths was still decreasing and more significant work was required. In the absence of traditional management practices on the heathland over a long period, it had become heavily encroached upon by scrub, secondary woodland and bracken, whilst the heather itself had begun to degenerate.

Restoration of the Country Park heathlands therefore began in earnest in the late 1990's, latterly aided by funding from a consortium of Government bodies and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Over the five years of the *Saving Cannock Chase* lottery project (1999 – 2004), more significant changes took place within the Country Park heathlands, involving restoring their open nature through tree felling and bracken control. This ambitious project was able to accomplish the objectives for heathland restoration outlined in the 1997 Country Park Management Plan, and once completed, the time was then right for the preparation of a new plan for this area.

The Country Park Plan – as distinct from the wider Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan, a statutory plan for the whole AONB – sets out management proposals for both visitor and amenity use, and for vegetation or 'habitat' management. Although previous plans had been widely consulted on, following new guidance on management planning for protected sites and common land, it was agreed that a public consultation programme should be undertaken to discuss current and new management options that would enable the County Council to meet its statutory obligations as regards to the SSSI and SAC areas on Cannock Chase Country Park.

4.2 LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The County Council has legal obligations to protect and further the conservation and enhancement of the key habitats on parts of the Country Park that are also included in the Cannock Chase SSSI and SAC, and which cover most of the Country Park (see map 1, Appendix 8.1). These obligations are detailed by Natural

England, in a process described below.

4.3 SITE CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Understanding and assessing the condition of SSSIs – a designation that is given to the best wildlife sites in England – is a responsibility of Natural England (formerly English Nature), who advise owners and occupiers on the type of management required for land of SSSI status. These ‘condition assessments’ are done using a scientific methodology that is able to take account of local variations and characteristics, but is based on a scientific understanding of what represents an ideal condition for a habitat to sustain its wildlife interest.

Cannock Chase SSSI was notified because of its heathland, mire and woodland habitats (the latter notably Brocton Coppice ancient woodland and the Sherbrook alder woodland) and later given European status as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) because it comprises the single largest area of lowland heathland in the Midlands. Natural England divides the SSSIs into smaller ‘management units’ which are then given targets or target ranges that have to be met to indicate that the habitat is in good health or in ‘favourable condition’.

In designating a site as a SSSI, Natural England include both a citation identifying the key features to be protected and conserved, and a list of operations that could be potentially damaging and therefore require their approval. They also provide guidelines to land managers on how they should be maintaining the interest on their sites.

Natural England currently defines the Cannock Chase SSSI as being in the main, in ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition, which reflects the fact that although a significant amount of management and restoration work has been undertaken over the past 10 years (responsible for the ‘recovering’ description), the site is still not yet in ‘favourable’ or ‘ideal’ condition. Natural England states that more work now needs to be done to address the quality of the heathland habitat. They add that ‘failure to improve the habitat quality will inevitably mean that future assessments

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of the site will result in its condition being described as 'unfavourable – no change' or 'unfavourable – declining'.

It is against this background that the County Council now hopes to be able to put forward a new Country Park Management Plan - one that will improve the condition of the key ecological features using approaches that are understood and supported by both specialists and the local community.

4.4 THE WIDER MANAGEMENT PLANNING BACKGROUND

The management of the Chase heathlands, including investigating grazing re-introduction as a management tool, was a key issue raised and discussed during the preparation of the wider Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan, which itself underwent a two-year consultation period from 2002 to 2004. During this time, many people took the opportunity to give their views on prioritising heathland conservation in general within the AONB, as well as on the broad management approach for this habitat.

This public consultation was therefore intended to focus more specifically on the management options for the heathlands, leading on from the targets and action points highlighted in the AONB Management Plan. It was not meant to cover the same ground as the AONB Plan consultation, but aimed to target key interest groups for their views on current and proposed practice. It also aimed to help Country Park managers appreciate public perception of the issues associated with managing the Country Park heathlands.

METHODOLOGY

5. STAKEHOLDERS

5.1.1 Who has an interest?

In order to establish who to involve and why, we consulted the document 'A Common Purpose: A Guide to Agreeing Management on Common Land', prepared by a number of key agencies including the former English Nature (now

Natural England) and the Open Spaces Society. Using this as our model, we carried out a thorough stakeholder analysis, in the course of which we brought together and updated several separate databases as a tool for this consultation and future involvement activities. We identified three levels of interest and structured potential stakeholders into these groupings:

- Legal interest
- Level of operation
- Nature of stake

5.1.2 Legal interest

This grouping includes those with a direct legal interest in the Country Park:

- Rights of ownership, benefit or access (other than public access rights)
- Legal responsibilities for any aspect of management.

5.1.3 Level of Operation

This grouping indicates the level of focus of a stakeholder. It informs us of the strategic level at which stakeholders will be concerned with issues relating to management of the Country Park.

These levels were:

- Neighbourhood e.g. Parish
- District
- County
- Regional
- National/International.

5.1.4 What kind of stake do people have?

This grouping defines the focus or type of interest a group or individual might have and details why groups/organisations may wish to be involved. These include:

- Owners
- Commoners
- Statutory responsibility
- Access
- Agriculture and forestry
- Archaeology
- Business, contractors, transport

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- Community and culture
- Education
- Game management, shooting
- Government
- History/tradition
- Landscape
- Minority and faith groups
- Nature conservation
- Recreation

By combining these complementary perspectives, we built a multi-faceted and overlapping picture of who the stakeholders are. This picture enabled us to decide the most appropriate stage, method or focus for involving stakeholders, based on the relative significance of the group's interests to the management of the Country Park, and the relative importance of the Country Park to the groups or individuals.

5.1.5 Consultation Level

The above analysis led to defining the following levels of consultation:

- Level 1: Priority relationships (essential relationship because of close involvement or legal rights). Examples include neighbouring landowners, District Councils, officers of the Cannock Chase AONB team, Commoners, etc.
- Level 2: Direct users (people using the Country Park, know it or part of it well, affected directly by changes). Examples include dog walkers, orienteers, horse riders, etc.
- Level 3: Local residents and workers (living or working immediately around the Country Park or in adjacent communities, visually aware of the Country Park). Examples include Parish Councils, bike hire firms, cafes, etc.
- Level 4: Others (anyone else who might be interested; general grouping which might also include individuals in other levels). Examples include Chase Council for Voluntary Service, Heart of England Tourist Board, Open Spaces Society national office.

5.1.6 Methods of consultation

We designed methods to consult groups and individuals at each level of consultation relationship, summarised in the table below:

5.2.1 Table showing consultation approaches

Consultation Level	Activity	Purpose / Reason for use
2, 3	Consultation stalls and displays – on site and in the locality	To provide opportunity for those who have an interest due to their actual usage or because it forms part of the environment of their neighbourhood.
1,2	Follow up by sample phone calls	Follow up specific areas of enquiry and to address gaps in the respondent profile.
1,2,3, 4	Hard copy Questionnaires	To provide opportunity for individuals and groups to contribute fully without using the internet.
1, 2	Key informant interviews	To provide opportunity for full discussion with representatives of organisations who have insight into issues and who may well have ongoing role regarding management of the Country Park.
1,2,3,4	Online questionnaire – prompted by direct mailing and e-mailing.	To gather views on Country Park heathland management. Very accessible to organisations and for those individuals with internet access, can be completed at home.
2,3,4	Postcards	To gather views on Country Park management. Quick, easy access, localised and immediately returnable method.
2,3,4	Public drop-in event – in the Country Park	To gather views on Country Park heathland management and create opportunity for discussion and expression of opinions.
2,3	Street and door step interviews – in the locality	To provide opportunity for irregular users, lapsed users, and potential future users to comment.
2,3	Semi-structured interviews – on site and in the locality	To enable a discussion on usage and attitudes to management of the Country Park heathland.
2,3	Visiting groups	To use opportunities provided by existing activities bringing together people who may have an opinion on management of the Country Park heathland.

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Consultation Level	Activity	Purpose / Reason for use
1, 2 (groups)	Requested telephone interviews	To provide opportunity for representatives of groups to contribute fully without using the internet
1,2	Workshop	A session to draw out the responses to the consultation.
1,2,3,4	Feedback pamphlet summarising consultation findings (post-consultation).	Public information, foster involvement and knowledge of ongoing Country Park management planning process.

(See also Appendix 8.5 'List of means used to promote the consultation').

We used these methods to gather views over a wide target area initially, especially the questionnaires, postcards and stalls and some early interviews. As the key issues began to emerge, we then focused on these at the drop-in, workshop and key informant interviews. The validity of the main issues identified through the earlier stages of consultation was confirmed and further detail added from the later stages. A description of each method used follows (see also Appendices).

5.2.2 Postcards and hard copy questionnaires

We designed a postcard for quick responses from visitors and local residents, which also signposted people to the on-line questionnaire and information about the management of the Country Park on the County Council's website. The postcards were made available in the five Visitor Centres and in local shops, Post Offices and cafés. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also made available in the Visitor Centres, together with an information booklet about management of the Country Park heathlands, the latter produced by the County Council.

5.2.3 On-line questionnaires

The on-line questionnaire, which follows the same format as the paper version, was publicised through the local press, local websites and by mailings, either directly or through the County Council, the Council for Voluntary Service and the

Rural Community Council. Altogether 600 organisations and individuals were contacted. At the same time, the mailings notified people about the consultation street stalls and also invited them to the drop-in day held at the Cannock Chase Visitor Centre, Marquis Drive.

5.2.4 Street stalls

Consultation stalls were held in venues within or near residential areas close to the Country Park, at Brocton, Pye Green and Milford Common, and at a Family Day event held at the Museum of Cannock Chase. They were designed to target people who live or work near the Country Park but do not necessarily have a special interest in it.

5.2.5 Drop-in

The drop-in day was held at the Cannock Chase Visitor Centre, using the County Council's exhibition caravan. The display used information about heathland conservation and management practice, and people were encouraged to discuss their views on this and complete further questionnaires. This part of the consultation was also used to test out the key issues already emerging from earlier stages of the consultation.

5.2.6 Semi-structured interviews

Country Park users and local residents were interviewed on doorsteps and in various locations around the park, using a simplified version of the questionnaire as the basis for open-ended discussions intended to draw out key issues. Similar interviews were held with key informants through face to face meetings and on the telephone.

5.2.7 Workshop

At the end of the consultation process, organisations and individuals in priority relationships (Level 1, see p.10) in relation to the management of the Country Park, and those who during the consultation expressed an interest in further involvement, were invited to hear the preliminary findings and discuss some of the key issues at a workshop. In particular, those attending looked at the options for

re-introducing grazing to the Country Park, and discussed the points for and against each option.

6. FINDINGS

In total, we heard from 580 people. A profile of the participants involved in each of the different consultation methods detailed in the methodology is shown in the Appendices. In the following pages, the main results are set out under the themes of:

- The importance of the Country Park – access and landscape
- Methods used to manage and restore the heathland within the Country Park
- Re-introduction of grazing animals (a key issue)
- Awareness and involvement
- Future management.

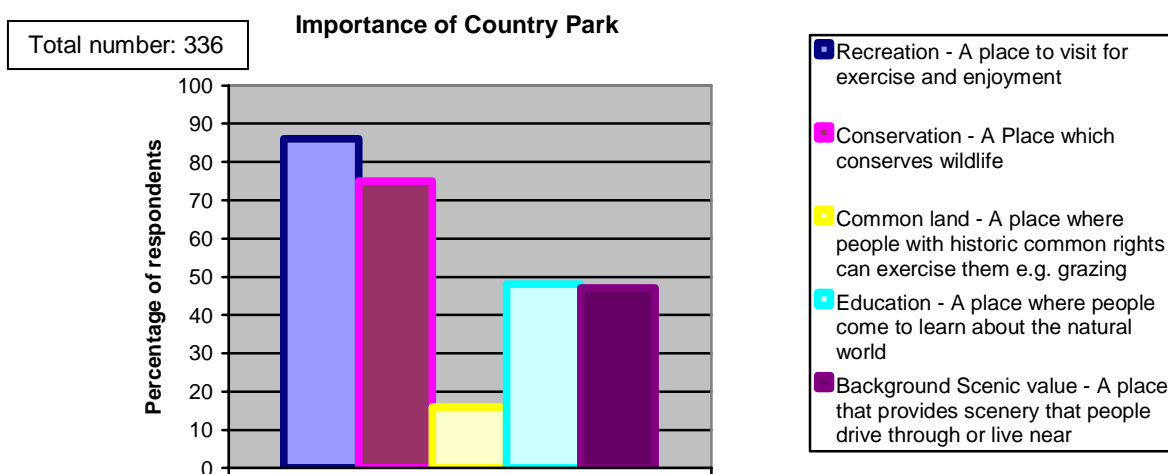
Following numerical analysis of the data for each of the above themes, the main issues and views have been drawn out, with strongly held views particularly highlighted.

6.1 IMPORTANCE OF THE COUNTRY PARK

6.1.1 Main findings

Respondents were asked how important different aspects of the Country Park were to them. Recreation – including simply taking in the fresh air and picnicking - and conservation emerged as almost equally important with over 80 & 75% of responses respectively saying these aspects were very important. This is significant as over 70% of respondents to the consultation claimed to use the Country Park for recreation of some kind. It appears that for most people who enjoy recreational use of the Country Park, wildlife is a big part of their enjoyment, and therefore the conservation of wildlife habitats is well supported. This deduction is confirmed when we look at reactions to management methods.

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6.1.2 Issues

There were over 200 comments on the overall qualities of the Country Park. 50% of them emphasised the importance of the quality of the landscape, especially its tranquillity, variety and historic associations. 34% commented on the importance of its openness and accessibility. These feelings influenced responses to grazing proposals as well as management methods generally.

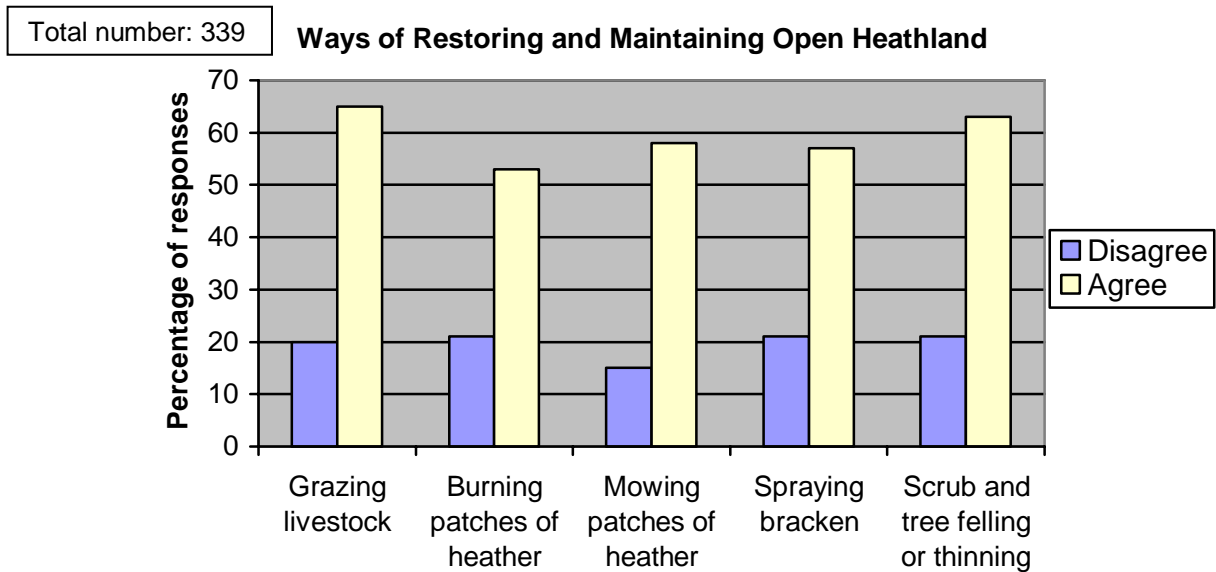
6.2 MANAGEMENT METHODS

6.2.1 Main findings

Asked for their opinions on the main methods used to restore and maintain heathland in the Country Park, there was strong support for all the methods used. The only exception was aerial spraying of bracken, which only 33% of respondents agreed with, attracting outright opposition from 45%. Even this method, the most unpopular, was opposed by a minority overall.

Grazing of livestock as a method of management was included in this question, although there is no grazing at the moment. Even so, there was a high level of support for this option.

These results are shown in the tables below.



6.2.2 Issues

There were some specific concerns that stood out, however.

Bracken control provoked controversy. The highest level of disagreement with any management method was spraying bracken using helicopters, at 45%. Some well-informed respondents commented that the impact of spraying should be more openly debated.

Tree felling and clearing was overall, well supported (63%), but it also provoked a good deal of reaction, with 55 specific comments about this practice, 48 of them negative. Overall, 175 comments were made on all management methods and of those 27% objected to tree felling. From the questionnaires, 96% of respondents agreed that important native woodlands should be protected.

Management of recreational activities drew a high response, with 63% agreeing that these should be re-directed to less sensitive areas and 70% commenting that the network of firebreaks and paths should be reviewed to protect sensitive species.

These concerns should not obscure the fact that there was a high level of support for the management practices employed within the Country Park.

6.3 INTRODUCTION OF GRAZING

6.3.1 Main findings

When considering the re-introduction of grazing animals in the Country Park, a number of options were offered, covering types of animals that could be used:

- Sheep
- Ponies
- Cattle

And different ways of managing them:

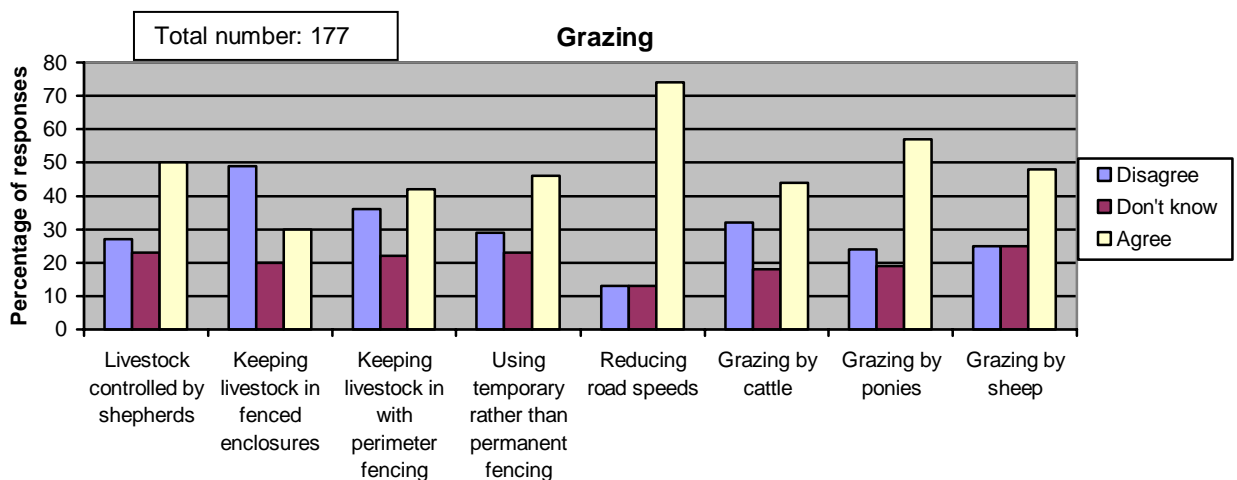
- Herding
- Reducing road speeds
- Perimeter fence
- Temporary fences
- Fenced enclosures

The most popular method of management by far, was reducing road speeds to protect grazing stock, which was favoured by 74%. Controlling animal movements by herding was also popular (50%), and of the types of animal being considered, ponies were the most favoured. Cattle were slightly less popular (44%), and opinions about sheep were evenly balanced, with almost as many opposing as supporting their use. Some concerns expressed in comments about sheep grazing may show reasons for less support for this option: their vulnerability to dogs and disease, and their possible negative impact by close grazing of vegetation.

Of the three options for fencing, temporary fencing was the most favoured and fenced enclosures the least, with perimeter fencing lying between these options.

A fairly high proportion of responses were 'don't knows', reflecting that for many people grazing animals are an unknown quantity at least in this context, and they were finding it difficult to think through the consequences.

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6.3.2 Issues

The options for re-introducing grazing were discussed at length during the final workshop, which involved a small, but widely representative range of people. Comments drawn from all the consultation methods including the workshop discussion highlighted the following main opinions on re-introducing livestock. As grazing was a key issue, it is useful to report these in some detail.

On the positive side:

- Lower cost and sustainable, low impact on habitats
- Traditional and historic, in keeping with the character of the landscape
- Good for managing vegetation
- A local marketing opportunity for meat
- Learning opportunities for visitors and 're-connection' with the site's history
- Slowing down traffic would be good for walkers and wildlife
- Low visual impact of some kinds of fencing
- Recent experience at Hednesford Hills Common has been positive; good for education
- Particular areas are suitable
- Herders on site can be a very useful source of public information & education
- Perimeter fencing would also help control crime such as poaching & fly-tipping
- Cattle and herdsman could be 'shared' by bodies within the wider AONB Partnership
- Cattle & rabbits shown to be best at controlling certain types of vegetation
- Potential jobs
- People like to see grazing animals
- Ideal for managing transitional zones between heathland and woodland/forestry.

On the negative side:

- Could be more expensive than existing methods
- Fear by the public of aggressive animals, which may prevent visitors coming to the Country Park
- A risk of dog worrying or poaching, and scaring the livestock
- May not be good for vegetation management and damaging to the ground
- Some vegetation is harmful to livestock e.g. bracken
- Animals may be demanding to manage, risky and disease-prone
- Bad for wildlife through injury or as vectors for disease
- Restrictive of open access, too much control by fencing
- Would ruin recreation
- A bad visual impact; change towards a farmed landscape rather than wilderness
- Bad for visitors; have to overcome a resistance to change
- Vandalism-prone
- Safety problem with roads
- As a significant change, it will need work to win over public perceptions.

6.4 KEY ISSUES

There were three key issues in relation to grazing re-introduction:

6.4.1 Fencing

- where the main negative issues raised were:

- Opposition to all fencing because it restricts access and limits the sense of freedom
- Opposition because it seriously affects landscape character, especially shifting appearance towards a farmed landscape rather than wilderness
- [Creation of] 'Sterile pockets of [wildlife] habitat enclosed by a fence'

Positive comments, as against these concerns include:

- Fence lines need careful planning so they don't impinge on the landscape.
- The visual impact of cattle grids needs to be considered
- Type of fencing should be in keeping with the landscape character.
- Temporary fencing would reduce public fear of animals and would not constrain access.
- To maximise public support, access must be maintained
- Fenced enclosures are feasible if carefully planned.

6.4.2 Traffic safety

- Road kill of deer is already a problem
- Traffic poses a risk to livestock

- Traffic calming is popular because of the positive impact on other Country Park users and wildlife
- Speed of bikes is also a problem to other users.

6.4.3 Husbandry

- Risk of disease spread to wildlife
- Livestock must be kept at a low density to prevent damage
- Animals must be controlled. Some areas are more suitable than others
- Cattle are more 'bomb proof' than others; they are more robust
- Sheep need more management than other animals, and are more vulnerable to dogs and disease
- Ponies and particularly cattle provoke more public fear than sheep.

Generally, the comments from all sources tended to favour cattle as grazing animals if public fears can be met by good management, because they are considered less vulnerable to dogs and disease. Overall, however, slightly more respondents favoured ponies than other animals. Herding would avoid all problems of introducing fencing, if cost-effective and offering enough control and protection to animals and people.

Again, it is notable that, in spite of detailed concerns, there is substantial support for the re-introduction of grazing.

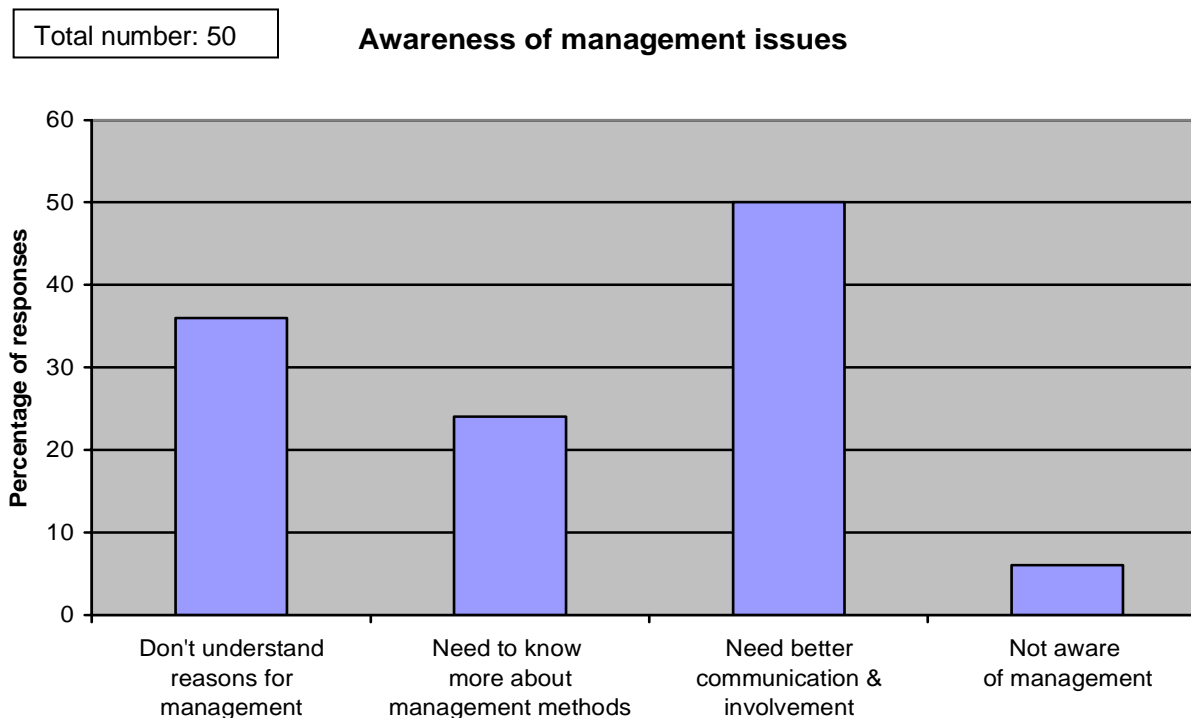
6.5 AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING AND INVOLVEMENT

6.5.1 Awareness of management issues

Throughout the consultation process, information about the reasons for heathland restoration and for considering the re-introduction of grazing animals was provided or made available. The County Council had produced a booklet for the Visitor Centres to accompany the questionnaires, which provided brief explanations about current and proposed heathland management techniques for the Country Park. The postcards, on-line and paper questionnaire also contained links to further information on relevant websites, and summary booklets and display information were provided at the stalls, drop-in and workshop events.

There were no specific questions about respondents' awareness or understanding of the reasons for heathland restoration, or the specific methods used. The analysis of current levels of awareness of management approaches shown in the graph is drawn from comments made arising from all consultation methods used, so are significant in spite of relatively low numbers. Some of the comments were made by people directly involved in site management or associated roles, e.g. tourism, who supported the view that better communication with the public was needed.

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6.5.2 Issues

Many of those expressing strong feelings, for example about clearing trees and scrub, appeared to base their opinions on misunderstanding or lack of knowledge.

The main areas of confusion are:

- Lack of awareness of the legal obligations on the Country Park managers, especially attached to the SSSI and SAC (see page 5, 'Background')
- The use and impact of management techniques, for instance the specific results of restoration work
- The extent and types of wildlife that exist on the heathland – many respondents were unaware of wildlife other than deer, rabbits & squirrels.

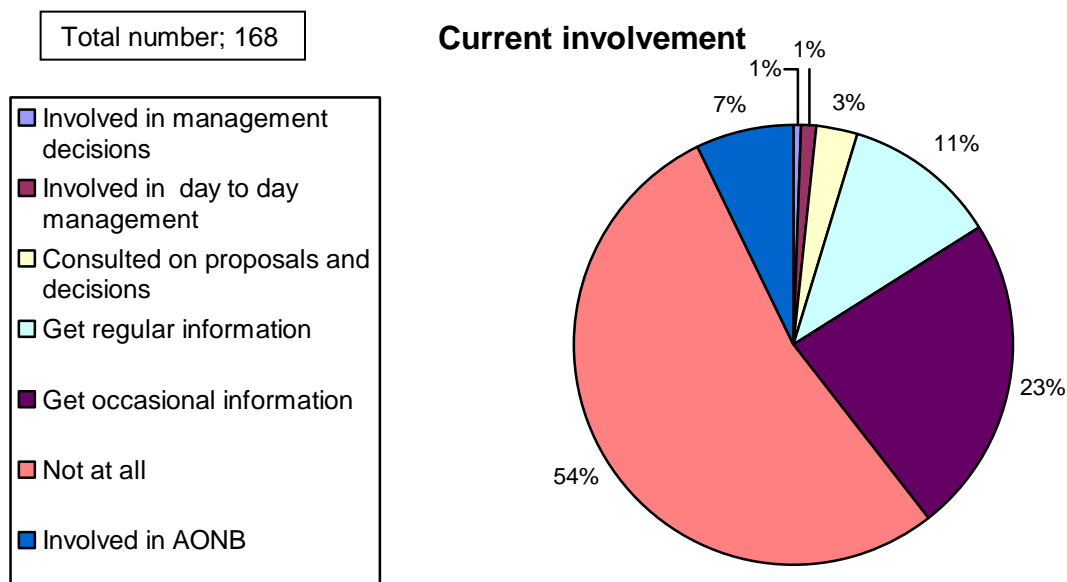
Many respondents felt or showed a lack of knowledge about heathland restoration and Country Park management practice generally, but many comments also expressed an awareness of this lack of knowledge and interest in being better informed. Some were not aware that the Country Park was being managed at all, seeing it as 'natural' wilderness – in many ways, a tribute to the current management approach. Some commented that they understood the issues much better as a result of the information provided alongside the consultation.

6.6 INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PARK

6.6.1 Main finding

54% of respondents felt they had no current involvement in the Country Park, even at the level of occasionally getting information (see pie chart 1 below). Only 23% said they got regular information or were involved more directly. This finding reflects the main body of respondents, day-to-day Country Park users, rather than managers or other major stakeholders.

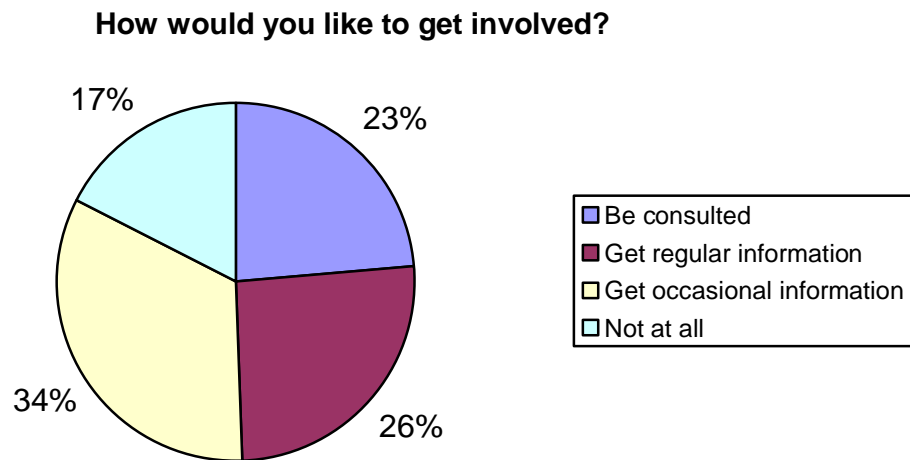
Pie Chart 1



A more unexpected finding, however, was that the vast majority of respondents (83%) said they wanted more involvement (see pie chart 2). This also shows that 34% of respondents want at least to receive occasional information, and 49% want to be informed more regularly or consulted.

Comparing the results between the two charts, only 17% of respondents want no involvement at all (chart 2), compared with 54% who feel they have none at present (chart 1).

Pie Chart 2



6.6.2 Issues

The main issue for managers is how the apparent demand for more involvement can be met effectively and efficiently. Options to be considered could include extending the role of Country Park Rangers, maintenance workforce and volunteers. There is also potential in developing key relationships with nearby business owners as a means of disseminating more information, especially those where the existence of the Country Park is essential to their activity, for example camping and caravanning site owners, horse riding schools and some cafés.

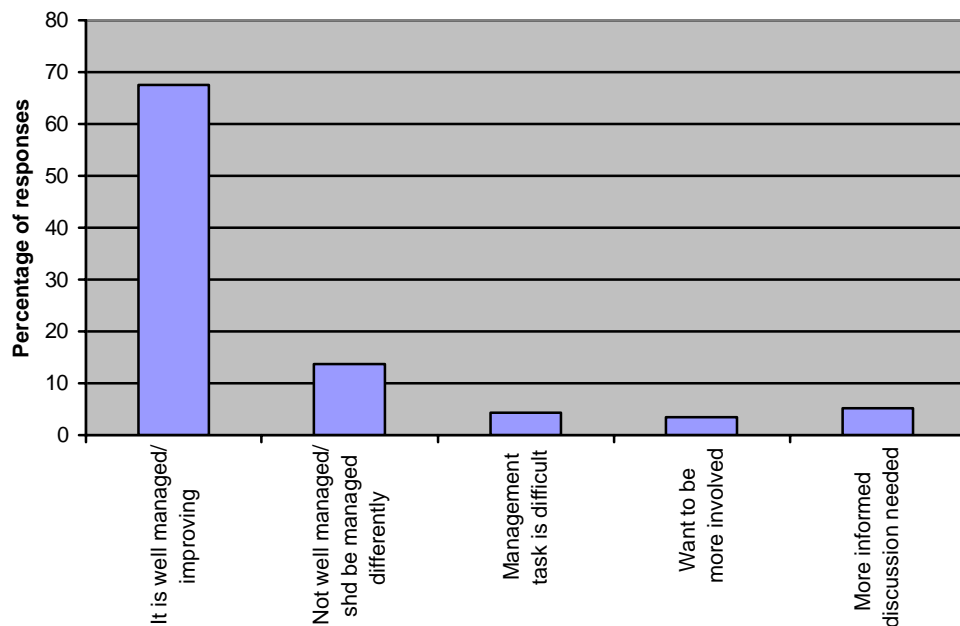
Over 40 respondents gave contact details and wanted to have some future involvement, whether receiving information, being consulted or in other ways. Some of this group may wish to be actively involved, for example as volunteers or contacts to distribute information to other interested parties.

6.7 SUPPORT FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT

6.7.1 Main findings

These results are drawn from comments arising from all consultation methods, and particularly from interviews with key informants. It is striking that nearly 70% support the way the Country Park is being managed at present. The small proportion who are opposed or who have specific concerns and suggestions, are important, however. Some of these concerns and suggestions are made by people who are well-informed and involved to some degree, others are from Country Park users who know and love it well.

Views on Current Management



6.7.2 Issues

Many comments noted big improvements, which can be summarised by the comment 'I value the County Council's genuinely joined-up thinking, exceptional in consultation'. Good information is appreciated alongside a demand for more.

Several wanted to see transitional zones between forestry and heathland; some comments recorded that the two did not currently join smoothly and the Forestry

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Commission approach in the boundary areas needed more explanation.

Other needs were identified:

- More resources and greater Ranger presence
- Buffering/expanding key sites of particular species, more scrapes for ground-nesting birds, more specific nesting sites
- More restoration of heathland (as well as demand for more woodland, noted earlier)
- More protection of birds and specific nesting sites, especially from dogs
- More action on climate change, noting the potential of the Country Park for promoting the sustainable message, for example through energy self-sufficiency
- Dialogue continuing by all involved.

CONCLUSIONS

A wide range of people and organisations were consulted on the management of the Country Park heathlands, leading to a significant number of responses. Almost all respondents used the Country Park for some form of recreation, indicating that it is highly valued locally, as well as by visitors from further away. There is some evidence, both from direct and indirect comments made, that some very local residents do not use the Country Park at all. In all, however, there appears to be a strong sense of ownership and love of the Country Park by those who use it, and a majority of respondents had few, if any concerns about its current management. 35% of respondents made comments, and of the 553 separate comments made, 66% were positive or neutral.

There tended to be fewer responses from people with a specific conservation interest in the Country Park, but many of their concerns were in effect supported by the large majority of respondents who were recreational users in the widest sense, since they recognise the value of nature conservation in terms of its impact on their enjoyment of the area.

7.1 BROAD SUPPORT FOR COUNTRY PARK HEATHLAND MANAGEMENT

In general terms, there is public support for restoring and maintaining the heathland on Cannock Chase Country Park, as well as for the main methods used to do so. Many said specifically that it is well managed.

7.2 AREAS OF CONCERN

There are some specific areas of concern however, particularly regarding bracken spraying and tree felling, some of which arises from lack of information, although these practices are likely to continue to be contentious. There was also some concern that all current practices are to some degree unsustainable. The negative responses, though a minority, were a large minority – 33% of comments made.

7.3 OVERALL SUPPORT FOR GRAZING

There appears to be a good level of support for re-introducing grazing in the Country Park from the results of this consultation.

The details will need to be carefully designed to meet specific concerns, however, which centre around:

- Unknown implications, lack of familiarity
- Management of animals
- Impacts on other users
- Fencing.

7.4 ENGAGING WITH CONCERNS

Drawing from responses and discussions during the consultation, a range of methods could be used to address the main issues and concerns:

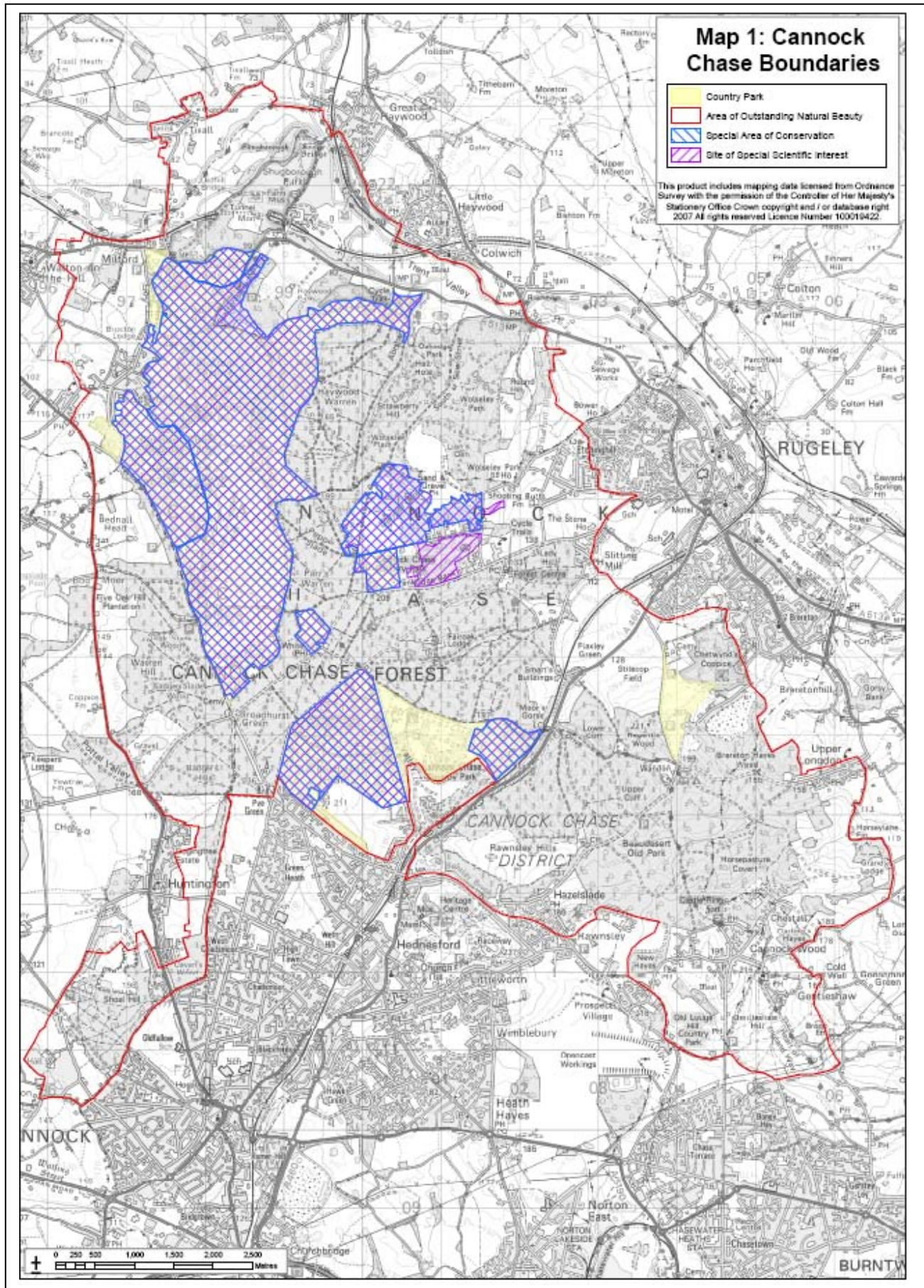
- Continuing with, and developing good quality dialogue with partners and other priority stakeholders
- More engagement of those responsible for delivering management policies
- More engagement of interested members of the public and of interested local businesses
- Developing the role of volunteers and Rangers
- Developing educational resources to meet a genuine interest in heathland management.

Several options are being considered for the re-introduction of grazing, all of which have their advantages and drawbacks. More than one may be piloted, but it is clear that good public information and involvement of interested stakeholders will be needed in designing the details in order to arrive at the best solution. The most positive aspect emerging from this consultation is the strong groundswell of goodwill and support for the management approaches taken so far, which gives a strong platform to build on.

APPENDICES

- 8.1 MAP 1: CANNOCK CHASE COUNTRY PARK SSSI AND SAC BOUNDARIES.
- 8.2 LEGAL DUTIES & POLICIES
- 8.3 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS
- 8.4 PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS BY METHOD OF CONSULTATION
- 8.5 LIST OF MEANS USED TO PROMOTE THE CONSULTATION
- 8.6 QUESTIONNAIRE, POSTCARD & STALL RESULTS ANALYSIS
- 8.7 COPY OF ORIGINAL QUESTIONNAIRE
- 8.8 DROP-IN AND WORKSHOP RESULTS
- 8.9 GRAPHS OF DETAILED RESPONSES

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APPENDIX 8.2

LEGAL DUTIES AND POLICIES

As owners and managers of the Country Park, Staffordshire County Council has a duty to meet legal obligations and national and international policy requirements. These are contained in:

- Section 40(1) of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act)
- Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

In addition, Paragraph 78 of the DEFRA code of guidance 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Encouraging positive partnerships' states that 'Public bodies are expected to adopt the highest standards in relation to SSSIs that they own, in order to secure positive management of the SSSI in accordance with an agreed management scheme'.

Natural England's views about the management of heathland such as that found on Cannock Chase SSSI include the following;

- Heathland supports the greatest diversity of plants and animals....where management maintains the open nature of the heath and by promoting a varied structure of uneven stands of native heathers and other characteristic plants.
- Low intensity grazing is a suitable means of managing areas of dry heath. Generally, areas of wet heath require limited management but light grazing may also be useful for maintaining the variation in vegetation composition and structure...
- Cutting or mowing may be useful options for managing dry heath where a mosaic of patches of heather of different ages is desired, usually in association with light grazing.
- Prescribed burning can also be a useful tool for maintaining the structural diversity of some dry heathlands...
- Management should ensure the predominantly open nature of the dry and wet heathland vegetation is maintained, but there is some benefit in retaining a few scattered individual trees, small clumps of birch and willow and some small patches of scrub.
- An element of native deciduous woodland fringing the heath may add to the conservation interest by providing edge environments favoured by some heathland birds and invertebrates, and mature oak is particularly valuable for these interests.

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- Some additional management may be required to remove any dense bracken or scrub invasion, or to control tree encroachment where this begins to impact on the open nature of the heath.
- Grazing is important in the management of valley mire.

The County Council and partners in the AONB Partnership have adopted these relevant policies and actions which are included in the AONB Management Plan:

Policy 3.1.3 (3); 'The management of the different AONB habitats will be undertaken on a sustainable, long-term basis, using a range of different techniques to create a mix of habitats where heathland is the primary concern.'

Action 3.1.2 (3) A; 'Support AONB partners in securing funding for the continuing restoration, management and where appropriate, re-creation of heathland and other key habitats.'

Action 3.1.2 (3) B; 'Research sustainable land management techniques, including grazing.'

Policy 3.1.2 (5); 'Locally, nationally and internationally designated sites will be protected in accordance with the relevant legislation and local policies, to ensure that the features by reason of which they are of special interest are maintained.'

APPENDIX 8.3 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The rationale for analysing stakeholders and establishing appropriate levels of consultation was based on the analysis set out in: 'A COMMON PURPOSE: Guide to agreeing management on common land' (English Nature (now Natural England), DEFRA, Open Spaces Society, Countryside Agency (now Natural England), National Trust, 2005.)

This document identified 13 types of interest, as follows:

Interests	Reasons for using the Country Park or being involved	
Nature Conservation	Wildlife, botany, geology interests	Moth Group, BTCV, secondary schools
History/Tradition	Interest in historic practices, folklore, historic landscapes	Civic Society, National Trust
Education	Source of learning opportunities	Schools, universities, Rangers, Wildlife Trust
Archaeology	Visible features, items underground	Archeological Society, English Heritage
Landscape	Scenic environment, open vista	Local residents, travellers, CPRE
Access	Opportunities for fresh air & exercise, tranquility, emergency access, no-cost facility, appreciation of open space	Ramblers, Open Spaces Society, bikers, riders, utilities, gov't agencies e.g. Fire, Natural England
Recreation	Sports, competitive events, specific pursuits, walking	Schools, orienteer clubs, British Horse Society, fishing clubs, campers, Sport England
Community and Culture	Local amenity, tourism, historic links, identity, community events	Parish Councils, event organisers, community groups
Minority & faith groups	Black and minority ethnic groups, churches, other minority groups	Churches, Staffs. Access Group, ToC'H'
Government	Statutory authorities, departments & agencies	County Council, GOWM, AWM,
Agriculture	Farming on or near Country Park, farming interests	NFU, local farmers & landowners
Game management	Rough & driven shooting, game management	BASC, CLA
Business, contractors, transport	Local businesses, contractors, transport operators	Chamber of Trade, B & B's, pubs, Arriva

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Using these categories of interest, we structured the interest groups into three levels of interest as described in the text of the report (Section 5.1.1 'Who has an interest?'). The table below shows examples of the application of the analysis.

Stakeholder analysis	Definition	Examples
Level of relationship	Importance of the <i>group</i> to Country Park management. Importance of the <i>park</i> to groups	
Level 1: Priority relationships	Essential relationship - close involvement or legal rights	AONB Officers, Natural England, Commoners
Level 2: direct users	Using the Country Park, know it well, affected directly by changes	Dog walkers, orienteers, cyclists
Level 3: Local residents and workers	Living or working immediately around the Country Park or in adjacent communities, visually aware of the park	Parish Councils, bike hire firms, cafes, local communities
Level 4: Others	Anyone else who might be interested	Chase CVS, Open Spaces Society national office
Area of operation	Geographical area where stakeholder is located or where they operate. May have two or more entries	
Local	In, or immediately around the Country Park, or very nearby	Haywood Society, local councilors, campsite operators
District	Operating across Cannock district or other adjacent districts	Stafford Historical and Civic Society, East Staffs. Rural Partnership
County	Operating across Staffordshire county, or part of	Community Council of Staffs, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Regional	Operating wider than county, less than national	Natural England, West Midlands Bird Club
National/ International	Operating nationally or internationally	Natural England, MEPs, Coal Authority
Legal interest	Having legal rights and/or responsibility	
Legal rights	Rights of ownership, benefit or access (other than public rights) in the Country Park	Commoners, utility companies, Fire Service, Coal Authority
Statutory responsibility	Legal responsibilities for any aspect of management	County Council, Natural England

APPENDIX 8.4

PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS BY METHOD OF CONSULTATION

The table below shows the type and location of consultation methods, and the profile of respondents contacted by each method, showing the numbers at each level of interest. Note that there are none shown at Level 4, because this level was a 'catch-all' to find interested people not contacted otherwise. Where contacts were made at level 4, respondents inevitably fitted into one of the other levels, usually Level 2, direct users of the Country Park.

Where 'x' is shown in the box, it indicates that respondents fell into this category also, but numbers are not shown to avoid double counting.

Where & how	Profile of Respondents	Level 1 Priority relation -ships	Level 2 direct users	Level 3 Local residents and workers	Total
On-line questionnaire	Mainly working age, some older people, few under 30	4	166 (incl. 11 org's)		170
Hard-copy questionnaire at Visitor Centres	Profile analysed with general interviews, below	6	28		34
General interviews On site: Visitor Centres, car parks, door knocking	Young families, teenagers, older people, school party, businesses, shops, cafe owners & staff, dog walkers	0	23		23
Postcards at Visitor Centres, Post Offices, cafes	Working age slightly higher than over-60's, one under 30		36		36
Stalls at Museum family day, Milford Common, outside shops at Pye Green & Brocton	Residents - Young families; older people, working adults, young people, foresters, Ranger, museum staff, PO & cafe owners & staff	2	151	12	165
Key informant interviews Phone & in person	AONB partners, Local Authority Officers in tourism and conservation, workforce and other staff, County Council	26	3		29
Drop-in	Adults - working age, some older people, a few children		106	x	106
Workshop	Adults - working age and older	19			19
Total		34	513	12	582

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Age & gender profile, **online questionnaire** respondents:

Under 10	0
11- 20	3%
21 - 59	83%
Over 60	14%
Male	64%
Female	36%

Age & gender profile, **hard copy questionnaire** and **general interview** respondents:

Under 10	3%
11- 20	0
21 - 59	48%
Over 60	48%
Male	52%
Female	48%

Age & gender profile, **postcard** respondents:

Under 10	0
11- 20	0
21 - 59	53%
Over 60	40%
Male	60%
Female	40%

Age & gender profile, **stall** respondents:

Under 10	13%
11- 20	15%
21 - 59	38%
Over 60	34%
Male	50%
Female	50%

Age & gender profile, **Key informant** interviews:

Under 10	0
11- 20	0
21 - 59	79%
Over 60	21%
Male	90%
Female	10%

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Age & gender profile, **Drop-in** respondents:

Under 10	2%
11- 20	5%
21 - 59	72%
Over 60	21%
Male	56%
Female	44%

Age & gender profile, **workshop** respondents:

Under 10	0
11- 20	0
21 - 59	79%
Over 60	21%
Male	50%
Female	50%

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APPENDIX 8.5

LIST OF MEANS USED TO PROMOTE THE CONSULTATION

The following actions were undertaken by Staffordshire County Council and Resources for Change.

SCC	R4C
1. Press release re. on-line survey (appeared in at least 3 local papers).	1. Flier text prepared.
2. Posters/fliers produced.	2. Finished posters distributed to Visitor Centres.
3. County Councillors written to (general introduction).	3. Postcards produced and distributed to Visitor Centres, shops.
4. Level 1 stakeholders written to re. consultation.	4. Questionnaire developed and paper copies sent to Visitor Centres – postcards/fliers etc., also promote on-line version.
5. Management booklet distributed to VCs with hard copy Questionnaires.	5. Publicise through Council of Voluntary Service (60 organisations) and Rural Community Council (Parish Councils, Local Authorities, other voluntary organisations) networks.
6. Questionnaire and SCC management booklet plus map on SCC web (in 2 places).	6. Street stalls and interviewing in and around the Country Park.
7. AONB, District Councils and Heathland Partnership members invited to promote survey on their websites.	7. Further letter to Parish Councils to publicise Questionnaire and Drop-in day.
8. Further letter to County Councillors to inform about Drop-in day and Workshop.	8. Interviews with key informants by phone and in person
9. Update website (SCC) and inform all others of Drop-in. Second press release on consultation.	9. Update press release drafted for SCC Communications Team to issue.
10. Write to schools who have recently visited the Country Park re. completing a questionnaire.	10. Contact recreational bodies who undertake organised events.
11. Promote Questionnaires on family walks, etc.	11. Write to Level 1 stakeholders re. Drop-in and workshop.
12. Extended on-line/paper consultation deadline to 11 December 2006.	

APPENDIX 8.6 QUESTIONNAIRE, POSTCARD AND STALL RESULTS

This table shows the numbers responding to each question. These results show numerical responses, not written comments, but all the questions inviting comments are included, showing the numbers responding to those questions.

Question	Response Total				Colours showing results for:	Includes stalls	Includes postcards	Includes postcards & stalls
Are You:								
An individual	244							
An organisation	21							
Total Respondents	265							
If you are completing this form on behalf of an organisation please tell us what it is called?								
Total Respondents	11							
The Country Park is important in a number of different ways. Which of the following is important to you? (Please tick the boxes which best show your opinion).								
	Not Important	Slightly Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Value most (postcards)	Total responses		
Recreation - A place to visit for exercise and enjoyment	0	5	38	259	10	312		
Conservation - A Place which conserves wildlife	4	15	39	265	13	336		
Common land - A place where people with historic common rights can exercise them e.g. grazing	54	65	57	34		210		

Education - A place where people come to learn about the natural world	6	13	97	166		282		
Background Scenic value - A place that provides scenery that people drive through or live near	10	43	70	197	16	336		
Total Respondents incl. postcards	192							
Is there anything else which is important to you? Please say what.								
Total Respondents	64							
What do you value most about the Country Park? For a map of the park go to: http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/NaturalEnvironment/Biodiversity/countryside								
Total Respondents	121							
Is there anything that you dislike about the Country Park? For a map of the park go to: http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/NaturalEnvironment/Biodiversity/countryside								
Total Respondents	91							
How do you use the Country Park? (Please use ticks to tell us how often you do these activities).								
	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Yearly	Response Total		
Walking	27	55	22	51	20	127		
Dog Walking	21	19	5	12	11	35		
Horse Riding	1	11	0	1	19	14		
Events	0	8	1	37	44	72		
Family outings	6	25	18	45	27	78		
Bike riding	1	18	14	32	39	78		
Total Respondents	146							

Do you use the Country Park for something other than listed above?									
Total Respondents	95								
Which areas of the Country Park do you normally use? For a map of the Park go to: http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/NaturalEnvironment/Biodiversity/countryside/									
Total Respondents	132								
How do you usually get to the Country Park?									
Total Respondents	142								
If you drive where do you park?									
Total Respondents	127								
How do you feel about the way that the area is managed for wildlife at the moment? For information on issues about the park's management go to: http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/NaturalEnvironment/Biodiversity/countryside/									
Total Respondents	103								
(skipped this question)	67								
What is your opinion of these ways of restoring and maintaining the open heathland?									
	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Total					
Grazing livestock	55	58	201	314					
Burning patches of heather	65	74	154	293					
Mowing patches of heather	44	75	166	285					
Spraying bracken	68	62	174	304					
Scrub and tree felling or thinning	76	35	190	301					
Total Respondents	167	211	Prob.						

Do you have any comments on the above management practices?									
Total Respondents	93								
Do you have any comments about the possible effects of any of these methods? For example grazing livestock could mean some fencing, bracken and scrub control may involve the use of large machinery, etc.									
Total Respondents	105								
In your opinion are there any other ways that the vegetation could be managed to provide heathland wildlife habitats?									
Total Respondents	66								
Detailed habitat management:									
Tree and scrub clearance:									
	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Total					
Further selective manual and mechanical clearance of trees and scrub	33	35	77	145					
Regular manual maintenance to keep cleared areas open e.g. pine pulling.	25	27	95	147					
Removal of tree seedlings through light grazing	37	26	85	148					
Total Respondents	139								
Do you have any comments on the management practices above or any other suggestions?									
Total Respondents	49								

Bracken Control	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Total				
Control by spraying using machinery on the ground	28	33	89	150				
Control by spraying with low-flying helicopters	68	30	49	147				
Reducing bracken through light grazing	37	29	82	148				
Total Respondents	118							
Do you have any comments about the above management practices or any other suggestions for alternatives?								
Total Respondents	52							
Recreation Activities	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Total				
Re-direct activities that disturb heathland wildlife to less sensitive areas	38	19	97	154				
Review network of firebreaks and paths (other than public rights of way) to protect sensitive species	23	23	107	153				
Total Respondents	142				105 drop-in, 27 postcards			
Do you have any comments about the above management practices or any other suggestions?								
Total Respondents	55							

Woodlands and Copses	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Total				
Protect important native woodland areas	0	7	153	160				
Retain small copses and individual native trees in heathland areas	2	13	145	160				
Total Respondents	121							
Do you have any comments about the above management practices or any other suggestions?								
Total Respondents	46							
Heather Management	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Total responses				
Rejuvenate old heather by cutting and removing waste by machine	23	43	85	151				
Rejuvenate by small-scale burning	26	39	77	142				
Increase the amount of heather rejuvenation work	19	47	81	147				
Use cut material as source of fuel	8	21	125	154				
Manage heather through light grazing	39	30	74	143				
Total Respondents	119							
Do you have any comments on the above management practices or any other suggestions for alternatives?								
Total Respondents	37							
(skipped this question)	133							

Grazing	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Total responses				
Livestock controlled by shepherds/Livestock should be grazed without using fencing	34	39	80	153				
Keeping livestock in fenced enclosures	82	34	34	150				
Keeping livestock in with perimeter fencing	58	39	53	150				
Using temporary rather than permanent fencing	44	39	69	152				
Reducing road speeds on roads through and next to the Country Park	22	21	123	166				
Grazing by cattle	51	32	66	149				
Grazing by ponies	37	33	81	151				
Grazing by sheep	38	43	69	150				
Total Respondents	152							
(skipped this question)	48							
Do you have any comments about the above management practices or any suggestions for alternatives?								
Total Respondents	53							

What is the nature of your current involvement in the Cannock Chase Country Park? (please tick relevant boxes)							
	Response Total						
Involved in management decisions	1						
Involved in day to day management	2						
Consulted on proposals and decisions	5						
Get regular information	19						
Get occasional information	39						
Not at all	90						
Involved in AONB	12						
Total Respondents	168						
How would you like to get involved in the future? (Please tick relevant box(es)).							
Be consulted	39						
Get regular information	43						
Get occasional information	55						
Not at all	29						
Total Respondents	166						
Have you any other views or comments you would like to make regarding the management of the heathland within the Country Park?							
Total Respondents	33						

Would you like to be involved in the future in the management of the Country Park?							
	Response Total						
Yes	35						
No	82						
Total Respondents	117						
If you would like to be involved please give your contact details which will be held by Staffordshire County Council and only be used for this specific purpose.							
	Response Total						
Name	32						
Address	25						
Tel:	20						
Email	33						
Total Respondents	40						
(skipped this question)	130						
For statistical monitoring purposes only could you please tell us your age:							
	Online qu'aire	Hard copy qu'aire	Stalls	Postcards	Total		
Age range							
Under 10	0	1	19	0	20		
11 - 20	4	0	23	0	27		
21 - 59	96	16	57	19	188		
over 60	16	16	50	14	96		
(skipped this question)	53				53		
Total Respondents	116	33	149	33	331		

Are you:								
Male	79	17	73	16	185			
Female	43	16	72	19	150			
Total	122	33	145	35	335			
How would you describe your ethnicity?								
Total Respondents	128							
(skipped this question)	56							

APPENDIX 8.7

QUESTIONNAIRE

This is the hard copy version of the questionnaire, which was available in Visitor Centres. The on-line questionnaire was virtually identical, but question numbering was different.

Cannock Chase Country Park Questionnaire

If you would like this questionnaire in large print or other formats, please contact Sarah Gilder on 01938 555759, admin@r4c.co.uk or at Resources For Change, 1 New Street, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7SF

Cannock Chase Country Park, part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is used and loved by many people. It is also one of Britain's scarce heathland landscapes, now recognised as internationally important (a Special Area of Conservation). The heathland on Cannock Chase provides habitats for a range of endangered animals, birds and insects, but the heath has declined to a fifth of its original size since 1800.

Our ancestors created and maintained the heathland by grazing animals, cutting bracken, clearing woodland, and coppicing trees. Since these practices by local people have ended the heathland has declined, so Country Park managers have tried other approaches to maintaining the heathland landscape, working to manage existing heathland and re-create it where plantations, self-sown pine or birch scrub and bracken have replaced it.

Staffordshire County Council has a legal duty to maintain and restore the heathland within the Country Park and is carrying out this consultation to help plan the management of the heathland landscape, its plants and wildlife habitats.

Country Park managers would value your thoughts and ideas for the future on continuing to improve the sustainable management of the Country Park.

The role of Cannock Chase Country Park

1. Are you an individual? [] Or organisation? []

Name of organisation:

Consultation on the management of Cannock Chase Country Park

2. The Country Park is important in a number of different ways. Which of the following is important to you? (Please tick the boxes which best show your opinion).

	Not important	Slightly important	Quite important	Very important
Recreation – a place to visit for exercise and enjoyment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation – a place which conserves wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Common land – a place where people with historic common rights can exercise them e.g. grazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education – a place where people come to learn about the natural world	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scenic value – a place that provides scenery that people drive through or live near	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Anything else? please say what.

3. What do you value most about the Country Park? For a map of the Park, go to <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/NaturalEnvironment/Biodiversity/countryside/>

4. Is there anything that you dislike about the Country Park?

5. How do you use the Country Park? (Please use ticks to tell us how often you do these activities).

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Yearly	Less Often
Walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horse riding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family outings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bike riding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please say what)						

Consultation on the management of Cannock Chase Country Park

6. Which areas of the Country Park do you normally use? For a map of the Park, go to <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/NaturalEnvironment/Biodiversity/countryside/>

7. a. How do you get to the Country Park ?

b. If you drive, where do you park?

Managing vegetation / wildlife habitats

8. How do you feel about the way that the area is managed for wildlife at the moment?
For information on issues about the Country Park's management, go to <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/NaturalEnvironment/Biodiversity/countryside/>

9. What is your opinion of these ways of restoring and maintaining the open heathland?

	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Any reasons?
Grazing livestock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burning patches of heather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mowing patches of heather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Spraying bracken	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scrub and tree felling or thinning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

10. Do you have any comments about the possible effects of any of these methods? For example, grazing livestock could mean some fencing, bracken and scrub control may involve the use of large machinery, etc.

11. In your opinion are there any other ways that the vegetation could be managed to provide heathland wildlife habitats?

Consultation on the management of Cannock Chase Country Park

The following questions seek your views on more detailed elements of wildlife habitat management. If you have no opinion on these details, please skip to Q13

12. What is your opinion of the following ideas for managing heathland vegetation? Please tick the relevant boxes, and let us know what leads you to this opinion.

Tree and scrub clearance

	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Reason?
Further selective manual and mechanical clearance of trees and scrub	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Regular manual maintenance to keep cleared areas open, e.g. pine pulling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Removal of tree seedlings through light grazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other suggestions?				

Bracken Control

	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Reason?
Control by spraying using machinery on the ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Control by spraying with low-flying helicopters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reducing bracken through light grazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other suggestions?				

Recreation activities

	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Reason?
Re-direct activities that disturb heathland wildlife to less sensitive areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Review network of firebreaks and paths (other than public rights of way) to protect sensitive species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other suggestions?				

Consultation on the management of Cannock Chase Country Park

Woodlands and copses

	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Reason?
Protect important native woodland areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Retain small copses and individual native trees in heathland areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other suggestions?				

Heather Management

	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Reason?
Rejuvenate old heather by cutting and removing waste by machine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Rejuvenate by small-scale burning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Increase the amount of heather rejuvenation work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use cut material as source of fuel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Manage heather through light grazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other suggestions?				

Grazing

	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Reason?
Livestock controlled by shepherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keeping livestock in fenced enclosures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keeping livestock in with perimeter fencing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Using temporary rather than permanent fencing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reducing road speeds on roads through, and next to the Country Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Reason?
Grazing by cattle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Grazing by ponies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Grazing by sheep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other suggestions?				

13. What is the nature of your current involvement in the Cannock Chase Country Park?
Please tick relevant box(es)

Involved in management decisions	Involved in day to day management	Consulted on proposals and decisions	Get regular information	Get occasional information	Not at all	Involved in AONB
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. How would you like to be involved in the future? Please tick relevant box(es)

Consulted	Get regular information	Get occasional information	Not at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Have you any other views or comments you would like to make regarding the management of the heathland within the Country Park?

16. Would you like to be involved in the future in the management of the Country Park?

YES / NO

If so, please give your contact details, which will be held by Staffordshire County Council and only be used for this specific purpose.

If you do not wish to be contacted on this matter again, please tick this box

Consultation on the management of Cannock Chase Country Park

Name	
Address	
e-mail	
Tel:	

For statistical monitoring purposes only, could you please tell us:

Your age:.....Are you Male / Female

How would you describe your ethnicity?.....

If you have any queries about this questionnaire or would like to make further comments, please contact Phil Newcombe phil@r4c.org.uk or Helen Fairweather helen@r4c.org.uk.

Please complete by 17th November 2006 and return to:

Resources For Change
1 New Street
Welshpool
Powys SY21 7SF

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire



APPENDIX 8.8

DROP- IN AND WORKSHOP RESULTS

8.8.1 DROP- IN RESULTS

The Drop-in at Cannock Chase Visitor Centre focused on the key issues emerging from the earlier stages of consultation. The statements below were designed to test the validity of these issues.

Respondents recorded their agreement or disagreement with these statements:

What is your view on these statements about managing the Country Park heathland habitats?	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Unsure	%	Total
Open heathland is the most important aspect of Cannock Chase	20	65	8	26	3	10	31
Felling groups of conifer trees is to be encouraged	19	79	4	17	1	4	24
Removing invasive young trees is to be encouraged	18	75	3	13	3	13	24
Felling further small areas of mature native trees (such as Silver Birch) is needed to achieve the right balance of heath and trees.	14	58	8	33	2	8	24
Grazing some livestock would be a cost effective and traditional way of managing invasive plants	20	80	4	16	1	4	25
Some cows should be used to manage invasive plants	19	79	4	17	1	4	24
Some sheep should be used to manage invasive plants	18	60	6	20	6	20	30
Some ponies should be used to manage invasive plants	20	77	5	19	1	4	26
Fencing should be used to keep livestock from straying onto roads	16	62	6	23	4	15	26
Livestock should be grazed without using fencing	6	32	12	63	1	5	19
There should be fenced areas for livestock where dogs are kept on a lead	18	82	3	14	1	5	22
There should be no new fencing on the Chase	8	40	8	40	4	20	20

What is your view on these statements about managing the Country Park heathland habitats?	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Unsure	%	Total
Temporary fencing should be used to manage livestock	10	50	6	30	4	20	20
Using a herdsman would reduce the need for fencing	11	58	1	5	7	37	19
Visitors to the Chase can play a part in monitoring the well-being of livestock	18	82	1	5	3	14	22
Fencing and cattle grids around the edge of the Country Park would be acceptable	21	78	5	19	1	4	27
Recreational activities that disturb wildlife should be redirected to less sensitive areas	21	84	3	12	1	4	25
There should be no restriction on recreational access	10	43	12	52	1	4	23
There needs to be areas where dogs are kept on leads to protect ground nesting birds	55	100	0	0	0	0	55

Comments:

- Recreational facilities SHOULD be restricted in CERTAIN AREAS. In HEATHLAND and in AREAS where the DEER and other wildlife can be relatively undisturbed.
- Grazing of livestock, cows/sheep would be fine if they were protected.
- TREES ARE VITAL and more planting of native species.
- No helicopter spraying of the bracken PLEASE
- Forest/woodland areas are just as important as the heathland – object to great areas being removed
- Grazing of some livestock would be ok – fenced but with gates – cattle grids on perimeter of Country Park
- Not keen on idea of roads....being fenced.
- Bikes can have the area by the bike hire shop – livestock can be in more secluded bits
- Pigs used to control bracken in Scotland
- Grazing working at Hednesford Hills LNR, should be encouraged on Chase
- Public transport

Do you belong to any organisations or groups?

Please tell us which ones:-

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| National Trust | Wildlife Trust |
| Friends of Cannock Chase | Ramblers |
| West Midland Bird Club | RSPB |
| National Trust | Woodland Trust |
| Parish Council Berkswich/ CPRE | National Trust/RSPB/English Heritage |
| British Deer Society Midlands Branch | BDS Midlands Branch |
| National Trust/RSPB/Staffs Wildlife | Mid Staffs. Wood Turners/Amerton Wood |
| Trust/Voluntary Chase Warden | Turners/Great Bridgeford Garden Guild/Scouts |
- Attendance = 105 people

8.8.2 WORKSHOP

After a presentation of interim findings from the consultation, workshop attendees considered a range of options by discussing each one in small groups, and recording their comments. The results of the discussions were passed between the groups to give others an opportunity to agree or disagree with the views being expressed.

OPTIONS

1. Graze with Cattle	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not worried by dogs ▪ Produce varied vegetation structure ▪ Costs less than most management options – mowing, etc ✓ ▪ Use traditional hardy breed – will selectively graze and lower maintenance/welfare issues ✓ ▪ Marketing of ‘Cannock Chase Meat’ – may be a spin-off to generate income to offset costs ✓ ▪ Less involvement of shepherd as opposed to using sheep/ponies ▪ Lower stocking rate of cattle (livestock units) as opposed to sheep/ponies ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some members of the public are afraid of cattle (education needed) ▪ Introduction of herd managing, fencing/cattle grids ▪ Cattle may be worried by aggressive dogs – awareness by dog owners ✓ ▪ Poaching could be a problem ▪ Could be too much of a commercial venture ▪ Will cattle graze all the appropriate vegetation types? ▪ Watering holes?

2. Graze with Sheep	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Docile/gentle animals ▪ Historical links ▪ Can be shepherded/fenced x ▪ More environmentally friendly than spraying, etc. x ▪ Fences don't necessarily restrict access – stiles, kissing gates - and can go through trees to hide them in landscape ✓ ▪ People like seeing animals ✓ ▪ 'Cannock Chase Lamb' – marketing meat for income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dog worrying ✓ ▪ Rustling ✓ ▪ Need shepherding ✓ ▪ Disease susceptibility – dipping, etc. ✓ ▪ Cost ▪ 'Scare' easily ▪ Non selective grazing – mown/lawn effect ▪ Still need handling facilities ▪ More demanding husbandry ▪ Higher risk of death/escapes

3. Graze with Ponies	
Pro's	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possibility ✓ x ▪ Non-breeding ✓ ▪ ? Numbers ▪ ? Areas of grazing need to be controlled ✓ x ▪ Good at grazing wet areas x (Cattle are better) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not tethered ✓ ▪ ? Dog worrying (dog likely to come off worse – ponies kicking) ▪ Control of traffic (only issue if not fencing) ▪ Non-breeding mares with foals ✓ ▪ Reflectors on roadside to be repaired or updated to the new style with sound – ? Can be funded by voluntary contributions ▪ Injury risk to public – insurance needed? ▪ Selective grazing ✓✓ ▪ Can graze too close ▪ Difficult to handle ✓✓ ▪ People feed ponies! Ponies bite/kick people! ▪ Hooves mess up ground

4. Seasonal Grazing	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce conflict ✓ x ▪ Improve habitat condition? ✓ ▪ Cost ▪ More 'sensitive' management, less chemicals used – (more sensitive than what? ✓ ▪ No goats – they eat everything ▪ Allows areas to recover ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fencing x ▪ Welfare & husbandry (TB tests, etc)* ▪ Implications to access* x ▪ Need more than one site (where do they go in summer or winter)? ✓ ▪ *Spreading disease to local wildlife ▪ *Cattle can be intimidating ▪ Sheep would be vulnerable to dogs ✓ ▪ No goats ▪ Even warnings to Chase users can go ignored ▪ No chemicals x ▪ Method of removal or over-wintering needed ✓ ▪ Fissures open up on Cannock Chase – effects of mining – can open anywhere

5. Grazing with Non-breeding Stock	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced conflict with visitors ▪ Less restrictions ✓✓ ▪ Less welfare issues ✓✓ ▪ Agree – must be non-breeding stock ▪ Stock less likely to be confrontational ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost implications, (only with stock) getting new stock ▪ Management of stock? – need to keep turnover of stock for health, etc. ▪ Someone needs to be in charge ▪ Many people do not understand wild animals – (urban visitors) ▪ Control of litter x ▪ Control of food dumping x ▪ Education of visitors needed for all options ▪ Young have no chance against dog roaming (not true of all stock types)

6. Grazing with Goats /Wild Boar (??)	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wild Boar/wolves – nobody on the Chase ▪ (Not an option) ✓ ▪ NO WAY ▪ No goats✓ ▪ Good for browsing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-selective grazing ▪ Non-traditional for site x ▪ High maintenance ✓ ▪ Too specialist ▪ Aggressive? (Billy goats) ▪ <u>Too much damage</u> ✓ x ▪ Goats would try for food from people

7. Grazing with Mixed Species of Livestock	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target areas of habitat ▪ Management (i.e. wet grassland, heather stands etc.) ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management nightmare! ✓✓ ▪ Specifically targeted for habitat requirements ▪ Different ranges required for grazing, i.e. sheep need smaller contained areas than cattle ▪ Specialist shepherding ✓ ▪ Sheep get foot rot – soil becomes sheep sick ▪ Cattle can be a problem with level of usage by people? X ▪ Adders are poisonous – could be a problem ▪ Stocking densities?

8. Minimise Conflict with Road Users By Managing Traffic Flow	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less accidents/road kill favourable for residents ▪ Verge clearance for visibility and reflectors/sound ▪ Need speed limit legalised to at least 30mph ▪ Signs visible noting number of deer casualties – would also be a problem for introduction of animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Costly to enforce ▪ Requires legislation ▪ Public education ▪ Visual impact on area (signs, etc.) ▪ Unpopular with commuters

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who would pay for damage caused by introduced animals? (if fenced in, wouldn't be a problem) 	
--	--

9. Contain Livestock with Perimeter Fencing and Cattle Grids	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Done sensitively, minimises impact and contains livestock ✓ ▪ Better than the alternative of having lots of smaller enclosures – small enclosures away from roads would be better ▪ Cattle grids, traffic calming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of implementation ▪ Restricted access x ▪ Cost of maintenance ▪ Still cost of shepherding x ▪ How do deer react to cattle grids? ▪ All wildlife could be hurt and children, on cattle grids ▪ Reduces the open space aspect of the Chase x ▪ Expensive? ✓ ▪ Vandalism could be an issue ▪ Emergency/public access limited x ▪ Cattle grids – aesthetic for landscape, safety for other animals x

10. Contain Livestock with Fenced Enclosures	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Easier to manage – husbandry ✓ ▪ Any type of fencing must be carefully considered – height and no wires on top x ▪ No problem with plain ▪ Flexible – can target particular areas and rotate, etc. ▪ Lower cost possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High visual impact x ▪ High cost ▪ Public perception ✓ ▪ Untraditional x ▪ Restricted access ✓ x ▪ Fragments heathland habitat ✓ x ▪ Create intensive grazing ✓ x ▪ Concentration of areas of dung may affect nutrient status of heathland permanently ✓ x ▪ Again restrict open access ▪ Overgrazing x ▪ Restrict deer access x

11. Contain Livestock within Enclosures Using Temporarily Fencing

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It's temporary! & rotational ▪ Same as using permanent barriers ▪ If necessary must be removed when no longer necessary (sometimes it's just left) ✓ ▪ Flexibility ▪ Cheaper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Looks unsightly and unnatural ✓ ▪ High maintenance – may fall down ▪ Cost ✓ ▪ Vandalism, theft ✓✓✓ ▪ Confusion over used areas ▪ Public safety – children electrocuted * ▪ Gets moved – may confuse public! ✓ (warn in advance what doing & why) ▪ Concentration of animals in one area (temporary, could move them) ▪ Electric fencing can be dangerous to the public * ▪ More vulnerable to poachers if in an enclosed area ▪ Non-starter

12. Using Herding to Manage Livestock

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local employment ▪ 24 hour presence – high profile educational role to public, too ▪ Traditional management practice ▪ Better husbandry and animal welfare ✓ x ▪ Ha Ha's? ▪ <u>Take a small experimental area to see if the idea works</u> (how many sheep needed to sustain a shepherd?) ▪ <u>Less impact on the landscape</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost involved ✓✓ ▪ If you have a shepherd you will still need to enclose (i.e. perimeter fence (must be carefully chosen))

Key ✓ Agree x Disagree * Unknown

A general discussion on pointers for future planning by the whole group then took place, and the main points were noted.

Next Steps

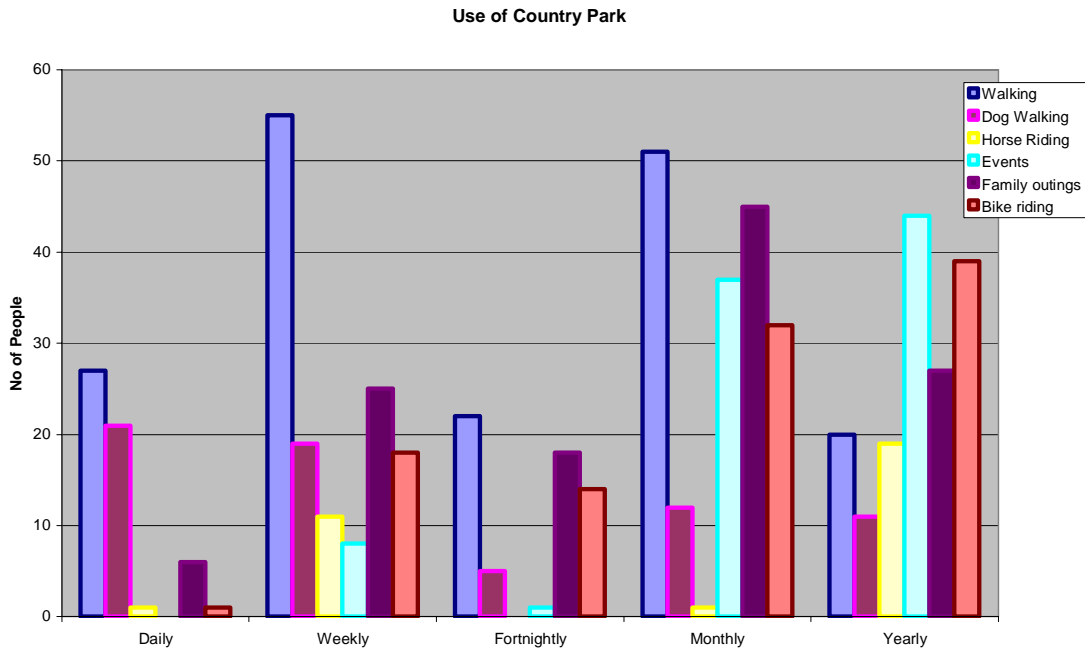
What to take into account?

- Education and awareness
- Funding – where money comes from
 - Cost not over-riding; ongoing cost
- Retaining access for fire service
 - E.g. Fencing and gateways
 - Grazing may benefit, reduce fire risk
- Impact on landscape – risk of reducing ‘wildness’
- Changing public perception
 - On fencing – low visual intrusion
 - On cattle – low stocking, not intrusive
- Impact on recreational access – fencing, livestock
- Best management practice
 - Keep in favourable condition
 - Grazing is a necessity

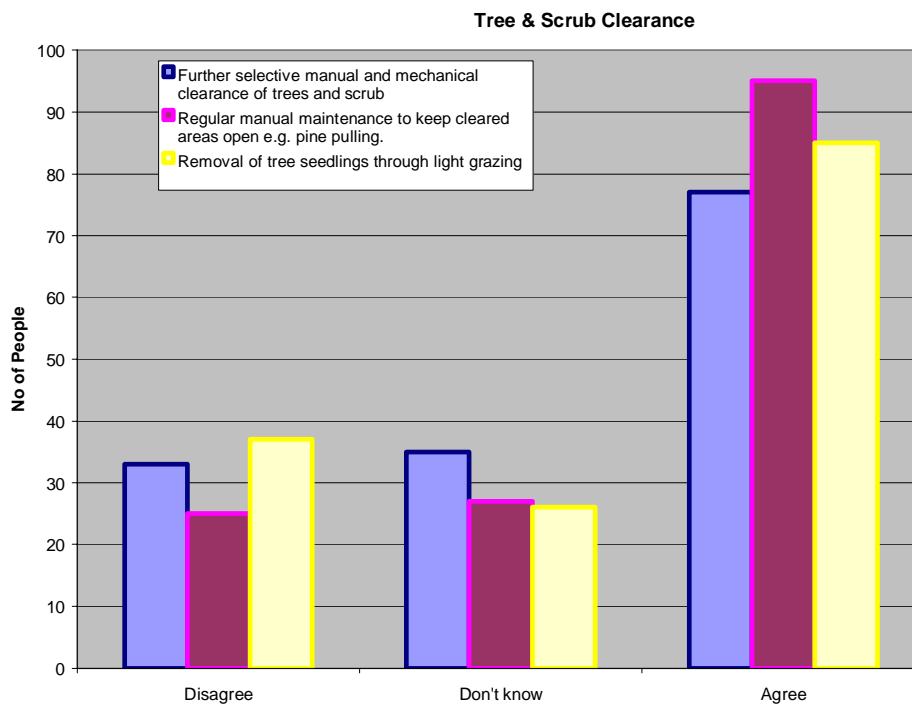
APPENDIX 8.9 GRAPHS

The graphs below show the responses to the main questions not otherwise shown in the main body of the report.

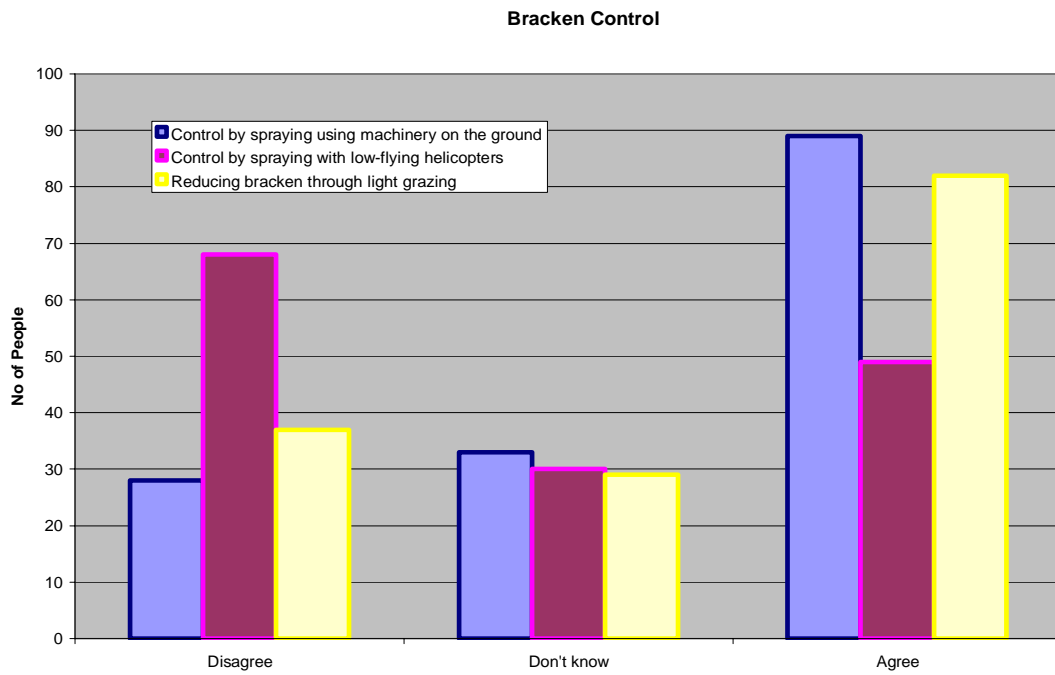
8.9.1 USE OF COUNTRY PARK



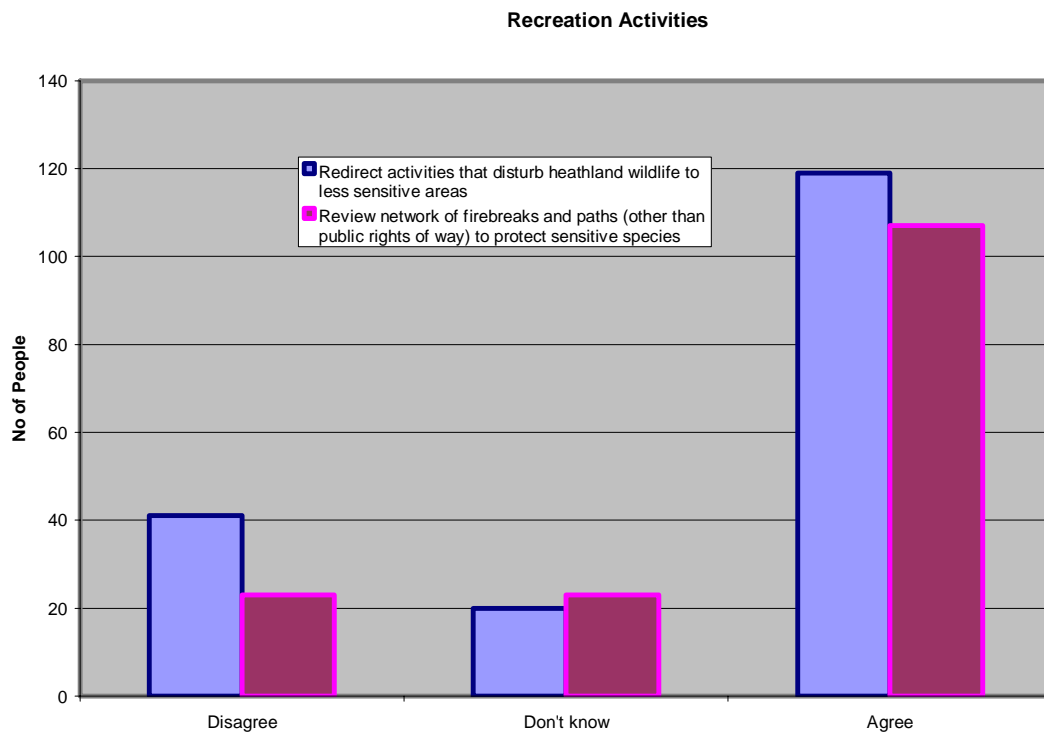
8.9.3 TREE & SCRUB CLEARANCE



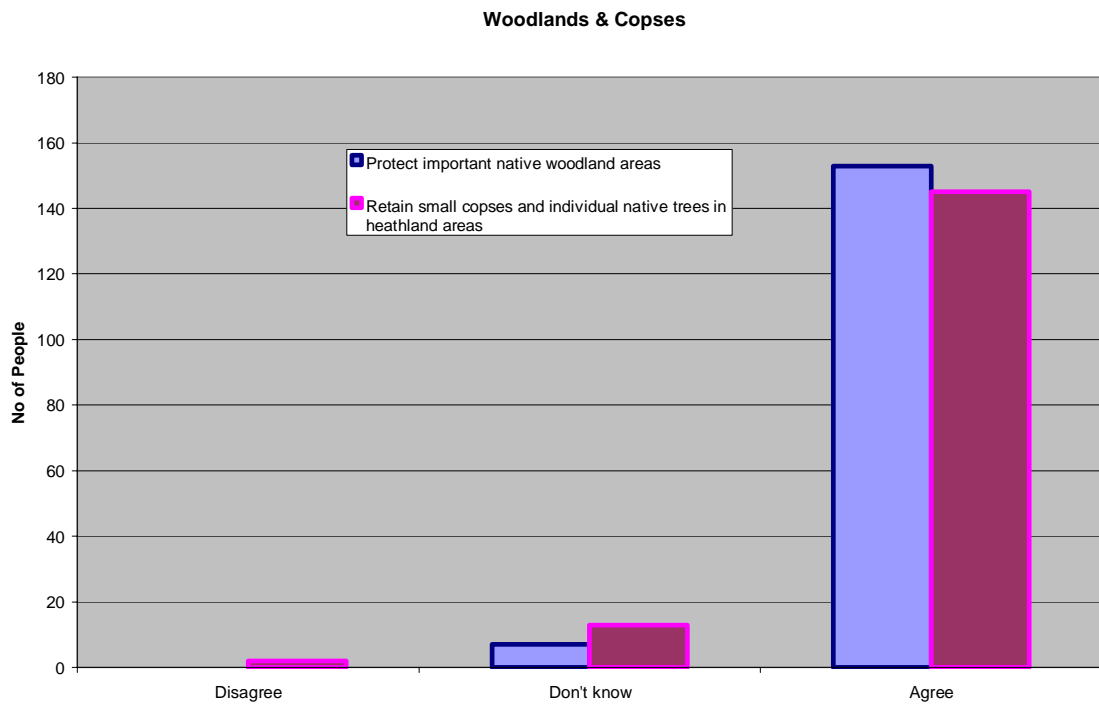
8.9.4 BRACKEN CONTROL



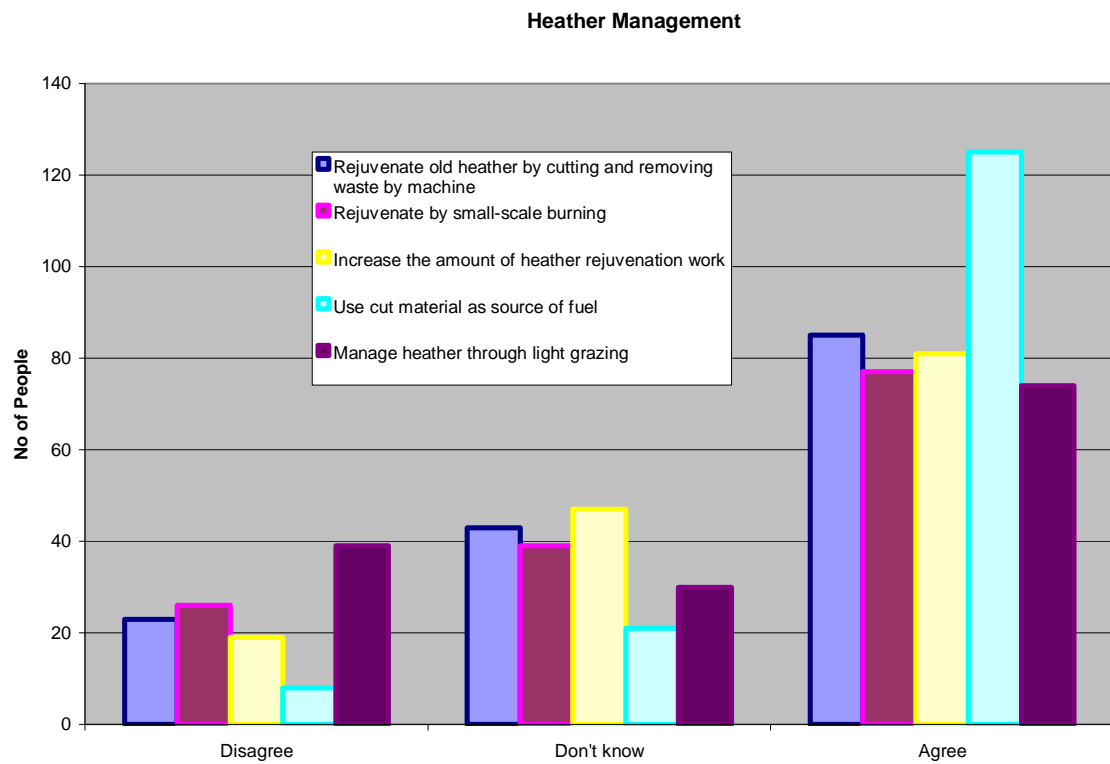
8.9.5 RECREATION ACTIVITIES



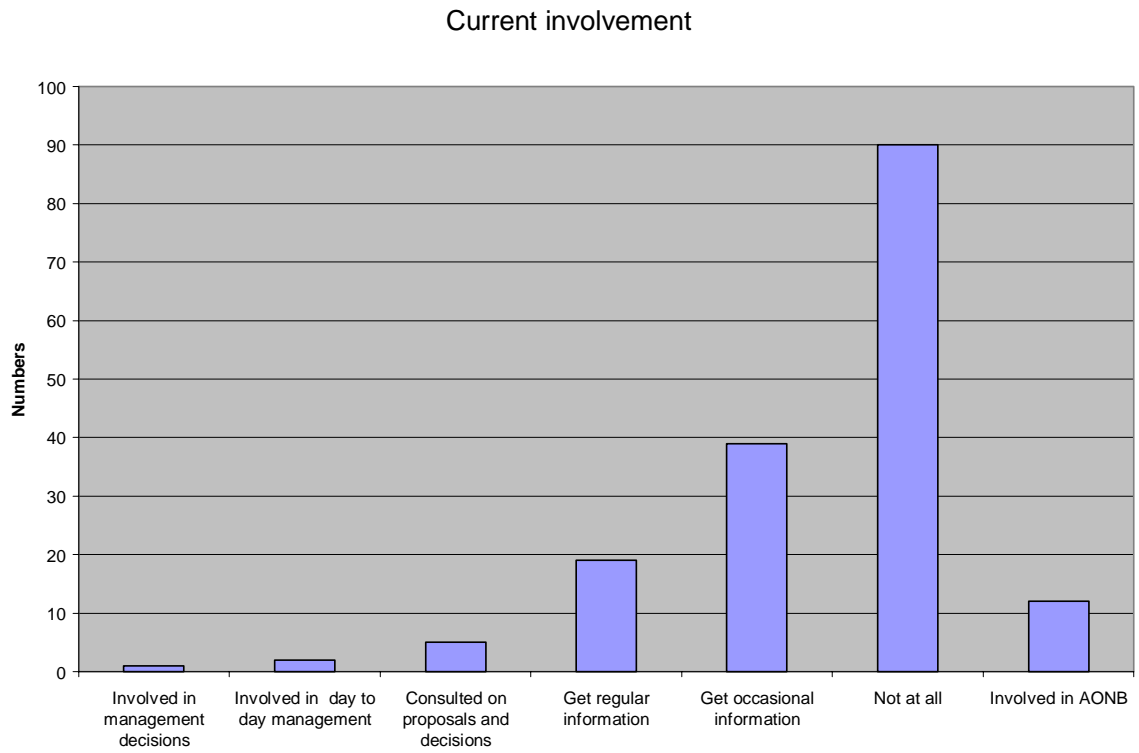
8.9.6 WOODLANDS AND COPSES



8.9.7 HEATHER MANAGEMENT



8.9.8 CURRENT INVOLVEMENT



8.9.9 FUTURE INVOLVEMENT

