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Andy Wilson

Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

Mr D Hodds
89 Leighton Close
Crossgates
Scarborough
YO12 4LB

Your ref:

Our ref: RC/2056/2

Date: 3 October 2014



Dear Mr Hodds

Potential new pond at Thirley Cotes, Harwood Dale

Thank you for contacting me for my views about the creation of a new pond on the Throxenby Mere Angling Club's land at Thirley Cotes.

At our site visit in July I noted that the western 'marsh' contained plants such as wild angelica, nettles, false-oat and tufted hair-grass, marsh and creeping thistles and hemp agrimony. I gather it is spring-fed. Most of the ground was quite dry at the time of my visit, although damper at the western end under some planted willows, and didn't seem to have great potential for water vole use. I didn't spot any likely water vole runs as we walked through. However, since water voles are known to visit the area, I was keen to make sure that a pond here wouldn't be likely to damage the habitat for that species.

Laura Winter, local expert on water voles and their habitats, kindly visited at the end of August and has let me have her thoughts. Although she didn't find any signs of water vole activity, the existing ponds and immediate surroundings would appear to provide good habitat for any water voles entering the area and would also be a suitable over-wintering site. With this in mind, here are my conclusions:

If the Throxenby Mere Angling Club were to submit a planning application for a new pond in the western part of their land at Thirley Cotes, I would not have any objections on ecological grounds provided the following measures are put in place to maintain and hopefully enhance the area for water voles and other wetland wildlife.

- The design of the new pond should be similar to that of the pond at the eastern end of the land, except that there should also be additional low-lying marshy areas that will stay

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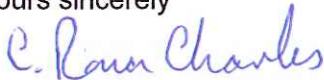
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wet for most of the year (i.e. wetter than at present). The intended proportion of open water to marsh should be no greater than 3:1.

- Spoil should be placed on the northern, higher ground. This is the only place where any trees should be planted, if any are desired.
- Tree cover elsewhere on the site should be managed to recreate more open ground and encourage the recovery of more herbaceous vegetation, by coppicing some of the trees and shrubs periodically. This is particularly important for the willows along the north-western edge of the site, apart from those closest to the boundary which form a useful screen.

I hope that the above is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Rona Charles

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