NOTES OF MEETING - YORKSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST AND STAVELEY WORKING GROUP

FRIDAY 6TH MAY 2011 AT 7.00P.M.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT):

Present: Mr. David Hargreaves

Apologies: Mr. Carl Watts

Staveley Working Group (SWG):

Present: Mr. David Childs (Chair)
Mr. Bernard Atkinson (part time)
Mr. Ken Barker (part time)
Mr. Robin Copnall
Mrs. Pam Coatham
Mrs. Sue Dibb
Mr. Danny Holliday
Mr. Ian Wallace.

Apologies: Mrs. Sue Meeke
Mrs. Julie Smith

1. **Welcome and thanks for coming/Future commitment.**

David Childs welcomed and thanked David Hargreaves for coming to the meeting, explaining that the Staveley Working Group had been set up following a Parish/village meeting, to aid consultation with regards to the planning application for the nature reserve and also form the basis of a long-term link with the village.

2. Introductions.

Each member present introduced themselves.

3. What are YWL's current plans/intentions for the expansion of the nature reserve?

David Hargreaves informed the meeting that the CEO of YWT had today had a meeting with the Harrogate Borough Council Planning Officer to discuss the planning application and way forward. David was not aware of the outcome of this meeting but was aware that two options are available:

To appeal the planning decision.
To submit a revised planning application (which would be within 12 months of hearing).

David said that he felt that YWT would be encouraged to re-submit.

David said that he understood the village had genuine concerns and that YWT is willing to find out what these concerns are and what the village wants. The driving force for YWT is nature conservation and the Trust does not make a profit on sites.

We told David Hargreaves that the village is concerned about possible impact.

4. How is YWL addressing the reasons for planning rejection?

CEO of YWT meeting with HBC Planning Officer to discuss way forward and meeting with the Staveley Working Group.

5. Discussion Points.
The following points were discussed with David Hargreaves.

5.1. What are the existing and projected visitor numbers?

David Hargreaves was not able to answer this as he felt such figures are difficult to provide as there is not someone permanently on site, and nature reserve is on a public footpath. A discussion took place that increased footfall is already being realised due to the extra cars that are parked around the village and that we feel this will increase owing to increased publicity on YWT's website, planned event days, school/group trips, and day to day visitors.

5.2. Number of school visits?

Possibly up to three per month. All groups would be by prior arrangement only.

5.3. Size of buses?

Probably 40-seater coaches would be used to bring school children

5.4. Risk assessment for visits. What has been done, including road safety?

David Hargreaves reported that Harrogate Borough Council had carried out a road safety assessment and was happy with current plans.

With regards to nature reserve and YWT, no assessments have been carried out (not considered necessary to carry out any further assessments based on their current plans). However, they felt that the provision of two car parks would assist with road safety and that group visits are pre-arranged.

David Hargreaves said that if there are any problems in the future YWT would obviously be prepared to investigate and deal with them.

Discussions then took place on SWG's concerns as follows:-
a). Road safety and car parking.

There is, and will be in the future, an increase in visitors to the nature reserve (see 5.1. above) which will have an impact on the village.

There are currently nine planned events advertised on YWL's website relating to Staveley Nature Reserve. YWT does not yet know how many will participate in each of the events but it is expected that there will be 12-18 people. Attendees have to pre-book.

David Hargreaves said it was possible to increase the number of car parking spaces in the Minskip Road car park and to use adjacent fields for special events, if required. Concerns were raised about concentrating all parking in one car park and the Minskip Road is already a busy road. David Hargreaves did have a proposal which was to expand the car park at the Church end of the village which is currently for three disabled car parking spaces, saying that the planners had wanted to put the main car park by the church.

A passing place(s) along the single track road leading to this car park is to be investigated. David asked us to consider this proposal and to get the consensus of the village.

We discussed the problem of opening and shutting gates at the Church entrance car park relating to disabled drivers. David Hargreaves said that if this car park is increased in size, the gates would not be locked and so this would remove this problem.

David was also asked to consider if a footpath was viable to exit out of this entrance, which he agreed to do.

b). Nature Reserve and Hides.

Hides would be subject to standard building requirements. If there are any problems in/around the hides in the future then these would be reported to David Hargreaves for action.

5.5. **Do the terms of the lottery grant preclude building the classroom hide on the old lagoon (old land)?**

David confirmed that the funding can only be used for the new site/land and that they could not get a grant for just the land. They can also use the funding to enable people to gain access to the new land and hides.

Why do you need two hides?

David was asked if YWT would consider building just one hide. At this moment, the plan is for two. This will enable groups to see different wildlife at different points.

Are you looking at reducing the scale of the classrooms/hides?

David asked what size of hides we wanted and that we should consider this. It was suggested to have two smaller hides and split groups having up to 20 in each group. A group of 40 children would be accompanied by teachers/classroom assistants/parents who would be able to supervise nearby activities. Carl could then speak to each group on a rotation basis. This could result in hides being up to 50% smaller.

David explained that the hides would have substantial roof eave overhangs and a growing sedum or turf roof covering. The approach to the hides will also be hidden.

David did not have any plans or artist's impression of the proposed hides but would bring these to next meeting. David will also provide a picture of a similar hide currently being constructed so that we can see the materials and the look of the construction.

5.6. **If more than 12 cars and a coach, where would the overflow go?**

See point 5.4.a). above. This would hopefully ease the situation of cars parking throughout the village.

5.7. **What consultation has been made?**

Meetings with Parish Council and village.

5.8. **Eleven people suggested, who are they?**

David was not aware of the eleven villagers but would try and find out their names. However, it was unlikely that they would be released. It was pointed out that this would assist the working group to get their opinions.

5.9. **What formal and/or informal undertakings have been made?**

None that David Hargreaves is aware of.

5.10. **What provision has been made for the security of the site?**

A gate will be put up 10 metres in from the road of Minskip Road car park entrance. However, this gate would be unlocked.

5.11. **How long is funding for maintenance in place?**

David said that YWT has been in existence for 66 years and so is a well established organisation. There is not a specific allocation for Staveley and funds would be taken from a central point as they maintain a whole suite of sites. It is in YWT's interest to maintain. There is an in-house team dealing with funding and David is confident it will be maintained. YWT also has a very good supporters group.

5.12. **Are you putting a revised planning application in for the 12th May?**

David confirmed that this date is too soon. As mentioned, YWT Chief Executive only met with Planning Officer today. No date known as yet but if putting in revised application this would be within 12 months.

5.13. **What happens if some of the villagers' fears are realised?**

When asked what impact he thought the planning application would have on the village, David responded that he hoped positive and that it is a great educational resource on the doorstep. David understood the villagers' concerns about increased footfall but did not think this would increase substantially – there is always an initial increase which is a passing phase. The events and group visits would be controlled.

When asked about future development, David said there no plans other than the existing plan for the size of site – this is not one of our top sites and is low key.

5.14 **Are you aware of the outline planning permission for the 13 affordable homes on the Minskip Road?**

David was aware of this but not of the full details. Concerns were again expressed regarding the volume of traffic using the Minskip Road, especially through the 20 mile per hour zone by the school.

5.15. **Where are the planned meeting points for the published planned events?**

The YWT website says the village green is meeting point at present.

6. **Any other questions**

6.1. **Facilities.**

David was asked if the provision of toilets is being considered, especially for the groups of school children. Response was that YWT would prefer not to provide toilets. All schools/groups are notified that there are no toilet facilities and that visits are for up to 3 hours in length, which is acceptable to the schools. Groups of children visit the YWT Lindisfarne site and they have not had any problems

6.2. **Village Hall.**

It was mentioned that YWT could hire the village hall, therefore affording the use of the car park and toilet facilities at specific times, so avoiding conflict with other events. It was also suggested that an honesty box could be used for car parking only, but this could cause problems if the hall is booked for use that day.

6.2. **Signage.**

David confirmed that it is not YWT's practice to put up any signage.

6.3. **Car parking construction.**

David confirmed that the car parks would be constructed with suitable materials.

6.4. **Timescale for Project.**

David confirmed that the Staveley Nature Reserve is a two-year project.

Date of next meeting.

It was agreed that David Hargreaves would suggest suitable dates during week commencing 23rd May to David Childs.

David Childs thanked David Hargreaves and all present for a very positive first meeting with a view to realising a long-term relationship between Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Staveley village.