

6, Templars Close,
Wheatley, Oxon.
4 Nov. 1998

copy; Pam Simmonds,
Wheatley Parish Clerk

Re: Littleworth Nature Reserve

Dear Sir,

It was in 1983 that an arrangement was agreed between Oxfordshire County council and Wheatley Parish that land in the old railway cutting at Littlemore become a nature reserve for the local residents. In this, the land would remain the responsibility of the county, and there was an arrangement that the grass in the middle of the cutting be cut, on a once a year management pattern, in the late summer. This has allowed the public some access into the land and has maintained a fairly attractive "feel" to the place. The cutting sides, as you will know, have a more interesting natural flora and fauna.

On a recent visit, I noticed that the central area had not been cut this year, and that there is a proliferation of nettles and rank grasses, making accesses originally intended, almost impossible. I wonder if there is a reason for the County not honouring its responsibility. I would also wish to know what the pattern of management will be next year, and subsequent years. I wonder also if the County are thinking of handing the land to the Parish, aware of the past history of tipping and pollution experience on this site.

As a local educator and an ecologist, I look forward to a positive response to this letter,

Yours sincerely,

David Mancey

Report of meeting between the County Council and Wheatley Parish
Council 20th January 1983

Councillor Audley Miller . County Councillor

Mr Seddon Estates Department

Mr Orton Planning Department

Councillor Mollyg Parish Councillor

Councillor Wilkinson Parish Councillor

Mr Mancey

Cllr Audley Miller opened by stating that the County Council were not prepared to consider a long lease at this time of economic stringency . The County wished to keep their options open.

Cllr Wilkinson said that the Parish did not consider that they could take on a financial burden of this nature without a lease of at least ten years .

There followed a discussion about the various items of management .
One, due to the nature of the ground it was not possible to make a pond at the site indicated by the Mancey plan. It may be possible to construct a pond at the lower end of the site furthest from the tunnel
Two . The parapet of the Tunnel wall is crumbling and in need of attention ,if the public were to be allowed access protection would have to be supplied. Should an agreement be reached , there would be no objection to this wall being used for activities such as Climbing practice, by bona fide groups.

Three. The area is currently planted with mainly soft woods if it is to have any value as a nature reserve it needs a percentage of indigenous hard woods and grasses introducing.

Cllr Audley Miller suggested that as there did not seem to be any chance of the County or the Parish being willing to move from their position that the solution may be for an informal committee to be set up to manage the site . Mr Seddon agreed that this would be possible and suggested that this could be reviewed after five years.
One of the snags may be that the site is in the parish of Horsepath and therefore they must be notified.

The county council would require access to the tunnel for maintenance purposes.

The Committee noted the minutes of 4th October ~~that~~ ^{the} quote Cllr Audley Miller as saying . . .

As a result the Committee failed to understand why there are any remaining obstacles to a long term lease.