

20th October 2022

Laura Cutter



Complaint Resolution Team
Customer Engagement Team
Natural England
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Natural England Complaint CMPT12022/00301 Tier 1 Response

Dear Laura Cutter,

Thank you for your complaint of 3 October 2022. In line with Natural England's complaint procedure, your letter has been passed to myself, Stephanie Payne within the Wiltshire Conservation and wider Wessex Area Team to investigate at Tier 1.

Your concerns were regarding Haydon Meadow SSSI not receiving its annual hay cut/cattle grazing this year, the lack of maintenance to the perimeter fence, the uncut hedgerows and the lack of an annual orchid count this year.

Our investigation found that, since Haydon Meadow SSSI is surrounded by housing, it has made it challenging for the agents to find graziers and contractors to take on the regular management. Natural England has provided information on potential contractors, and agri-environment funding, which is available to help support the positive management of the SSSI.

When the SSSI was first notified, a section 106 was put in place, as part of the planning consent for the adjacent housing. This was for the Wildlife Trust to undertake some monitoring, litter picking and community work. It also included putting up an interpretation board and talks to residents. The section 106, was unfortunately, only for a limited time of 6 years.

The orchids were last counted in 2015, unfortunately, neither NE nor the local Wildlife Trust have the resources to undertake annual orchid counts. The SSSI was condition assessed by NE in 2021 and it is proposed to monitor the orchids next summer. NE will again ask whether the landowner would allow local volunteers to count the orchids on a more regular basis.

The meadow was not cut this summer, however the land agent, has since found a local grazier who is willing to take on the grazing and future hay meadow management. It was agreed, as it was later in the season, that the meadow could be cattle grazed this autumn/ winter. This will be beneficial to help remove the excess grass growth. The meadow will be cut for hay next summer. It is proposed that this will become a longer-term arrangement enabling the regular management needed to deliver and maintain the condition of the SSSI. There is no intention to de-notify the SSSI.

NE have discussed and passed on the concerns regarding the boundary management to the land agent.

I hope I have clarified Natural England's position in relation to your complaint. If you require any further information, please contact us at Customer.Feedback@naturalengland.org.uk and we will be pleased to help.

If you do not consider that this response satisfactorily deals with your complaint, you can within the next 30 working days, write to Customer.Feedback@naturalengland.org.uk to escalate your complaint to Tier 2 of Natural England's complaint procedure.

Further details of our complaint's procedure can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/complaints-procedure>

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Payne
Lead Adviser
Wiltshire
Wessex Area Team
Natural England