



Devon Countryside Access Forum

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Mr C Marrow
Forest Management Director
Peninsula Forest District
Bullers Hill
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EXETER
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18 November 2009

Dear Mr Marrow

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – Open Access restrictions

As you are aware, the Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a statutory forum established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Its specific remit is to advise on “the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area..” The Forum has fifteen members who represent the interests of land management, access use and other interests.

The Forum is notified of open access restrictions under the CRoW Act and had noted the three 180 day applications related to parcels of forestry in the Eggesford area; namely Flashdown Plantation, North Down Plantation and Heywood Wood. As you will appreciate these applications fell just within the six month statutory consultation period.

A sub-group of DCAF members was consulted and some concern was expressed as these woods, which include a motte and bailey, are extensively used by members of the public and by the Wembworthy Outdoor Centre.

I subsequently had a very useful and helpful discussion about the restrictions and felling regime with Jimmy Mann, North Devon Area Forester. The use of banksmen to ensure public rights of way can be kept open and display of appropriate notices, over and above the statutory information requirement, are very welcome in ensuring some continued access during the felling period.

This information will be passed on to the Forum together with news that the access restriction for Flashdown Plantation has now been withdrawn, presumably at the end of

essential forestry work. If restrictions can be removed as soon as work is complete this would be much appreciated by access users.

The Forum welcomes and recognises the valuable access opportunities afforded by woodlands in Devon yet, at the same time, is aware that essential management and maintenance are needed for timber production purposes.

The Forum will be very pleased to advise or comment on any actions resulting from the South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework Implementation Plan 2009-2012, particularly those related to Quality of life objectives and the aims associated with 'more people enjoying woodland' and green infrastructure.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

cc J. Mann, Area Forester, North Devon