

Brown Moss - a proposal to re-introduce grazing

Information for site users/visitors

A return to grazing at Brown Moss has been discussed for many years.

In October 2011 local residents, and several users and visitors, were approached to discuss this idea.

So far, the vast majority of those consulted support the proposal.

We would welcome your views.



Brown Moss - the need for management

Brown Moss is a highly valued site for nature conservation, recreation, landscape and education. It is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar Site and Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

The features of greatest significance are the wetland & heathland habitats which support many rare plant & animal species. These are vulnerable habitats that require management to retain the open character that is vital to the notable species they support.

Historically, the Moss was kept open by grazing animals. However, since grazing ceased (thought to be during the 1960s) it has been necessary to manage the wetland, heath and grassland in other ways, for example by cutting the young trees and shrubs which constantly invade the open areas.

Why grazing?

Grazing will have the following benefits:

- maintaining the open nature of the wetland, heath and grassland habitats in a traditional, sustainable, way which will reduce the need for on-going regular mechanical or chemical scrub, bracken and bramble control;
- opening up dense swards, providing opportunities for many of the rare plant species to survive and spread.

Ideally, grazing would be carried out between late spring and autumn using a few cattle of a docile, hardy or rare breed that thrives on the types of habitats present. However, potential graziers will have a significant role to play in advising on the availability and suitability of livestock types and breeds.

Fencing & Public Access

To allow grazing at Brown Moss, it would be necessary to erect fencing or use cattle grids to control stock. The most popular option at present would be to fence along the western side of the road so that animals are kept off the lane and the eastern parts of the site.

Fencing would not affect the Brown Moss's Common Land or Open Access status.

Please be assured there is no intention to exclude the public.

If fencing is agreed, it would mainly be hidden in the woodland. Kissing gates (or similar) would be provided at all popular access points so that everyone can continue to enjoy the Moss.

To ensure that we provide suitable access, please contact us to let us know where you currently enter and/or exit the site (see contact details below).



Due to the Common Land status of the site, fencing would require consent from the Planning Inspectorate. Public support, particularly from the local community, will be key to gaining this consent and we look forward to your involvement in our application.

Next steps

If you would like to discuss the proposal to re-introduce grazing to Brown Moss please contact: Gareth Egarr, Shropshire Council's Countryside Sites Manager on 01691 624448 or send comments (including support for the proposals) by email to gareth.egarr@shropshire.gov.uk or post to Gareth Egarr, SC Countryside Office, Swan Hill, Ellesmere, SY12 0DQ.

We are particularly interested in finding out where you usually access the site so that we can ensure access provision is fully addressed in any fencing plans.

Once we have discussed the proposal fully with local residents, users of the site, interested groups and the Parish Council, we will review the results of our discussions and any comments received. Draft plans will then be presented to the local community to allow further discussion.

Consultation is likely to continue throughout the winter of 2011/12. If there is support for the proposal, an application to the Planning Inspectorate may be prepared in spring 2012 (at the earliest).

Funding and Support

Management at Brown Moss is largely funded through a Higher Level Stewardship Agreement (administered by Natural England). The majority of the costs of this project will be met by this funding and the Council has included a request for funding in a Meres and Mosses Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

In the long-term, if grazing is established, annual management costs are expected to be significantly reduced in comparison to the management required in the absence of grazing.

The proposal to establish grazing on the Common is supported by Natural England, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, RSPB & the Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership.

