

The Old Methodist Chapel
27 Main Street
Holwell
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire
LE14 4SZ

18th September 2024

Ann Tomlinson, Chair
Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust
The Old Mill
9 Soar Lane
Leicester
LE3 5DE

Dear Ann

Holwell Wood deer cull

I have read and considered carefully your letter of 11th September. I am unconvinced by your arguments that the deer cull should go ahead in Holwell Wood now, as follows:

Firstly, you present no real evidence of the number and impact of deer at Holwell. The one Scoring Sheet you provided hardly represents a scientific approach to assessing the need for a cull. Instead, I would invite you to come and take a close look around the reserve. What real proof is there of deer damage to existing trees? Above the quarry, the natural succession of young trees and shrubs is taking place with no sign of deer grazing. Grey squirrels - another invasive species- are clearly damaging & de-barking trees all over the reserve - are they to be culled, too?

Secondly, why undertake the cull right now? I understand the Woodland Trust's approach is to leave tree guards on for 5 years and *then* assess whether deer are a problem. For example, by fencing off a small portion of new woodland and comparing it over time with the surrounding area. You have volunteers in place to maintain this fencing and process.

Finally, as you are proceeding with the cull soon, I ask for more information on the culling process itself. As we in Holwell village live and exercise nearby, may we be informed in advance precisely on which days will shooting take place? May we see the code of practice under which it is undertaken, as well as the qualifications of the deer manager and any other stalkers involved? In which other LRWT reserves have you implemented culling and when?

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Yours sincerely



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