

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

3rd September 2024

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

Dear Ann

### **Holwell Wood deer cull**

I write to ask why you are undertaking this cull in our local nature reserve. I have lived in Holwell for 25 years and so I know most of the other residents. From recent discussions, I am aware that a significant number of us here simply can not understand why our local Wildlife Trust will be shooting wild animals in a nature reserve. It matters to us because this is happening close to where we live and the Wood takes our village name.

I can summarise our concerns and questions as 'Why?' and 'How?':

#### **Why?**

- Is it really necessary to cull the deer in this way? How many Muntjac deer are there at Holwell? Have you done a count? I walk my dogs every day on the roads past each of your 3 reserves here and I hardly ever see or hear a Muntjac.
- We understand a deer impact survey has been undertaken at Holwell - may we have sight of this?
- Have the alternatives to a cull been considered seriously? You concede fencing does work to protect small areas, so why not extend fencing around the whole wood and reserve?
- Every new tree at Holwell Wood appears to have a substantial plastic protector around it; what are these for, if not to protect the tree? Over past years at the nearby reserve, there have been other plantings of trees and these are now thriving without a cull.
- What about sterilisation as an alternative to culling? Has this been considered properly?

#### **How?**

- How many deer will the cull kill? Over what period? Surely if you kill deer in one area, like the Wood, will not other deer just move in to replace them? What about the Roe deer that have been photographed there, will they be shot too?
- What happens to the dead deer? Will we see carcasses being hauled away in wheelbarrows and on the back of trucks? Are they sold? Who profits from this?
- We have very serious concerns about the risk to public safety from this cull. There is a clear line of sight from one of the high chairs to Holwell Lane, along which many dog walkers, cyclists, horse riders, motorists and others pass every day. What signs warning the public will be put up? When, where and for how long? Euphemisms like "Deer management under way" will not sufficiently convey the risk from high powered rifles and live ammunition.
- How will you select and manage those undertaking this cull? Under what Code of Practice will they be operating? How will you verify that their training, experience and capabilities are up to the job of preventing any accidents? Isn't this all just too risky for any benefit to the Wood?

Finally, may we ask if your fellow Trustees are all fully aware of the cull and its implications? Was this cull a discussed and minuted decision of your Council? Or has it been simply an executive decision? If so, by whom?

We look forward to hearing back from you shortly. We don't wish to take any further action regarding the cull until we have your response. However, awareness of the cull is spreading in Holwell and social media has a way of disseminating news rapidly. No doubt, in due course, local print and electronic media may be interested, too.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Simon Wilkinson-Blake". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Simon" and "Blake" being capitalized and prominent.

**Simon Wilkinson-Blake**

E: [simonwilkinsonblake@gmail.com](mailto:simonwilkinsonblake@gmail.com)

T: 01664 444432

M: 07977 004159