

HALE PARISH COUNCIL

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FAO Ben Smith
National Grid plc
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By email: visualimpact@nationalgrid.com

7th September 2018

Dear Ben

Ref: New Forest Visual Impact Provision "Hale Purlieu": Feedback ref livestock access

At the recent consultation meetings held in Hale and Woodgreen Village Halls, you asked for assistance in understanding the daily routines of de-pastured stock moving on and off Hale Purlieu. With the full support of the Parish Council, Councillor Hartas subsequently organised a meeting of commoners and riders on Hale Purlieu to ascertain their views.

The meeting was held on 21st August and 34 people attended, including 17 commoners and 19 riders. No drivers of ponies attended the meeting but we are aware of two people who drive ponies and traps in the area. As well as responding to your request, there are also several questions for you contained in the following summary notes of the main points of the meeting. These have been numbered for ease of reference.

Those present asked for it to be made very clear that their participation in this meeting should not be construed in any way as support for the project to underground the cables and that no-one can really know what the behaviour of livestock will be under these conditions.

In the opinion of those present it was agreed that a minimum of four access routes would be needed to allow animals to move between Hatchet Green, Hale Purlieu, Forest Road and Turf Hill. Primary access routes for livestock are marked on the attached map in blue:

These four routes would need to be a minimum 7.5 metres wide with a funnel entrance at each end to encourage stock to enter. There should be no machinery or vehicles left near the entrances and right of way must always be for the animals. There should be a pedestrian walkway to one side at least 1 metre wide, fenced from the wider part of the passageway and gated at each end to stop stock entering. Signage would be needed to inform walkers, riders and drivers what to do in an emergency, giving emergency telephone numbers, and should be sited at every entrance. The number of the person responsible for site Health and Safety should also be given on the signs.

The route from Lady's Mile would have to be closed at both ends if work to the roadway is taking place.

There were concerns about animals being frightened by the noise underfoot when crossing a bridge-like structure and possibly stampeding. Ideally the structure should be covered with rubber matting for health and safety reasons.

Please note that operators of machinery near the access paths and drivers of vehicles operating the gates or waiting to cross, must always turn off their engines when riders or drivers are crossing and allow them to cross safely.

An additional two pedestrian walkways would be needed giving access to the tracks across Mays Firs, these should be gated at each end. Kissing gates or self-closing gates would be needed on all pedestrian access routes.

Q1) What are National Grid's plans for getting animals out of the excavation area should they get in?

Q2) Please confirm that there would be a gate (or temporary cattle grid) at each end of the haul road (where it meets the B3080 and at the Lady's Mile end) and that these gates would remain closed except when opened for each vehicle passing through and also that there would be gates at the access points to the SECs.

Stock fencing should have small, horse-safe mesh supported by strong wire and very secure posts. Ponies and cattle rub against fence posts and can get their legs trapped in larger mesh. It is considered very important that fences and posts should be inspected and mended daily and there should be no barbed wire.

Q3) Fences would need to be a minimum of 8 feet high to stop deer entering the works areas. If not, would there be someone on site each morning to deal with injured deer? How would dead deer be disposed of?

Q4) What speed limit would apply on the haul road? Would the drivers be given any form of awareness training?

Just under half of Commoners present said they fear the risk of leaving stock on Hale Purlieu would be too high and they might be forced to take their stock off Hale Purlieu for the duration of the project, incurring significant feed costs. Many thought that those animals not taken in would migrate to other areas and may not return.

Q5) How would the ecological balance of Hale Purlieu and Hatchet Green be maintained if stock levels are reduced significantly over a two-year period? How would overgrowth due to lack of grazing stock be managed?

Q6) What reimbursement of expenses could Commoners expect if they decide it is safer to take their stock off the purlieu or for supplementary feed because of reduced grazing on the purlieu?

Q7) Please confirm that National Grid would take full responsibility for livestock causing accidents or injuries to others on or near the access routes provided by National Grid.

Q8) Please can full details be provided of the procedures for compensation and evidence needed and a copy of the National Grid fee scale for professional representation?

There was a strong preference that a designated compensation fund should be held by an independent party such as the Verderers, National Park Authority or National Trust, with a named point of contact, and that claims should not be made via any representative of National Grid.

If you have any questions or any of the above needs further clarification or discussion, please do not hesitate to come back to us.

We would be grateful if you could acknowledge safe receipt of this letter and let us know when we might reasonably expect a response to the questions raised.

Yours sincerely

K. Cleary

Kathy Cleary

Clerk to Hale Parish Council

Encl: Route map showing livestock access

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