

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

NOTICE OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY DECISION FOLLOWING REVIEW OF DIRECTION RESTRICTING CROW ACCESS RIGHTS

Prepared by Sarah Haigh, Natural England

Access authority: Norfolk CC
Relevant authority: Natural England
Local access forum: Norfolk Local Access Forum

| Land parcel name | Direction reference | Restriction on existing direction | Reason for restricting access |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Dersingham Bog National Nature Reserve (Dersingham Fen & Wolferton Fen) | 2006120055 | Dogs on short leads all year | Direction given under section 26(3)(a) for Nature Conservation, to protect ground nesting birds and winter roosting raptors from disturbance. |

Natural England has now decided how to proceed following its review of the long-term direction restricting CROW access rights on this land. A summary notice was published inviting comments from 18 February to 5 April 2022.

Summary of responses

We received 10 individual responses to the consultation, of which 9 were supportive of the restriction continuing, and 1 was uncertain that the restriction was required.

The Ramblers, Norfolk County Council's Countryside Officer and Norfolk LAF also responded, with support/no objection to the restriction from the first two. Norfolk LAF asked for further justification for the dogs on leads restriction outside the nesting season.

The NNR manager's response to the request for further justification is as follows: The year-round restriction helps to avoid disturbance to winter roosting raptors, including Hen Harrier and Merlin, which are threatened with extinction in Great Britain. Minimising disturbance helps to maintain a viable habitat for these birds on the nature reserve, which is even more important with the increasing number of visitors. Having dogs on leads is also helpful from a health and safety perspective when in the vicinity of the cattle on site. People with dogs are welcome to visit the nature reserve; it just isn't a suitable site to let dogs off leads across it.

Outcome of the review

To protect ground nesting birds and winter roosting raptors from disturbance, **Natural England's decision is to leave the original direction unchanged in the way it was originally proposed and extend the end date for a further six years.**

Details of the restriction appear on the relevant map of access land on the Open Access website - www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk.

In compliance with our statutory duties, Natural England will review this direction within 5 years' time of this decision.

Date review completed: 28 April 2022.