

From: Sonia Stretton [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Mark Osborne
Sent: 03 September 2020 15:45
To: Scott John <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Mark Osborne <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Without Prejudice Save As To Costs: Enforcement appeal by Dunlin Limited, Heads of Agreement
Importance: High

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Dear John,

Midhope Moor – Matting Track

I am sorry that I did not include this in yesterday's missive to you. A sign of old age, forgetting all the important things! During our recent conference call discussion, we talked about the future work which was planned on the moor, which is accessible **only** via the matting track and would be inaccessible for restoration work if the matting track was not present. It is our understanding that;

1. There are no further works planned at this location under the existing HLS Agreement. In this, there is no requirement for follow up works or maintaining but for the sake of best practice, the Estate is very keen to follow up and maintain the work which has already been completed.
2. The only gully blocking works which have been completed at this location thus far, are all above the 500m mark. There is therefore huge potential for further gully blocking works here.
3. NE have indicated their desire for further works (including gully blocking and sphagnum inoculation works) to occur, although nothing is set in stone.
4. The Estate hopes that the successor HLS agreement will provide an opportunity for further conservation works to occur.
5. The Estate is very keen to see further restoration works being carried out on this part of the moor.

In addition to this, the Estate's view is that there is a real and present need for the Estate to undertake fire mitigation works and also be able to provide really good access in the event of a wild fire, either on Midhope Moor or indeed on adjoining properties. As you know, all of Howden has a significant and ever increasing load of combustible biomass due to the National Trust's non burn policy and despite their cutting work, which we and almost everyone else who has any practical knowledge of fires on Moorland (which the NT bless them, do not have!). The same applies to the Cut Gate area on Midhope. If the matting track was not in situ, then there would be an area of moorland of approximately 764 acres which would be completely inaccessible for moorland restoration, moorland management and also in the event of an emergency/wildfire. Of this 764 acres, only c. 150 are consented for burning, and without access to this area with a topper/swipe,

very little control of the build-up of combustible fuel load will be able to be completed. Without proper access to these remote areas for firefighting equipment if a fire did occur, the consequences would be truly horrendous.

As you know, the Oaken bank fire access was up a track only really suitable for very experienced Argo / Polaris drivers and the lower track was not maintained by the NT, as a result becoming dangerous for other users, including the fire brigade. Only three keeper vehicles accessed the higher reaches of the Oaken Bank fire (via Geoff Eyre's route from the Derwent End) and 28 keepers and farmers arrived at the fire, most of who accessed it through Midhope. Without this assistance, the fire could have easily grown to well over 6,000 acres (nearly 10 sq. miles) overnight. Attached are some pictures showing the PDNPA Argo (1), the injured individual (2) whilst the fire raged and a Unimog struggling on a poorly maintained track (3/4). All of these examples highlight the importance of access to these very remote areas, which at the current time, the matting track helps provide to this burnable area of 14 sq. km or more. I honestly do not think that any Inspector is going to be very impressed when shown these sorts of pictures, because they do show the absolute necessity of having proper access. Wildfires are not a figment of our imagination. They occur with increasing frequency and as the fires on Hatfield and Darwin Moors showed this year, wetting will not prevent them occurring under very dry conditions. I really do wonder how your Authority will respond in the aftermath of a very significant wildfire in that area (but not necessarily on Midhope Moor), when having to explain the removal of a very valuable access route, which might well have made all the difference in getting valuable men and equipment to the blaze?

I hope that the above is useful to you following our initial discussions. If you would like to discuss this at all, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours,
Mark Osborne

[dictated by & sent in the absence of JM Osborne]



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