



Annual General Meeting Tuesday 18th February 2015

Present: Pippa Jones (chair), John Handley, Anthony Jones, Heather Calderbank, Pat Baker, Anita Willoughby, Chris Frankland, Jane Selva, Dee Moore, Diana Jerman, Denise Renshaw (minutes),

Apologies: Andrew Backhouse, Marianne Broadgate, Jean Hill, Garry Olson.

Business Arising from previous meeting:

1. Visit of Rob Hopkins - suggested programme; Meet Rob from train 14.45 7th May; visit community orchard and garden at the Temp; Lindow Moss walk; pot luck meal with local foods and evening presentation by Rob - Denise to check availability of Meeting House. Invitations to go to Transition Wilmslow members and associates and other Transition type groups in the region. Arrangements to be finalised at March Steering Group.

2. Love Wilmslow, Love your planet - The feedback forms from the day were very positive.

Expenses for the day were a £300 donation to the Centre for Alternative Technology and Paul Scotts expenses. Churches Together in Wilmslow Treasurer has paid the balance after donations made on the day. Anita will make a donation of £70 on behalf of TW towards the shortfall and will reimburse the printing costs incurred. It was agreed that in future the practice of having feedback forms for events should be adopted.

Appointments

Chair: Pippa Tyrrell-Jones was appointed to serve for a further year.

Treasurer: Anita Willoughby was appointed to serve for a further year

Membership Secretary: Heather Calderbank was appointed to serve for the coming year. The role will consist of maintaining the list of Transition Wilmslow members, updating the email contact list of associates and dealing with incoming emails to the Transition Wilmslow Google mailbox.

Trustees: The names brought forward to serve as Trustees at the January Steering

Group Meeting were appointed.

Rachel Corrigan

John Handley

Pippa Jones

Anthony Jones

Denise Renshaw

They will serve initially for 12 months.

Minutes Secretary: Denise Renshaw was appointed for a further year.

Membership report:

Andrew Backhouse has created a database for recording details of the members and has a file of hardcopies of the completed membership forms. Heather will now take this over.

Membership forms have been received from 25 people and entered on to the database.

Treasurers report and 2014-2015 accounts

The accounts are attached and as seen. Anita will check with the Charities

Commission whether it is required for them to be verified by an external examiner.

Reports from sub-groups:

Comms:

"We would appreciate more members coming on board. We have regular meetings, bring our laptops/tablets with us, share ideas and help each other out with problems. There is usually someone with a solution or we work through it together. Recently there have only been three of us in attendance.

Website:

The following members have author access to upload content to the website: Ali Berry, Flo Collier, Pat Baker, Rachel Corrigan, Heather Calderbank and Rebecca Segal. Phil Valentine is still the main administrator.

The Web Team will upload information sent to TW gmail with <comms> in the subject line.

An annual fee is due to keep our website account with Wordpress. A fee to use the TW URL is due every two years. The web team have note of this.

Stats: Last 12 months – most accessed pages (apart from the home page) were Diary (433), Lindow Moss (305) and 12 Monthly Challenges (228). Over the last 30 days the top three pages were – Diary (62), 'Love Wilmslow' (55), 'Body in the Bog' (37). Most of our readers in the last 30 days came via search engines (241) followed by Twitter (25) and Facebook (13)

This underlines the importance of the 'Diary' being kept up to date.

Dropbox: We need more active members using this.(the more who sign up the greater amount of storage space we are given) It really is the only way for sharing/accessing posters, press releases and photographs in particular. To find out more, e-mail to TW with <comms> in the subject line.

Current users are: Andrew, Ali, Flo, Pippa, Anita, Marianne, Heather, Pat, Denise, Rebecca.

Publicity: Comms Team will submit, but NOT WRITE, press releases. For events, keep in mind the amount of time needed for the Team to prepare material, posters etc. We have costings for photocopying and printing. Heather Calderbank is our designer of posters, flyers and leaflets. On Dropbox we have a list of contacts for promotion of events in local press, church magazines etc.

and also locations for posters. See folder: <Comms, Web Info Admin> file: <Events Publicity Check List>.

We need to evaluate the effectiveness of our publicity. Word of mouth for the 'Love Wilmslow' event was an important factor. Greater use of feedback forms?

Transition Wilmslow Business Cards would give us a more corporate identity – better than giving out our details on scraps of paper when we meet with contacts.

Storage of Material: Several TW members have various items for use at stalls; similarly leaflets and other material. How do we keep track of this?

TW gmail: Ali Berry, through her work, has attended a course on how best to use social media and now has more information on Mail Chimp as an e-mail organiser.

We need someone to be officially in charge of the TW account to pick up on enquiries on a regular basis, and to send the mail shots out to the 'Friends of Wilmslow' list.

Twitter, Facebook: Followers on Twitter now up to 1,192 (731 same time last year). Good use of Facebook during 'Love Wilmslow' with great photos that auto link to twitter."

Energy:

Ali Berry has taken on being chair for 2015 and is working with Helen Lederer and Chris Daniel to get more people trained in using the cameras and to do more surveys, thanks to the grant from the Town Council. We have also had the first meeting of the community benefit society embryonic board to put PV on community building roofs - with Garry Gresham, Mike Carey, Ali Berry, Amanda Stevens, and me attending. I would like to have a couple more interested and skilled people. This Saturday morning I have the founder of MORE Renewables and Richard Pearce of Low Carbon Lymm coming to talk to us at 31 Vale Head at 11am if anyone else is interested.

Environment and Planning:

The environment and planning group continue to engage with the Cheshire East Local Plan and John did attend the Cheshire East Workstreams meeting on 23rd January that he was invited to attend. Under consideration are the programme of work on Lindow Moss and strategic planning applications.

Lindow Moss:

John Handley presented the draft response he has prepared to submit to Cheshire East on the restoration scheme proposed by Crogan Peat for the Moss. This divides the peat extraction site into 10 compartments. His submission was circulated in advance of the AGM and is attached to the end of these minutes

Having considered John's analysis of the restoration plan the Meeting agreed with John that our best hope of stopping the peat extraction and returning the Moss to a bogland habitat was to support the planning application from Crogan Peat to build 14 houses on the Moss Farm site. However our support was on the condition that Peat extraction ceased immediately and that we only supported this application for building on Green Belt because of the unique circumstances and would in no way wish it to be considered as setting a precedent. The meeting hoped to see local involvement when the Restoration Group is set up.

Those present at the meeting expressed our gratitude to John for the huge amount

of work he has put into preparing this document, we are very aware of our good fortune in having access to his expertise.

Film:

The next film is 'A Dangerous Game', Tuesday 31 March 2015, 7.30pm: United Reformed Church (URC), Chapel Lane, Wilmslow SK9 1PR. The film is about access being lost to heritage landscapes worldwide because they are being developed as golf courses for the rich.

Food:

Seedy Saturday in 2014 was a successful family event and we plan to repeat it on Saturday April 25th. Time has been spent maintaining the community garden at Gravel Lane Temp and some of the produce was supplied to Wilmslow Parish Food Bank. We still need to get more of the local residents involved. Some of the group attended a workshop on pruning to help with maintaining the Community Orchards. Vandalised fruit trees have been replaced at the Gravel Lane and Carrs orchards. Attempts to grow the number of people buying local food from Food4Macc direct has been slow, but there was interest after the promotion at the "Love Wilmslow" event and we will capitalise on this, working towards a Wilmslow collection point.

AOB:

Earth Hour 28th March 8.30 - 9.30

Enquiries have been made as to whether the Old Dancer would be interested in staging a pedal power cinema event for Earth Hour showing something like a Buster Keaton silent film. Dependent on what pedal power cinema would charge.

British Ecological Society - Outreach Grants

Outreach grants of up to £2,000 are being offered to organisations interacting with the general public and providing education to a non-academic audience on ecological projects. Applications need to be in by the 26th March. John will look into this as he has had connections with BES.

Date and time of next meeting: March 18th 2015, 7.30 at Wilmslow Quaker Meeting House.

Draft for consideration by Transition Wilmslow Steering Group

Response by Transition Wilmslow to Planning Application 15/0064M, for variation of planning conditions and the restoration of the Lindow Moss peat extraction site.

Summary

Transition Wilmslow wishes to support in principle this application for variation of planning conditions on planning permission 5/97/0758P for restoration of the Lindow Moss peat extraction site, also known as Saltersley Moss. We welcome the prospect of an end to peat extraction and the restoration of the extraction site. However, we have serious reservations about certain aspects of this proposal, as submitted. We would like to make suggestions about how the negative impacts of the proposal could be mitigated and also about how the proposal could be strengthened, in a positive way, so as to assure the desired outcomes. We request that these observations are taken into account in determining the application, with its associated Restoration Scheme and replacement planning conditions.

We recognise that this application is inextricably linked to planning application 15/0016M for demolition of existing buildings and construction of 14 detached family houses on the Lindow Moss Peat Farm, at Moor Lane, Wilmslow. We will comment separately on the housing application (15/0016M) but we understand that cessation of peat extraction and progress of the restoration scheme on Lindow Moss is conditional on approval of that application. We have reservations about application 15/0016M but we will also give that application our conditional support, in order to secure an end to peat extraction and the restoration of the peat extraction site.

Transition Wilmslow and the New Vision for Lindow Moss

Transition Wilmslow is part of the Transition Towns movement in the UK, which seeks to promote community action to improve the sustainability and liveability of their localities. We have given a high priority to developing a 'New Vision for Lindow Moss' (Annex 1) which seeks to promote the restoration of the peatland core and the conservation and interpretation of that and the wider Lindow Moss landscape. This area is broadly congruent with the Lindow Moss Landscape Character Area (M2) in the Cheshire County Landscape Character Assessment (Cheshire County Council, 2008) which has been formally adopted by Cheshire East Council (see attached map).

The New Vision for Lindow Moss was developed through a Workshop in April, 2014 which involved key government agencies (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency), Cheshire East Council, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, user groups and local residents. The Workshop was convened by Transition Wilmslow and facilitated through a pro-bono contribution from the consultants ARUP. The New Vision is summarised below:

Lindow Moss is one of the most significant peatland landscapes in Britain and yet it remains abused, neglected and officially unrecognised. Through this New Vision those who care about the future of Lindow Moss are coming together as the Lindow Moss partnership to restore, conserve and celebrate this uniquely important landscape. This will involve:

- *Cessation of peat extraction and restoration of the peat working area to create an attractive natural habitat and to re-establish the Moss as a carbon sink*
- *Protection of the wider historic landscape of Lindow Moss*
- *Improved access for recreation and exercise, for all ages and abilities*
- *Creation of an area where flora and fauna can flourish and be appreciated*
- *Interpretation of the rich natural and human history of the Moss, including Lindow Man, to*

enhance education and understanding

- *Establish a 'green tourism' destination whilst maintaining its natural character*
- *Recognition of Lindow Moss as a Green Infrastructure Asset in the Cheshire East Local Plan and a 'green lung' for the people of Wilmslow and beyond*

This application presents an opportunity to secure a key objective of the New Vision, namely cessation of peat extraction and restoration of the peat working area to create an attractive natural habitat and to re-establish the Moss as a carbon sink. For this reason it has our in principle support. However, this proposal needs to be seen in the broader context of a 'multifunctional landscape' as reflected in the range of objectives which comprise the New Vision. In preparing our comments we have read the Planning Application Document, the Environmental Statement (Volume 2:Main Report), the Restoration Scheme and all supporting documents.

Policy context for the application: the importance of landscape, and the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for 'good design'.

The planning application document lists 'relevant' policies in the National Planning Policy Framework but omits Objective 7 '*Requiring good design*'. Whilst this section of the NPPF is indeed focused on the built environment it has relevance for all development. For example, Para 56 states that '*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people*'. Whilst Para 61 stresses that high quality design goes beyond aesthetic considerations and that '*planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and place and the integration of development into the natural, built and historic environment*'.

This resonates strongly with the European Landscape Convention of which the UK is a signatory, which defines 'landscape' as:

'Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. (See ELF and Natural England Guidelines for Implementation of the European landscape Convention)

Lindow Moss is already important as a wildlife habitat, and is set to become more so if the restoration plan is implemented successfully. **But Lindow Moss is more than a wildlife habitat, it is above all a cultural landscape. The Restoration Scheme needs to be about people as well as wildlife.** This is recognised in the clear and informative archaeological assessment within the applicants' Environmental Statement. At a recent Day School on Lindow Moss, Rick Turner the archaeologist who discovered Lindow Man gave a scholarly presentation but was also invited to present his aspirations for Lindow Moss 'soap box' style. We attach this presentation at Annex 2 because it so germane to this application.

The landscape and visual impact assessment (Section 7 of the applicants' Environmental Statement) captures the 'sense of place' very effectively in Para 7.5.13:

'With regards to landscape character, the site is again considered to be of high sensitivity. Lindow Moss is valued as a resource by the local community...Despite its location close to the edge of Wilmslow, the Moss has a remote and rural feel, due in large part to the enclosed nature of the site, which is surrounded by tree belts and small woodlands with little intervisibility through this tree screen. As such, the site has a character all of its own, with very little influence from outside.

Clearly any change within the site has great potential to influence this character.'

However, Section 7 of the Environmental Statement has a number of shortcomings:

- There is an apparent lack of awareness of the most up-to-date Landscape Character Assessment of Cheshire (Cheshire County Council, 2008), which supersedes the 1994 LCA. The LCA for 2008 has been formally adopted by Cheshire East Council and is readily available on their website (see map attached to this submission)
- The assessment applies a standard methodology which does not do justice to the cultural/historical dimensions of the landscape
- The assessment does not assess the landscape and visual impact of the Restoration Scheme on a compartment by compartment basis, as is necessary if the 'saved' landscape policies in the Macclesfield Borough Council Local Plan (January,2004) and the Cheshire Replacement Minerals Plan (June,1999) are to be properly met
- In two key locations (the Sand Hill in the NW corner of the site, and the woodland to the east of Rotherwood Rd) the landscape and visual assessment at Paras 7.4.3 and 7.6.16 is clearly referring to an earlier scheme, which did not involve substantial clearance of woodland.

We now proceed to an assessment of the applicants' Restoration Scheme itself (Appendix 2.1) which is at the core of the proposal.

The Restoration Scheme

The objectives of the Restoration Scheme are set out in Para 13, p 2/3 of Appendix 2.1. In response to that:

We support the proposal to restore the site so that multiple benefits are delivered through re-establishing '*functional raised bog habitat in combination with other wetland, heath and woodland habitats*', and the restoration objectives which relate to that.

We recognise that this requires habitat reconstruction or '*rebuilding*' as described in the Restoration Scheme and that the successful restoration of part of the site to raised bog will involve the creation of shallow water storage lagoons. The report states that the key to successful restoration is retention of a minimum depth of low permeability, well humified peat to constrain downward seepage of water. We are concerned that the 12 month period since the Restoration Scheme was submitted has seen a particularly aggressive period of peat extraction. This has the potential to inhibit restoration to raised bog habitat and the new levels appear to call into question the viability of the hydrological regime as proposed.

There should be a moratorium on peat extraction whilst the Restoration Scheme is agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Peat depths should be checked and levels established (as required by the planning conditions currently in force) to ensure that the Restoration Scheme as submitted is still viable.

A minor point, but it should be noted that the descriptions of expected flow of excess water between compartments in Paras 104 and 109 of Appendix 2.1 seem to be incorrect; they perhaps refer to an earlier draft.

We now comment on the Restoration Scheme compartment by compartment (numbering relates to Axis Fig 3.4, which we have attached). In this assessment we will have regard to the

statement at Para 66 of the need to *'promote biodiversity whilst minimising landscape impact'*.

Compartment 1.

The existing wet heath in this section is a valuable habitat in its own right, and one which is not well represented in the wider Lindow Moss landscape, including Lindow Common. We recognise the need to maintain a high water table but we suggest that given the topography, and the attractive aspect of a broad stand of heather alongside the public footpath (described as high visual sensitivity at Para 7.6.15 of the Environmental Statement), the emphasis here should be on retention of wet heath.

It would then not necessary to carry through the intrusive programme of engineering work that would otherwise be required to maximise the extent of bog habitat in this compartment.

We suggest a low intervention option in this compartment with wet heath as the dominant habitat.

The main outfall from the whole site to the Sugar Brook is located at the western corner of this compartment. We would like to see a properly engineered sluice at this point (as already required by the existing planning conditions) which is the final control point for the whole hydrological system. This would both regulate water levels from the perspective of mossland restoration but also provide an opportunity to regulate flows in time of flood, due to excessive rainfall and/or hydraulic failure within the system.

We suggest the construction of a properly engineered control sluice at the main outfall point, as already required under the current planning conditions.

Compartment 2

This compartment comprises the retained sand hill elevated above the peat extraction area. The applicants intended to retain this area as wet woodland but Cheshire East Council in their pre-application advice (CEC, Feb 1st, 2013) requested that 'extensive tree/scrub felling be required' so as to establish lowland heathland.

We question the appropriateness of this advice and object to the proposal to clear the woodland because in this situation it is unlikely to result in a significant expansion of heathland, and the woodland is an attractive and valued asset in the landscape.

The Restoration Scheme describes this compartment as 'heath habitat with some significant scrub incursion'. This is a misreading of the situation. What we have here is a bracken dominated secondary woodland comprising Oak, Birch and Scots pine, with fringing heathland. The dominance of bracken will be reduced somewhat as the water table rises due to changes in the wider landscape, but not to the extent required to permit a comprehensive switch to heathland, even following wholesale removal of tree cover. That in turn would have a very detrimental effect on visual amenity in this prominent location within the site. It would also result in a strong pulse of mineral nutrients into the adjoining mire. What is needed here is some control of birch scrub at the margins and perhaps selective thinning to encourage succession towards a lightly canopied woodland with Oak and Scots Pine.

There are excellent opportunities here for landscape interpretation linked to the trenches left by former archaeological investigations.

Compartment 3

We welcome the proposal that this area shall be left largely undisturbed as intermediate heath/bog habitat, but with scrub invasion controlled.

Care needs to be taken with scrub removal in the ditch separating Compartments 3 and 9 because of the presence of Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*). Newton, in his Flora of Cheshire (Newton, 1971), notes that Royal Fern is now almost totally absent from its former range of habitats in Cheshire (typically Fen margin of Sphagnum bog) and now favours damp sandstone cuttings.

Compartments 4 & 5

We support the proposal to restore these compartments to raised bog habitat.

Compartments 6a and 6b

We support the proposal to restore these compartments to raised bog habitat.

In the north east corner of compartment 6B the peat thins rapidly above a lens of sand which is clearly visible in the drainage ditches. Also visible in the ditches, at this point, are fine examples of fossil pine, rooting in situ into the underlying substrate. Unfortunately, the pine stumps have been smashed by the excavator but even in their damaged state there are good opportunities for both scientific investigation and environmental interpretation.

The opportunities for landscape interpretation (fossil pine stumps in situ, rooting through humified peat and into the underlying mineral substrate) in the NE corner of Compartment 6B should be incorporated into the Restoration Scheme.

Compartment 7

This compartment has recently been subject to a period of aggressive peat extraction. It revealed a magnificent stand of fossil pine which would have fringed the sand island perhaps 6,000 years ago. Tragically, the significance of this for science and environmental education went unrecognised. The pine stumps have largely been destroyed by the excavating machine.

The recent destruction of a remarkable stand of sub-fossil pine in Compartment 7 provides additional justification for a moratorium on peat extraction whilst the scientific and interpretive potential of the exposed peat horizons is reviewed.

Compartment 8

The Restoration Scheme observes (Para 112) that *'this compartment is substantially unworked at present and is characterised by peat baulks and pits known locally as 'moss rooms'*. This is fortunate because this compartment includes the find site of Lindow Man, the first and only Bog Body in Britain to be recovered in an almost intact state and subject to full scientific investigation. Lindow man is now displayed in the Iron Age gallery of the British Museum. Rick Turner, the archaeologist who discovered Lindow Man has pointed out that there are very few instances in Europe where the precise location of the find site of an Iron Age bog body is precisely known, and that this site deserves to be properly marked and interpreted. The fact that this area is substantially unworked in recent times because the context in which Lindow Man was discovered can be easily

visualised and interpreted.

Given the international significance of the discovery of Lindow Man and its great importance to the understanding of this landscape we consider that this compartment should remain substantially unworked. The priorities here should be archaeological conservation and environmental interpretation, with ecological restoration of relevance only inasmuch as it furthers those over-riding objectives. Specialist advice should be sought from English Heritage about how this can best be achieved.

Subject to that, we suggest that the find site of Lindow Man be appropriately marked and interpreted, with a board walk connecting that site to the public footpath which at this point is little more than 40m away.

Compartment 9

We support the restoration of this compartment as a fen with minimum intervention, especially given that this is the centre of Water Vole activity within the site. We suggest that the hydraulic regime is redesigned at this point so as to conserve the Water Vole habitat.

Compartment 10

Compartment 10 lies to the east of Rotherwood Road and has not been worked for at least 40 years. During that time it has become a woodland, principally Birch but with Rowan and Oak above and an understory of Holly below. The ground flora is dominated by Bramble but with Bilberry on the peat baulks. Because of the damp conditions and irregular topography there is a luxuriant bryophyte flora. The woodland provides an excellent example of natural succession on a former peat working surface and as such has great interpretive value in understanding the ecological restoration of the rest of Lindow Moss.

There is also much dead and decaying wood which favours both invertebrates and birds such as woodpecker. This is ideal breeding habitat for priority bird species such as Willow Tit and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. The Breeding Bird Survey of Lindow Moss, by Jeff Clark Ecology did include the western fringe of Compartment 10, (see Appendix Y to the application). The report points out that whilst Willow Tit and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker might have been expected, their absence from the survey was hardly surprising as both are 'early nesters'. In fact, because ground conditions are so difficult this block of woodland is virtually impenetrable and little disturbed, so it makes ideal bird breeding habitat in summer and in winter, roost sites for owls. Although Compartment 10 did not appear to be part of the formal ecological survey of Lindow Moss commissioned by the applicants, Jeff Clarke Ecology made the following comments (Para 7.4):

'Part of the planned mossland restoration will impact upon the eastern woodland block outwith the boundary of the current extraction area. Here a pioneer birch/oak woodland has become well established and its partial removal will directly impact upon several sensitive species including the red-listed Willow Tit. Careful consideration of the proposed management plans is required to balance these conflicting needs throughout the restoration process.'

Taking a broader landscape ecological perspective on the wider Lindow Moss landscape, woodland habitat patches such as this are vital as part of the habitat mosaic. They compensate for woodland losses elsewhere, for example at Lindow Common, and this particular woodland provides a very attractive setting for two important and heavily used public rights of way (restricted Byways 34 and

35). Furthermore, unlike the rest of the site, the wet woodland of Compartment 10 is already functioning as an effective carbon sink.

The applicants proposed that this area be retained as woodland but the Pre-Application advice from Cheshire East Council (CEC, Feb 1st, 2013) suggested restoration to a 'priority habitat' such as mire/fen/wetland should take preference and that this would ultimately would require 'large scale tree clearance'. The final proposal therefore shows substantial clearance of the woodland, followed by substantial engineering works in an attempt to recreate bog habitat and retention of a tokenistic woodland fringe.

We consider that the wet woodland which comprises Compartment 10 should be conserved in its entirety, and not cleared to make way for an alternative habitat. It provides multifunctional benefits as a wildlife habitat in its own right, a key component in the wider landscape mosaic, a functioning carbon sink and a landscape amenity of great importance, given that it is bounded by two heavily used rights of way. It also contributes strongly to the visual sense of enclosure which is such an attractive feature of the Lindow Moss landscape. It is a first class example of natural succession on an abandoned peat working and has high educational and interpretive potential.

During the 19th Century there was a rifle range on the moss the 'thousand yard' range ran north/south towards the eastern margin of this compartment. Again this presents an interesting opportunity for landscape interpretation.

We suggest that the line of the former thousand yard rifle range is marked and interpreted where it passes N/S through the woodland of Compartment 10.

Peripheral Habitats & Boundary Treatments

We greatly welcome the proposal (Paras 127/128) to retain, encourage and protect the peripheral woodland and scrub which is so important for the setting of Lindow Moss. We are concerned that the 'Restoration Committee' may be empowered to countermand this intention within the Restoration Scheme.

Hydrology

We commend the evidence based assessment in the Environmental Statement and the general approach within the Restoration Scheme. We accept that much of the control of water levels will be engineered within the site but we still feel, as argued above, that there is a case for a properly engineered sluice on the main drain, at or near the outfall to the Sugar Brook, as a final 'set point' for the water level in the system and as a last line of defence if required in times of flood.

Access, Amenity and Interpretation

We welcome the proposals to retain existing rights of way and, additionally, to provide two E/W permissive paths, one close to the northern boundary of the site and the other along the main access track through the middle of the working area.

We understand the reasons for discouraging access via the proposed housing development on the current 'Peat Farm' site but welcome the provision of an access point for organised visits with hard standing for minibuses. **We are concerned about disabled access to the site as a whole and**

wonder if this access point might also be appropriate for disabled access.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust has a small but attractive nature reserve on the south central boundary of the site. The combination of bilberry with fringing birch trees means that the site is attractive to the scarce Green Hairstreak butterfly, as well as people. Unless CWT actively wish to deter public access (and that would be a shame) it would be good to provide a linking path from the central access track through the site to the reserve. This would be accessed through the adjoining small mature mixed woodland and perhaps the applicants would consider dedicating that woodland to the Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

We commend the statement at Para 6.3.10 of the Environmental Statement that:

'the bulk of the restored site would be wetland and as such public access could easily be accommodated without both an unacceptable risk to health and safety and unnecessary disturbance to the habitats created. Well designed wetland areas are well adapted to prevent unauthorised access whilst providing the public with views across the restored site from paths and viewing points.'

Part of the charm of Lindow Moss is its lack of formality and we dread the prospect of the proliferation of fences, keep out signs and red and white plastic hazard tape which now so often blights the wider Lindow Moss landscape. We would like to see endorsement of the applicants' approach written into the terms of reference of the Restoration Committee.

In his evidence to the Environmental Statement, Professor Nick Higham states in Section 8.8:

'Lindow Moss is archaeologically and historically one of the most important lowland wetlands in Britain, offering an unusually early inception, exceptional depth of stratified peat, important prehistoric archaeology and a unique group of organic remains which include human bodies of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and/or Roman period. The exceptional archaeological and historic archive provide the opportunity to tell the story of Lindow in detail. Illustrating the processes of bog burial and deposition, prehistoric deforestation and settlement, enclosure, land improvement and peat digging.'

That he argues should include preservation of some of the surviving mossrooms as we have suggested for Compartment 8.

Given the great potential of the site for scientific inquiry, education and interpretation to a wider public, the plans for the site need to be properly grounded in an Environmental Interpretation Strategy and Plan. We have made several suggestions about that in this submission and we would be pleased to support work in this area, so that the potential of Lindow Moss can be properly realised.

Management and Aftercare

We respect the intention of the applicants to retain ownership of the application site and to be responsible for future management operations. The approach set out in the Management and Aftercare Plan seems broadly appropriate. However, we are concerned that if the site remains in private ownership in the longer term this will inhibit the scope for leveraging in grant funding from bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Charitable Foundations. That will be necessary to

ensure that the site's full potential is realised. Some idea of what is possible may be gained from Natural England's Fenn's and Whixall Mosses to the south of Whitchurch. In the fullness of time it would be good to see land ownership transferred, and with it responsibility for management to an appropriate body such as the Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

The applicants propose that the restoration process should be overseen by Restoration Committee which is likely to comprise Cheshire East Council, Natural England and the Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

We are concerned that the proposed Restoration Committee should be given a broader remit than that of ecological monitoring & an over-riding objective to maximise the extent of priority habitats. We would like to see the Restoration Committee given a broader remit to include: protection of landscape amenity, conservation of palaeoecological and archaeological assets (including sub-fossil pine), promotion of scientific inquiry & education, support for public access and the development of an interpretive strategy. Its membership may need to be broadened to reflect that.

Assuring the outcome

We recognise that this proposal is contingent on planning consent for the development of housing on the Peat farm site. We anticipate that will generate the capital necessary to underpin the restoration of Lindow Moss and its after-management, as proposed in this application. A recurring theme in our discussions on the two applications has been concern that the good intentions within the Restoration Scheme may not be realised in practice. Cheshire East Council will not need reminding that the Heads of Terms for the Section 106 Agreement needs to be very secure.

We suggest, as is not uncommon in Minerals Planning, that a Bond should be secured to be drawn down as the Restoration Scheme proceeds, with a separate commuted sum to secure after-care and ongoing management. We also suggest that any commuted sums generated through the housing development should be directed to Lindow Moss itself and not to general amenity within Wilmslow.

Prepared by the Planning and Environment Group of Transition Wilmslow and approved by the Transition Wilmslow Steering Group on Feb 18th, 2015.