

Miss Kate Mulveagh  
Natural England  
Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
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Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ



25<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Miss Mulveagh

**Water industry Act 1991, Section 156 Land Disposal – Charlbury Glebe, Nine Acres, Charlbury, Oxon (Wigwell Nature Reserve)**

Features of interest

The land was opened as a nature reserve in July 1995 and has since become a well-known site in the west Oxfordshire Cotswolds. It abuts Charlbury forming part of the setting of the town.

The site sits within the Cotswolds AONB and is, therefore, of national interest and of strategic significance in local and national plans. A large part of the site forms the steep sided valley to a tributary of the river Evenlode and although small is quite dramatic, forming a strong landscape feature. From the highest part of the site there are notable views south west over farmland to the Wychwood Forest.

Most of the site is unimproved limestone grassland, a large part of which is designated as a Key Wildlife Site. The Wigwell Nature Reserve is also one of 21 sites nationally for meadow clary *Salvia pratensis*, making the site of high importance.

There are no scheduled monuments but there are some earthwork features present including faint ridge and furrow.

Access

Access is via a public footpath that clips the south west and north west corners of the site. Whilst there are no other public rights of way crossing the site, a permissive path runs around the perimeter of the nature reserve.

Threat and future protection

Disposal of the site could threaten the public interests of the site and as such a restrictive covenant or a long term management agreement is recommended. The focus of the covenant/management agreement should be to conserve and enhance the calcareous grassland, in particular the meadow clary and to maintain public access to the site.

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The Board is unlikely to enter into a management agreement for the Wigwell but strongly supports the continuation of the existing management agreement with the Wychwood Project

Regarding the list of organisations Natural England is consulting on this matter, the Board recommends the addition of Charlbury Town Council who have had a vested interest in the Wigwell for at least 20 years.

Yours sincerely

Mark Connelly

Land Management Officer

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