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Protected Sites: Regulation & Enforcement
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Direct Line: 01588 674091
Email: mike.kelly@shropshire.gov.uk
Your Ref: EIA 1630
Our Ref: Cefn Einion EIA

18th September 2013

Dear Jackie,

EIA Agriculture Regulations Screening consultation, Cefn Einion, Holding 35/173/0036

Thank you for this consultation. We have studied the consultation and recognise the applicants' desire to improve the production and palatability of grassland. However, the fields the applicant wishes to improve are located on steeply sloping land and we are concerned that ploughing will remove the continuous cover that is important to prevent runoff and diffuse pollution to a watercourse that is already subject to unsustainable sediment and nutrient loads. Ploughing would increase the risk of this eventuality and further compromise the River Clun SAC which is in Unfavourable Condition.

As part of our assessment, we have visited four of the five fields in question and did not observe the excessively high weed problem as described by the applicants (photographs attached). To address any concerns, ELS agreements have provision for the treatment of any injurious weeds without resorting to ploughing.

To improve the sward, we would recommend the applicants explore grassland restoration as a more sustainable option. Soil compaction is known to be an issue in the Clun catchment and the use of a pasture aerator should encourage, soil biota, spring growth and sward recovery even after sustained grazing or silage cuts. These are available for hire from local machinery rings.

At the time of visit the grasslands were grazed or recently cut so we were not able to assess their botanical significance. However, being in ESA for many years, these fields may have some wildflower interest and we would recommend a baseline survey before any commencement of any potentially damaging activity. Furthermore, we feel that ploughing of this permanent pasture runs counter to the spirit of these agreements and could undo much of the benefits derived from many years of public funding investment through the ESA scheme. Ideally the management practices prescribed in ESA/ELS agreements to conserve permanent pasture should continue to be followed in this case.

I regret therefore that the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership must object to this proposal to plough permanent pasture, and recommend the exploration of more sustainable options.

Should you wish to discuss any aspects please do not hesitate to contact me on the above.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kelly

River Valleys Officer



Field 4339



Field 4960



Field 5788



Field 0148