

## **Hesworth Common – Fittleworth Village Survey Feedback (April 2024)**

### **Summary**

- 20 completed surveys were received
- 1 additional email was received
- 3 other verbal responses were received from Councillors Murray, Houlden and Mackenzie.
- Of the 24 surveys responses received, 3 respondents stated that they would prefer no change to the current condition of Hesworth Common. On that basis, over 85% of respondents are either in support or have no objection to the biodiversity enhancement management works being proposed under the Countryside Stewardship funding programme.

### **Responses to Specific Questions**

- (1) Do you live in Fittleworth – 100% said yes.
- (2) Where do you live in Fittleworth – 30% Lower Street (close to Swan), 15% close to the Fleet/Limbourne Lane, 15% Bedham Lane/Upper Street, 10% close to Lower Street (top end), 10% close to School Lane, 10% close to Church Lane, 5% Tripp Hill, 5% on the Common.
- (3) If you don't live in Fittleworth – given response to (1) n/r.
- (4) How long have you lived in Fittleworth – range between 3 - 56 years, with an average of 22 years
- (5) How old are you – 10% between 30-49; 55% between 50-69; 25% between 70 and 80 with 10% over 80.
- (6) 95% of respondents use Hesworth Common, with only 5% (1 person) stating that they didn't as they felt that there wasn't a connecting footpath.
- (7) Why don't you use Hesworth Common – see response to (6) above.
- (8) Activities respondents enjoy doing on Hesworth Common include enjoying nature (20), enjoying the views towards the South Downs (18), walking without a dog (15), bird watching (9), walking with a dog (8), trail running (3), horse riding on bridleway (2), playing (2), picnics (2) as well as photography (1), walking the Serpent Trail (1) and conservation work (1).
- (9) Of the 8 respondents who walk their dog(s) on Hesworth Common, 2 (25%) keep their dogs on a lead with the assumption being that 75% always keep their dog off the lead; 3 (37%) are not worried about other dogs, but 5 (63%) are worried about other dogs; 3 (37%) use the dog bins to dispose of dog waste, whilst the other 5 (63%), either take it home or do not pick it up; only 2 (25%) were aware of the Take the Lead campaign.
- (10) Walking access to Hesworth Common is predominately from St Mary's Drive (43%), from the Swan PH along lower Street (28%), Lower Street car park

(14%) and then Hesworth Common lay-by, Hesworth Common direct and Birchwalk Wood direct all 5%.

(11) In terms of where people go on Hesworth, 18 said that they went to both the Trig Point and Lower Bench below the Trig Point, 15 to the western Barkworth Bench, 11 onto Hesworth from Hesworth Lane, 7 from the Lower Street car park and 5 all over Hesworth Common.

(12) Only 2 respondents (10%) said that they drove to Hesworth Common, parking at the Lower Street car park.

(13) Exciting wildlife seen – respondents have seen deer (4), adders (3), badgers (3), buzzards (3), lizards (2), slow worms (2), tree creepers (2), kites (2) and 1 of owls, bats, foxes, great spotted woodpeckers, goldcrests and cuckoo.

(14) Respondents go to other local areas like Petworth Park, Lords Piece, Parham, Pulborough RSPB and the South Downs Way for variety / change of scene, the views, open countryside with fewer trees, longer walks, different wildlife, peaceful outlooks, more attractive woods, different landscapes, unspoilt rural environment and to enjoy the change of seasons.

#### **Other feedback:**

- Need to manage potential increased water run-off close if it is proposed to remove trees close to St Mary's Drive.
- Need to ensure speed of change does not cause habitat shock.
- Would like to see permitted bridleway reopened parallel to A283.
- Would like to ensure visitors educated as to how to enjoy Hesworth Common.
- Keen for Parish Council to take this opportunity to protect and enhance the rare heathland habitat both in the role that they play in supporting biodiversity and carbon sequestration but also in providing a range of green spaces for residents, not just woodland (which is well provided for within our village).