**Kingscote forest plan – external consultation – Autumn 2021**

**We asked, you said, we did…**

The external consultation for the Kingscote forest plan was open for five weeks in October / November 2021. Posters were put up at the main entrances to the wood, directing people to an online survey. The Forestry England planner and forester held an informal drop-in public consultation session at Kingscote in early November, which was a great opportunity for us to meet some of the woodland users and answer questions about the plan.

The majority of the 18 respondents to the online survey describe themselves as neighbours and walkers. There were also comments from Natural England and a local forestry contractor.

Respondents scored functions of the forest plan (including biodiversity, communities, forest products, and recreation) in terms of importance to them / their organisation. All respondents scored most of the functions as ‘important’ or ‘very important’, and most said that the forest plan addresses their needs and interests ‘very well’ or ‘well’, indicating that this is a woodland that is able to deliver a range of benefits for people and wildlife.

Positive comments from the feedback included:

“It is a clear and well-presented plan and reflects the SSSI interest features and likely constraints very well.”

“I was very pleased to see such a detailed and comprehensive description of the wood and of the plans for the future.”

“I enjoyed reading the plan and how it is embracing the current challenges facing forestry.”

Some respondents raised concerns, including use of the wood by mountain bikers, and the condition of tracks and bridleways, and there were a couple of requests to allow horse riding in other parts of the wood, and not just on the bridleway.

Forestry England’s response:

* We have only owned Kingscote for a couple of years. As we get to know it better, and understand more about how it is used, we will be able to identify tracks that need attention, such as vegetation control, and make decisions about how best to manage horse riding and mountain biking.

Some people requested that more detail is included in the plan – about the history of the wood, and how Kingscote will help to mitigate climate change.

Forestry England’s response:

* There is a limit to the amount of detail that we can include in the final version of the forest plan, but be assured that we hold a great deal of background information, such as maps and documentation from the previous owners, at our office.

There was a request that we try to ensure that Kingscote is joined up to other local woodlands in order to improve habitat connectivity.

Forestry England’s response:

* While we wholly recognise the importance of connectivity in the landscape, we are limited in what we can do to influence planting of trees or hedges on private land, but are happy to consider collaborating with neighbouring landowners if we are approached with proposals.

Forestry England – [westengland@forestryengland.uk](mailto:westengland@forestryengland.uk)

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