

From: Robin Harley
Sent: 27 August 2013 16:42
To: 'Ron Allen'

Subject: St Catherine's Hill Management

Dear Ron

Thank you for coming out to visit the site and see the proposals for the first year. It was very useful to meet and discuss what is proposed and any potential impacts. I attach a map showing the areas that we looked at on Friday. Please let me know if you need a different version.

Please can you agree or suggest amendments to the following points. The areas are labelled on the map but labels are quite small, so I will try to add descriptions.

Area A (0.26 Ha) the block on the north facing slope that has a bank half way down the slope – mainly birch upslope. The intention is to block fell the upper slope, leaving some large character pines - you had no view on this area as it is straightforward and has no potential impacts

Area B: (0.14 Ha) the narrow strip of trees at the top of a north facing slope, with heather to the north and south. We plan to fell most of the trees which are mainly young pine and birch - you had no view on this area as it is straightforward and has no potential impacts

Area C (0.25 Ha) the western slopes of a valley system, draining down towards the road but well below the residential area. We plan to phase thin this area to increase light penetration to the ground. Previously there had been a solid rhododendron understorey that has recovered well in the open areas – you had no concerns here given the distance and height of adjacent properties

Area D (0.32 Ha) the eastern slopes of the above valley system. Mainly the removal of dense pine on the sloping ground but also some birch at the NE end on the higher ground – you had no concerns here given the distance and height of adjacent properties.

Area 19 (0.25 Ha) the head of a small valley system, covered in mixed pine species, adjacent to area E (see below). The plan is to selectively fell this area, initially to a wood-heath phase. We pointed out that the junction between 19 and E is often soft in the winter and gets rutted but there is no visible surface water – your view was that this could proceed but careful monitoring was needed. We need to check for emerging water (e.g. springs and other seepages), any evidence of surface flows (e.g. washing of needle litter) which would suggest erosion. Also what percentage of the ground was affected – a small amount would be acceptable.

You pointed out that it would be better to dissipate any water energy upslope and you suggested leaving some of the felled stem sections in-situ, across the block. These would need to be staked and could also be monitored for needle build up. We need to be careful not to direct surface water to create a new problem however. You said that this may be an area to consider working over more than one season, possibly doing half the block this year or thinning the whole block but it was not essential.

Area E (0.16 Ha) downslope from Area 19. Mainly mixed conifers including some large Maritime pines. Edges were marked with pink paint. Most broadleaves to remain. Beyond the western boundary I showed you trees that have died in recent winters, possibly due to waterlogging. I also showed you some small retention ponds and we discussed what happens to the surface water in this area (plastic pipe etc) Ground now has a slight slope but not as steep as Area 19 – your view was that this again could proceed with careful monitoring. Again if necessary we could phase this block over 2 years.

Area F (0.2 Ha) block adjacent to the radio mast site and ancient monument. Heavy selective felling, almost clearfell to create the start of a wide ride linking to the north. On the plateau. You had no concerns over this area.

Area G (0.2 Ha) the first block that we visited with blue crosses on the trees to remove. Not as heavily wooded as other areas and no ground cover. Relatively straightforward fell on the plateau, up to the boundary bank. You had no concerns over this area.

Area 11 (2 Ha) large block on eastern side of plateau, south of the quarry pond. The intention is to carry out a 50-60% thinning operation to create more open wooded heath. Trees on the western edge are more dense so the operation will be more focused on that boundary. You had no concerns over this area.

Area 10 (0.34Ha) clearfell of block to create open link between west and eastern areas, again on eastern plateau. You had no concerns over this area.

Area 29 (0.24 Ha) selective felling of trees below a fixed diameter. This block sits upslope from the gun club quarry. We pointed out that the gun club had their own proposals but these were outside the plan. We pointed out that all larger trees will remain at least in the medium term and that the trees being removed were all relatively young. You had no concerns over this area.

Area H.(0.18Ha) block of mixed pines at top of slope overlooking western edge of site. Block felling from open area to east, towards break of slope, probably stopping at fallen tree stem in first year. Your view was that we could proceed but again needed to monitor carefully, including the adjacent dipwell. While we could remove loose needles to aid recovery you did not recommend any removal of humus and felt that this was a good area to introduce heather propagules from mowing adjacent areas in the autumn. These could be raked into the humus which would form a substrate for germination. We discussed the use of geotextiles/coir. We could also leave some cut and staked stems to mitigate against any potential surface erosion.

Best wishes

Robin

Robin Harley

**Countryside Officer
Christchurch and East Dorset Councils**

From: Ron Allen
Sent: 03 October 2013 10:36
To: Robin Harley

Subject: RE: St Catherine's Hill Management

Dear Robin

I have read through your notes and found the locations on your plan.

I am really pleased with the careful approach you are taking with the felling; balancing the needs for wildlife conservation with those of the community using the site.

I agree the items set out in your email below and look forward to seeing some action on the ground before too long.

Kind regards
Ron