

## Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

### NOTICE OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY DECISION FOLLOWING REVIEW OF DIRECTION RESTRICTING CROW ACCESS

Prepared by Natural England

**Access Authority:** Gloucestershire  
**Relevant Authority:** Natural England  
**Local Access Forum:** Gloucestershire Local Access Forum

**Direction reference:** 2005110053

Land Parcel Name	Direction Reference	Details of restriction on original direction
Upham Meadow	2005110053	01/03/2010 - 31/07/2010 Every year until 31/07/2015

Natural England has now decided how to proceed following its review of the above mentioned long-term direction to restrict CROW Access rights on this land. A second consultation has been held between 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015 with statutory consultees and the general public. We received feedback from the Ramblers.

In summary their feedback was that as conditions on the site have not changed since the 2009 reassessment and breeding populations of redshank and curlew still occur in nationally significant numbers on the site they have no objections to continuation of the current direction. They do ask that suitable warning notices explaining the direction are in use at intersections with public rights of way when they enter and exit the land.

#### **Outcome of the review:**

Natural England's decision is to vary the direction to extend it for a further six years.

Therefore the land will have access excluded between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> July every year until 2020, to protect breeding populations of Curlew and Redshank.

This direction has been given as Curlew and Redshank are present in nationally significant breeding populations. Both species are on the Category A species list for England and are bird species which have been identified by Natural England and the RSPB as being exceptionally scarce or sensitive to disturbance.

It is thought that changes in agricultural practices such as the switch from hay making to silage production have left Gloucestershire's breeding curlew population, as well as many other farmland birds, sparse in number and in fragmented populations across the county. These small and increasingly isolated populations are

that much more affected by adverse change, and thus are highly vulnerable to further pressure from recreational use.

Breeding curlews are especially sensitive to disturbance, being disturbed by an intruder entering their territory up to 1km away.

The traditional hay making practices at Upham Meadow, being a Lammas Meadow where a late hay cut is taken, favours these breeding birds, and this combined with there having not being access historically has allowed these populations to continue to use the meadows.

Given the sensitivity of these breeding birds and that continued disturbance could result in the loss of chicks and nests and even Upham Meadow as a breeding site, a total exclusion is required. A dog exclusion or the national dogs on leads restriction during this period is not thought to offer enough protection given the sensitivity and importance of these species.

Natural England's policy for long term directions is that they should not be given for a period of more than 6 years. Therefore the original direction will be varied to have an end date of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

#### Access Management

The Second Consultation Report noted that some improvements to the access furniture at the site are required.

These comprise a new kissing gate at the Sandacre Farm access point and 4 new robust restriction signs. The two kissing gates will also be kept locked during the closed period.

#### Summary of changes made to the existing directions:

<b>Land Parcel Name:</b>	<b>Details of restriction on original direction:</b>	<b>New details of restriction</b>
Upham Meadow	<b>01/03/2010 - 31/07/2010 Every year until 31/07/2015</b>	<b>01/03/2015 - 31/07/2015 Every year until 31/07/2020</b>

Details of the restriction will appear on the relevant map of access land on the Open Access website - [www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk).

Where a direction restricts access indefinitely, for more than five years, for part of every year, or for part of at least six consecutive years, we have a statutory duty to review it within five years of the date of its issue.

Date review completed: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015.