Dear Planning Inspectorate

IPING COMMON SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Letter in Support of Sussex Wildlife Trust Application to the Planning Inspectorate For Fencing.

I am writing this letter in support of the fencing application that has been submitted for Iping Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). I apologise for this letter being late, which is due to extended leave, and hope that it can still be considered in evidence.

Natural England has been keen to see the possibility of low intensity grazing on the common fully explored and supports the application for consent to the Planning Inspectorate for fencing to allow grazing of the common. We believe that grazing the heathland at Iping Common SSSI is essential to achieve favourable condition of the SSSI, and that the erection of fences is the only option available to achieve this.

Natural England has satisfied itself that the consultation process has achieved the most appropriate design to incorporate the minimum amount possible of new fencing and secure all the existing public and private access.

I can also confirm that the fencing proposal is based on the need to restore species diversity to the heathland habitat which has become overgrown with Molinia grass, whilst taking into account the needs and concerns of users of the common. Grazing with cattle as an addition to the overall management of the common would be entirely consistent with the positive management requirements of the SSSI.

Natural England expects that Iping Common will remain in Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) until the end of the agreement, and then transfer into Countryside Stewardship and that these funding streams will contribute significantly towards facilitating the proposal.

Natural England advises that an EIA screening opinion is not required for this proposal as it does not ‘increase the productivity for agriculture of uncultivated land and/or semi-natural areas’, and is expected to have a positive environmental impact.

Yours sincerely,

Carole Mortimer
Land Management and Field Unit Adviser, Sussex & Kent Team.