

<b>Item</b>	<b>B.10</b>	<b>07/00521/CB3</b>	<b>Permit Full Planning Permission</b>
<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>Mr Andy Wiggett</b>		
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Coppull</b>		
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Creation of three new ponds, 5 hectares of species rich grassland and various other improvements to nature reserve.</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Hic Bibi Nature Reserve Hic Bibi Lane Coppull Lancashire</b>		
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Chorley Borough Council</b>		
<b>Proposal</b>	<p>The application relates to a scheme of ecological enhancement of the Hic Bibi Local Nature Reserve. This covers 0.5ha out of a total area of 8 hectares and involves the creation of three new wildlife ponds, scrub removal and exposure of clay substrates for species rich grassland colonisation. The works have been informed by ecological monitoring over 10 years by the Council's Ecological Consultant. The proposals have been assessed by them and in consultation with various local groups and specialists who support the project.</p> <p>The proposal is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• halt the processes of natural succession for the benefit of flora and fauna already living on the site,</li> <li>• create ponds and remove surface vegetation to expose clay substrates suitable for natural colonisation of species rich grasslands,</li> <li>• create extensive new breeding grounds for great crested newts, other amphibians and water voles,</li> <li>• safeguard the species rich grasslands,</li> <li>• improve the local environment.</li> </ul>		
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Hic Bibi Local Nature Reserve was a former brick works and clay quarry site which closed in 1959. The nature reserve was created on the site in 1997 when rubbish was cleared, paths and ponds created and new planting, fences and stiles provided. The site was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in September 2000 and is now one of the most ecologically sensitive nature reserves in the Borough of Chorley.</p>		
<b>Policy</b>	<p>PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.  Joint Lancashire Structure Plan Policy 21 – Lancashire's natural and man-made heritage.  Local Plan Policy EP2 – County Heritage Sites and Local Nature Reserves.  Policy DC1 – Development in the Green Belt.</p>		
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>In 1996 Planning permission was granted for a change of use to a nature reserve. In December 2006 an application to create the ponds was withdrawn.</p>		
<b>Consultations</b>	<p>Lancashire County Council Ecology Unit, Natural England, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Chorley Borough Council Contaminated Land Unit, Rambler's Association - without response.</p>		

**Representations**      None Received

### **Applicant's Case**

- The project has been carefully planned and thought through, the main aim being to improve the biodiversity of the site.
- All the relevant groups have been consulted and support the project.
- Guidelines from Natural England and the Wildlife and Countryside Act have been adhered to.
- A Great Crested Newt Conservation Licence has been obtained.
- The new ponds, scrub clearance and grassland colonisation have been designed to provide optimum habitats for Newts, Water Voles and other amphibians.
- A new ecological management plan will be produced in Autumn 2008.

### **Assessment**

#### Impact on the Green Belt

The application is considered to come within the category of other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and will secure nature conservation interest. The site is open to public access from several existing public footpaths. A hide has been constructed in order to watch the ponds but defined routes will be set out to avoid disturbance of fragile habitats or breeding birds or animals. None of this conflicts with Green Belt policy.

#### Impact on neighbour amenity

The proposals will have no impact on nearby residents, the nearest houses on Coppull Moor Lane are about 300m away.

#### Ecological Issues

The evolution of this project has followed a logical progression following ten years of monitoring and extensive consultation with local groups and specialists. All relevant biodiversity factors have been taken into account. Finally, when the works have been carried out a new ecological management plan will be produced.

**Conclusion:**      The proposal is essential to provide ongoing habitat improvement and maintain a viable one to support great crested newts , water voles and other amphibians. The permission can be conditioned so that the project will be carried out in accordance with the agreed licence. The proposal complies with the relevant planning policies.

### **Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission Conditions**

1. Once the site works are complete, an ecological management plan for the new and existing ponds and grasslands shall be prepared not later than the end of 2008 and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: to secure the proper management of the reserve and to comply with Policy EP2 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

2. The works to the ponds shall be carried in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Conservation Licence Application Method Statement.

*Reason: To ensure the proper development of the site and secure the habitat of the protected species in accordance with Policy EP2 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

3. No works shall be carried out during the bird breeding season (March to July inclusive).

*Reason: To prevent any adverse impact on nesting birds which the habitats on site support.*

4. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

*Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.*

---