



**The
Box Moor
Trust**

Dear local resident,

Thank you to everyone who fed into our consultation on the future improvements to Bovingdon Reach. We ran two consultations, one around the boardwalk area, and one around access and new fence and hedgerows at the large field at Bovingdon Reach.

We really appreciate all of you who have taken the time to give us your thoughts, and we are grateful for your opinions.

To ensure our local community gets a say in the future management of Westbrook Hay our Estate Manager, Peter Samson, felt it was important to get as much feedback as possible through this consultation. Bovingdon Reach came into Box Moor Trust's ownership over 20 years ago, and we aim to make sure it follows our commitment to being open, accessible, and enjoyable, to as much of the community as possible.

The Box Moor Trust estates team and Trustees have reviewed every response made to us, to help make sure we are delivering for our local community. Some of the feedback we heard included:

- You really enjoy the open space and environment up at Bovingdon Reach and the connection with nature you and your families can have there.
- You did not feel that commercial dog walkers, who can come from as far away as Watford and Aylesbury, are respecting the space and are having a detrimental impact on the amenity.
- Many members of our local community still want to be able to access the Bovingdon Reach area of the Box Moor Trust estate with their dogs. This is something we are committed to maintaining, with some seasonal and animal welfare exceptions.
- We need to strike the appropriate balance, to make the land available for those who live within the Trust's Area of Benefit and ensure that it still provides a space and home for nature.



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Some of the issues we are looking to resolve at Bovingdon Reach:

One of the issues that has arisen over the years is that the boardwalk is coming to the end of its useful life, where we are needing to regularly repair it to ensure it stays safe for users. However, this is becoming increasingly costly and onerous. We are committed to replacing the boardwalk with a mobility-friendly and accessible surface, and plans have already been drawn up to do just that.

We have received several complaints that there is a lot of uncollected dog mess at Bovingdon Reach, which is reducing the enjoyment of the amenity for the families and children that love the area. Sadly, this is something that is down to a minority of irresponsible dog walkers. Neither is it something that is restricted to Bovingdon Reach. Not only is this an avoidable nuisance, but it is also a health risk to our livestock which graze in this area and can suffer from Neosporosis (which can cause abortions in cattle) and Sarcocystosis (which can cause brain disease and death in sheep). It is also a threat to human health too, with the threat of Ocular toxocariasis, which, although rare, can cause serious eye disease including blindness.

We are conscious that Dacorum Borough Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency. Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust produced its State of Nature Report in 2020, showing that animal species associated with farmland have dropped 70% since the 1970s. One of the aims of the Box Moor Trust is to develop land management programmes in accordance with best proactive practices, with an emphasis on biodiversity, whilst still providing a good amenity space for people.

What we will be looking to progress:

You will see below how we have amended the original proposal in response to the positive feedback we received. We will be looking to implement the below:

- With thanks to a very kind bequest from a local member of the community, we will be upgrading the boardwalk to an all-weather path to improve accessibility from the Old Barn along the route of the boardwalk.



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- We will also be looking to enhance Preston Hill Pond, to make sure it is still a relaxing and wonderful space for our visitors, as well as providing a vital habitat for wildlife.
- We are already installing some additional water troughs for our livestock, which you will have seen being installed across the Bovingdon Reach field. We have also started work on the north/south fencing which has replaced the temporary fencing that has been there for the last few years. This was pre-planned work, and we apologise if it looked as though we had started work on a proposal which was subject to this consultation before the consultation had finished. We will be planting a hedgerow on this north/south fence line to create a vital wildlife corridor.
- We may look in future to ask dog walkers not to go into certain small fields or areas during key periods of the year. For instance, we may ask people not to let their dogs disturb areas where we have livestock grazing, or for a few months a year during bird nesting season. Most of our permissive footpaths and bridleways will remain open at all times to everyone as they currently are, and all statutory footpaths and bridleways will remain open at all times.
- We have attached a plan of Bovingdon Reach at the end of this letter showing the proposed new gates, fence lines and the hedgerows.
- We will be installing a few new kissing gates and entrance gates. This is to make sure that it is easier for you to get around the estate and readily experience more parts of it.

We had many comments asking us not to 'ban' dogs from the Box Moor Trust Estate. This had never been one of our plans, and it is not something we would contemplate; indeed, you will have seen that our estates team installed a 'hydration station' at the Old Barn and are providing free dog-poop bags to make it as enjoyable an experience as possible for you, and of course, our canine friends. We are installing new dog waste bins at Herdsman's Moor (by the tunnel under the bypass) and at Roughdown. A new dog poop bag dispenser will also be installed at Herdsman's Moor, if the trial at The Old Barn is successful.



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One of the key bits of feedback that we have received consistently before, during and after the consultation is that commercial dog walkers are having a negative impact on your experience of the estate in and around the Bovingdon Reach area. During one of our drop-in consultation sessions, we noted around 11 commercial dog walkers in a 2-hour period, including those queuing to take parking spaces.

Given your feedback, we are going to be looking at options to restrict access for Commercial Dog Walkers on the Westbrook Hay part of the estate, to make sure that your, our beneficiaries', experience continues to be a positive one.

We will be looking to hold some volunteer work parties to plant the new hedgerow and do conservation work at Bovingdon Reach and across the rest of the estate. If you would like to join us as a volunteer, please look at our website at www.boxmoortrust.org.uk

Thank you very much for your support and feedback. We will be holding our Annual Public Meeting at a later time this year in August or September. We would love to have the opportunity of meeting you there.

Yours faithfully,

David Kirk
Chair of Box Moor Trust