



Shaping the future of Hatfield Forest together

Workshop 1 of 2: November 23rd 2016

Workshop Outputs
Word for Word report

Professional workshop facilitators:	Diana Pound Lucy Armitage Joel Pound	Dialogue Matters Ltd Dialogue Matters Ltd Dialogue Matters Ltd
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Volunteer small group facilitators:	Fiona Hall Claire Sargent Susannah Elliott Alli Stone Sheila Abrams
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Typed by:	Alli Stone	National Trust
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Sorted by:	Greg Wannell, Joel Pound	Dialogue Matters Ltd
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Checked and signed off	Diana Pound, Lucy Armitage	Dialogue Matters Ltd
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About the workshop and this report

Purpose of the workshop

Hatfield Forest is a highly valued and much loved place. It provides space for tranquillity and quiet enjoyment as well as a place to walk dogs, ride bikes or horses and explore nature. It is also a nationally special place protected for its beauty, nature and wildlife. The forest is a National Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest and is one of the last remaining intact Royal Medieval hunting forests in Europe.

In the past, local people shaped and maintained the land through traditional practices such as grazing and harvesting. These traditional management techniques are actively continued and shape the recognised coppice and wood pasture landscape. Being on clay soil, and the increasing popularity of the forest these fragile habitats are under strain and we fear are being lost.

The National Trust have commissioned a stakeholder process to find visitor management techniques that can maintain an equilibrium for nature and people to enjoy these special places over the long term. It is vital that new management is well considered and factors in how people use and enjoy the area.

At this workshop discussions were informed by the knowledge of those who took part, and will be combined with the findings of wider community engagement and the input of specialist advisers.

About this report.

During this workshop facilitators wrote up the essence of everything said on flip charts, or participants directly contribute their points by writing on 'post-it' notes or forms. Following the event, all these outputs have been typed up 'word for word' as written.

Once typed, we have sorted and clustered the points within each conversation so that similar points are together. We do this because conversations don't progress in a linear way but go off at tangents, circle back and change direction suddenly making discussions reported in this order, very hard to understand. By sorting similar points together, the main topics and themes of the conversation become clear.

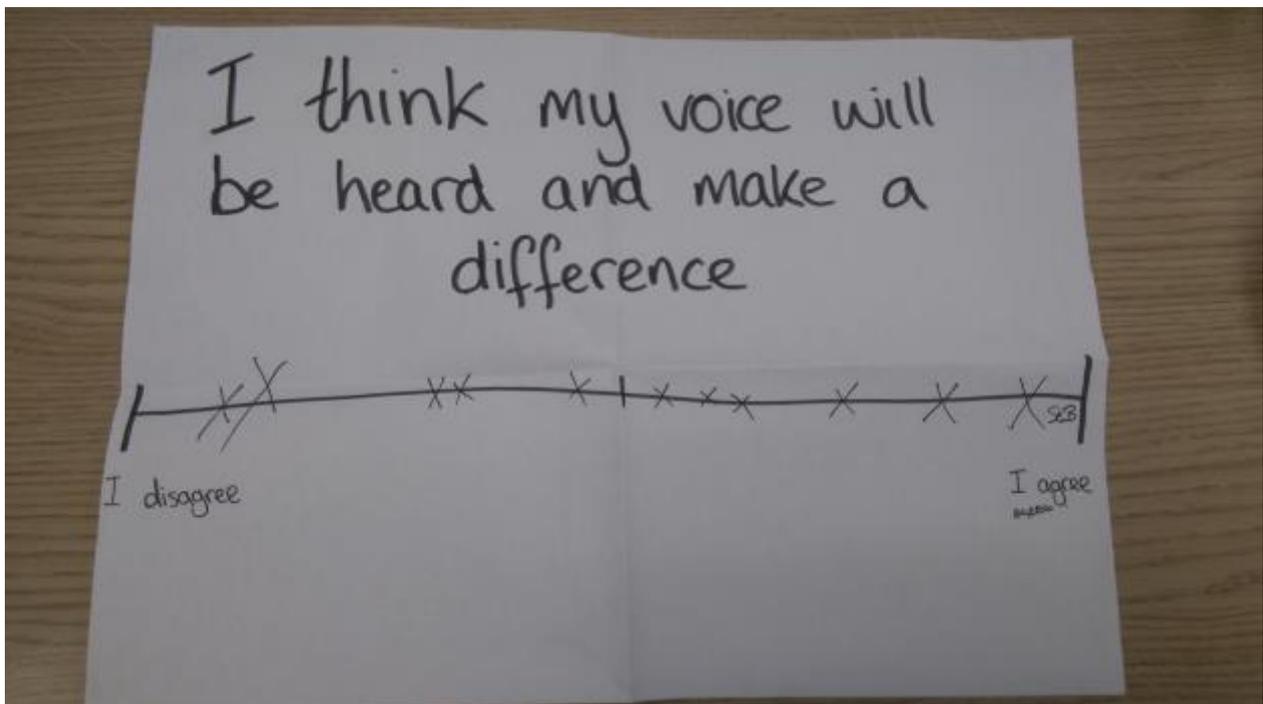
The method we used to sort the outputs is called 'emergent processing'. This means we don't organise the text to a pre-set expectations or titles but see what emerges. The ideas could have been grouped differently or different titles chosen, so no weight should be attached to them.

This report serves as a record of what people discussed, and an *aide memoir* for those who took part in the workshop, but the contents are inevitably quite cryptic in places. We recommend it is not used as the main means of communicating with non-participants.

This report follows the same order as the event.

Acronyms used in	Meaning
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this report	
SSSI	Site of special scientific interest. Sites of local and national importance containing important plant and/or wildlife populations
NNR	National Nature Reserve. Contain examples of some of the most important natural and semi-natural ecosystems in Great Britain. They are managed to conserve their habitats.
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship. A scheme which requires farmers to carry out a more demanding, advisor-led package of habitat management designed to deliver significant environmental benefits in high-priority areas.
NT	National Trust
ECC	Essex County Council
Mosaic	is defined as an area where a range of plant community types occur in transition with one another, usually with ecotone habitat gradients and repeated occurrences of each community, and often at a small scale.
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
SPP	Species
NAAFI	Navy, Army, Air Force Institutes
////	Means we are unable to read the handwriting



Q&A following presentation

Following a briefing presentation by Ade Clarke of the National Trust there was a question and answer session.

Question answered at the workshop

Q 1. What does it cost to care for the forest?

A Annually it costs about £500,000

Q 2. Resource availability to enable this?

A The way the National Trust works is that as each property generates income this goes to a portfolio reserve, Hatfield has a priority. Resources at disposal for medium size issues that can be used. External funding might be available. Money not a constraint, Ade will find the money.

Q 4a. There is farm machinery that can help with compaction – golf courses have the same problem. Ditches at the side help with drainage and keep people away from the edge. Provision of more outdoor space should not be your responsibility it should be ECC providing this. Promote Woodside Green more – provide parking here

A There are compaction machines, I have a company who are well known for decompacting soils – they are pioneers. They are excited to try and help. There is a test and study going on via them then we will know what the most effective way is.

Q 4b. What would the financial impact of closing in the winter be?

A Everything is on the table, unsure of impact. Challenge is – what do you close? The hub? There is a huge extent of impact, how do we prevent this impact? It is more complex than just closing the gates.

Q 5. What involvement with the local farmers do you have?

A Neighbouring farmers are on local committee and have involvement

Q 6. Since you have now opened the forest for winter visitors what is the increase in footfall and as winters have gotten warmer that must have had an impact on numbers of visitors

A Weekends: there is an obvious increase but is constrained by car parking as we go from 1000 to 100 spaces. Solution isn't just to close the gate, we have to strike a balance between people enjoying the forest and the forest thriving.

Q 7. How many dwellings within 1 mile, 2 miles etc. of Hatfield Forest in 2010, 2016, 2020? Area of accessible green space within 1 mile, 2miles etc.?

A Information on this can be sent out

Q 8. Why is there so little obvious education for visitors?

A Regarding this specific issue, any issue – more opportunities to engage with people entering from car park. Challenge for other areas. We can do better. What type of info? How does it want to be received?

Question not answered due to lack of time but noted for answering before the next workshop

Possible solutions

- Q Have you considered raised walkways?
- Q Why don't you make people aware of local footpath network??
- Q Whilst not ideal, have you considered either more avenues or wider avenues?
- Q Have you tried cleaning out ditches beside the avenues and installing modern drainage?
- Q Drainage – look carefully at the old Victorian drains and maintain. Man-made walkways through drains. Grass growing through perforations.
- Q Would you consider closing Bush End entrance in the winter and access only from south west – consider another car park in this area?
- Q Why do you not chip scrub during coppicing and naturally feed it back in to rides to build up erosion this will stop people walking round the mud into the next zone causing further damage

Funding

- Q What is the income of the Forest?

Learning from elsewhere

- Q Are there any similar Forests (ancient woodland) which have suffered similar problems – UK & Europe? If so what have they done to manage these issues?

Possible constraints?

- Q What barriers does the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) place on the options available for protection of the Forest?
- Q Do you still have to be self-sufficient on funding? Surely there is a contradiction

Knock on effects?

- Q Whilst you are reducing winter parking at Forest, people simply go elsewhere e.g. Thremhall. How are you dealing with it?
- Q Does closing paths and redirecting people not just cause double the erosion on the next path surely spreading people out is better than them all using same routes

Are current activities and actions contributing to the problem?

- Q What impact does the running club – Takeley park run have on the Forest?
- Q If you really want to reduce numbers why do you still run events in winter e.g. Park Run, New Year's Day Run?
- Q Summer can be often wetter than winter, and there are more visitors in summer
- Q Why are drainage ditches / culverts / streams not maintained?

Why not comment on developments?

- Q N Trust has been barely visible at planning decision to date. How are you dealing with it?

What is the info on NT visitors v others?

- Q Do we know the percentage split of NT visitor numbers to non-National Trust visitors?

1 Vision for 2030

Its 2030 efforts to balance access and conservation for this special place have worked and you like what you see. What pleases you most?

A place for nature and people

- Thriving wildlife & quality environment, limited numbers of visitors & no or very limited commercialisation
- Birdsong, dog walkers, healthy grassland
- In 2030 the Forest is green, lush and teeming with wildlife for people to see, experience and enjoy making precious memories for future generations
- The forest is safe. People can enjoy the forest alongside its wildlife
- The right balance, people & wildlife
- The forest is understood & respected by all as a special place oozing with history, wildlife and atmosphere
- Preservation of natural beauty and enjoyment of facilities by all

Tranquillity

- Peace, quiet & solitude

Dogs under control

- More control of dogs in coppices etc.

Horse Ride

- That horse riders can still be seen in the forest

Children having fun

- That children still play in Elgins car park and that it is still grassed
- Children and their families enjoying the open grassland alongside the cattle grazing and the air filled with birdsong

Thriving wildlife

- Forest has recovered and by the measures taken to protect the forest (walkways routes etc.) wildlife is there again as migrant routes were protected by resisting more development
- Grassy paths, long clear views, healthy trees
- That the big trees have lived
- A thriving ancient woodland that is alive with flora & fauna
- Invasive species are under control and native species are flourishing
- Increase in the wild flowers on Takeley Plain
 - back to where they were before the thistles took over

Visitors and Children inspired and learning

- Happy educated and inspired visitors
- Education is a large part of the forest experience
 - children enjoying and understanding all about Hatfield Forest and it's ecology
- People are able to convince to understand appreciate and enjoy the forest & its natural heritage

New staff, fresh ideas

- NT should consider moving staff around different properties, change of staff bring new ideas

Drainage sorted out

- Drainage sorted out by opening up the Victorian Drains more work needed

Less wheels

- Less wheels - to be kept as a SSSI forest and not used as a theme park for events that bring in extra people
- Less wheels, bikes & less organised events
- More control of wild life i.e predators i.e squirrels etc (culling) magpies so as to encourage small birds that have declined. Bird boxes put up and feeders by

- volunteers (I would be one as I live in the Street)
- More control of trees being chewed at the base by deer
- Less mature trees/scrub coppiced. More gates /access points to spread out footsteps. Ditches and drainage maintained
- Drains improved, magpies and squirrels culled to save song birds. More use of brush wood cut down chipped and spread on drives where muddy on paths

Housing development

- Future housing development close to the forest will further damage the footfall and wildlife this should be resisted, no development on the other side of Flitch Way. Further parking should be considered along the south west as any more traffic on the Bush End Road would cause congestion in Takeley Street and encourage people to use an area

No new housing development

- Prevention of housing developments close to Hatfield Forest which is impacting on SSSI status

Car parking managed

- Visitor facilities, car park etc. located away from the centre of the forest
- Car parking away from boundaries and adequate size for those wishing to visits. No congestion on access roads or car parking outside Forest boundary impacting on local traffic
- In 2030 the car parking is offsite in an area close to the Forest and people can move freely around the site without sharing the road with cars
 - the Rosemoor model in Devon

Paths for differently abled

- Lots of disabled friendly walks!
- A path round the lake area that makes it accessible to all walkers whatever the weather

Technology to assist access

- Technology to assist access

Still protected for nature

- That is already under pressure in the same area. I have a fear that H/Forest will lose its SSSI status, this forest has an important part to play in this area, don't let it be destroyed!
- It will remind me of the forest as I knew it in the 1970s. I don't remember any mud!
- As little sign of the modern world as possible
- Forest has recovered & retained its cultural significance and its future is safeguarded
- Restore the quality of the forest

2 Session 1: Building understanding

2.1 What do you value

2.1.1 Where do you value now and why?

Number	Comment
1	Example - no comment
2	The whole Forest - probably the most complete and significant Medieval hunting Forest in the country - perhaps the world!?
3	The entire Forest is so important for environmental, social, cultural reasons. I value this place personally and professionally. It's a place to escape, reflect, wildlife spot, walk the dog, go to events with friends and family. The Forest plays a huge

	part in my life.
4	Open space, big trees and lovely buttercups in spring
5	Old Woman's Weaver and Shermore Brook – rich in wildflowers (but vulnerable, as it is a wet area)
6	The whole site of Hatfield Forest is nationally significant as a SSSI, NNR and also a fine example of a wood-pasture system (i.e. Rackham). Wood-Pasture is not only a BAP habitat and supports a significant assemblage of rare invertebrates and fungi and lower plants, and veteran trees that require and deserve nature conservation. The restriction of veteran trees and wood pasture at Hatfield Forest is acknowledged as important research applied ecology and conservation management. It also provides an important educative resource up to PHD level and European symposiums.
7	No comment
8	All Forest is of value. Certain areas for ancient trees and SPP may require more protection. Decoy lake – high value for SPP and important stepping stone for SPP.
9	The whole Forest because of its age and completeness. The lake area because of the very different atmosphere and the link to Capability Brown
10	10a Great for taking school groups 10b Great for taking school groups and bug hunting 10c Butterflies! 10d Doodle Oak – place for contemplation 10e Good for Nordic walking
11	- No sheet
12	More diverse and fewer people (especially at the weekend!)
13	Whole lake/water environment. Lake area is significantly damaged with significant bio-diversity impact (photo's available) 3 years of study observations. Main lake area now probably would not be SSSI status if re-assessed. Main lake is almost unique within ancient Forest environment.
14	Collins coppice and Portingbury are very rich and diverse areas due to coppicing
15	The whole Forest is valuable as a nature reserve and a quiet reflective place to be
16	16a – The centre considered to be Anglo-Saxon. The 8 Wanz Way probably a deer park. Refer to Oliver Rackham's book. Less impact on the Street Coppice? 16b – Elgin Coppice used during 2 nd World War *site of the NAAFI
17	All Forest habitat as a green lung and home to ecology. Significantly lower levels of public access, help to assist regeneration link with habitat management
18	The whole Forest is important. Every area offers different walks, views and flora/fauna

2.1.2 What do you see and do that you would like future generations to be able to see or do?

Visitors and children exploring and playing

- Family gatherings with people of all ages spending the whole day having picnics and playing together
- People would be able to visit and enjoy the forest like I did as a child. The wonder of exploring the forest, seeing the deer, taking part of the forest and feeling as though it was my playground. It shaped my future and the people helped me recover from a long-term illness.
- Grandchildren and school children running freely and safely
- The freedom to explore and enjoy a beautiful place
- Free for all children to enjoy:
 - 50 things activities
 - summer holidays
 - climb trees

- den building
- managing risk
- team building
- friendships

Natural and cultural education

- Visit to understand the natural and cultural heritage of the forest
- Children to visit with schools and enjoy the forest. Understand its ecology and how special it is. Make education fun, explore, learn and connect with nature
- Free access to the forest for all children – education team should not be seen as an income generation team – educations should be free for all
- More use of the Shell House to educate visitors

Informative signage

- Better signage
 - in particular explanatory boards of with Capability Brown ones just erected but around trails & concerning wildlife

2.1.3 What does Hatfield Forest provide that locals and visitors benefit from?

(Environmental, social, cultural, economic).

Local historic landscape

- A sense of place and a link to the past
- The opportunity to visit, understand and appreciate a unique historic landscape

Natural green space

- It's a 'green lung' for the area like Epping Forest was a 'green lung' for London
- Green space on a scale that is seldom experienced, with opportunities to see and experience things that you wouldn't necessarily see anywhere else
- Connection to nature. Health benefits from being in a green and peaceful setting. Family enjoyment and making memories

Recreational area

- Locally it's a space to use for recreation
- Space for people to play with their children
- Safe place to ride horses with no roads

Education

- Used for child minders to educate
- Should provide more education for everyone

Local wildlife

- A place to see wildlife
 - e.g. deer in rutting season

Tranquillity and freedom

- Open space, sense of freedom away from vehicles & development
- Magical place where people can explore and find freedom. Other green spaces are good but don't have the same emotional effect on me as the forest does – childhood memories etc.
- Peace and quiet
 - quiet reflection

Meeting place

- Dog walker; meet other people, social meeting place
- Meeting place for like-minds e.g. naturalists, dog walkers

Benefit lessened by congestion

- Little benefit for immediate locals due to volume of traffic and lack of parking, congestion at main entrance

2.2 Trends and changes

Trend	Based on
<p>What trends and changes are taking place that need to be taken into account?</p>	<p>What is your observation based on? (eg observation, a photo record or research)</p>
<p>Soil compaction</p> <p>When land was managed/worked as a medieval forest it was not damaged by heavy vehicles/ATVs etc. this damage in first picture was about 25 years ago and although is level and grassed over it is compacted and holds water</p> 	<p>Photographic evidence of forest over 20+ years</p>
<p>Cattle trash gateways and rides during wet summers and this goes into winter with a muddy gateway</p> 	
<p>Increased visitor numbers</p> <p>Massive increase in visitor numbers over last 36 years</p> <p>The trend is to more visitors therefore more damage</p>	<p>Personal observation and access to NT data</p> <p>Do different ways of managing the forest need to be considered?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closing sections of the forest on a rotational basis allowing it to recover - Encourage people not to use certain areas and point them to other areas - Utilise areas outside of the forest for people

	to walk and dog walk to take pressure off the forest
Events and cafes drawing more visitors	
Takeley Park Run – weekly 400 plus runners, damaging forest	Observations and forest website and staff and Takeley Run website
To have Park Runs which increase footfall every Sunday	Visiting on regular basis
Catering facilities introduced which brings more people	Knowledge
There are too many events held on the forest these days – run as a business to bring in funds	Appears to be run as a theme park – not a SSSI for people to visit for the beauty flora and fauna
Path/gate closures	
Ransom gate closures with no notice of how long/where/why	Observation, getting stuck!
Ride and gate closures for moths/years simply increases footfall on the open rides increasing erosion elsewhere	
Loss of biodiversity and shift in species	
Significant drop in lake biodiversity from SSSI designation to current time. Reduction in species numbers and new green thing growing underwater over whole main lake area	Photo records and three years of project work on main lake and other water bodies <25>
Blue/green algae in bloom on lake, eutrophication?	Observation
Loss of plant diversity	Observation
Increase in buttercups due to under grazing and compaction (water logging)	Observation
New app of insects from continent due to warming	Observation
Decline of birds to name a few: True sparrows, nightingales, cuckoos, reed bunting, white throats, yellow hammers, snipe, owls, mistle thrush, chaffinch Damage to young trees at base cause by deer/squirrels	Every day walks
Changes in weather	
Changes in weather patterns causing weather to be warmer	Fact – global warming
Drainage	
Lack of a strategic drainage plan for forested areas is creating an on-going impact situation	Observation whilst working as a conservation volunteer <25>
Increased housing and local population	
There is an increased built environment around Hatfield Forest, including increased local population	Arial photography, planning – local plans
Increase in development around the forest without supply of local green spaces	Observation, ECC plans, local development plans
Increased population pressure	Local planning

NT rarely seem to comment on planning apps	UDC website
Increased housing nearby = increased number of people using forest as amenity space, so it isn't getting the respect that an internationally significant site deserves	Observation
Better approach by NT	
Desire of the National Trust to do the right thing and not repeat the mistakes of the past through uniformed action	Research commission by NT
New outdoor activities	
Increased recreational pressure e.g. mountain biking	National trends
Visitors less careful	
Some visitors need educating. It never used to be necessary to stop children damaging trees etc., their parents used to do it. Current generation of parents have little respect for forest (big generalisation I know)	Observation; (children allowed to pick shells off the Shell House while parents look on!)
Out of control parents at weekends	Observation
Out of control dogs at weekends	
Parking	
Cars now parking at Thremhall as it is free and café cheaper	Liaison and observation and planning application. NB Thremhall café expanding and more parking
Parking: inadequate. Restricting maximum of 100 in winter means visitors park on yellow lines and onto areas outside of lines causing further damage	Everyday usage of road past forest
Bush end/car park poor layout and use, larger cars, need to re-configure to improve use and capacity	Observation/comparison with other sites
Changes to area around the Shell house	
"core" area around Shell House and catering is increasingly under pressure, even outside winter. Its character as a Capability Brown feature isn't full respected and it looks uncared for	Observation Research
NT has increased clutter at Shell House in an 'ad hoc' fashion; not been careful about the areas use (new buildings, bins, hedge, plastic matting, temporary fences, cycle hire...) not been joined up approach	
Conservation management	
Positive conservation management and understanding of veteran trees and biodiversity interest has increased, but more work and surveys necessary to ensure resource is adequately restored and conserved sustainably	Liaison and observation

Ageing population and access	
Ageing population – need for less styles/gates better access for buggies etc.	

2.3 Current Management

2.3.1 What is the current management and what is the reason for it?

Current Management	Reasons for this management	Say what your knowledge is based on	
		I help plan management here	I observe the management here
Coppicing			
Traditional management, e.g. coppicing, for the benefit of wildlife	Benefits people and wildlife	X	
Not enough regular coppicing	Produces a range of habitat and wildlife		X
Coppice management & management of veteran trees/ wood pasture incl. grazing	Contribution to historic landscape and biodiversity	X	
The coppicing needed but is too severe and is removing habitat	Management should be more sensible. The hash management has adversely affected song bird numbers		X
I don't like the way the coppicing is carried out – too severe	Some shrubs & understory should be left as shelter – esp. hawthorn		X
Grazing			
2 herds of cattle = more gates which creates more muddy paths	Remove 1 herd of cattle (one herd only) & then remove gates and fences = less //// less management (1)		X
Two herds of cattle on forest due to breeding programme and not breeding father with daughter (1)	If bred at Home Farm cattle will calve at forest which will endanger public and animals alike due to overprotective mothers	X	
Cattle and sheep very important in education of children as well as scrub control & mowing and grass	If not cattle scrub and grass would grow out of control, would cost human and financial resources to maintain	X	
Fences and gates			
Fences & gates – all are required for site management/create muddy areas	Check if all are needed. Also designs might be less intrusive/restrictive		X
Gate and entrance areas	Treat entrances e.g. chalk		X

concentrate footfall and help create muddy areas	or hoggin		
Too many gates open from Flitch Way during winter	Close all but one in so visitor numbers will reduce	X	
Restrict access			
Limit/control winter footfall in Northern/top of forest by closing gates on Flitch Way	Limited access would control degree of impact to ride areas	I have input	
Dear and squirrel damage to new growth			
Young trees in coppices are being damaged by deer and squirrels at the base – possible ring barking	More culling of squirrels or offer protection across the whole forest		X
Boardwalks			
More boardwalks so the flora is not damaged			
Friends of Hatfield			
Removal of Friends of Hatfield Forest has put local opinion back – it is disregarded	Re-instate the friends		X

2.3.2 What are the constraints on management choices?

Financial

- Financial restraints
- In the past there has been a need to raise money – hence the emphasis on running big events during Easter & Christmas holidays. If the money these events raised was no longer needed (ie replaced by central funds) then these big events could be happily avoided
- Financial resources
- Resources

Availability of information/ data

- Survey information not always comprehensive & research of impacts not always readily available
- Information gaps
- Data

Limited public access

- Closed areas (plane crash site e.g.) allow regeneration with management? what comes 1st forest preservation or public access

Statutory Designations

- There are statutory constraints (SSSI/listed buildings)
- SSSI: site of special scientific interest
- Designations
- Legal
- HLS: Higher level stewardship
- The whole site is sensitive – it is all important, protected fragile habitat

People Resources

Limited staff resources

People resources

Poor Signage

- Closed paths are only marked at one end and not both – how does this help people know where to walk?

Weather Patterns

- Changing weather patterns require more flexibility/adaptability for all aspects of site use/management (heavy rainfall, no frost, early spring & later autumn etc.)

2.3.3 What would happen if there is no management?

Loss of historic landscape and biodiversity

- Flora and fauna would be destroyed, centuries of coppice management overturned and historic buildings or landscape features would be lost or changed beyond recognition
- Loss of historic landscape, reduced biodiversity, loss of ‘sense of place’, loss of educational opportunities
- It would change beyond recognition. We would lose a huge amount of diversity of species and access would become difficult
- The forest would cease to exist as we know and value it

Loss of designations and protection

- We would rapidly become unfavourable condition as a SSSI and NNR, and potentially threaten its SSSI status & protection

Nature would take over

- Nature would take over without “man’s” input. It would be different and maybe the forest would survive
- Scrub would take over. Nature would flourish, Deer would become out of control in numbers, affecting roads with more collisions with vehicles. The would also affect neighbouring farmers

2.4 Information

What do you need to know?	Who has this information?
What else do you want to know to help you in these discussions?	Who has that information and can make it available?
How do visitors view Hatfield? Is it a green space or a historic site, or a nature reserve, or a place of recreation?	NT data Visitor surveys
How successful does the NT consider its relationship with local council and local plan and the apparent lack of infrastructure in relation to all new building locally?	NT ECC
Have NT applied for lottery funding?	NT
What is the 10 year plan for the forest? How has that changed with the new building (3000 houses) in Bishops Stortford?	NT/Forest
Local people who have lived in the village for 20+ years have <u>never</u> visited the forest	<19>
Impact of different types of visitor and what they use, walkers, cyclists, horses, cars	<19>
How well do visitors understand the forest and appreciate its importance?	NT
Why did you discontinue the Friends of Hatfield Forest?	NT
What comes first, conservation or public access?	
Why is NT not promoting Woodside Green more and include this on map?	NT
Was NT consulted by Uttlesford before it started dumping houses in Takeley and surrounding villages? How can further problems be prevented or is damage too far gone?	NT
Is NT stakeholder in current and emerging local plans?	NT

<p>How many people take part in Park Run and how many cars involved. Do they pay for parking?</p>	<p>NT</p>
<p>We need to look at how other countries deal with the same problems</p>	<p>The Alps and Far East. New Zealand</p>
<p>Parking plans? For the forest</p>	<p>NT</p>
<div data-bbox="204 362 705 848" data-label="Image"> <p data-bbox="718 380 861 716"> (CULVERTS NEVER RODDED <hr/> DRAINAGE DITCHES NEVER CLEANED </p> </div> <p data-bbox="185 875 823 940"> Drainage maps exist, but these have never been cleared. These are for worst hit areas. </p>	<p>Residents – local knowledge exists! <5> <3></p>
<p data-bbox="185 976 882 1041"> Why don't you provide adequate drinking troughs for cattle? Cattle thrashing culverts, Weavers Pond area </p> <div data-bbox="226 1093 544 1332" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="569 1093 916 1350" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="173 1350 627 1592" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="632 1350 916 1574" data-label="Image"> </div>	<p>NT manager/budget holder</p>
<p>Why has style been removed near Stane Street Halt?? Will simply send more people through different gate</p>	<p>NT</p>
<p>What is the reason for the current planning application for parking meters? Will the gates be opened?</p>	<p>NT</p>

3 Session 2: Access and nature in Hatfield Forest

3.1 What is already being done that is going in the right direction?

(By land managers, communities, volunteers)

Group 1, Group 2, Group 3

Events

- WoodFest run well
- (?) (1) But shouldn't be run in a SSSI. Hatfield Forest either a forest OR a place to hold events for 1000s of people
- Evening's not appropriate
- Scaled back on events – Christmas and Easter
- Events tailored to Every Step Counts

Parking management

- NE (*INatural England?*) gives permission for parking of 8000 people
- Parking is being managed better by double yellows
- Another car park off Bush End Road was promised

Education

- Education of young people
- More education for visitors needed on wildlife and wildlife management
- More education for visitors needed on forest as a whole, e.g what is Hatfield Forest about? What is special here?
- Adapting what is happening for families & constantly discussing this, also for school groups

Research

- Commissioning research and surveys to inform future decision making e.g. conservation management plans

Information availability

- Information is being given out
- People are getting info already, website
- Not everyone has a computer

Walkways and byways

- Walkways are one of the best things the Forest has done
- Byways to restricted byways

NT management approach

- NT consider implications of all their activities
- Adopting a sustainable approach
- Pleased with how NT is approaching this, open minded to looking at possibilities
- Liaise with other country parks
- Care of the marsh is good

Coppicing and cutting

- Volunteers are used – coppicing is good
- Brush cutting (this year) picked up, improving the environment
- Would like more brush cutting done
- Maintained cutting down of reed & sedge is good
- Need improved equipment for brush cutting & more budget

Grazing

- Continued grazing
- Far fewer cattle; grass has gone lank. Wet spring, grass overgrew, very bad for

smaller plants. Should have more cattle to graze of grass with a flail (chop it down).

Grass could have been out in April

- Graze cattle when weather is right (not certain months but by the weather)

Species management

- Muntjack strip bark, not fallow deer
- Wild animal management is good
- 3 pairs reed buntings present this year

Workshops

- Current workshop a good step to allow us to address the issues

Representing user committees

- Are all different users represented on various committees e.g. Horse Rider Committee

Nothing

- Nothing

3.2 How could that be strengthened and enhanced?

Group 1, Group 2, Group 3

Better information availability

- Information distribution not working in some areas
- More detail
- If you miss the one time for the info you can miss it unless someone shares it
- Suffolk and Norfolk have a lot
- People need easier to understand maps related to paths practically
- Discovering NT Hatfield Forest management procedures is difficult; need to be more visible

New information sources

- Do info sharing on a grapevine
- Website, leaflets, literature not enough
- Are we using twitter?
- A continual cycle of news
- Do we use local radio or TV?

Involve HF in development planning

- Strategic engagement from local planning authorities
- Green infrastructure plan
- How is it all working together?
- Hatfield Forest need to be involved in neighbourhood plan more proactively
- Recognise over development
- Respond to all planning applications in whole of area

More impact surveys

- Survey to analyse what is the greatest impact
- Revisit an existing survey
- Factor in erosion that is from all sources
- Increasing evidence base to link challenging decisions back to these
- Look at what happens around the Forest as well, wider area activities have an impact

Gate monitoring

- Monitor people coming through all access points

More ecological information

- Do management understand what's in the forest? E.g insect populations? Do they know what's there?
- Forest has SSSI status; NT should have SSSI statement: looking at all ecology regularly

- No information on the birds/wildlife that are near the café – no bird feeders, visitors don't understand what's there
- Amount of knowledge about the forest is increasing through things like Every Step Counts and Capability Brown, it's a positive step to help understand how it can be managed

More people resources

- Useful to have Every Step Counts volunteers around the lake area with maps and info
- Off the Flitch Way is a problem in winter so more info at this point or more people
- Difficult to resource at the moment with people
- People who run the café are fabulous but area around the café needs to be improved
- Visitor Experience person needs to be more visible. Good that they're there

Educating visitors

- Impact from locals not so crucial, it is people from further away that need to be educated

Scale down events

- WoodFest doesn't fit an SSSI forest
- Scale down winter events, e.g. Park Run

Car parking management

- Another car park on south side
- Or in another area

Case studies

- Forest already has a natural profile, could become a case study
- More boardwalks; what happens in other places in the world
- Alps also have these problems so how do they manage this?

Clearer dog walker signs

- Red, Amber, Green on fence posts for dog walkers

Seasonal mountain biking

- In winter no mountain bikes

Friends of Hatfield Forest

- Friends of Hatfield Forest

More of the same

- More of the same

3.3 What else needs to happen?

Group 1, Group 2, Group 3

Self sustaining forest

- If forest needs to be self-sustaining then it need to go away: not be dependent on income generation to survive
- Chipping wood for rides when trees cleared
- Is forest there to fund itself (to pay for staff) when money should be coming from NT

Better visitor communication

- Better monitoring of post codes for visitors – ask everyone who visits for their postcodes
- Greater communication face to face with regular visitors
- Consistent message
- Out of office hours strategy, we need to communicate and engage with them
- Current 'closure' make people aware of danger and let them decide
- What does closed mean?

Other case examples

- To look outside the forest/area for solutions, e.g. other national parks in parts of the UK

Drainage management

- Active drainage management needed

- Has survey been done of old drainage? Could be solutions regarding Victorian drains, get survey done of drainage
- Engage with local land owners to understand how they're managing their drainage
- Drainage should be included in local planning
- Issues about drainage with housing but not being dealt with through local planning
- Use modern methods, ditch digging and drains
- Drainage survey for Forest to establish drainage network
- Have to work on paths – drainage

Look at historic management

- When people worked and managed land previously
 - We can learn from what was done years ago
 - Nothing is cleared

More effort from county council

- Essex county council not looking holistically at the area; so understaffed; not putting effort into planning applications, more effort needed

Improved ecology management

- Decline of bird life, solution on countryfile, youngsters involved more, feeding points, monitoring to know what birds want to improve bird life

Educate visitors

- Education of young people who are the future protectors
- Follow up on young people education
- Include ecology education
- We need outreach to the schools
- Other users need to be reached, we need to get message across to them. In Scotland people are told to respect the mountains, we need to educate visitors

Better information sources

- Give them a leaflet?
- do they read it?
- some do
- At entrance we could have an information which is variable about where to go, this could be a map or an app
- How about noticeboards?
- Winter

Technological advancements

- How do we capture those that don't read leaflets
- Digital education, apps need to be updated
- Is there a mechanism to reach people on their digital devices
- Could we produce a live app which acts as a guide/info
- Maybe this would capture more people
- App can be proactive with photos etc.
- Could give info about species etc.
- Or closed paths
- Social media – share whether forest closed
- Text regulars alerts about the forest

More people resources

- Local people could act as wardens
- Friends of Forest was closed because of NT charity laws, no local discount membership

Improve entrance gates

- Other than main entrance, number of horses limited at other entrances
- Properly gated entrances e.g. turnstiles
- Control of people through non-main gate

Event clarity

- Current mixed messaging – all footsteps count but Park Run still continues
- NT members can't park in winter cos of Park Run
- Park Run not charged for parking
- Should Park Run happen?

Clarify forest designation

- Clarify where Hatfield Forest is positioning itself
- What is the forest
 - SSSI not a country park
- Forest has to close during wind etc. for legal reasons

Route management

- Manage rides so that there is less impact from wet
- Encourage people to come but stick to hard path
- People visiting only increases
- Put trails on dry paths
- People automatically prefer dry paths
- Create dry paths and boardwalk
- Remove random casual paths and concentrate on one which is maintained

Café area improvement

- Improve area around café
- Playground and BBQ site

Alternative car parking

- Alternative car park to spread people

3.4 Any new ideas and solutions?

(Include any you have heard worked well elsewhere)

Group 1, Group 2, Group 3

Redirect advertising

- Reduce advertising significantly
- Move people to places outside of the forest by making them want to go there

Car parking management

- Remove car parking as this would cut visitors
- Takeley St gets a lot of cars parking in the layby, adequate needs to be provided elsewhere
- Find a way to close main car park
- Create large car park somewhere else and create a sense of arrival and introduction, a visitor centre that has a café and 1000 therefore taking them out of the forest
- With controlled access through visitor centre

Alternative routes

- Offer alternative routes
- Improve public rights of way network
- Other entrances rather than Bush End

Public transport

- Introduce public transport, park and ride

System of closure

- Sacrifice an area in winter, so much woodland underutilised, cut a walkway through
- Shut the forest in the winter
- No day passes horses winter only Nov-Feb
- Close forest when too wet, e.g. Epping forest
- Rotational system of closure
- Use the map – mark up the closures
- But short term closures ineffective
- Complete closure of whole forest for a number of months in the winter

Increase NT land holding

- Increased land holding outside of forest
- Rosemore in Devon, purchased farm land for visitor centre etc.

- Move visitor buildings from the middle of the forest

Horse power

- Heavy horses to haul wood

Drainage management

- Impact of drainage, open up these as Victorians did. Drain across South plain, example of airport as they do this now. New balancing pond near Bush End Road, floods near the bridge.
- Not filling ditches or drains with debris by contractors, self-manage rather than contractors
- Someone in to look at drainage, especially London Road

Route management

- Walking alongside or under motorway to get to these places
- Holland proper dedicated walkways
- We need a radical solution – how about we make more rides?
- Cut back footpath through Colin's Coppice

Limit user access

- Make everyone be an NT member or live within a mile of the forest
- Totally limit to interest groups totally (could only be 1 person) with no visitors, very limited access

User group schedules

- Wednesdays/Thursdays always closed for horse riding or people

User group communication

- Establish network of user groups so we could communicate immediately
- Care with language, accessible language, so everyone knows what it means e.g. SSSI
- Glossary of terms for public

Technological advancements

- Better mobile phone signal for any apps to work
- Broadband?
- People to text alerts to tell people about car park closure

Education improvements

- Visible education office in main office area
- Information and education access would be there like at Anglesey Abbey
- Employ educationists to target teenagers

Staff resources

- Rangers that are on foot
- Rangers to give up to date daily reports
- Volunteers around coppices to set up recording stations to record birds

Gate maintenance

- Oil the gates

Grazing

- New species grow where cattle have been

4 Session 3: Considering solutions

4.1 Possible Solutions

Out of everything you have heard, suggest 2 solutions each.

Next prioritise the 4 you think are worth more in-depth consideration today?

Idea	No.of dots
Visitor centre and car park off the forest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative car park/visitor centre off the forest 	16

- Create a visitor centre and a new car park that people have to go through to get to the forest
- More visitor facilities off the forest by acquiring significant adjacent land
- Visitor centre/education
- Acquire peripheral land on which to build a big car park, visitor facilities and loos and create a real sense of arrival. Must also include introduction to the forest. Vast majority of visitors to be channelled through this point. Remove visitor infrastructure from lake area as a consequence

Drainage

16

- Detailed soil map for the whole area
- Use existing maps to excavate/clear out existing drainage system that are decades old, using forest staff not contractors
- Drainage of the whole area (more than forest) for a wider solution to water flows
- Improve drainage in and work with others outside the forest and water catchment plan
- Improved modern drainage
- Survey of Victorian drains and construct a balancing pond on the south plain (left of Street Coppice). Suggest a feasibility study
- Drainage maintenance of Victorian system
- Clean out existing drainage and ditches
- Strategic drain plan and ride regeneration as urgent priority. Linked to closure of areas whilst this is undertaken (Crash site and tree enclosures demonstrate this approach works for long term regeneration)
- Drainage by using Victorian system
- Make forest self-sustainable by using its own by products to build up and maintain erosion i.e. chip coppiced ash, hazel, birch and feed back into rides and paths. Currently it is dragged into drainage ditches – wasted energy by burning

Closure and Communication, Best Routes of the Day Rapidly Communicated

10

- Complete closure during winter months
- Close forest when too wet
- Permit only access in winter for local people or NT members only
- Suggest to people best route for the day
- Red, Amber, Green posts to inform walkers/riders of condition of paths and where to avoid
- Establish networks of user groups so can communicate effectively and immediately
- Use up-to-date technology to alert people

Change priority/purpose so of Hatfield Forest so it doesn't have to be self-sustaining

7

- Change to NT policy that the property should be self-sustaining/ self-funding. At a national level the NT needs to understand the importance of what it has and to value it appropriately. World Heritage status for National Forest
- Change status back to SSSI with limited access, move away from local visitor attractions with almost 24/7 access at low cost/no cost

Strategic influence of green infrastructure to remove pressure

7

- Strategic intervention/engagement in local planning/green infrastructure – partnership working with LPA's, ECC, airport, landowners and other stakeholders
 - We must look for solutions that take into account the forest and the surrounding areas when coming up with ideas
- Education/Info/Communication** **6**
- Need to develop and improve culture of respect and contribution to safeguarding the site and biodiversity
 - Promote citizen science
 - Promote conservation activity involvement
 - Promote sustainable usage and research and education
 - Improve education within the forest and as outreach
 - Work really hard to change the perception that the forest is an amenity space. It's an NT property and should be marketed and opened like other NT historic designed landscapes. NO park runs!
 - Communications to all the public on how the Forest needs to work so it will be there in 30 years' time
 - Increased volunteers/staff in the forest "every step counts team" communicating with people face to face
- Circular and surfaced tracks** **3**
- Surfaced/circular track
 - Create a circular surfaced track for winter use
 - Create drained and surfaced paths in limited numbers and designate nature trails
- Dedicated cycle and walkways** **3**
- Dedicated walkways and cycleways, as per Holland
 - Cycle and walkway dedicated
- Signage** **3**
- Information signs in key places (NOT just maps)
 - Improve the education via signage and suitably educated rangers
 - A few but clearly marked paths across the plains
- New forum** **3**
- Takeley primary schools had a 'Forest School' expand that to a wider group of local residents to explain history and importance of HF to the area
 - Reinstate 'Friends of Hatfield Forest'
- Sacrificial areas** **2**
- Investigate 'sacrificial' areas/paths for benefit of wider forest
- Access and recreation management plan** **1**
- Need to develop an access and recreation site management plan, for whole site with targeted more detailed consideration as necessary for honeypot areas, and sensitive/vulnerable and irreplaceable nature conservation interest. Utilise toolkit approach and promote best practise
- Manage parking in and around forest** **1**
- Manage vehicle access in and around forest to reduce numbers. This does not mean improve parking, it means seriously restricting it, locally too e.g. by permit
- Other suggestions**
- Protect song birds by culling magpies and squirrels and //// funding around
 - Bird decline. Set up feeders by volunteer on areas around Forest to halts the decline of bird life. Suggest a feasibility study?

4.2 Solution 1: Route (Ride) closures and communication

4.2.1 Idea: What do we know about this (facts and figures)?

Currently working well

- There are closed areas of the forest now; they work really well, only specific people can go in them

Visitor numbers

- Historically there is gate closure data, this collects the amount of visits
- Gate counters

Non-intervention areas

- Crash Site closure – no plans to reopen, no informed review for 17 years
- This is the same for all closed areas

Poor signage

- We don't have data but we do have anecdotal evidence that signage of closure not effective because of the word ride

Surveys

- Ecologist path health survey
- But these surveys don't cover what is causing the damage
- Surveys monitor non-intervention areas

4.2.2 What are the benefits?

Route recovery

- No ongoing damage
- Chance of recovery

Healthier environment

- Healthier natural environment

Increased communication

- Problem is shared
- By communicating to people in the forest we can reach more people
- Signage in the forest to communicate
- How to communicate the benefits

4.2.3 What are the challenges and disbenefits?

Closures not currently working

- Closure that works
- Closure does not work, people do not take notice
- Different sorts of pressure are put on closed areas
- People have to detour around the closed area
- Which causes more erosion
- Needs to be throughout

Sign clarity

- Clarity of signage, are rides closed or not?
- Internal challenge about communication

Educated decision

- Needs to be by education

Need visitor for revenue

- Finances dependant on visitors, therefore restrictions don't work

- Gate counters are put in to understand numbers

Uncertainty over reception

- How is it received?

4.2.4 When and where would it work well?

Control at gates

- Turnstile gate which acknowledges visitors
- Could be prohibitively expensive
- Would this be on every gate?
- This would control people

Permitted access only

- Limit access to NT members
- People could apply to be registered users
- Doesn't need to be enforced all the times

Community engagement

- We need to work with local businesses and other locals to support the forest
- We need partnership with other green sites
- With volunteers to help

Alternative sites

- Thremhall Priory and ask for help
- Look at pockets which are outside the forest
- Possibly create brochure for other sites
- Or could be a digital solution

Visitor information

- Too good publicity has meant too many visitors
- Find out where people have come from
- Then we could collect data on visitors

Doesn't address problem

- Closure just pushes away the problem

4.2.5 How could it not work?

Closure confusion

- Are the closed areas closed or not?

Closed area management

- Closed areas need to be managed
- Regeneration needs managing
- Closures need to work hand in hand with management maintenance of erosion and regeneration

Viable alternatives

- Need to provide viable alternatives

Clarity of signage

- We need clarity of signage

4.2.6 What do you want to know about this idea to consider it further?

Clarity between NT and non NT

- We need to know the split between NT and non NT

Realistic possibility for permits

- Possibility of creating a community residents permit

- How could this be managed?

Financial costs

- Information about cost benefit of visitors
- Information about financial spend of the forest

Tourist information

- Why do they come to Hatfield Forest?
- Why they walk in the forest?

4.3 Solution 2: Off Forest Visitor Centre and Car Park

4.3.1 Idea: What do we know about this (facts and figures)?

Limited car park spaces

- Only 100 car park spaces in winter, 1000 in summer

Visitor usage

- Visitor numbers are increasing
- People are coming to visit the forest, don't move it all
- Majority of visitors at weekends focus on the café
- During summer people picnic and don't go far from their car, separate these from nature visitors
- For some a trip to the forest is just to go outside, they could do this outside the forest

Restricted by SSSI status

- Do you want to be a SSSI or a shop?
- Restricted by SSSI status

More land required

- Currently don't have any other land, would need to acquire

Lacks sense of arrival

- Lack of sense of arrival with present facilities

4.3.2 What are the benefits?

Sense of arrival

- More of a sense of arrival

Access to arrival information

- Having arrived you can point different audiences to different areas - families, nature, dog walkers etc. all go different ways
- You can guide people from our info centre to areas and facilities

Extra facilities to use

- Extra facilities offsite you currently can't/don't have
- You can allow people to use technology to plan routes

Increased education

- Better education

Reduced pressure on other areas

- Current facilities focused around Shell House and lake - could take pressure off and restore sense of that area
- An area offsite would reduce pressure on forest and take away visitors who don't want the forest itself just a dog walk etc.

4.3.3 What are the challenges and disbenefits?

More visitors

- Attracting more people

Disconnected from the forest

- If it's too far away it will be disconnected from the forest

Pressure on local infrastructure

- What is there already in the surrounding area? Increasing pressure on local infrastructure if new facilities are close to Hatfield Forest

Financial costs

- Cost, financial, planning permission

More land required

- Acquiring right land
- You don't need extra areas you could do this at the lake
- It's not the NTs place to do this, provide a playground etc.

Staff required

- Staffing

4.3.4 When and where would it work well?

Next to the forest

- It needs to be next to the forest

Near local housing

- Near population/housing areas

Need for accessible link

- Direct link from there to the forest itself
- Link needs to be accessible by all

Woodside Green

- On Woodside Green

NT property

- Look at NT ownership in the area
- To use as an alternative or separate to forest

Information point accessible

- Could start with an info point/room during winter at main car park
- Educational/activity hub

4.3.5 When and where would it not work?

Too far from forest

- Too far from forest/people
- It's not in keeping with the environment or forest

Near busy roads

- If there are lots of busy roads

No planning permission acquired

- Can't get permission or land

4.3.6 What do you want to know about this idea to consider it further?

Visitor numbers

- Is there an upper limit on visitor numbers?
- What are the seasonal visitor numbers?
- What is the impact of a visitor centre on numbers?

Visitor Centre definition

- What do we mean by visitor centre?

Commonly used gates

- Where are people getting in to the forest?
- Which gates on the Flich Way are used the most?

Service station usage

- Is it being used as a service station for M11/Stanstead?

Comparable case examples

- Comparative examples, e.g. South Downs, Dunstable Downs

Other options

- Could something be done on the Forest as it is now?

4.4 Solution 3: Drainage

4.4.1 Idea: What do we know about this (facts and figures)?

Poor drainage of paths and rides

- Drainage of paths and rides is the issue, not to be confused with drainage of the entire forest
- Need to get water off the paths and the ditches which should be full of water in the winter and they're not

Potential drainage solutions

- Balancing ponds used to exist, culvert the street
- Not getting water from the drives
- Mole drains
- Aerate the soil and loosen up the soil, can be done through mole drains

Ground type

- Forest is not all clay, some plains are gravel and drain well

Need further study

- Need feasibility study

4.4.2 What are the benefits?

Maintains natural environment

- Dry rides and nice damp forest
- Forest is a natural wet habitat
- Trees need wet area but not completely saturated area

Increases biodiversity

- Introduce willows to help drainage
- Increased biodiversity subject to careful management
- People will use the rides more to observe wildlife and birdlife (2)

Cheaper option

- Relatively cheap solution such as mole drains (3) compared to other solution

Work timing

- Work done in spring/autumn

Minimal disruption

- Minimal disruption

4.4.3 What are the challenges and disbenefits?

Legal compliance restrictions

- Disturbing the soil, affecting the SSSI & HLS & NNR; they may not allow drainage work to be done
- Legislation and compliance
- Environmental impact assessment would be needed

Area has become too overgrown

- Area which has not been coppiced is where the greatest problems are, it is overgrown

- Must cut down undesirable things
- Nonsense that coppicing has been left for so long, you now cannot do it

Coppicing management

- 10m either side of a ride is most important; increase scrub growth (coppice either side of a ride)
- Coppicing will mean chipping wood, could use for insects and also as a surface
- Growing this understanding is the challenge
- Changing perceived ideas of management so changing the mindset, coppice an area and put the chippings instead of just leaving
- Use 16 year coppice cycle for management, coppicing management of trees, opening canopy, clearing

Limiting public access

- Access
- Focussed on certain rides at a time

Resources available

- Resources; using volunteers (natural way) or a digger would affect time it takes to achieve this

Time of year

- Time of the year; weather and public access

4.4.4 When and where would it work well?

Working up from lower ground

- Would work well on all rides where there are pre-existing ditches
- Start at the bottom of a ditch to work up
- Start at the lake and work upwards
- Area below wet area is usually what's causing the problem

In spring to autumn

- Do in spring to autumn as it works best

4.4.5 When and where would it not work?

In summer and winter

- Avoid summer and winter so only when soil conditions are right
- In medieval times they stopped work on brick making in October

Nowhere

- There is nowhere it will not work

4.4.6 What do you want to know about this idea to consider it further?

How feasible it is

- Feasibility on process and ideas and then a plan of action
- Can we have the feasibility study by the next meeting/workshop?
- Important that everyone can see the feasibility study
- One of the easiest, simplest and cheapest things to do
- Simplest is clearing out the ditches

Plans for implementation

- Need dates and plans for implementation at next workshop

Who NT is collaborating with

- Who is NT in dialogue with about this? Companies and universities

Discussion group

- Would be have great to have people to inform and discuss

Examples

- Gave example of what happens with countryfile

4.5 Solution 4: Change priority/purpose of Hatfield Forest so that it doesn't have to be self-sustaining

4.5.1 Idea: What do we know about this (facts and figures)?

NT properties must be generate income

- Monetary reserves accumulated in regions? To fund all the properties in that region
- Property needs are calculated for needs
- Each property can do basic upkeep
- Should have a basic "wipe its face" sustainability

Events generate income

- Events generate income: Easter, Christmas

Generation of income is causing issues

- For HF the generation of income must not come before conservation
- Anything is possible for conservation if it has a financial downturn
- Solution: less activities
- Conservation message of: don't trample the forest undermined by events which attracts visitors
- Cost of activities – true cost – not always evident

Difficult to perceive

- Perception changing/difficult to understand

Some irreparable damage is already done

- Irreparable damage already done
- Once damage is done, every foot reinforces damage and no recovery is possible

Need to address this now

- Move straight forward now

NT here for people

- NT is not a wildlife charity, we are here for people

4.5.2 What are the benefits?

Enables other solutions

- Why not close café, parking, education etc. for at least 4 months over winter
- OR just open a small robust area in response to NT policy of being open all year
- Shut forest = no further damage
- Message public of closure

Can manage income generation

- Manage the income generation better

Habitat recover more quickly

- Recovery in spring happens faster

It's done elsewhere

- Other sensitive sites are closed,
 - but they are more isolated

4.5.3 What are the challenges and disbenefits?

Multiple access points

- People visit by different methods, many just walk in
- The challenge around multiple access points makes closing the forest difficult, local people feel 'ownership' and aren't put off easily

Sensitivity around forest closure

- People are used to visiting and are not going to be dissuaded easily
- During summer we encourage children and families and then in the winter we reverse this message, how can this be done sensitively and effectively

Influencing behaviour

- The behaviour of people in the countryside is influenced by our offer – signage, facilities etc.

Clarity of sustainable access

- There is a sustainable winter access; where the tipping point lies is not always clear (it could be tested)

4.5.4 When and where would it work well?

Increasing staff numbers

- Staff numbers increased in relation to directing visitors proved effective at busy times
- Moved catering to entrance = didn't work without reinforcement by staff

Conducting more research

- Research needed to find out trampling effects of visitor numbers, together with other factors: messaging, info on routes
- Do we have time for research? Damage already done. Research may identify which areas recover quickest/best

At existing café

- Café wanted in usual place
- Use this area for messaging
- Closing café would reduce visitor numbers
- Advantages no need to make money, café loses in winter

Local use only

- This would work for local (Takeley Street) 'walk on' visitors as the forest could remain open for them
- New estate people may cause a problem if they too walk on (despite closure of café etc.)

Trail biking

- Trail biking

4.5.5 When and where would it not work?

Closing the whole forest

- You can't shut the forest, people come on even when it is shut

Reduces available finances for conservation

- The less financially viable the forest becomes, the less is available for conservation

Reduction of staff needed

- It would mean diverting staff away from facilities to conservation and reduce staff numbers
- Staff reduction would mean less money needed to run the site

4.5.6 What do you want to know about this idea to consider it further?

Other funding options

- Are there other sources of funding to reduce need for income generation?
- Other models of sustainability (financial)
- One big event to generate money in drier months
- Other funding streams (e.g. 106 agreements)

Different seasonal staffing

- Different (seasonal) models/methods of staffing

Evidence needed to support forest closure

- Evidence needed for shutting all site/some paths
- What would happen if we shut down? Redundancies, esp. only do if proven benefit

Public willingness to use other sites

- Would the public still visit if it was not open? Would they go to other area?
- Evidence for use of other sites; will people use them?

Who will provide an alternative green space

- We need to know views of: D.C, ECC, Stanstead, what will they do to provide other green space

Similar case examples

- What other models have been adopted by other organisations in similar situations?

4.6 At this stage which management solutions do you most support?

4.6.1 Summary table

Idea	Tick one of these for each idea to show your level of support					Number of people who put their mark from I can live with it and to the right	Description
	I have strong concerns	I have concerns	I can live with this	I support this	I actively/strongly support this		
Path closures with rapid communication	3	1	2	3	6	11	Good support
Off forest visitor centre with car parking	5	1	1	5	4	10	Some support but significant number of concerns
Drainage	1			4	12	16	Strong support – close to consensus
A model for sustaining income at Hatfield that does not rely on visitor numbers	1	1		9	5	14	Strong support

4.6.2 Results

Idea	Tick one of these for each idea to show your level of support					What do you like about this possible salutation	Anything that you would suggest to increase your support?
	I have strong concerns	I have concerns	I can live with this	I support this	I actively/strongly support this		
Path closures with rapid communication	3	1	2	3	6		
					X	Short term approach	Careful approach that is evidence based ensuring biodiversity priorities are conserved and not compromised
					X	Protects habitats and species, controls footfall	I fully support this
					X	I know area closure works for ecology regeneration. Controlled closure of forest reduces footfall and thus less impact	Taking action
					X	Only in winter and in those areas that are deemed to be unusable	Keep future discussion groups, inform
					X		Better understanding of visitors, modelling of future use/numbers, behaviours, etc.
					X	Gives the rides a chance to recover which means future sustainability	Get the support from Takeley Street
				X		Benefits the environment greatly	Practical application
				X		Only in winter or very wet summer weather to allow forest to recover	Communication to local parishes to feedback ideas. Regular newsletter
				X		Closing off = reduced impacts. Time to allow forest to recover	Fully thought out comms plan and robust public awareness-raising will be required – impossible task?

			X				Dates on closure signs, e.g. start and end date
			X			It would save the paths in winter	Only car park open is at top
	X					Ok as medium to do drainage and coppicing work	I am anti closure unless for a defined use/recovery work
X							Do not support, seen not to work. Discriminatory against locals - disabled
X						<u>Nothing</u> . Opening for vandalism	I will never support this
X						Spreading the load by opening more tracks is a better solution	
Off forest visitor centre with car parking	5	1	1	5	4		
					X	This approach works well in other sites of NC importance	Requires careful consideration and resourcing
					X	Winter closure for vehicle. Look at car park on south east side, as alternative do not agree with off site	To be kept informed
					X		Great support from NT beyond the region/national recognising importance of Forest and supporting regional team
					X	Takes cars and pressure off the forest and educates before access	Active discussions with local land owners
				X		Reduction of footfall within forest. More education of forest ecology issues	To be able to see this on a comparable site
				X		People education	Not increasing the number of visitors/year
				X		Offers real opportunities to create a sense of arrival and educate people about the forest before they enter it, would enable the lake area to be restored	Look at comparative scenarios to see whether creation of new visitor centre helped or hindered
				X		Take pressure off the lake area, ceases to be a destination	Acquisition of adjacent farmland
				X		It would give a better visitor experience	Be assured no increase in numbers in forest in winter

			X			Expensive and does not address drainage problem	
		X					
	X					I feel we need to look at the Forest to see how we can manage what we own and could use the space better	
	X						Only feasible if you close in winter months, not cost effective for 6 months
	X					<u>Nothing</u> . A centre on or off the forest will still bring in too many visitors	Trash the idea
	X					Better education if all visitors funnelled through centre	Difficult to do/not effective unless done well
	X					Do not agree with off-site car parking	Keep future discussion groups, inform
Drainage	1			4	12		
					X	This would reduce winter problems. To be done by forest and not contractors	
					X	Drainage is main issue causing problems on the forest as well as canopies over rides	Have working parties with people and spades clearing ditches and culverts
					X	Cheap, easy to implement, can be done quickly, results will be visible	N/A
					X	Effective wherever method is used. Especially with regeneration methods	Taking actions ASAP. Should be included as part of an overall drainage plan
					X	Cost effective, would solve damage to rides	To be kept informed, ensure this is implemented
					X	Easy to do, beneficial to wooded areas, would control surface water	Keep future discussion groups, inform
					X	Could be easily and cheaply done	
					X	Would have been done historically so seems entirely sensible to do so again. Focus this work on high traffic areas	N/A
					X	Easy to implement reduce, water logged drives	Be kept informed, as suggest this at the forum

				X	Good idea to investigate	Feasibility study
				X		
				X	A good way of taking water away from key areas	Drainage survey to understand how the drains and ditches could work
			X		Needs a survey to look at what areas need to be done first, suggest ditches need to be cleared	It is the paths and rides that need to be dealt with
			X		It works with natural habitats and has potential to enhance mosaic and biodiversity	Feasibility study – need to be evidence based accounting for a nature conservation interest
			X		Ditches and drainage in place – reduce water logging	Impact on wildlife, need to know how this would affect existing habitats
			X			Survey/feasibility – need to understand historic drainage system and wider area
X					Good change of solving main problems – may need to combine with restrictions	
A model for sustaining income at Hatfield that does not rely on visitor numbers	1	1	9	5		
				X	Forest should not have to self-sustain. Fundraising puts pressure on need for events, numbers	Better management and support for management
				X	Surely this is the meaning of managing an SSSI	Management take a better role in managing what is there, not allow it to get out of control then bring in contractors
				X	Protection of habitats, protection of species, only way to protect the forest	
				X		
				X		Financial modelling/analysis
			X		In an ideal world by not sure if this is realistic in current economic climate; may be relevant option for some aspects of operation	Focus should be on ensuring forest management achieves and sustains biodiversity objectives in a sustainable way, successfully offsetting costs through management products and visitors

						expenditure and grants
			X		Conservation more important than finance, the benefits to humans of the peaceful tranquil environment outweigh profit	A better plan, more evidence
			X		Idea should be conservation based	Limit access to special access groups and locals justifying access, not ad hoc visitor just out for a day trip
			X		Perhaps a change of mind set, consider birds	Communication to local parishes to feedback ideas. Regular newsletter
			X		Not much	
			X		Decreasing dependence on visitor income can only be a good thing. Would remove necessity to attract so many	Identify other viable sources of income which are sufficient to cover cost of forest conservation/management
			X		Explore flexibility, changing café events to summer, seasonal 'quiet' periods, other options	Part of a suite of options to explore
			X		Take pressure off staff to be a profit centre	Change of NT policy
			X		Means we can find a sustainable carrying capacity	NT support property financially from other means, internal or external
	X				Reduce pressure in winter	Cause more car parking in surrounding streets causing problems for residents
X					I am concerned that habitat (birds) have not been discussed	Keep future discussion groups, inform
					Need to look at NT land to see where changes could happen on site	

Please note: one participant added a suggestion on the end of their sheet which has been added to the 'Parking Place' so that it isn't lost.

5 Sessions 4: Collaborative Action and Communication

5.1 Potential offers

At this stage, what kind of resources do you think your interest or organisation might be able to contribute for shared initiatives and shared outcomes? (Recognising this is tentative and you will need to check it and discuss this with others).

Assets and resources include: time, effort, energy, information, know-how, innovations, skills, funds, staff, volunteers, initiatives, places, networks.

Participant number	Cluster header
Funds	
24	– funds,
18	– Stewardship schemes/ grants
Advice and knowhow	
18	– conservation advice
9	– know how
7	– Anything farm related including equipment time/labour, know how
Partnership working	
18	– partnership working (notably around wood pasture restoration)
Development planning and green infrastructure	
9	– Strategic planning (local planning authorities and green infrastructure across the county)
18	– Engagement with planning casework and strategic planning,
Engagement, networking and getting messages out	
18	– Engagement with local planning authorities, Environment Agency and local regulators
22	– Helping to spread the word, access to networks
4	– Parish/ Church magazine – use more often and more parishes
Volunteers	
9	– volunteers
Rising profile of the Forest	
9	– volunteers and raising profile of the Forest, know how
9	– Strategic planning (local planning authorities and green infrastructure across the county) volunteers and raising profile of the Forest, know how
Knowledge of historic features	
5 & 3	– Support locally, historical research, know how, drainage map, local networks from residents' view point
Data and information	
24	– information,
10	– Provide data and info to people for their networks
People	
24	– staff, volunteers
Enhanced understanding	
16	– Build Every Step Counts into Forest education and volunteers

5.2 How can visitors be helped to understand and adapt to change?

Group 1, Group 2

Encourage green transport

- Encouraged to walk not drive mechanised transport

Increased and better communication

- Local papers, local parish magazines, publicity
- Talk to people, get out there
- Volunteers to talk to people around the Forest
- Faster telephone response time, extension that works
- Tell why you want people on a winter walk hard path
- Forewarning – say what and when is coming
- Good information – clear language

Use of social media

- Social media to flag up changes
- Messaging for different generations, not everyone on web
- App to show what's happening

Better education

- Education: more blunt
- Follow up with schools that have visited

Clarification of work being done

- Clarify why they should do something
- Blunt messaging with a reason why
- Give people reasons why
- Enhance communications strategy

Better signage

- Instructions on signs
- Confusion with signs. Old and new signs not clear. Rationalised
- Dates on signs

Reasonable alternative spaces offered

- Reasonable alternatives for people
- That there are other places to play/run etc
- Move focus for visitors to other place

Traffic light system

- Traffic light system: areas where things are or aren't allowed options for people
- More publicity for traffic light system
- Not everyone knows about traffic light system

More access points

- More access points/gates so not all through one gate

Social inclusion projects

- Increase active involvement in forest management, practical tasks, citizen science, Duke of Edinburgh award etc.
- Social inclusion projects with outcome that leads to better wildlife management
- Engage new communities as they grow e.g. RSPB
- Re-establish links to local primary school

More staffing during busy periods

- Busy periods staffed more?

Wildlife information

- Make it clear what wildlife there is

Target user groups

- Target to user groups to help make informed decisions

5.3 What would you like us to find out from wider engagement if we can?

Group 1, Group 2,

Getting involved in forest activities

- How would they like to get involved in forest activities – join NT, events, conservation,

volunteers etc

Reasons for using the forest

- Why do people use the Forest?
- Which direction come from?
- Horse riding, recreation, running, café?
- Difference between a recreation ground on a housing estate and a special place to study ecology

Visitor information

- Where do they come from?
- How do they get there?
- Where parked?
- How long do they stay?
- Members/ payers
- Where they go in the Forest?
- How much do people travel to visit – survey done by housing developer but it was not good
- Consider how we gather feedback to cover all visitors

Which gates are used

- Every gate at peak times?

What they know/ value about the forest

- Do they know which wildlife HF is important for?
- Understanding of history of Forest
- What parts of the Forest do people value
- What do they value – nature/history etc.?
- Do people know Hatfield is a special reserve and SSSI – so more important than a green space

New resident information

- Know more about people buying the new houses, what do they want. Surveys through doors and send someone around to collect them (on new housing estates)
- Many have moved because they want a more rural life

Similar case examples

- Is there somewhere that has put in a similar circular walk?

Opinion on all weather path

- Ask whether having an all-weather path would make people want to visit

Opportunity to give feedback

- Nothing at centre to ask what people have seen today
- Explore methods for feedback

Anything else to add

- Ask is there anything else

The 4 ideas covered

- The 4 ideas discussed in depth

6 Parking Place

Observations / points / info

- 'Rides' – people think bicycles or horses
- 'Closed' to whom?
 - everyone
 - non NT members?
 - locals
- Very important to maintain SSSI and NNR so need to make sure measures are taken on the forest to stop this happen
- The forest is putting out mixed messages in the winter – every footfall counts but the park run, with hundreds of people, can take place. Children's events are cancelled however
- Issue about removal of carcass – put hide seats only an area that are accessible. Also controlled by weather conditions. Also talk to landowners about culling

- Research and surveys outputs and plans should be transparent
- When communicating we must avoid jargon – not everyone understands brush-cutting, coppicing and ‘rides’
- Statutory obligations around wind etc closure
-

Questions

- Number of deer now? Are there more?
- Deer or muntjac do more damage?
- How can people be encouraged / educated to respect the forest more? The kind of behaviour we see wouldn’t necessarily happen at, say, Blickling. Why? Different perception of NT place?
- Timed parking? Some people visit to walk their dogs (1-2 hours). £2? Some visit all day and £5 is reasonable
- What is happening about the recreation ground at Crump Farm Quarry? Extra recreations facility
- Vehicles are causing damage – what about deer stalkers and carcass removal?

Suggestions

- Consider digging ditches open verges outside eastern boundary of Forest to prevent parking
- Designated BBQ area (draw people to one area)
- Close the Forest in winter months. Wardens would need to patrol and issue fines to prevent those accessing areas. Extra income
- Shut some of the gates off The Flitch Way during the winter
- Because gates are being closed – access is not possible for a lot of people – all gates should be kept open
- Stop ‘special’ events in winter encouraging more visitors
- Bark chip paths. Good or quality boardwalks
- Increase educational area – to make people aware of issues
- Gate Elgins ‘summer’ to stop cows fowling so people would be more likely to stay there
- Closure of café when I understand is open in winter. No refreshments less visitors?
- Always need to consider the effect of vehicles, and their emissions on the Forest. The aerial ambient levels is one aspect, but need to also be mindful of need to protect ‘heart’ of internal habitats
- Vehicle movement of NT staff – need to think about alternatives to using the vehicles at an or alternative routes
- Idea – promote other areas that are open to public for walking riding etc. (Flitch Way towards Dunmow, Jacks Lane in Takeley and Lt. Canfield).
- Better control of grazing and mowing. The plains are currently under-grazed to the detriment of wildlife
- Definitive breakdown of visitors. Whether NT member or visitor of dog walker / horse rider / local etc. Control ideally with a recordable pass. Even if as a once off day visitor.
- Find out what the winter max use/tipping point is? Set a target for both visitor numbers in winter and part closure (of paths etc.) - Research into soils, drainage

What does this mean?

- SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest
- NNR – National Nature Reserve
- Rides are not just for horse riding- they’re also for walkers, better to use ‘paths’
- Very important for the Forest to maintain the SSSI and NNR
- HLS = Higher level Scheme (Stewardship) – subsidies for farmers

Annex 1: Agenda

Shaping the future of Hatfield Forest together

Workshop 1 of 2: November 23rd 2016

Agenda

09:30 Registration, coffee and tea will be available, informal starting activities

Its 2030 efforts to balance access and conservation for this special place have worked and you like what you see. What pleases you most?

Add your thoughts to those of others

10.00 Welcome

Facilitator's introduction Diana Pound Dialogue Matters

What's this all about? Ade Clarke National Trust

Questions of clarification only (there will be plenty of opportunity to give your views later)

Session 1: Building understanding

Visit each of the different topics below and have your say.

What do you value

- Where do you value now and why?
- What do you see and do that you would like future generations to be able to see or do?
- What does Hatfield Forest provide that locals and visitors benefit from?

Trends and changes

- What trends and changes are taking place that need to be taken into account?
- What is your observation based on? (eg observation, a photo record or research)

Current Management

- What is the current management and what is the reason for it?
- What are the constraints on management choices?
- What would happen if there was no management?

Information

- What else do you want to know to help you in these discussions?
- Who has that information and can make it available?

11:20 Tea and coffee break

Session 2: Access and nature in Hatfield Forest

- What is already being done that is going in the right direction? (by land

- managers, communities, volunteers)
- How could that be strengthened and enhanced?
- What else needs to happen?
- Any new ideas and solutions? (include any you have heard worked well elsewhere)

- Out of everything you have heard suggest 3 solutions you think are worth more in-depth consideration?

12:40 Lunch

Session 3: Considering solutions

- Consider the solutions and select the ones that are worth more in depth consideration
- Select the one you most want to talk about

Developing ideas further

- What do we know about this (facts and figures)?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the challenges and disbenefits?
- When and where would it work well?
- When and where would it not work?
- What do you want to know about this idea to consider it further?

At this stage which management solutions do you most support?

15:15 Tea and coffee break

Session 4: Collaborative action and communication

- At this stage, what kind of resources do you think your interest or organisation might be able to contribute to positive change? (Recognising this is tentative and you will need to check it and discuss this with others).
- How can visitors be helped to understand and adapt to change?
- What would you like us to find out from the wider engagement if we can?

Finishing tasks

16:30 Finish no later than this

Annex 2: List of Attendees

Name	Organisation
Trevor Allen	Takeley Local History Society/Naturalist
Allison Evans	The Street, Takeley Resident
Carol Pratt	Takeley PC
Jackie Cheetham	Deputy Leader Uttlesford DC
Heather Scadden	Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Councillor

Jean Johnson	Resident (Local & Horse riders)
Lesley Gilman	Hatfield Forest Riding Association, Essex Bridleways Assc and British Horse Soc
Graeme Fawcett	NT member
Margaret Shaw	NT Vol - Learning
Stuart Warrington	NT Staff - Ecologist
Neil Fuller	Natural England
Geoff Vowles	Naturalist
Gordon Sylvester	The Street
James Rea	Licenced Grazier
John Monk	The Street Resident
Tina Carter	NT staff - Learning
Anna Forrest	NT staff - Curator
Adrian Gascoyne	Essex Council Historic & Built Environment manager
Jacqui Michie	NT member
Sarah Barfoot	NT staff - Community
Ade Clarke	NT Staff - General manager
Stuart Gray	NT Volunteer
Robert McGowan	Farmer/Landowner/developer