

# Fairlop Birders

Press Release immediate

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2018

## Redbridge Council intends to allow destruction of important wildlife habitat on recently declared Local Nature Reserve at Fairlop Waters Country Park

It has come to the notice of the Fairlop Birders that Brett Tarmac Ltd (BTL) intend to drive a gravel extraction haul road through one of the most diverse parts of the Fairlop Waters Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which will decimate the wildlife value of the site.

The area affected will be adjacent to the Lagoon area of the LNR adjoining the Aldborough Hall Equestrian Centre land holding. It should be noted that all the open land on Fairlop plain is mostly owned by the Council but tenanted out - in effect owned by the people of Redbridge whose views have been ignored over the original application for gravel extraction for the new areas on Fairlop Plain. The consequence is the impending damage to the Fairlop Waters LNR. The area that will be trashed has 50-year-old trees that are now maturing. It is a vitally important habitat for amphibians, including Great Crested Newts, a protected species, reptiles and a diverse range of birds.

Late last year a small roost of Long Eared Owls (an extremely rare species in the London area) was found adjacent to the proposed route of the haul road. These owls are extremely susceptible to disturbance and will not tolerate up to 180 lorry movements every day by huge vehicles. Rarer birds frequenting the area on passage, include the Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, Whinchat, Stonechat and Wheatear. Other parts of the proposed haulage track go through breeding areas for Skylarks. The destruction of this part of the hedge line will create a gap for the large flocks of Tits that move along it in winter.

Said Chris Gannaway, Spokesperson for Fairlop Birders: "This is a terrible state of affairs when one group of Council Officers take the trouble to develop and go through the Local Nature Reserve registering process with Natural England, while the planners allow developers Brett Tarmac to run roughshod over what is now a mature wildlife site. This is an integral part of the Local Nature Reserve and once destroyed cannot be restored to its former glory".

Neil Twyford, Fairlop Birder: "Since the Redbridge biodiversity action plan states that it '**seeks to ensure no overall loss of wildlife habitats**' and that '**Fairlop plain is particularly notable for birds and the range of migrants that over winter here**' also the '**protection of green corridors including hedgerows**' why has Redbridge Council granted permission to disrupt one of the most important hedge lines in Fairlop? If the haulage track goes ahead not only will there be the destruction of habitat, but the disturbance and dust the lorries will create will be a devastating blow to the wildlife of Fairlop."

Steve Bacon, Fairlop Birder: "Redbridge Council need to put green spaces before profit. Once they are gone, it is for good! LNR's should be enhanced for wildlife not trashed."

**ENDS**

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**Photograph Caption:** Long Eared Owl at roost in Fairlop Waters Local Nature Reserve

Photograph: Steve Bacon