

Wildlife Corridors – Natural England Guidance

Email received from Natural England on 17 February 2016, following a meeting with Effingham Parish Council.

I am emailing in response to our recent meeting, kindly hosted by yourselves at the Effingham Parish Council meeting room.

I took a couple of actions away from this meeting, namely to identify the implications of the proposed green corridors through the Parish. These have been designed to help to connect Bookham Common SSSI, situated to the north of the Parish, to the Sheeples SSSI and Ranmore Common SSSI, to the south. The idea being that this will help encourage wildlife movement through the borough and between the SSSIs.

The first query on the above related to the optimum width of green corridors (60m of prime habitat and 20m either side of buffer, the latter would include back gardens etc.). Having run this past some of our specialists, I can advise that this proposal sounds reasonable, given current evidence. However, it is generally considered that the wider the 'prime' areas of green corridors the higher the likelihood of their functioning well, this may be something to consider when devising the corridors throughout the Parish (i.e. wider areas throughout the corridor, exceeding 60m). Generally speaking, 100m of good habitat, as a minimum, would be considered reaching ideal, but narrower corridors would still aid dispersal.

Currently, there is no consensus on how green corridors should be designed, and this will depend on the species that you are dealing with. The SSSI features that you are considering could inform this, and help you draft evidence based policies centred specifically on what you are hoping to connect. Please visit the following [link](#), for details on finding this information. I would stress that the features along and within the corridor will be as important (if not more so) as the actual width of the corridor itself i.e. are there areas of scrub, tall grass, shade, sunny aspects, bare ground etc., that are all recognised as being of great importance for many species. The proposed 40m green buffer is a good idea, as this will prevent adverse impacts on the corridor, e.g. from pollution or physical damage.

You may find the following useful in helping to inform your policies on this:

http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/knowledge/documents/TGN9_15GreenBridgesGuide_LI.pdf (relates to green bridges, but may have some applicable points)

The second query related to the implication of utilising the public rights of way (PRoW) that are currently in situ to facilitate the corridors. From an access perspective, this would provide a good opportunity to upgrade any PRoW links and bridleways that would require this. There wouldn't necessarily be a need to improve walkway surfaces, but you could put in good permeable paving (not concrete), to enable track use for all users, provided this would also be conducive for the habitat link purposes. It is important to also consider any structures on PROW and make them accessible to all (including people in trampers and pushchairs). All structures should ideally comply with British Standard BS5709. A free guide to the BS is available from <http://www.pittecroft.org.uk/>.

I hope that this information is helpful, if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Thank you very much,
Best wishes,

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