



Meeting Notes

CCPR, London 23 July 2008
Duncan Carter, CCPR
Jerry Swift, BKFA

Purpose

To review Free the Fields Campaign with CCPR and see what assistance they can offer, particularly with respect to a meeting with DEFRA.

Background

Chris Dowie started the campaign in September 2005. He found that farmers are reluctant to allow power kites onto some of their land, in his example "Permanent Pasture", because they believe such activity would, if sufficiently frequent, void the farmer's claim under the 'Single Payment Scheme', a very important source of income for farmers.

DEFRA say that recognising that they need to take a "balanced approach", on land categorised as 'B' they will allow non-agricultural activity on up to 28 days a year. Clearly this is very restricting for regular users.

They have come up with three categories: unrestricted which applies to walking and riding, restricted (country fairs, ballooning, power kiting etc) and non-permitted (golf courses etc). Using DEFRA's own rules Chris suggests that power kiting should be in category A, unrestricted, since he argues power kiting is transient, leaves no mark on the land, and the land is available for immediate agricultural use.

Key points

- CCPR are happy to support the campaign: they believe it is consistent with their aims and reflects similar concerns from other sports governing bodies (members of CCPR). CCPR is looking for increased sustainable access. They have regular contact with Natural England on this issue;
- CCPR have friendly MPs with whom they can discuss possible PQs (parliamentary questions) which encourage the responding minister to get involved in the issue
- CCPR will try and facilitate a meeting with DEFRA to air the issues;
- Duncan Carter suggested using local media to raise the profile of the problem. They will advise on tactics. Suggested that photos of "here's one we can use, here's one we can't, spot the difference" would probably generate media coverage;
 - *Action: JS to provide full briefing to DC to discuss with CCPR media team*
- DC suggested an independent assessment to back up the claims of nil damage. A survey of farmers would also demonstrate how much of an issue this really is – how many farmers would grant access if not for the single payment issue?
- DC also suggested Sheffield Hallam might be willing to do some research in this area. JS pointed out that BKFA do not have funding available for such research;
- Discussed Countryside & recreation website;
 - *Action: JS to investigate whether the website might give access to research opportunities*

- *Action: DC, on receipt of briefing, will follow up with contacts at Natural England, Environment Agency and DEFRA*
- *Action: Aim for meeting with DEFRA before year end*

JS

6 August 2008