

Response to Swale Borough Council's Tonge Conservation Area
Appraisal and Management plan

We, as landowners, own the majority of the land in the Tonge Conservation Area including Tonge Pond and the associated land; we only came across the above document by chance and we would therefore like to know why you haven't contacted us directly for our views upon the above Appraisal and Management plan.

We have the following comments/queries to which we would like a response:

1. There are various references in the document to e.g. Tonge Mill and its associated stream and pond being a "visitor destination", to "community woodland" and to "the public access afforded to the land". We should like to formally place on record that although part of the land south of Tonge Pond was, at one time, a Country Park, it has not been a Country Park since 2016 when Natural England closed their file. All of the land to the south of the Mill Pond as well as the Mill Pond itself, is privately owned and the only public access is one public right of way which runs from Church Road by the Mill, across our land and exits the other side into an adjoining orchard. There is clear signage at the property marking our land as private and we are frustrated by the widescale abuse of the land by members of the public including the huge amount of stealing of fruit, constant fly tipping and other antisocial activities carried out by members of the public.
2. There should therefore be no reference upon any map to Tonge Country Park as it no longer exists and has not existed for several years.
3. In addition, the reference to the former carpark being in need of attention, is therefore not relevant. We are intentionally allowing this area to grass over
4. For information, we have been liaising with Michael Ellis at Kent County Council with regard to clearing the access for the public right of way from Church Road (which has been done) and also further clearing of the right of way (due to take place shortly)
5. With reference to the chain link fence, is it suggested that this be replaced at the council's expense? The chain link fence pre-dates the designating of the land as a conservation area. If this is suggested, it should be done in conjunction and discussion with the present occupiers and owners of the property (consideration will need to be given to the height, security and style of the fence etc)
6. There is a bin for dog waste mounted next to the entrance to the former carpark. Since there has been no public access at this point for years, please could this bin be moved to the access for the public footpath, further along Church Road towards the Mill?

7. Page 43 of the document states "Seek opportunities to secure future public access to the land - see separate note". The separate note is not included. Please make this available as soon as possible by e-mail.

██████████ on behalf of the landowners
11 November 2020