

## Correspondence.

1. Dangerous fencing on Purbeck National Park & No help when needed.  
Email received and forwarded to Councillors 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

Response from Mark Singleton 01-11-23

"I'm really sorry you have had to witness these distressing incidents, particularly as it is in what is one of the most amazing places for wildlife in the UK. The deer population in Purbeck is very high and landowners do control numbers, fences are still an issue and we clearly we don't want animals suffering in this horrible and painful way. I have had to deal with this myself and completely empathise with you – it's very distressing.

As you might know, the fencing is part of the Purbeck Heaths 'super' National Nature Reserve. Seven organisations, including the National Trust, joined together to enhance the heathland for people and wildlife. As a part of this new stock fencing was installed (and a lot removed) around the perimeter of Arne, Stoborough, Middlebere and Hartland to create one 1300Ha continuous grazing unit where cattle, ponies and pigs could roam across the heaths on National Trust, Natural England and RSPB land – Purbeck Heaths Grazing Unit | Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ([dorsetaonb.org.uk](http://dorsetaonb.org.uk)).

When the new fences went in, we initially we recorded a number of incidents like you describe (more than we would usually expect). We initially designed the fence specification following the British Deer Societies (and local deer stalkers) recommendations. The fence consists of a barbed wire strand (at the base of the fence) to stop the pigs going under, a 1.2m sheep net and then a barbed wire strand on the top (which forms part of the structural integrity of the fence). I don't believe it's the barbed wire itself that is the issue, but the fact that the wire sits flush with the top of the sheep netting. Deer have got their legs stuck between the sheep net and barbed wire. Also a few animals were caught in the top 'square' of the sheep netting.

Since installing we have taken measures to reduce the numbers of deer becoming caught, such as:

- Putting metal hog ties around the top of the fence to bind the top strand of barbed wire to the sheep net, which helps prevent legs getting caught between the two.
- Where repeated incidents have occurred, or we know there is a deer run (an area where they move regularly), we have installed metal tags on the fence. These make it easier for deer to see the top of the fence, and so clear it when they jump.

This has reduced incidents. We are still getting more incidents than we want and are still looking at ways we can minimise the occurrences – for example, installing 'deer leaps' where we can attach rails to highly used deer run areas. We have been talking to local deer stalkers to help us identify these areas. Elementing the problem to zero will be impossible but we can work to reduce - anywhere where there is high deer populations and stock fences there will always be this risk. Also other factors can influence the probability of these incidents occurring i.e. where deer are stressed/ disturbed and are running increases the risk of them not clearing the fences.

As for out-of-hours contact numbers, we discussed this as a partnership, and following your email I have raised it again. Natural England do have signage and a national number that can be called where local teams are then contacted. The National Trust doesn't have a 24-hour contact number, and implementing one isn't straight-forward. But I would be happy to discuss possible

ways forward with you, such as having a network of local people who know who to call when there is such an incident.

Would you be happy to meet to discuss? My contact details are below and now you have my email address as well."

## 2. Signage

3-11-23 The following email was received:

"Don't know if you remember me, I was the person who refurbished the street nameplates a few years ago. As I drive through Corfe weekly, can't help noticing some of the signs have fallen in to disrepair-East Street, Halves Cottages, plus one or two others that need new posts. If you would like me to repair these in the future (weather permitting) please let me know."

A reply was sent stating we have already reported signage to Dorset Council, who are responsible for their maintenance.

3-11-23 The following email was received:

"I was talking to our new highways officer Glen this morning. I happened to tell him what I have been doing regarding street nameplate refurbs. Funnily enough he had collected the Halves Cottage sign and I told him the East street sign was lying on the verge as well so hopefully when he collects it he will bring both signs to me for repair. He is quite happy on behalf of D.C. for me to repair them with your permission of course. I would also put new posts on the Colletts Close one as that looks ready to fall. As before I will only charge for materials. The alternative will be to wait for D C.to replace them, albeit according to Glen there is a very long waiting list due to their budget 😬 "

"Cost is estimated at no more than £75,which includes, ballast, cement, backing board and posts".