



# HIGH BATTS NATURE RESERVE

Charity Number 1151676

## A Letter from Your Chairman

Dear Member

As we commence another calendar year first and foremost I need to thank all members for their support of High Batts Nature Reserve. From the steadfast "armchair" member to the regular or occasional visitor to those who volunteer for a more active role and to fellow Trustees I thank you all sincerely.

### Trustees

The Reserve's Annual General Meeting occurs in the spring, and we are fortunate that most current Trustees have in recent years been able to continue and have been duly elected. However there are vacancies to assist in ensuring that the management of the Reserve is fit for purpose in the future it is essential that new blood be introduced, so my first request is that each member considers seriously whether they would be able to accept a nomination to fill a Trustee vacancy. To convince you that such a role is not an onerous one and will increase your satisfaction in supporting High Batts please have a word with me and/or my colleague our Secretary Alwin Knowles. Contact details are shown at the end of this letter.

### Leases

I can now update you on Lease matters. Either the Land Owner or respective Land Agent of both the Reserve and the Car Park/Barn area have given verbal indications that we can expect a more long term lease in the near future. One Agent has also confirmed that, as expected, High Batts will have to meet 'the Lion's share' of legal costs.

### Sand and Gravel Extraction

In early autumn 2017 our close neighbours Hanson UK received final planning consent to commence extraction of sand and gravel from Pennycroft, the large level arable area immediately south of the Reserve boundary fence. It is **very important to be aware** that huge quarry vehicles will be using the haul road currently under construction and it will be **necessary to cross it with great care**. This same haul road, nearer the Reserve Barn, will eventually block our existing access to the lower car park. So a new inclined track, from the upper car park, has been constructed. **The upper car park will be our only parking area and from here access to the Reserve will be on foot only except for "Blue Badge" holders.**

### Annual Report

The 2016 Annual Report is in its final editing stage; before too long it should be off to the printers. Work on the 2017 edition will commence shortly so any outstanding records from last year should be submitted to the relevant recorders immediately. We have been most fortunate that our neighbours, Hanson UK, have for some years sponsored printing costs up to the 2015 issue. We trust that they will be able to continue such generous support in the year that the Reserve will see a large loss of income when the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, administered by Natural England, reaches the end of its 10 year life on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 followed by the legal costs of new leases mentioned above.

*(continued overleaf)*

Please be aware that a new revised Bird species recording form will be in use with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 and reflects the anticipated additional species expected to use the developing adjacent quarry.

#### Work Parties

The local charity Open Country, with whom we have a long association, have requested that they work with us one day per month. Also, the Community Payback Scheme has asked us to find work for at least two days per month, and we are consulting on how best to utilise this extra manpower. Many of the tasks requiring attention are likely to be outside the Reserve proper i.e. in and around the Barn area and in Pennycroft. The regular Thursday team will still be present and there will probably be further member's "muck-in sessions" as well since these have proved to be both successful and enjoyable (especially the refreshments bit!).

#### Harrogate Borough Council Ranger

We regret that Sam Walker will complete his contract with us in the spring. As previously mentioned, the monies receivable from Natural England will cease in 2018 as the HLS Scheme period ends on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018; this means that High Batts can no longer commit to our small proportion of his salary. We will be sorry to lose Sam but cannot fund any HBC work from members' subscriptions alone.

#### Hanson Quarry Life Award Competition

Information on this exciting new project was included in the September 2017 Newsletter and I would very much like to thank those members who came forward and expressed an interest in taking part. In cooperation with Hanson UK we are currently looking to develop a circular path around the working quarry in Pennycroft to undertake survey work and in due course organise visits. The involvement of schools and the local community is also developing apace at the moment. **There is still time to be involved so don't hesitate to contact me on telephone number 07935 352890 or our Secretary Alwin Knowles on 01423 714910 or you can email to: [highbatts1@gmail.com](mailto:highbatts1@gmail.com)**

With very best wishes to you all for 2018,

**Colin Slator**

19th January 2018