

PINEWOODS LEASE Q AND AS

January 2013

1. What exactly are the RHS' plans?

RHS Garden Harlow Carr occupies 58 acres of land that is currently leased from Harrogate Borough Council. The RHS would like to expand this lease by acquiring the small section of the pinewoods that falls immediately adjacent to its new car parking facility to the north of the Pinewoods, enabling the Society to create a safe and inviting pathway for visitors through the pinewoods and to the entrance to the gardens.

The pathway would be designed in a sympathetic material that would not detract from the nature and character of the space. The pathway would follow a natural desire line within the wood which is in the most part already established, therefore having a minimal impact on the trees and plants within the area.

2. Why is the RHS trying to lease a section of the pinewoods?

There are two key reasons why the RHS wants to lease the small section of the pinewoods directly adjacent to the new car park facility:

Firstly, when the new car park is open the route through the Pinewoods will have to be maintained adequately for the safety and enjoyment of our visitors. As with any aspect of our site, we will want to ensure the high quality presentation of this area.

Secondly, as a charity that has horticulture and the environment at its core, we also believe we could make the route through this area of the Pinewoods a more engaging and educational space without affecting its natural state with the use of interpretation about the local flora and fauna. This could provide an opportunity for our visitors, and other visitors to the Pinewoods, to learn more about the area, and hopefully inspire them more about local biodiversity.

3. Why can't the footpath be put where the ditch is on the road alongside the pinewoods?

In order to put a pathway along the edge of Crag Lane, the current ditch would have to be relocated, which could cause drainage issues for the site and the surrounding area. In addition, in order to provide safe access along this route, the road would have to be widened significantly, which would require the felling of trees and significant disruption to an established hedge used as a wildlife corridor.

4. Why can't HBC still be responsible for this area of the Pinewoods, and the RHS simply use it as they require?

In order to be able to ensure the safety of visitors within this area of the pinewoods, the RHS would manage this piece of woodland in accordance with the Harrogate Borough Council's Tree Management plan through their Arboricultural Officer in line with the Heads of Terms, linking in to our existing practices within the garden for our woodlands and specimen trees.

This would enable us to identify any health and safety issues and monitor the well-being of the trees using our inspection criteria. This would mean we could respond to any safety or tree health issues as soon as they arose and timetable in the work accordingly. This would not be practical or feasible if the responsibility for management of the area did not belong to the RHS.

The RHS has the resource and expertise to be able to ensure that this area of woodland is maintained to a high and safe standard at all times, and also has sufficient resource to be able to make suggestions in relation to the longevity and consequent planting and management of this wooded area.

5. How does the RHS propose to work with the Pinewoods Group going forward, should a lease be granted?

The RHS has already consulted with the Pinewoods Group about its proposals, and the Society will continue to actively engage with the group and involve them in plans for the area, should the lease of this area of land be granted.