Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership

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Mr D Gill
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43-45, St Peters Church Yard
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11th April 2008

Dear Mr Gill,

RE: Letter of support for the Water Vole Conservation at Draycott Ditch

Thank you for contacting me about your current application to the East Midlands Airport Community Fund.

The water vole is on the UK biodiversity priority species list as populations have declined significantly in recent years. Thankfully we still have water voles in Derbyshire but they are still under threat from habitat fragmentation as well as predation by mink. The Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan has a Species Action Plan for water voles. I have attached the action plan with the accompanying background document for your information. Draycott ditch, along the route of the Derby to Sandiacre canal is one of the site which is monitored regularly for water voles to assess populations and maintain a vigilance for signs of mink.

Canals in Derbyshire are one of the favoured habitats for water voles and as they are accessible to the public provide an excellent opportunity for members of the public to view them in their natural habitat. The idea of having a CCTV camera broadcasting the antics of the endearing creatures to the general public is wonderful. The webcam featuring the peregrines on Derby Cathedral has really captured the public's imagination and raised the profile of the birds and associated conservation issues. If the camera became a similar focus for the water voles at Draycott ditch then this would be fantastic and would help raise the profile of water voles and their conservation plight. The camera would also capture the other wildlife that can be seen along the area such as kingfisher and herons.

Raising awareness of biodiversity species and habitats is an important part of the work of the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership.

I wish you well with the application. Please let me know the outcome.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Court

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