

25 February 2021

Our ref: RFI 5409



Mr Ben Abbatt

request-722524-3d7147c9@whatdotheyknow.com

Mail Hub
Worcester County
Hall Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Dear Mr Abbatt

Access to Information request - Request No RFI 5409

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 29 January 2021. Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR's").

You asked for:

Please provide Natural England's specific guidance for updating the Ancient Woodland Inventory for the occasions when a licenced or permitted forest track is created in a Ancient Woodland.

Licenced relates to Forestry Commission felling licences.

Permitted relates to Planning Authority planning permission.

Does "A handbook for updating the Ancient Woodland Inventory for England, section 3.3.3.4 page 38 and 39 apply?

In response to your request above, the handbook for updating the Ancient Woodland Inventory for England, is the definitive methodology on updating the ancient woodland inventory and section 3.3.3.4 would apply in this case, which makes it clear that forestry tracks should be included as part of the woodland polygon.

Forestry tracks are considered as permanent open space within the woodland and would therefore be included in ancient woodland polygons. The only possible exceptions to this rule might be if a forestry track were on the edge of woodland area and was not surrounded by woodland, or if a surfaced forestry track was part of the public highway.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. As you may be aware, under the legislation should you have any concerns with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please email me at foi@naturalengland.org.uk and I will arrange for a review to take place. Under Regulation 11(2) this needs to be done no later than 40 working days after the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of that complaint or the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the internal review procedure provided by Natural England. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/> or call on 0303 123 1113 (local rate), www.ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Kate Donovan
Adviser – Access to Information
Legal & Governance Team