**THE NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**

**(CASTLE ACRE** **U22074/U33280 SOUTH ACRE ROAD)**

**(PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES) ORDER 2022**

**STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR THE MAKING OF THE ORDER**

The proposal to make the Order is made because it appears to the County Council that it is expedient to do so in accordance with Sub-Sections 1(b), (d), (e) and (f) of Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984, namely -

**“**(b) for preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road;

(d) for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property;

(e) without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (d) above) for preserving the character of the road in a case where it is especially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or

(f) for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs;**”**

The site of this proposed vehicle prohibition was once a constructed road surface which the River Nar passed over creating a ford which provided access for vehicular traffic from one side of the river to the other.

The road surface of the ford (U22074 South Acre Road in the Parish of Castle Acre) has now deteriorated to such an extent that it is now a riverbed and is not suitable for vehicular traffic to use.

Local residents have reported that the ford and other sections of the river is still used by some off-road enthusiasts. Movements of these vehicles are potentially adversely affecting the water quality and wildlife both in the ford itself, downstream sections of the River Nar which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and adjoining land which is part of the same SSSI. The sub-sections above set out are what is sought to be achieved by prohibiting the use of the ford by motor vehicles which would have the following benefits to the River Nar :-

1. reduce potential environmental damage caused to the River Nar (SSSI) from vehicles which produce disturbance to sediment and pollute the river bed with engine oil and fuels along with other debris
2. prevent further erosion of the river banks and the river bed;
3. avoid disturbing fish and other wildlife associated with the ford;
4. preserve and enhance the positive use of the ford and the river by people on foot;
5. will prevent access and damage to the River Nar (SSSI) and surrounding land to the east which also falls within the SSSI designation;
6. prevent the potential risk of wheels spreading invasive species of plants;
7. prevent disturbance of the river bed including potential fish spawning areas caused by vehicle manoeuvres;

The proposal also takes the following factors into account:-

1. the river and surrounding area needs protecting as a Site of Special Scientific Interest;
2. the duty upon the County Council to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise its functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which the site is of special scientific interest by virtue of S28G Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
3. the ford is within the boundary of the village of Castle Acre which is within a conservation area;
4. South Acre Road which provides access through the ford is a paved, narrow width track over its entire length (approx. 1,130m). Its width reducing to 2.0 metres in places with occasional passing places. It is not wide enough for 2 vehicles to pass each other;
5. there are other, more suitable routes that can be used. The ‘road’ is effectively redundant in its use in that it serves no purposeful access for services, private or commercial use. Traffic wishing to reach South Acre from Castle Acre can use a variety of alternative routes.

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