

Rabbits

We have recently received a number of complaints from neighbouring properties about damage by rabbits. It appears that the Country Park is under a legal duty to actively manage the rabbit population as the warrens are within the country park boundary.

Set out below are a number of options with comments, but any rabbits that are caught alive cannot be released elsewhere due to their territorial nature and therefore will need to be killed on site.

Rabbit Fencing

Cost £5,000

The cost of fencing is nearly half the annual maintenance budget for the park. There are difficulties to fence around gateway and entrances and a fence will make life difficult for other species such as badgers, deer and foxes to move freely.

Shooting

Cost Possibly None/Contractors Time

Shooting in a heavily used public area would need to be managed very carefully. It may not be possible in this location.

Gassing

Cost £250 per year

Gassing rabbits in their warrens is undertaken in the autumn. Rabbit predators, such as stoats or occasional polecats can also be killed.

Long Netting

Cost Possibly None/Contractors Time

There are not many people left who undertake long-netting. The nets are dropped when the rabbits are out feeding and then are chased back to the warren where they are caught in the net.

Ferreting

Cost Possibly None/Contractors Time

This is undertaken in the winter months by putting a ferret (a close relative of the polecat) into the warren. Nets are put over the holes which catch the rabbits as they bolt.

Do nothing

There is a large risk that we could be prosecuted for not taking action. This could lead to substantial costs.

Cost Possibly Nothing

Work with adjoining property owners

Cost Unknown

We may be able to work with adjoining property owners to secure their properties from rabbits that live on the country park. The long-term, and short-term costs of this could be prohibitive.

Thank you for your help

PAT KNIGHT
Countryside Services Manager