

# Connecting people with their peatland heritage

## Consultation Paper

**Flanders Moss National Nature Reserve is about to open its doors.**

**We want more people to know why Flanders Moss is such a special place.**

**What do you think of our proposals?**



**Flanders Moss National Nature Reserve**

**SCOTTISH  
NATURAL  
HERITAGE**



Flanders Moss has been a National Nature Reserve (NNR) for 25 years. Scottish Natural Heritage would like to give more people a chance to enjoy and appreciate Flanders and we have obtained funding to develop visitor facilities.

SNH wants to incorporate local peoples views into these plans so that we develop an NNR that is valued and used by the local communities.

Please read the proposals and pass on your views using the form and FREEPOST envelope by the **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005**

If you require more information or a further copy of the consultation paper please contact the following :

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## **FLANDERS MOSS NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE**

### **Connecting People with their Peatland Heritage**

#### **Introduction and Background Information**

1. Flanders Moss National Nature Reserve (NNR) is one of the largest areas of relatively undisturbed lowland raised bog in the European Community and as such has been designated a European Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Quite simply, it is probably the biggest and best remaining raised bog in Western Europe. It is one of the last remaining natural landscapes in Scotland and is home to many plants, insects and birds. It also tells a fascinating story of the social and cultural history of people living in this part of Scotland. There is much to interest people.
2. SNH wants to place a much greater emphasis on promoting public understanding and appreciation of NNR's. This means giving people opportunities to visit these special places and helping people to understand and enjoy them to the full.
3. People can learn and experience many things about Flanders Moss :
  - The site has special wildlife living in the bog habitat
  - Flanders has played a part in Scottish history through its location in the landscape.
  - Flanders has influenced local peoples lives for hundreds of years and has strong social and cultural links with the surrounding area.
  - Flanders Moss can be used to illustrate the plight of bog habitats across the world and what action everyone can take to help conserve bog habitats.
  - In the last 20 years, SNH has made a huge effort to restore the bog habitat at Flanders Moss, trialling many innovative techniques.
  - Flanders Moss is a piece of an ancient wilderness landscape that has an appeal for many people.

#### **How Many People Visit The Site Currently**

4. Flanders Moss hosts few visitors at present:-
  - 200 - 300 visitors a year – all in staff guided groups – these groups are almost all special interest groups and student groups. These groups mainly come to see the bog restoration work being undertaken on the NNR or the wildlife.
  - Interpretation of the site is done off-site through interpretation panels at viewpoints, leaflets, articles in newsletters and illustrated talks.
  - 2 Open days for local people have been held in the last 3 years attracting over 290 people.
5. At this present level of visitor use, Flanders Moss does not fulfil its NNR purpose of “raising national awareness”. SNH is looking at ways changing this situation.

### **How Many People Might Visit The Site In The Future**

6. Attendance at the two Open Days has been good and the Moss lies on a busy tourist route. SNH believes that greater promotion of the site and improvements to its facilities and interpretation will attract up to 5000 people a year.

### **Proposals For Managing Flanders Moss for People**

7. SNH is proposing the following objectives and key projects to help achieve greater awareness of the reserve.



### Objective 1

To enable the public to find out more about Flanders Moss.

## Off-site interpretation proposals

- i. Provide information about Flanders at key viewpoints
  - At or near to Thornhill and Kippen.
  - At Stirling Castle and the Wallace Monument
- ii. Create a Flanders Moss web-site for :
  - Use by students, containing detailed information in the form of education notes on subjects such as geology and rare species with links to sources of further information.
  - Scientific reports (past and present) including research reports undertaken on Flanders Moss that have increased our understanding of the NNR.
  - All literature and articles written and produced on Flanders Moss such as newsletters, articles and general information leaflets.
  - Information about on-site facilities, wildlife sightings and events for Flanders Moss NNR that will be updated regularly.
  - Monitoring of peoples views with opportunities for feedback on issues and features of Flanders Moss.
- iii. Produce a portable display for use at events and in public buildings e.g. local libraries.
- iv. Newsletter – produce 1 or 2 a year to send to neighbouring landowners, local businesses and local people who have expressed an interest in the site and make them available in local shops, pubs and libraries.
- v. Newspaper articles – produce occasional articles for community newsletters and local papers e.g. Stirling Observer.
- vi. Information leaflets – produce a historic drive leaflet and a general information leaflet.
- vii. Face to face events - staff and volunteers can promote awareness of Flanders at various environmental events.

**What do you think of these proposals ?**

**Are there other issues and areas of interest that you would like to know more about?**

**If we develop a Flanders Moss NNR web-site are there any useful web links we should be promoting?**

**Are there events in your community where you could promote information about Flanders Moss?**

## Objective 2

### To enable visitors to enjoy a visit to Flanders Moss

8. First hand experience is always going to be the most direct way for people to appreciate the site. The dilemma at Flanders Moss is that it is a fragile and delicate site. The wetness of the site and the depth of peat means that it can be dangerous and it cannot take large numbers of visitors without damaging the habitat.

### On-site interpretation proposals

- i. **Construct a car parking area to include: a welcome to the site, orientation panel, non-site specific information (e.g. composting displays for peat conservation, sources of further information, contact details of SNH etc), information on local services and facilities in the surrounding area.**
- ii. **Construction of a boardwalk , a safe circular path on the bog surface of a total length of up to 900m that would provide access for less able visitors.**
- iii. **Viewing tower - a platform about 7 m off the ground giving a panoramic view of Flanders Moss and the surrounding area.**
- iv. **Interpretive materials – an interpretation plan will be prepared to identify the audiences, messages, location and appropriate media to use The following is only a guide to indicate what may be required.**
  - **interpretation for general visitors**
  - **information boards at stops on boardwalk, car park and viewing tower.**
  - **interactive interpretive displays on boardwalk and in car park/picnic area**
  - **artworks**
  - **themed interpretation with more detail leaflets on specific subjects for use at numbered stops.**

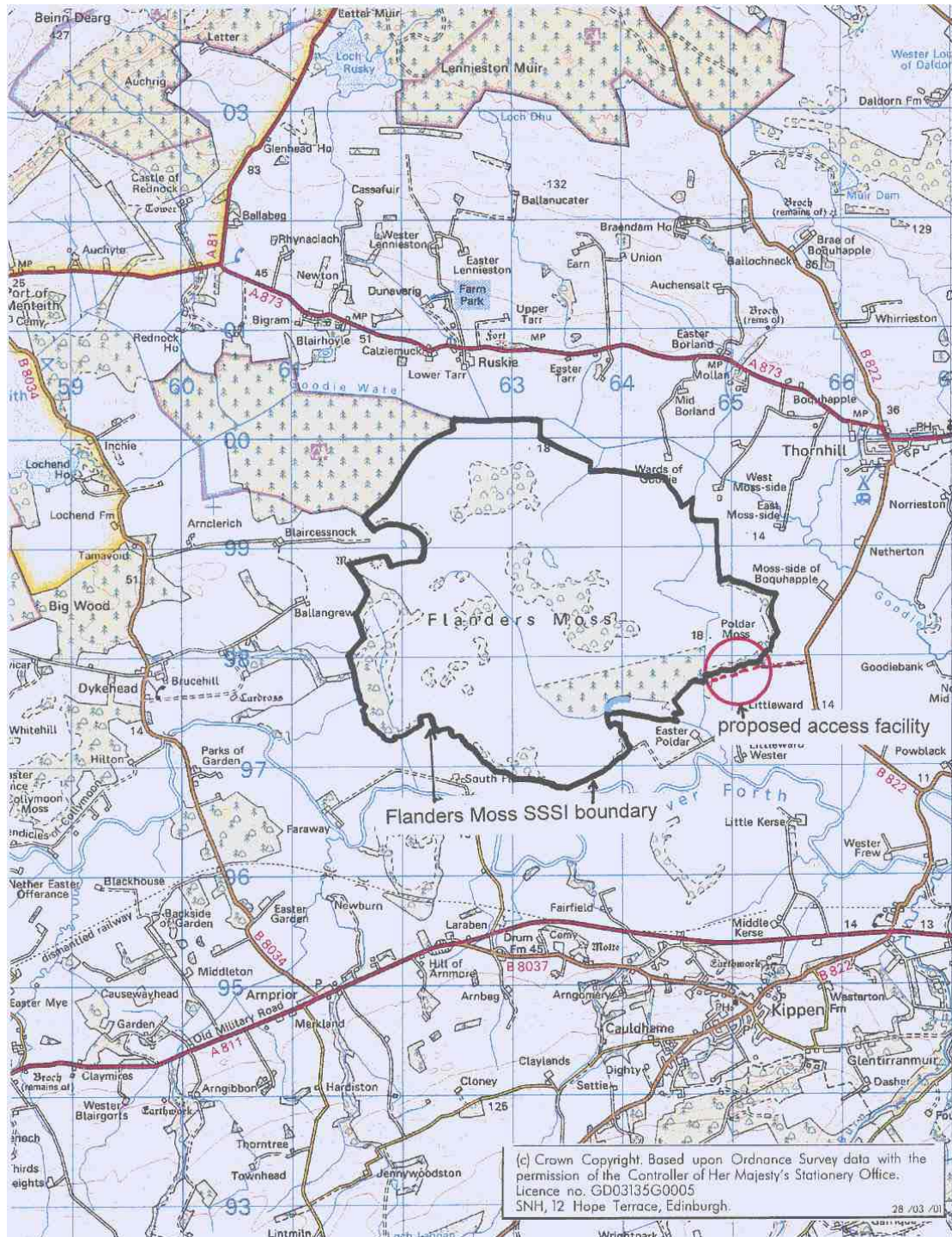
**What do you think of these proposals?**

**What information about the local area and services would you like to see on the information boards?**

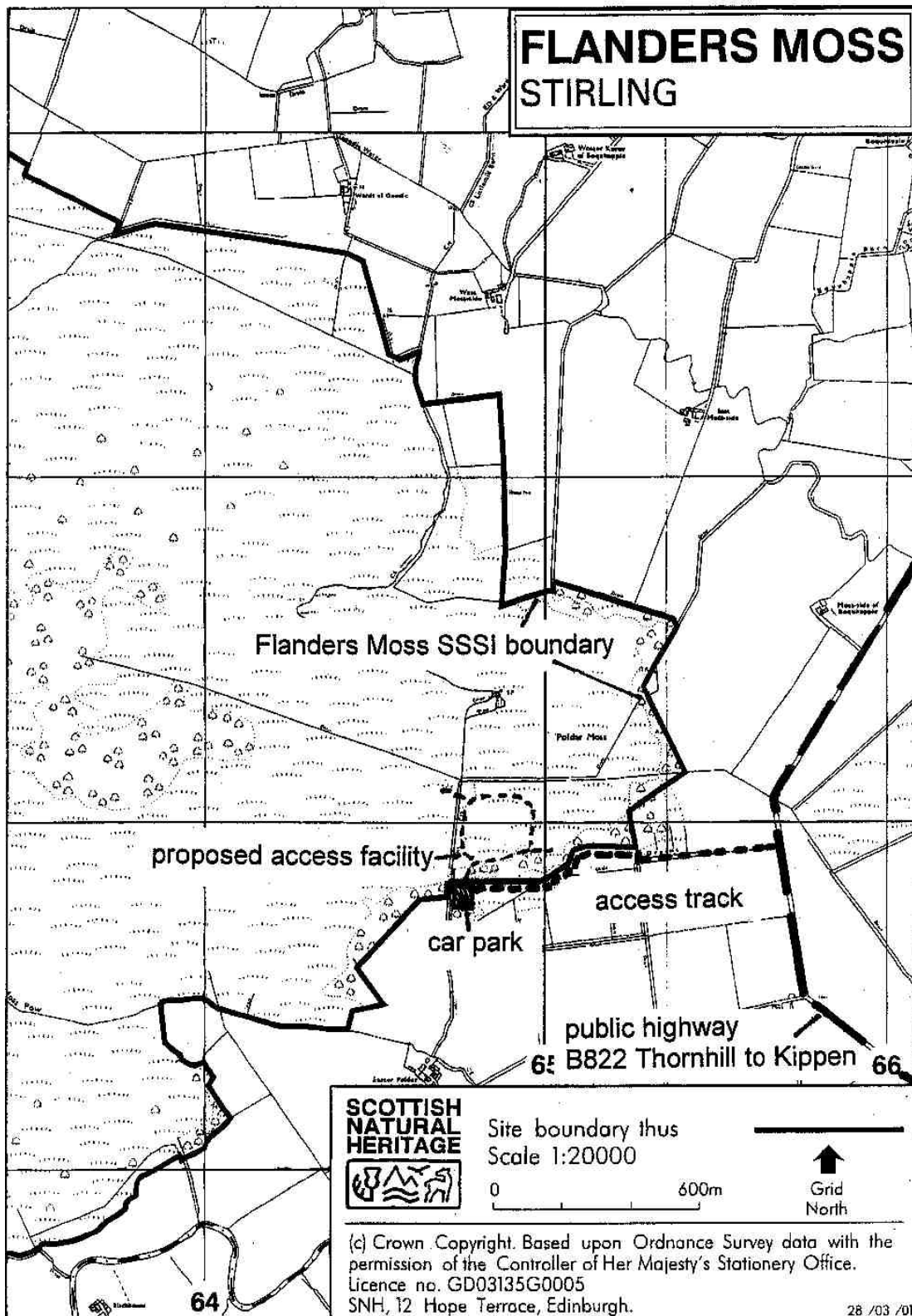
**If you would like to bring groups to the site what sort of facilities would you like to see?**

**Are there messages or areas of interest that you think should be covered by the information?**

Map 1 Location of Flanders Moss SSSI and proposed access facility



**Map 2 - Location of proposed access facility**



### Objective 3

To encourage local community involvement in the management of Flanders Moss NNR.

9. In the past, local people have had little chance to become involved with the management of Flanders Moss NNR. We are hoping local people will be interested in taking an active part in its future management and welfare, now that access issues are resolved and the Reserve has become better known. SNH has already worked with the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) to organise volunteer work parties where local people have carried out practical management work on the NNR. There is however more that can be done

### Proposals for working with local people

- i. Organise with partners a programme of volunteer work parties
- ii. Organise with partners (Stirling Council and S WT) a programme of events to introduce people to Flanders Moss.
- iii. Where possible support links between the NNR and the local economy e.g. interpretation leaflets in local business outlets, information on local businesses at the visitor facility.
- iv. Link the Flanders facility with the proposed red kite trail that aims to link up bird of prey watching sites such as the red kites at Argaty, Doune and peregrines at David Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle.
- v. Promote locally made products related to the NNR e.g. Flanders Moss beef and honey.

**What do you think of these proposals ?**

**Are there locally produced products and services that you think would benefit from a connection with Flanders Moss?**

**Would you like to see Flanders Moss linked to the surrounding communities by cycle routes and footpaths?**

**How can we link Flanders Moss to local businesses, ?**



Have you any suggestions about how the management of Flanders Moss NNR could be improved? Can you help in any way? Please remember that suggestions must be in keeping with the management of a National Nature Reserve where nature comes first.

Please pass on your views and comments to the Stirling SNH office using the form and FREEPOST envelope enclosed by :

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005.**

