COMMENT

It is disturbing to read that NRW have accepted the assessment of the ES Report submitted by Cunnane with regard to the starling roost at Llandegley Rhos. Their report uses figures taken from Lack ‘The Atlas of Wintering Birds in Britain and Ireland’ 1986, which is now over thirty years out of date. Since that time, the population of Starlings, both breeding pairs and overwintering flocks in the UK has diminished by 80%. The starling is now on the RSPB/BTO Birds of Conservation Concern 4 Red List.

More recent bird counts and photographic evidence, clearly demonstrate the scale, and the significance of the Starling Roost in the conifer plantation adjacent to Llandegley Rhos Common, which has been well recorded and documented over the years. It is a very well established roost that has bucked the overall trend of plummeting populations across the UK. The national importance of this roost when compared to the published list of ‘Top Ten UK Murmurations’ document 2016 gives further evidence to this fact.

The current RSPB strap line is ‘Giving nature a home’. The Llandegley Roost is the wintering home of hundreds and thousands of Starlings. They currently have a home which has given them shelter and protection and the means to exist successfully in this part of Wales. The whole area represents a beautiful and quiet haven for wildlife and should be recognised for the valuable and irreplaceable asset it is. It represents in all but name a wildlife nature reserve which affords open access to all ages via the scenic public rights of way and access onto Rhos Common. It ticks all the ‘Well-being for Future Generations’ boxes by delivering the potential for a wealth of environmental experiences which are readily available for all to benefit from and enjoy. Just as the Llandegley Roost is a magnet to thousands of starlings in the winter, the area has an equivalent attraction not just to people from the local area but from across Wales and the UK.

Photographs 1 and 2 evidentially show tens of thousands of starlings approaching their roost from the West and the North West, directly through the proposed windfarm site on Hendy Bank. They are at an altitude exceeding 25 metres. This is not an occasional occurrence but is happening every day at dawn and dusk through the winter months, from early November through to the end of February.

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