
APPLICATION NO.	19/00795/FULLS
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION - SOUTH
REGISTERED	28.03.2019
APPLICANT	Mr Kevin Harrington
SITE	Land Adjacent Mill Lane, Sherfield English, Romsey, SO51 6FN, SHERFIELD ENGLISH
PROPOSAL	Change of use of agricultural to public open space, and creation of a car park
AMENDMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Layout drawing• Kissing gate detail• Field gate detail• Height Barrier detail• Board walk detail• Hard and Soft Landscape details• Swept path detail
CASE OFFICER	Received 8th and 9th May 2019 Miss Sarah Barter

Background paper (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is presented to Southern Area Planning Committee because it is submitted by the Council for its own development which is not minor.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is currently agricultural land located on the western side of Mill Lane in the parish of Sherfield English. The land covers an area of 12.8 hectares and is a varied landscape of open grassland, scrub, wet woodland and mature trees within hedgerows. The land was purchased by TVBC in July 2018 to set out and manage as *Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)*.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application is to change the use of the agricultural land to public open space with mown footpaths and a board walk / path across the site. A car park would also be created to accommodate 12 parking spaces together with a height barrier and bunding around this area.
- 3.2 An information board will be located in the car park and a number of waste bins will be located around the site. Timber benches will be placed at regular intervals. The boundary of the site will be formed of stock fencing and post and rail fencing.

4.0 **HISTORY**

4.1 None

5.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 Policy – No Objection

5.2 **Highways** – No Objection

5.3 **Leisure** – No Objection

5.4 **Landscape** – No Objection

5.5 **Romsey Ramblers** – No Comment

5.6 **Ecology** – No response. Update to follow

5.7 **Natural England** – Support

We welcome the change of use at this site as part of the council's strategy to mitigate recreational disturbance on the designated sites within the New Forest. We believe the provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace and the proposed management of this site, as set out in the submitted plans, will attract people away from the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), reducing pressure on it and being of benefit to the conservation objectives for the designated site.

5.8 **Trees** – No Objection

5.9 **Environmental Protection** – No Objection

6.0 **REPRESENTATIONS** Expired 30.04.2019

6.1 **Jays Orchard Wellow Wood Road – Objection**

- There is 10,000s of acres of New Forest to walk this area is much too small and will be abused.
- What screening and fencing will there be to keep dogs from my home?
- We do not want to be looked at day and night by people walking about.
- This is a security risk to all homes this backs on to.
- The entrance is on a bad bend and will increase accident risk to homes this backs on to.
- The road is used by drivers and horse riders and it will be worse with people in these lanes who do not know them.
- Car park will have an affect on the surface of the land.
- What surface will the car park be?

6.2 **Wellow Wood Cottage and Ivy Cottage, Wellow Wood Road – Comments neither supporting or objecting**

- Our garden and paddock backs onto the brook and land which is to be utilised for the purpose of recreation/dog walking etc. Whilst we approve of the proposed use of the land, we also have some reservations regarding how this may affect the wildlife.
- Looking at the plans and the proposed boundary fence and footpath, we are concerned with the close proximity to the brook and potential disturbance to nesting birds as a result.
- The land north of the brook is very wet and boggy for most of the year and would be unsuitable for foot travel.
- We also note, that the bio-diversity study was carried out during the early part of this year – the winter months. It is now bordering on summer, which brings the summer migrants. May we humbly suggest, that you conduct further bio-diversity studies at this time of year to obtain a more seasonal evaluation of the importance for wildlife and birds in this area.
- Whilst we embrace the fact that local people will benefit from the use of this land, we feel that it must be managed with conservation in mind and due consideration given to the sensitive wetland area north of the brook.
- Whilst I am generally happy that the land will be used as “suitable alternative natural greenspace” I have some concern that centres on maintaining the privacy and tranquillity that we currently enjoy.
- Your plans show parking for ten cars and therefore in principle there might be 20 to 40 people using the site at any one time although more likely 10 to 20. This is not an insignificant number and creates the potential for the noise and privacy concerns I have expressed above. Lesser provision for parking might alleviate this.

7.0 **POLICY**

7.1 Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

7.2 Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016)(RLP)

COM1, COM2, E1, E2, E5, LHW4, T1, T2

7.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Sherfield English Village Design Statement

New Forest Interim Mitigation Framework

8.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The main planning considerations are:

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance
- Trees
- Ecology
- Impacts on neighbouring properties
- Highways and Parking

8.2 **Principle of development**

Policy COM2: Settlement Hierarchy – the site lies outside the boundaries of settlement and is therefore within the countryside. Development outside of settlement boundaries will be permitted if a) it is a type appropriate according to RLP policy or b) it is essential to be located in the countryside. This proposal for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace is essential to be located within the Countryside and therefore complies with criterion b) of this policy.

8.3 Policy COM1 of the Revised Local Plan sets out the scale of residential development envisaged over the plan period, including the split of this between the housing market areas. Paragraph 5.40 indicates that housing sites coming forward will need to account for other policies and legislation, including that affecting ecological designations.

8.4 The supporting text to policy E5 (Biodiversity) advises that the Council proposes to bring forward new opportunities for informal recreation to minimise the impact of the increased population in relation to such designations. Through seeking contributions, a range of mitigation measures would be brought forward, including securing access to new areas of land. The scale of such mitigation would be based on 8 hectares per 1,000 population. This is also set out within the New Forest Interim Mitigation Framework, through which relevant applicants can provide their own mitigation measures, or contribution towards off-site mitigation measures.

8.5 A number of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) have already been secured through planning permissions, or are indicated in conjunction with the allocation of sites. These relate to land in Romsey, North Baddesley, and Nursling and Rownhams. The SANG proposed through this application will therefore form part of a network of such provisions within the southern part of Test Valley all designed to mitigate the impact an expanded population will have on the New Forest area. While the secured and allocated SANG sites are located close to some of the larger settlements, the proposed SANG is close to a number of the more rural villages in the south west of the Borough. It is also approximately the same distance to the proposed SANG from the western edge of Romsey as to the nearest public car parks within the New Forest. Therefore, the location of the proposed SANG will complement the network of secured and allocated SANG sites and also be accessible to more rural communities in which windfall developments have contributed towards off-site mitigation measures through the Interim Mitigation Framework.

8.6 The physical characteristics of SANG and the factors that make them attractive to users, rather than the New Forest, also tend to require a countryside location outside the defined settlement boundaries. They should be natural or semi-natural spaces, ideally including a mix of habitat types, offering a tranquil space for recreation, ideally avoiding urban intrusions. There are also benefits from access to the wider public right of way network. The application site provides all these characteristics, including a public right of way located on the opposite site of Mill Lane, in close proximity to the site access.

- 8.7 Taking the characteristics of SANG and the role the site would play as part of a wider network of such provisions in southern Test Valley, it is considered that the proposal satisfies criterion b) of COM2.
- 8.8 The proposal reflects the social and environment objectives of sustainable development (paragraph 8) in the NPPF around protecting the environment and facilitating the delivery of sufficient homes. It also is consistent with paragraph 175, criterion d) of the NPPF which indicates that '*development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported*'.
- 8.9 **Character and appearance**
The application site off Mill lane is located approximately 300 metres from the A27 (Salisbury Road). The character of the approach to the site along Mill Lane is a mix of domestic fences and gates, flint and brick walls, conifer and native hedgerows, agricultural buildings and domestic properties with outbuildings. A large fruit farm operation is located to the north of the site with poly tunnels covering approximately 5 hectares.
- 8.10 The boundary of the site is dominated by woodland and scrub. A line of native scrub and trees run alongside Mill Lane with the only direct view into the site at the existing site entrance. To the south the boundary is dominated by alder carr woodland scattered scrub. Views into the site from residential properties on Wellow Wood Road are obscured by scrub, mature trees and private boundary features including laurel hedging. To the north blackthorn scrub and mature oak trees provide a visual barrier to the fruit farm infrastructure.
- 8.11 A number of changes to the site are being proposed as part of the change of use application from agriculture (grassland management) to recreation space. The proposal would see the construction of a gravel car park measuring approximately 300 m² to accommodate 12 parking spaces (see appendix 4). The existing galvanised field entrance gate will be retained and a vehicle height barrier painted black will be installed to the rear of this gate. The car park will be set back from Mill Lane by approximately 12 metres and the height barrier by 5 metres. Vehicle movements within the car park will be contained by a low level earth bund which will be sown with an amenity grass mix. The bund was chosen to mirror similar car park layouts in the New Forest and provides a less formal appearance than timber bollards. The bund will also be screened from inside the space using a native hedge mix. An information board detailing walks around the site and ecological information will be located at the car park. A number of waste bins will be located around the site, positioned to be fully functional but unobtrusive.
- 8.12 The boundary of the site will be secured with a combination of stock fencing and timber post and rail fencing, with galvanised steel gates. The materials have been chosen to mirror the materials used on the adjacent agricultural holdings. Access around the site will be via mown grass paths and where required to traverse wetter sections of land short timber bridges and boardwalks.

- 8.13 It is considered that this new infrastructure would have negligible effect on the character and appearance of the site. The existing vegetation on all boundaries will act as a visual barrier to the new car park, and materials have been chosen to mirror those of the surrounding farmed landscape. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with policies E1 and E2 of the Revised Local Plan. In addition, the proposal would not conflict with any of the guidance notes within the Sherfield English Village Design Statement. Further information has been submitted with regards a hard and soft landscaping specification and maintenance. This is currently under review with the Landscape Officer and an update will be provided.
- 8.14 **Trees**
The proposed development would not create any significant impacts on the trees on site and the Tree Officer has no objection to the proposals as such the development is considered to be in accordance with policy E2 which seeks to preserve existing landscape features.
- 8.15 **Ecology**
Natural England supports this application to provide a new area of land for publicly accessible greenspace. The change of use is welcomed at this site as part of the council's strategy to mitigate recreational disturbance on the designated sites within the New Forest. The provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace and the proposed management of this site, as set out in the submitted plans, would attract people away from the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), reducing pressure on it and being of benefit to the conservation objectives for the designated site.
- 8.16 Comments from HCC Ecology are awaited and will be included in the update paper.
- 8.17 **Impact on neighbouring properties**
Concern has been raised about security for neighbouring residential properties the rear gardens of which back on to the application site on the southern boundary. The fence along the southern boundary has been stepped back into the site to keep access away from neighbouring properties to the south, and also to make management of this part of the site easier. The position of the fencing leaves an approximate buffer within the Mill Lane site of 20 metres (taken from the fence to the stream which forms the southern boundary). The private properties to the south of the stream which are located in Wellow Wood Road, are separated by approximately 50 metres of what appears to be fields (it is appreciated that private use by the householders of these field will vary) before the boundary of what appears to private gardens to each of the houses.
- 8.18 The purpose of the SANG is to provide a space for people to walk dogs off a lead and the site will be advertised for this purpose. There is no evidence to suggest any significant problems occurring with dogs barking or people shouting in this countryside setting, and we would simply expect people to pass/repass along this southern route. Whilst the applicant would not necessarily preclude ball games, the way the site will be managed with predominately longer grass with mown paths is not conducive for such an activity.

Specifically, compartment 7 (southern boundary) is wet fen type vegetation which extends above the knee of an average height person (say 5.9ft) so again ball games would not be feasible.

- 8.19 The fencing proposed would be stock fencing (wire netting with 2 strands of wire along the top), chosen to keep people and dogs contained within the site and will mirror the existing agricultural type fencing in the locality. The applicant is extremely keen to ensure the feel and landscape of the Mill Lane site changes as little as possible, with the exception of the obvious required infrastructure of the car park, fencing and bins etc. It has been confirmed that there is no intention to preclude views across the site and enclose the space. In light of the above information from the applicant it is not considered that the change of use of this land to enable the public to take a walk around the area would create any significant impacts on the adjacent neighbouring properties either on Wellow Wood Road or Mill Lane. As such the development is considered to comply with policy LHW4 which seeks to protect amenity.

8.20 Impact on highway safety and parking provision

The Highways Officer initially had an objection to the proposals due to lack of information. Further detail has been submitted and reviewed. In relation to parking provision Drawing P263/1A now shows provision of 12 parking spaces. There is no current standard for parking provision for this type of rural public open space set out in the Test Valley adopted Local Plan. Annex G (Policy T2) Parking Standards for Community, Leisure and Recreation Facilities does provide a standard for a number of outdoor facilities including (golf courses/sports pitches), however these are not applicable and cannot be used for this purpose.

- 8.21 On this basis the applicant has calculated the number of parking spaces based on existing sites in the Borough which are relative in use to what is proposed at Mill Lane. Sites include:

- Stoney Marsh located on the A3057 for access for walking the Test Way - 10 spaces
- Anton Lakes Andover – 10 spaces

Taking into account the proposed use of the site for dog walking/ walking only, and no equipped leisure facilities are to be installed, it is anticipated that 12 spaces will be adequate to absorb parking demand to access this space at peak times. The updated Layout drawing P263/1A shows the proposed access, internal layout of the car park and visibility splay on Mill Lane. The parking spaces are standard 2.4m x 4.8m, and the manoeuvring width is 6.2m (minimum width is 6m). The Highways Officer has confirmed that having reviewed this information there are now no concerns in this regard.

- 8.22 In terms of visibility, Mill Lane is lightly trafficked therefore from Manual for Streets the distance X is taken as 2m. A radar speed survey of northbound traffic, just north of the entrance (where the road is straighter, therefore speeds faster) shows maximum vehicle speeds of 25mph. A manual speed survey of vehicles approaching from the south gave a maximum speed of 20mph.

From Manual for Streets the SSD is therefore 25m (which is where the existing T Pole is located – see Drawing). The remainder of the hedge will be removed and verge bank reduce in level to further improve visibility. Drawing P263/2 - Vehicle Swept Path shows vehicle speeds turning into the entrance at 5 and 10mph. The details provided with regards to the vehicular visibility envelope achievable is considered acceptable by the Highways Officer. It is considered appropriate to apply a suitable condition to any planning permission granted that requires the vehicular visibility splays to be maintained for the lifetime of the development. Subject to appropriate conditions also ensuring the parking is laid out and provided it is considered that the development is in accordance with policies T1 and T2 of the Revised Borough Local Plan 2016.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposal is considered acceptable and in accordance with the development plan.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

PERMISSION subject to:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans numbers:
Layout Plan P263 1 A
Management Compartments
Indicative Path Layouts
Site Plan
Indicative Internal Fence Plan
Height Barrier 41010-0
Detail Swept path P263 2
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning
3. The development shall not be occupied until space has been laid out and provided for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles to enable them to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in accordance with the approved plan and this space shall thereafter be reserved for such purposes at all times.
Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy T1
4. Prior to the commencement of development the access shall be constructed with the visibility splays as detailed on plan P263 1 A and maintained as such at all times. Within these visibility splays notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order) no obstacles, including walls, fences and vegetation, shall exceed the height of 1 metres above the level of the existing carriageway at any time.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy T1

Notes to applicant:

- 1. In reaching this decision Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. TVBC work with applicants and their agents in a positive and proactive manner offering a pre-application advice service and updating applicants/agents of issues that may arise in dealing with the application and where possible suggesting solutions.**
 - 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and completed strictly in accordance with the submitted plans, specifications and written particulars for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.**
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