

Working to Protect the New Forest



PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reply to: -

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Sent as attachment to Email only

14 January 2015

Katie Pearce
New Forest National Park Authority
Lymington Town Hall
Avenue Road
Lymington SO41 9ZG

Dear Katie,

Application 00721 FOXBURY, BLACKHILL ROAD, EAST WELLOW, SO51 6AQ
3no Cabins; compost toilet; creation of boardwalk; jetty and carpark; 4 boards; upgrade to access track

1. New Forest Association (NFA) objects to the application in respect of the proposed car park. Thank you for your forbearance in allowing such a late and I'm afraid hastily prepared response. The following remarks are directed as much to the applicant as at the Authority.
2. NFA is enormously grateful to the National Trust for acquiring the plantation and, under the Higher Stewardship Scheme, restoring and managing it to what will in time become the same SSSI standard as other NT commons. NT's action has shown what seemed like the never ending erosion in the size and the quality of the New Forest can be countered.
3. From this starting point, NFA became aware of the Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) document *Annex to Cabinet Report 1st October 2014 New Forest SPA Mitigation – Interim Framework* which is attached. The document appears to identify Foxbury as the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to counteract the negative affect on the New Forest SPA of development in the south of the TV Borough. This is not the route suggested by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010 South Hampshire, nor it is not the route contained in the TVBC Revised Local Plan DPD 2011 – 2029 Regulation 22 – Submission at LHW3 page 118 which is currently under examination. Further Foxbury would not seem to meet the criteria so far developed for a SANG from work around the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
4. The involvement of TVBC adds to unease, not dispelled by the application, that the NT's aspirations regarding recreational activities at Foxbury have not been refined to the same degree as 2 above. It would seem that the car park is by way of an overflow to the existing Half Moon car park for activities such as orienteering that involve large numbers. As NFA understands, such activities are unlikely to occur more than two or three times a year. Similar car parking requirements occur elsewhere in the Forest but do not require the creation of a car park that would, despite best efforts, sterilise to a significant degree a large area of valuable and designated heathland. Beaulieu Road Pony Sales are an example of an existing car parking requirement that is dealt with simply by utilising some nearby lawn. NFA urges NT to see whether the creation of an informal lawn area for overflow parking would not be adequate at least until recreational activities and plans become entirely clear. Such a solution has the advantage of being cheap and outside the planning regime. NFA contends that the case for what is in Forest terms a very large car park has not been made. NFA objects both to a car park and to the size of the car park. If granted NFA seek a condition limiting use to a maximum of 28 days per annum.

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NFA objects to the position of the car park. It is situated on top of a hill that dominates the surrounding area to beyond Southampton. Presumably the applicant feels some nervousness about the location as a visual shield in the shape of a hedge is proposed. NT will no doubt stretch the definition of hedge to minimise urban and maximise rural interpretation but NFA questions whether the sight of a hedge on the top of a hill in the middle of heathland 365 days a year is preferable to the sight of cars on three days a year. NFA consider the car park, if it is not to be an informal patch of lawn, could be moved to the side of the hill that obscures it from most directions.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Baker.

Graham Baker, NFA Planning Committee

Lee Milin Ranger 07967657007