

APP/18/00450 | Erection of 320 dwellings (including a 30% provision of affordable homes), 66 bed care home, provision of public open space, habitat mitigation zone, allotments, closure of existing access and creation of 2 new access points and associated infrastructure following demolition of existing buildings (approved 17.1.2020). Request to discharge condition nos 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 21 and 23 (Recd 23.1.2020). | Land at Forty Acres Farm, Havant Road, Havant 20.0807

Thank you for consulting me on this application. Please accept my apologies for the long delay in responding.

The application is accompanied by an amended Mitigation Area Creation, Management and Monitoring Strategy and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (WYG, June 2020).

Overall, I would again echo the points raised by Natural England in respect to the importance of establishing the wintering bird refuge as early as possible: both NE and I recommended that some elements needed to be in place before the commencement of the 2020/21 wintering season.

If no enhancement measures are to occur in time for the upcoming wintering season then it should be made clear if the site is currently in suitable condition for visiting bird species. If so (i.e. there is a suitable grassland or crop coverage across the site) then perhaps it can be argued that minimal work is required. If not, and the site is unsuitable for birds, then this would potentially render any future enhancement works liable to failure/delay if birds perceive the site as unsuitable. Perhaps the use of decoys this winter would assist?

The amendments to the strategy such as the fenced and ditch are very welcome. There are several observations from my previous response that remain valid:

- It would be preferable for the entire refuge boundary to be established in 2020. Autumn 2020 to early spring 2021 is optimal. Whips should be as mature as possible to hasten establishment. There is no reason not to establish the entire hedgerow boundary at the same time and at the earliest opportunity.
- Provision should be made for flexibility in hedge management, enabling some areas to be left uncut and others trimmed. This will benefit biodiversity more widely.
- Wader scrapes must be able to hold water. Use of clay liner may be necessary and should be included as an option (subject to expert advice) within the methodology.
- Provision for a 'steering group' type arrangement for reviewing the long-term efficacy of the refuge is recommended.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Tristan

Tristan Norton

**Senior Ecologist
Ecology Team**