

TOURNERBURY FARM IS NOT A 'FULL TIME WORKING FARM'

At HBC Planning Committee meeting on 24th June 2021, the Council's Planning Committee were determining the previous application by The Tournerbury Woods Estate (APP/18/00943).

Part of the Officer reason for recommendation for refusal of that previous application was, as stated in the Officer's report –

".....the risk of conflict between visitor movements and the safe and satisfactory functioning of the farmyard."

This officer decision was made on the basis of representations made by A G Phillips & Son Ltd (AGPS) (owners of the landholding known as Tournerbury Farm) and their supporters that "*Tournerbury Farm is a full-time working farm*" in multiple objecting submissions to the previous application.

It is germane to the decision making process of the current application to understand how thorough (or not) the Council were in coming to their conclusion in the previous application that there is conflict between the Tournerbury Woods Estate's (TWE) use of their lawful Right of Way and 'farming operations' at Tournerbury 'farm'.

At the Planning Committee on 24th June 2021 the Planning Officer at his presentation slide 'Access to the site – within Farmyard' states to the Committee -

*"You will have seen from the Officer's report that there are serious concerns about the appropriateness of the use of the access through the farmyard area, and in particular given the intended number of movements and the timing of the movements in close proximity to those residential properties will result in a loss of residential amenity to them **and it is also likely to disrupt the satisfactory operation of the farm**".*

In questions to the planning officer, after deputations, a Committee Member, Councillor Patel, asked the Planning Officer –

"Mr Weaver, can you say how active the farm is? Is it really a live farm, a commercial farm? Or is it a part-time farm?"

The Planning Officer responds –

"I believe the farmers are full-time farmers. But beyond that I'm not sure I could comment on it, how active, I don't know how you would judge how active, ummm we heard from the deputation that there is livestock kept on the farm, you know 33 I think it was, cattle. A number of horses are kept there but in terms of the range of activities within the farm itself, not having had a pre-submitted question I can't give you much more detail than that I'm afraid."

What this exchange at Planning Committee clearly demonstrated was that in reaching a recommendation for refusal of the previous application on the basis of the application being likely to "*disrupt the satisfactory operation of the farm*", the Council, in coming to such a decision had no 'on the ground' real-world idea or data of how little farming takes place at Tournerbury 'farm' and instead had highly subjectively based their decision on the hearsay and opposition submissions of A G Phillips & Son Ltd and their supporters.

The same narrative has been used consistently by A G Phillips & Son Ltd and their supporters in opposition to this application and therefore is due scrutiny so that the same false premise for refusal is not utilised again.

The Council already has substantial evidence in front of it, both it's Planning Enforcement Team and applicant submissions to this application which demonstrate that Tournerbury Farm is not "*a fulltime working farm*" as an objective person would understand a farm to be. This is contained amongst other things in the applicants supporting document ANALYSIS OF TRANSPORT NOTE 31/10/2022.

However, in order for the Council to properly and objectively weigh this matter in the planning balance for this application, further evidence of the lack of farming activity at Tournerbury 'farm' is provided below.

AGPS and their supporters and professional advisers have stated to the Council on multiple occasions that Tournerbury farm is a "*Fulltime working Farm*" and that use of the applicants Right of Way is in conflict with safe operation of their farming activities.

Given that such narrative has been historically accepted by the Council (as shown on the previous page), without any fact checking, it is helpful to compare Tournerbury 'farm' with other local farms that an objective third party (such as a Planning inspector) would observe to be 'fulltime working farms' –

MANOR FARM – HAYLING ISLAND



Manor Farm, Hayling Island - Google Earth 2011



Manor Farm, Hayling Island - Google Earth 2015



Manor Farm, Hayling Island - Google Earth 2019



Manor Farm, Hayling Island - Google Earth 2022

The above Google Earth images of Manor Farm on Hayling Island clearly show an active 'fulltime working farm' with different crop rotations across their land holding and their land being in use for 'farming' over the last 11 years. The ploughing, seeding and cultivation of their fields (farming activity) is clearly visible.

STOKE FRUIT FARM – HAYLING ISLAND



Stoke Fruit Farm – Hayling Island – Google Earth 2011



Stoke Fruit Farm – Hayling Island – Google Earth 2015



Stoke Fruit Farm – Hayling Island – Google Earth 2019

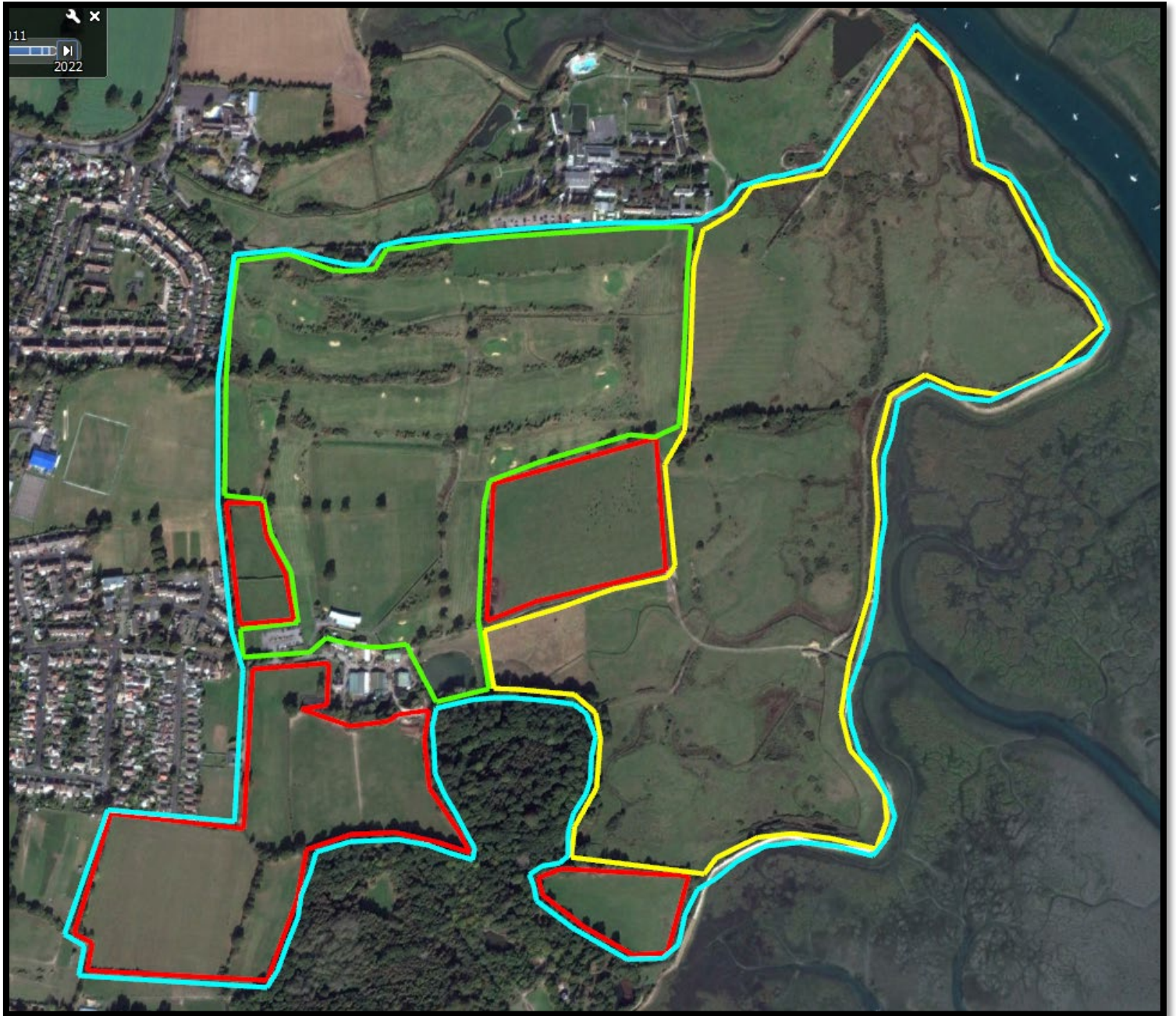


Stoke Fruit Farm – Hayling Island – Google Earth 2021

The above Google Earth images of Stoke Fruit Farm on Hayling Island clearly show an active ‘fulltime working farm’ with different crop rotations across their land holding and their land being in use for ‘farming’ over the last 11 years. The ploughing, seeding and cultivation of their fields (farming activity) is clearly visible.

TOURNERBURY 'FARM' – HAYLING ISLAND

The land holding known as Tournerbury Farm consists of approx 250 acres. The below Google Earth image shows the land holding boundary (pale blue boundary), the 'agricultural' fields (outlined in red), the Tournerbury Golf Center and driving range (outlined in green) and the Tournerbury Marsh SSSI / SPA / RAMSAR site which has 'agricultural land status' but is only used for the grazing of a small head of beef cattle in agreement with Natural England – circa 30 animals (outlined in yellow).



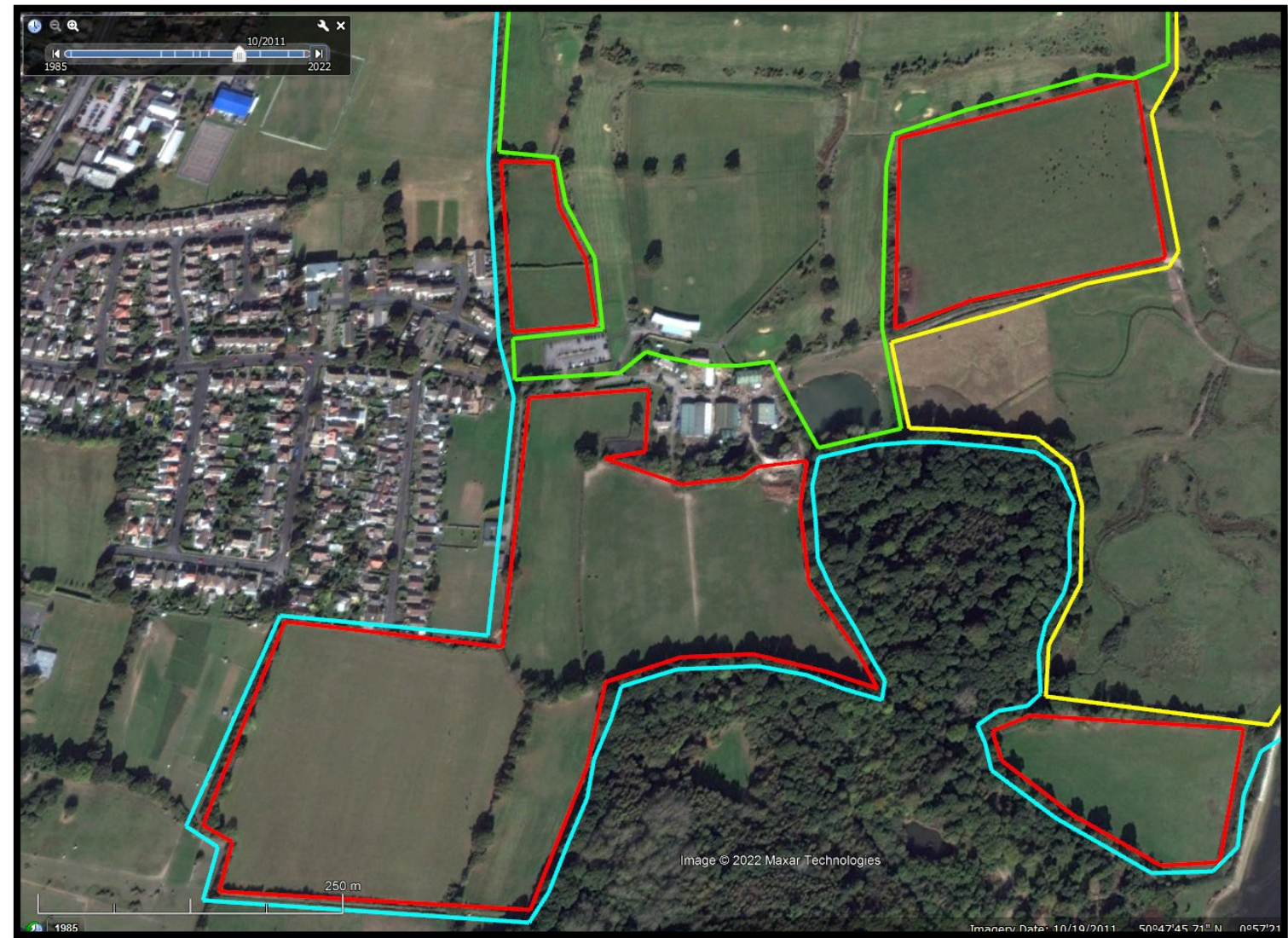
Of this substantial land holding, it is useful within the determination planning context for decision makers to be very clear on the level of actual 'farming' activity that takes place at Tournerbury farm, on the ground.

The questioning of the Planning Officer at Committee in the last application by a Committee member (as shown above), evidenced very succinctly that the Council had not adequately investigated or addressed whether the objectors' claims of Tournerbury Farm being a "*fulltime working farm*" were indeed true or not, and therefore basing a refusal decision on such a lack of real world knowledge appears erroneous.

It is also completely clear from the above Google Earth images of nearby farms (Manor Farm and Stoke Fruit Farm), that they are indeed 'Farms' that use their landholding for the production of food and crops.

Therefore, it is right to undertake the same analysis on the 'Agricultural fields' at Tournurbury farm in order to better establish (rather than the lack of factual analysis by the Council in the previous application) as to the true amount of agricultural activity undertaken at Tournurbury 'farm'. –

TOURNERBURY FARM – HAYLING ISLAND



Tournerbury ‘farm’ – Hayling Island – Google Earth 2011

The ‘agricultural fields at Tournerbury ‘farm’ are not in agricultural production, unlike other local farms that are actually ‘Farms’. The only agricultural production that can be seen here on the 2011 Google Earth imaging is the small head of cattle grazing the field directly to the east of the Tournerbury golf Centre. When zoomed in, it is clear to see that one or two horses are situated in the southern ‘agricultural’ fields that have now been given over to horse grazing for over a decade.



Tournerbury 'farm' – Hayling Island – Google Earth 2015

The 'agricultural' fields are not in agricultural production, unlike other local farms that are actually 'Farms'. The only agricultural production that can be seen here on 2015 Google Earth imaging is the small head of cattle grazing the field directly to the east of the Tournerbury golf Centre. Again, when zoomed in, it is clear to see that one or two horses are situated in the southern 'agricultural' fields that have now been given over to horse grazing for over a decade.



Tournerbury 'farm' – Hayling Island – Google Earth 2019

The 'agricultural' fields are not in agricultural production, they are given over to grass for horse grazing, unlike other local farms that are actually 'Farms'. The field directly to the east of the Tournerbury Golf Centre contains a single grazing horse when zoomed in. There are no cattle present on any of the 'agricultural' fields and no cattle present on the Marsh.



Tournerbury 'farm' – Hayling Island – Google Earth 2022

The 'agricultural' fields are not in agricultural production, they are given over to grass for horse grazing, unlike other local farms that are actually 'Farms'. The field directly to the east of the Tournerbury Golf Centre contains two grazing horses when zoomed in. There are two horses grazing the fields to the south.

The above suite of comparative photographs taken over the last ten years starkly demonstrate to decision makers that the complete (and substantial) suite of objection comments from AGPS and those that support AGPS's continued opposition to the TWE's planning applications on the basis that "*Tournerbury Farm is a fulltime working farm*" and there is risk of "*conflict due to farming operations*" are misleading and misdirecting the Council's decision makers.

This false narrative was a primary objection strategy in the previous application that (as described in this document) was highly successful in persuading the Council's decision makers to refuse the previous application on the grounds of amenity of the 'farm' operations and such tactic is being used again against the extant application.

It is acknowledged that a very small head of beef cattle (circa 30 animals) are kept at Tournerbury Farm. They live predominantly on the SSSI SPA/RAMSAR Marsh and field adjacent to the Golf Centre and the level of 'farming activity' that this generates is worth scrutiny, so that the wool is not pulled over the eyes of decision makers again.

The very small herd of cattle that are raised at Tournerbury Farm are brought to Tournerbury as calves in a single cattle lorry and immediately left to graze on the Marsh. They are extensive grazing beef cattle (that is, they are not intensively reared indoors). On only a couple of occasions a year will they be moved to a barn in the farmyard for vet checks. If it is a cold winter they may be moved on one occasion to the cattle barn in the farmyard during the worst winter months, however this is not favoured by AGPS, as such a move involves costs of feeding them, as opposed to the free feed of grazing the Marsh. Last winter (2021/2022) we did not witness the cattle in the barn in the farmyard at all as it was such a mild winter.

The idea postulated by AGPS and fellow objectors that 'stock movements' could be in conflict with use of the Right of Way by the TWE venue traffic is on any analysis ludicrous and unsound. If it were the case that there was 500 head of dairy cattle at Tournerbury 'farm', which were moved to large scale industrial milking parlours alongside the Right of Way twice a day then there would be rationality and sense in decision makers considering the potential for conflict between such daily, consistent, actual farming use and the venue use of the TWE. This is entirely not the 'on the ground reality' at Tournerbury 'farm'.

Even in such a scenario as imagined above, both traffic to the venue and daily dairy herd movements could still co-exist without substantial 'harm'. By way of simple example, Northney Farm at the north end of Hayling Island move their 90+ dairy herd over the Public Highway (St.Peters Road) twice a day.



Northney Farm dairy cattle being moved across the Public Highway.

Commercially it should be acknowledged by decision makers that agricultural activity is very minor at Tournerbury 'farm'. A simple analysis of approximate commercial values indicate thus. Beef cattle calves as brought to Tournerbury 'farm' will cost in the region of £200 to £350 each dependent on their age and breed. After 18 months of outside grazing their value for slaughter will be in the region of £1500 each (again breed and age dependent), but it is safe to assume that even without taking vet bills and any supplementary feed costs into account, circa 30 beef cattle being sold for slaughter from Tournerbury 'farm' will raise only in the region of £37,000 over the 18 months to 2 years that they are grazed. That equates to less than £20,000 a year and as such it is clear that this is not the 'primary' commercial activity at the 250 acre land holding known as Tournerbury 'farm'.

What can be clearly ascertained from this document by decision makers, who have been subjected to voluminous representations as to Tournerbury 'farm' being a 'working farm', is that whilst there is a very limited use of Tournerbury 'farm' for a smallholdings worth of beef cattle rearing, to describe Tournerbury 'farm' as a full time working farm is a nonsense. Such small levels of agricultural activity on such a large area of land, has the optics of being in place purely to gain annual farming subsidy payments and to retain the agricultural status of the landholding for commercial and financial advantage.

Extensively reared beef cattle (reared through outdoor grazing) require minimum intervention and minimum 'farming activity' as they are left to graze pastures or marsh grasslands themselves on a daily basis; week in, week out. They do not require animal husbandry or the levels of farming activity that one would see with dairy herds or other livestock. No arable crops are grown at Tournerbury 'farm'.

The one part of the Tournerbury 'farm' landholding that has not been addressed in this document is the extent of purported 'agricultural' operations in the Tournerbury farmyard itself or 'Tournerbury farmstead' as it has been referred to by Mr & Mrs Phillips of A G Phillips and Son Ltd and their advisers.

Please see accompanying document – Non-Agricultural uses of 'Tournerbury Farmstead'.