

I have additional comments to make on APP/21/01310, further to my submission of 4/11/2022.

1. The alleged “reduction” to 65 weddings a year in APP/21/01310 is a reduction only in relation to a theoretical maximum of 100 - 200 weddings a year proposed in APP/18/00943. 65 weddings a year would be a significant increase on the actual number of weddings held in the last 5 years when no limits were imposed on total guests or events: 42 weddings in 2019; 52 in 2018; 39 in 2017; 43 in 2016 and 26 in 2015. If 65 weddings a year had taken place since 2015 there would have been 123 extra weddings during that period. Using the applicant’s arithmetic the 65 weddings would give rise to 10,350 visitors a year, excluding any service or support visitors which would increase total numbers.

2a. New material dated 08/09/2022 and 21/10/2022 regarding SSSI regulations, ORNECS, and Natural England (NE) reports over the years includes a submission (Appendix 1) showing a clear, visual timeline of physical alterations in Tournerbury Woods since the late 1970’s to the present day.

2b. In terms of official inspections of the SSSI site in Tournerbury Woods, updated Appendix 4 submitted by the applicant on 02/11/2022 states that NE visited on 10 occasions between 2010 and 2022. It is alleged that NE had nothing but praise for the major landscaping changes that were taking place, including increasing the size of the wedding venue/domestic curtilage area from 5000 m² to 50,000 m², importing thousand of tonnes of roadmaking and landscaping materials to create car parks, lawns and other raised surfaces that would never flood after heavy rain, and the felling of mature trees.

2c. The updated Appendix 4 states a full ISA (Integrated Site Assessment) was undertaken in the spring of 2015 and is publicly available on the NE website, link provided. On checking out this website on 21/11/2022, no ISA report could be found for any part of Hayling Island. On a different NE website a report dated 2010 can be found. The latest Condition Report from Natural England has allegedly not been completed, so cannot be seen.

2d. There remains a lack of transparency from the applicant as to the specific details of NE’s views on the remodelling of the landscape at the time the works were being carried out, in particular 2012 and 2013. The recent submissions from Natural England indicating their acceptance of new VMS proposals relates to future management concerns, and not to the permanent physical alterations that took place in the past. It is the latter that set such a dangerous precedent for permitting other SSSIs throughout the UK to be treated with a similar level of careless disregard. Mature trees removed and entire ecosystems lost under metres of imported stone cannot be replaced quickly, or even in a decade. Nevertheless, it defies all logical comprehension that the combined mass of 10,350 humans and their associated vehicles, rubber, fumes, erosion and pollution trundling back and forth hour after hour for six busy months a year could be deemed by Natural England to not produce any sort of harmful effect on the remaining delicate ecosystems and environmental health of the Tournerbury Woods SSSI.

3a. A major difference between the earlier and current planning applications is the decision to exclude any consideration of the alternative track constructed by the Tournerbury Farm owners in a location which would provide both safe and conflict-free access to Tournerbury Woods, and avoid the many amenity problems for Tournerbury Farm. These amenity issues were the primary reason for the refusal of APP/18/00943, and they remain exactly the same 4 years later, as noted in the Haydn Morris letter of 08/11/2022. The applicant’s current perspective on switching to the alternative access was confirmed to the Planning Appeal Inspector in May 2022 when it was denied that an alternative track existed.

3b. The Analysis of Transport Note of 31/10/2022 repeats the false accusation that negotiations over using the alternative track broke down as a result of alleged “ransom” demands and extortion on the part of the Tournerbury Farm owners. This same accusation re-surfaces in 29 of the 158 support letters sent in February 2022 (see paragraph 4 below). Mrs. Phillips statement of 19/04/2022 confirms that no reply was ever received to a letter sent to the applicant in July 2021 with Tournerbury Farm’s initial proposals, which were opening exploratory ideas, not demands. Likewise a later proposal for more acceptable “like for like” terms sent by the applicant in April 2022, and acknowledged immediately by Tournerbury Farm to confirm their interest, has also not been pursued any further by the applicant. The ongoing refusal by the applicant to engage in any form of meaningful negotiation during the last 18 months is the sole cause of there being no progress on this matter.

3c. The Visitor Management Strategy proposals in APP/21/01310 involving stewards marshalling vehicles leaving Tournerbury Woods would not be able to solve the problems caused by traffic passing through the Tournerbury Farm yard as they cannot be implemented on land owned by the servient tenement without their express agreement.

3d. The civil engineer report of 09/08/2022 on the structural condition of the alternative track is based on a collection of photographs supplied by the applicant, and not by an on-site visit to enable a comprehensive examination.

4. The 162 letters of support for APP/21/01310 include two duplicates and two missing texts, bringing the total to 158. 108 of the 158 letters were received/published in one week from 3 to 9 February 2022 and 107 of them use repetitive language and expressions (eg. hidden gem, beneficial support for local businesses and tourism, never experienced a problem driving through Tournerbury Farm) suggesting they were written as the result of a template style request sent to local suppliers, employees and past wedding clients. 49 letters included offensive accusations against the owners of Tournerbury Farm and those who wrote objecting letters. Some are slanderous and all 49 contain unfounded and spiteful rumours. Many of the writers complained Tournerbury Farm was no longer a working farmyard but instead an unsightly, livestock-free builders’ yard. Almost no redaction of personal names was undertaken before publishing these letters on the public portal.

5. The Visitor Management Strategy does not give sufficient weight to overnight camping safeguards. Written rules are provided to campers, but there is a dangerous risk these could be ignored by wedding guests who have consumed large quantities of alcohol and are still in the mood to continue having a good time late into the night. In dry summer months such as 2022 this could give rise to serious fire hazards as seen regularly on national TV news channels throughout last year’s drought. In the event of such a fire in Tournerbury Woods, it would take many valuable minutes before fire services could attend, which could lead to devastating consequences given the speed with which wildfires spread.

6. The Analysis of Transport Note includes photographs of unconnected bonfires at Tournerbury Farm, and details of two short term alcohol licences obtained for the local Wave charity event, hosted by Tournerbury Farm on two single weekend occasions only, one in 2021 and one in 2022. Neither have any material significance to the planning considerations for APP/21/01310.