

Tournerbury Woods Estate

Wedding / Event Guest Visitor Management Strategy (Management Code). Heads of Terms for discussion with HBC. December 2021.

Introduction

1.1 The Shadow Appropriate Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment submitted in support of the retrospective planning application for a wedding venue at Tournerbury Woods Estate have identified the need for a Visitor Management Strategy (VMS). The purpose of the VMS is to ensure that weddings are planned and run in a way that avoids adverse impact on the ecological interest features of the site and surrounds.

1.2 This VMS has been prepared in consultation with Natural England and presents an operational framework designed to avoid inappropriate access and/or use of ecologically important areas within the Tournerbury Woods Estate that are sensitive to disturbance by either the wedding guests themselves, or the activities in which they partake. The VMS identifies a series of controls that define the:

- type of activity appropriate within an area identified as ecologically sensitive
- timing of an activity relative to a season that is ecologically sensitive; or,
- extent of an activity within an ecologically sensitive area or context.

1.3 Adherence to the VMS will be secured through condition of the retrospective planning consent.

1.4 Natural England has reviewed the VMS and subject to minor revisions now included, has confirmed that the content is appropriate to the avoidance and mitigation of impacts identified in both the Shadow Appropriate Assessment and the Ecological Impact Assessment.

Visitor Management Strategy

2.1 Two areas within the Tournerbury Woods Estate have been identified as having potential ecological sensitivity and for which controls are required. These are:

- **The Bury**, within which a Heronry is present (point A on the attached plan). The Bury is a mixture of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland within Saxon earthworks. The Heronry is located adjacent to, and over the access track that runs along the western flank of the Bury, in a roughly north to south direction.
- The intertidal muds of **the foreshore** for their support of overwintering waterfowl. Wedding guests use the Harbour Lawn (point B) during weddings, which sits immediately adjacent to the foreshore and from which access to the intertidal area is possible.

2.2 In addition:

- Tournerbury Plantation lies to the west of the site, and comprises secondary woodland established on former open ground in the late 19th Century. A plateau of land lies to the immediate north and north west of the lake in the Plantation, and this area is used for camping (area C). Although

Tournerbury Plantation is not ecologically sensitive itself, it lies in proximity to the Bury, flagging the need to carefully control camping use of this site.

- Pipistrelle bat populations are present across the site, feeding at the woodland edge along tracks and field margins and with a small roost (common pipistrelle) located in Woods Cottage. Bat foraging behaviours can be affected by night-time lighting and it is therefore important to minimise the scope for impact in this regard.

2.3 Environmental controls, to be secured through condition, are as follows:

- ***The Bury***

During the heron nesting season (1st January to 1st June) wedding guest access to the heronry area in the Bury will be limited to access along the access track as guests arrive and leave the site. Additionally, signs will be placed at either end of the heronry area of the track requesting that vehicles continue travelling along the track and do not stop due to nesting birds. If the alternative access track (granted by HBC APP/17/00207) becomes the primary access route to the Tournerbury Woods Estate, then wedding guest public access along the existing access track during heron nesting season will most likely cease as a matter of course.

- ***The foreshore***

Access: wedding guest access to the Harbour Lawn will not be permissible on any day that a wedding party takes place during the period 1st November to 31st March consecutively. This will be secured by means of a rope barrier and signage erected across the access track to the Harbour Lawn. The sign will read “*No public / guest access beyond this point. Overwintering birds protected area*”. The barrier and sign will be erected at area ‘D’ on the accompanying VMS aerial photograph.

Jetty: occasional use of the temporary jetty will be restricted for weddings & events to use only between 1st April to 31st October to prevent disturbance to feeding waterfowl over the core wintering period.

Dogs: all wedding guests bringing dogs on site will be required to keep their dogs on leads to prevent uncontrolled dogs finding their way to the foreshore.

Fireworks: wedding guests or suppliers will not be permitted to bring fireworks to site at any time of year. This has historically been a contractual requirement and will continue to be so.

Noise: noise levels at the foreshore from amplified music during the over wintering waterfowl season (30th November to 30th March) will not exceed 69dBA.

- ***The Plantation***

Camping: tents will only be pitched within the designated camping area (area C on the attached plan). The one exception to this is that one tent may be situated on the amenity grassland adjacent to Woods Cottage for the married couple if they so wish.

Campfires: campfires are not and will not be permissible. This has historically been a contractual requirement of the wedding party and will continue to be so.

- ***Woods Cottage & Venue area: lighting***

Outside lighting: outside lighting will be angled to the ground and should avoid spillage of greater than 1 lux onto the trees and woodland, wherever possible. Any additional future lighting must be warm spectrum non-UV LED lighting, and angled to the ground.

Direction: lighting will be directed to illuminate only the immediate area required and with as sharp a downward angle as possible. The lit area should where possible avoid being directed at, or towards, retained vegetation or where bats are known to roost in Woods Cottage. A shield or hood can be used to control or restrict the area to be lit. Any new wide-angle lighting will be avoided.

Security lighting: lighting of greater than 2000 lumens will not be employed.

Figure 1: Aerial photo showing features relevant to the control of wedding / event guests during weddings and events



2.4 Access management along the Right of Way (private part of Tournierbury Lane from end of the adopted Highway to the boundary of the Tournierbury Woods Estate).

The Right of Way that is owned by the Applicants in order to access the Tournierbury Woods Estate confers on the Applicants (as owners of the Right of Way) substantial ‘Ancillary Rights’ to make the way safe for users in their capacity as ‘Dominant owners’ of the Right of Way.

As such, the Applicants may enter the servient land (Tournierbury Farm) to undertake such work as is necessary to make the Way safe and suitable for users. This may include resurfacing the Right of Way with a smooth tarmac finish, line marking or installing lighting & signage etc.

It is settled law that there are a number of Ancillary rights to the Right of Way, which would enable the applicants lawfully to make up (as they have done previously) and significantly to improve the

surface of the Right of Way or, indeed, to do other works to accommodate vehicular / pedestrian user safety.

As 'Gale on the Law of Easements (20th edition)' summarises at paras. 9-112 to 9-113:

"9-112 The dominant owner is entitled to enter the servient land to effect repairs or to alter the surface of the servient land to accommodate the right granted. So a dominant owner may be entitled to enter the servient land to install lighting if that is reasonably necessary to enable the way to be used safely and conveniently.

*9-113 The following summary of the law has been described as "settled for centuries" and uncontroversial. Subject to contrary agreement,
(1) the grantee may enter the grantor's land for the purpose of making the grant of the right of way effective viz. to construct a way which is suitable for the right granted to him;"*

2.5 Proposed enhancements / controls to the Right of Way (to be agreed with the planning authority)

- Maintenance and repair of potholes along the Right of Way to aid safe access.
- Clear signage at entrance to Right of Way.
- Managing overgrowing vegetation along the Right of Way to ensure the current long sightlines are maintained.

2.6 Proposed management controls on event days.

- On event days a venue manager will be present on site from hire start time to the time all guests and suppliers have left site.
- Clear signage erected at exit of the Tournurbury Woods Estate (before accessing the Right of Way) requesting exiting guests / suppliers to drive quietly and considerably.
- During the 'peak' leaving hour at the end of an event, a traffic marshal to be stationed at the exit to the Tournurbury Woods Estate to ensure driver compliance with the signage instructions.
- All Bands and DJ's to exclusively use the installed Zone Array sound ceiling for front of house amplification when performing in the marquee. Bands and DJ's may not use their own front of house Public Address speakers.
- Throughout an event, the site manager will regularly monitor the grounds of the venue area to ensure that guests are not freely wandering away from the core venue area.