



The Woodland Trust
Kempton Way
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 6LL

Telephone
01476 581111
Facsimile
01476 590808

Website
woodlandtrust.org.uk

Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza,
Civic Centre Road,
Havant
PO9 2AX

9th January 2014

Dear Ms McMurray

Planning application APP/13/01074

Proposal: Change of use from woodland to mixed use of woodland and natural pet cemetery.

As the UK's leading woodland conservation charity, the Woodland Trust aims to protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future. Through the restoration and improvement of woodland biodiversity and increased awareness and understanding of important woodland, these aims can be achieved. We own over 1,000 sites across the UK, covering around 20,000 hectares (50,000 acres) and we have 500,000 members and supporters.

Ancient woodland is defined as an irreplaceable natural resource that has remained constantly wooded since AD1600. The length of time at which ancient woodland takes to develop and evolve (centuries, even millennia), coupled with the vital links it creates between plants, animals and soils accentuate its irreplaceable status. The varied and unique habitats of ancient woodland sites provide for many of the UK's most important and threatened fauna and flora species cannot be re-created and cannot afford to be lost. As such, the Woodland Trust aims to prevent any form of disruptive development that may result in the damage, fragmentation or loss of these finite irreplaceable sites.

The Woodland Trust **objects** to the planning application as it threatens the welfare of an area of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) known as Johnston's Coppice (grid ref: SU691080).

The soil profile of ancient woodland is unique and characteristic to this particular habitat. The interment of remains and ashes will result in localised disturbance of these soils with potential harm being caused to tree root systems, much of which occurs in the top 600mm of the soil. Not only will this be harmful as a result of soil disturbance, cremated remains will have the potential to alter the chemical profile of the soil, thereby indirectly affecting any sensitive ground flora, groundwater and water bodies within the area by means of soil enrichment (i.e. phosphates) and contamination (heavy metals).

The lack of detail regarding development plans for the cemetery and the environmental impact of the proposed cemetery provides strong opposition for the application. What can be said however is that the increased number of visitors to the ancient woodland will be detrimental; proposed tracks and new entrances will result in increased disturbance of the woodland wildlife, e.g. the hazel dormice population and variety of breeding birds mentioned in previous ecological surveys taken on the site.

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 118 states that "planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss."

We hope that you find these comments of use. If you have any queries relating to the information that we have provided then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Jack Taylor

Campaigning Team
(WoodWatch Volunteer*)

*WoodWatch is a volunteer network which is managed by the Woodland Trust; please contact Katharine Rist (Campaigner- ancient Woodland) if you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or WoodWatch.