

Consultee Comments for Planning Application APP/25/00071

Application Summary

Application Number: APP/25/00071

Address: Land Forming part of, Northney Farm, St Peters Road, Hayling Island

Proposal: The excavation of grassland scrapes with related landscaping, boundary treatments and associated works to create enhanced habitat for wetland birds.

Case Officer: Henrietta Owusa-Ansah

Consultee Details

Name: Mr Peter Westron

[REDACTED]

Email: Not Available

On Behalf Of: Ramblers Association

Comments

For SEHants Group of the Ramblers Association.

This proposed development is within an area of Hayling Island, which is flat and open to long views. The area is crossed by a rich network of PRow footpaths (Public Rights of Way). In particular, paths Havant106, Havant82, and Havant116 run adjacent to the site, while other paths lie in the same area of open farmland. Havant116 is the route of the Coast Path (King Charles III England Coast Path), an important national trail.

We have no objection to the change of use of the land to enhance the habitat for birds by creating 'scrapes' and altering farming practice to encourage bird life, but we do object to the use of large hedges which will completely change the character of the area and ruin the environment of the footpaths.

We can find no details of the exact positioning of the hedges to show how far from the field edges and footpaths, they are to be placed. The only mention of the height proposed for the new hedges is in SUPERSEDED_-_HABITAT_MANAGEMENT_AND_MONITORING_PLAN_-_FINAL-2082293.pdf paragraph 3.68 where it states that 'small gaps (<5m) could be left in the hedgerows' or 'maintained at a lower height (approx. 2m)' to avoid obstructing views from adjacent properties. Thus we presume it is intended that most of the hedges be much higher than this.

It also says in the above document (paragraph 3.28) that the existing PRow 'appear to be limiting bird use to a small degree in field H60D (Gauntletts Main a core area in the SWBGS) and potentially to a significant degree in field H60F'. The proposed 'scrapes' and changes to farming practice, with the dog proof fencing will enhance area for birds, but the hedges should be omitted. The hedges would alter the character of the area and destroy the environment of the footpaths for

limited gain. If the hedges are to be allowed then they should be permanently limited in height to two metres or less and set back from the PRow footpaths.

The three footpaths most affected by the proposals will be considered below:

Havant82: This PRow footpath runs along the southern boundary of field H60F, Gauntletts (part). The footpath is separated from the field by a few isolated small trees and a large ditch. A low hedge here would not affect the footpath greatly, other than the views north from it. It would change the general environment of the wider area. Replacing the hedge with a few extra small trees would be more in keeping with the area.

Havant106: This PRow footpath runs along the northern boundary of field H60D, Gauntletts (main). Again the footpath is separated from the field by several small trees and a large ditch. The main affect of the proposed hedge would be on the outlook for the path and the general environment of the area. A few extra small trees would be more in keeping with the area than the hedge, even if it is kept low.

If the hedge is to be added in this area it would be on the south side of the path and ditch and should be positioned sufficiently far from the ditch to avoid shading ditch and path as well as restricting the height as previously mentioned. Secondly, the gap between the edge of the field and the new hedge should be used as an opportunity to improve the connectivity of the PRow network by dedicating a new path connecting the two PRow Havant106 to Havant116. This would allow walkers to avoid walking along Northney Road between these two paths and provide some compensation for the loss of view.

Havant116: This PRow footpath runs along the north east edges of fields H60D and H60F, Gauntletts (main and part). This path is also the route of the Coast Path, an important national trail. At the edge of the fields alongside this path is a large ditch and a hedge of tall trees, many of which overhang the path. Adding a new hedge alongside the path to screen the field would result in the path being boxed in on all sides resulting in a complete change of character of the path and the lack of sunshine would cause it to become muddy and impassable. New hedging should not be added alongside this path. If necessary a row of small trees could provide some screening and would be more in keeping with the area.

If hedging is to be allowed alongside this path it should be permanently trimmed to below two metres and be spaced sufficiently from the path such that the path is not shaded. The existing headland that the path runs along at this edge of the field is approximately five metres wide. At least that width should be allowed for the path to avoid shading, and for maintenance of the path.

For SEHants Group of the Ramblers Association.