

Additional representation to the Wiltshire Housing site Allocation Plan Exam.

In view of the publication on 21st February 2019, of the Wiltshire Council Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy and also details that recently came to my notice from - Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan – Community Area Topic Paper – Updated September 2018. I should like to comment further on POINT 1 and POINT 2 of my original submission regarding site H2.4 and also sites H2.5 and H2.6.

POINT 1 - The River Lambrok flows throughout the parish of Southwick, through Site H.2.6 Southwick Court, site H2.5 Studley Green, Site H2.4 Church Lane/ Southwick Country Park and beyond to join with the River Biss in Trowbridge.

The Southwick Court site H2.6 was, until the WHSAP, within the Parish of Southwick. We were given no explanation as to why it then appeared to have become part of Trowbridge while not included in the settlement boundary review.

Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy, TBMS, Page 36 figure 4 – Bat Habitat Sensitivity –Zones.

The three sites previously mentioned, plus Southwick Country Park and the entire parish of Southwick appear in the Yellow Zone – Medium Risk of being areas used by Bechstein's Bats. If, under settlement Boundary Changes, these sites fall inside The Trowbridge Settlement Area, will they lose the protection of the Yellow Zone?

WHSAP Community Area Topic Paper – Updated September 2018 Appendix G, Assessment criteria and output from Stage 4a of the site selection process

Page 104 -Table G.7 Site 1021 (H2.4) Church Lane.

Page 108 - Table G.8 Site 3260 (H2.5) Upper Studley.

Page 112 - Table G.9 Site 3565 (H2.6) Southwick Court.

The Biodiversity section of each of these assessments include the words – “However, Records indicate the presence of protected species (e.g. Bechstein's bats) using mature trees and hedgerows on site for foraging and roosting.”

(1)

Records not generally meant to be shared for security reasons but very relevant in this context.

Recently, Wiltshire Council Senior Ecologist, Louisa Kilgallen, forwarded to Southwick NDP Steering Group, the Southwick Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Document.

This acknowledged that (1) surveys in Southwick carried out in recent years had shown large numbers of Greater Horseshoe bats in our fields, that (2) Bechstein's bats at the very least commute through Southwick and that (3) a roosting Bechstein's bat had been discovered in Southwick Country Park.

Any increase in pollution, damage or cat predation caused by house building, in or near any part of the River Lambrok, could have far reaching effects on the habitat of endangered and rare flora and fauna found throughout the length of the Lambrok waterway. Including Bechstein's, Lesser and Greater Horseshoe Bats, Water Voles, Kingfishers, Tawny and little owls, Otters, Grass snakes and others. In contravention of Core Policy 50.

Cat predation is a major contributor to the loss of our birds, reptiles, small mammals and BATS and is a growing problem.

The Friends of Southwick Country Park have, since 2014, worked towards gaining LOCAL NATURE RESERVE status, with backing from Natural England. All that remains is ratification from Wiltshire Council. As this has taken so long, (five years!) SCP are being denied the protection of LOCAL NATURE RESERVE status when they most need it. Is there a reason behind this?

The TBMS - Recreational Pressure Mitigation - page 55 – 56 - 9.2.2 - Infrastructure enhancements to other greenspace sites.

Whilst bat roosts obviously have to be protected from recreational pressure, why was Southwick Country Park chosen as the primary greenspace site to mitigate this. Other, better suited greenspace sites are available. Biss meadows Country Park for example, already has many of the suggested features and is easily accessible. (2)

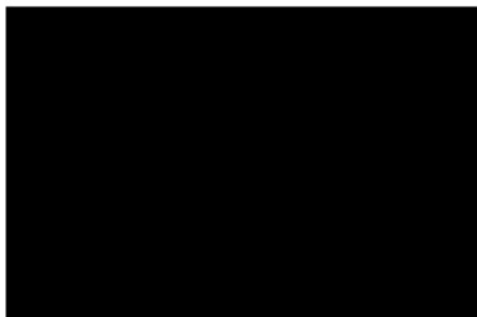
After all the Friends of Southwick Country Park have worked to achieve in the past five years to gain Local Nature Reserve status, it would seem ill-informed at the very least, to now suggest they must destroy all they have achieved to turn the SPC into a 'doggy fun park.'

POINT 2. In my original submission I questioned that as site H2.4 Church Lane is already used by residents in the area as a greenspace and dog walking area, it may be better used to improve the local natural environment, re-connect people with nature and act as a natural buffer to Southwick Country Park.

TBMS Page 57-(237) – Suggests undertaking a site search to identify Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG). Perhaps this site could be included as such, as that is how it is already in use at present.



Barbara Johnson.



6th March 2019.