



**Hampshire &  
Isle of Wight  
Wildlife Trust**

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Submitted via email to: [planning@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:planning@eastleigh.gov.uk)

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F/23/95844 LAND AT STOKE PARK FARM, BISHOPSTOKE, EASTLEIGH, SO50 6DW Use of agricultural land as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for recreational purposes, with associated access, car parking, paths, landscaping, infrastructure and other works

Dear Dawn,

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust are an independent charity founded in 1961 and together with 46 others we are part of The Wildlife Trusts, the largest grass roots nature conservation federation in the UK with 900,000 members. Locally across Hampshire and Isle of Wight we have over 28,000 members and we currently manage 5,000 hectares of land for wildlife, primarily nature reserves of local, national, and international importance.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is broadly supportive of the strategic approach that Eastleigh Borough Council is trying to achieve through acquiring land for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). We need a strategic approach to ensure that true gains for nature are delivered, particularly within close reach of where communities can benefit. We hope as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is created and implemented that councils can use the LNRS to understand where strategic mitigation can be delivered to provide the most additional benefits for people and nature. We would urge the Council to embed the LNRS within strategic plans, including for Biodiversity Net Gain and green infrastructure.

However, the Trust is concerned that trying to deliver a SANG and BNG on the same site is likely to compromise the ambition of the project. Managing a site for maximum biodiversity net gain will be undermined by the recreational pressure if a SANG is created across the whole of the same strategic site. We need to see real ambitions for nature's recovery if we are to meet the national and international targets of protecting and restoring 30% of land and sea for nature and this can and will be delivered through leveraging private finance through mechanisms such as BNG. We need to ensure there are strong market principles in place so that any BNG delivered for nature is meaningful and high-integrity so we can put nature back into recovery.

Eastleigh Borough Council has the opportunity to lead the way locally and drive real benefits for nature and the wider nature recovery network, if they deliver this project to the highest nature-based solutions market standards. But this real ambition could be undermined by trying to deliver too many things on one strategic site if there is not careful design.

We offer Biodiversity Net Gain advice service through our Ecological Consultancy where we support clients to drive for best practice BNG and other mitigation. Given our experience managing nature reserves for both people and nature, we would also be able to provide case studies, or perhaps a site visit to our reserves where we successfully manage visitor pressure while prioritising nature's recovery. For example, our Barton Meadows Nature Reserve was established to mitigate the environmental impacts caused by the Barton Farm development. As mitigation land the 32-hectare nature reserve was also intended to reduce pressure on other green spaces in and around Winchester that would be caused by the population increase.

Public access around the nature reserve was designed to provide circular walks and visual access over the meadow, but there were no paths through the middle of the site allowing wildlife including ground-nesting birds to have a bit of a sanctuary away from disturbance by people and dogs.

Furthermore, the site must be carefully designed to provide connectivity between habitats. While a pond or wetland can provide important habitats for wildlife, the location of the pond in the middle of the site doesn't appear to be connected to other habitats so this will limit its value for wildlife.

We hope that you find this information valuable, please do let us know if you have any questions.

We trust that you will find our comments helpful and, if you wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact us. I also ask that you keep the Trust informed of the progress and outcome of this plan.

Yours sincerely,



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