

SUBMISSION REGARDING LOCAL PLAN

THE FRIENDS OF MELTON COUNTRY PARK

The friends are a properly constituted group and reserve the right to representation at the inspection of the Local Plan.

We have done a survey of all the houses since 2011 which have been built or are in the process of being built or have full planning permission, but have not yet started building. Also the number of properties on land where developers have applied for various types of permission (this does not include any land to the east or north of the country park) The total is in excess of 3,300. Which at the desired rate of house building in the town of Melton Mowbray represents over 20 years supply of available land. We consider that the location of house building land is not vital to the financing of parts of the proposed distributor road, as all house builders in the town should be contributing.

We consider that any development to the east and north of the park will have a detrimental effect on the wildlife corridors and destroy the views from the east and north of the park.

We realise that the northern section of the eastern distributor road is necessary for the future development of the town and can only hope that it is constructed in such a way as to minimise its impact on the park.

Now that the preferred route of the road is to the east of the town developers will become interested in land to the east of Burton Road between the distributor road and the current town boundary, any land becoming available in this area would easily accommodate the extra 700 houses to make up the desired total of 4,000.

The park now has Qe2 fields in trust status and recently the whole of the park has been designated a Local Wildlife Site.

We do not wish to comment on any other aspects of the local plan as we are only interested in the protection of the park.

Documents attached in support of our submission

Appendix (A)

A list of flora and fauna that has been recorded by Chris Hughes, who is a lecturer in ecology, on the land between the country park an Melton Spinney Road.

Appendix (B)

A Bat survey carried out by Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group.

Appendix (C)

A Botanical Report on Melton Country Park to support the application for Local Wildlife Site status for the whole of the park , compiled by Paul Greene-Master of Horticulture (RHS)-lecturer at Brooksby Melton College.

appendix (D)

Pages 74 and76 of the biodiversity report carried out by AMEC for the Core Strategy, which we believe is still relevant, with the paragraphs relating to the country park highlighted.

Main contact

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(A)
**FLORA AND FAUNA ON UK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN LISTS (THOSE MOST THREATENED IN UK)
 RECORDED ON PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE PLUS BIRD RINGING RECORDS FROM CHRIS HUGHES**

Birds ringed and retrapped by Chris Hughes- mainly during winter periods Oct -March - from 1995 onwards

Species	RINGED			RETRAPS			Conservation status
	Site A	Sites B/C	Total	Site A	Sites B/C	Total	
Fieldfare	3	1	4			0	UK BAP, SPEC RED
Swallow	2	0	2			0	SPEC AMBER
Blue Tit	159	604	763	44	1094	1138	SPEC GREEN
Great Tit	80	410	490	8	679	687	SPEC GREEN
Dunnoch	71	384	455	28	83	111	
Robin	27	91	118	16	66	82	SPEC GREEN
Starling	653	0	653	71		71	UK BAP, SPEC RED
Pied Wagtail	10	1	11			0	SPEC GREEN
Blackbird	205	113	318	62	19	81	SPEC GREEN
Yellowhammer	2	356	358		37	37	UK BAP, SPEC RED
Reed Bunting	9	5	14			0	
Wren	22	45	67	4	12	16	SPEC GREEN
House Sparrow	207	201	408	10	36	46	UK BAP, SPEC RED
Greenfinch	970	1295	2265	115	203	318	SPEC GREEN
Chaffinch	28	674	702	1	144	145	SPEC GREEN
Long tailed Tit	35	84	119	7	11	18	SPEC GREEN
Goldfinch	45	23	68	6		6	SPEC GREEN
Carrion Crow	7	0	7			0	SPEC GREEN
House Martin	1	0	1			0	SPEC AMBER
Whitethroat	2	5	7			0	SPEC AMBER
Linnet	3	0	3			0	UK BAP, SPEC RED
Black headed Gull	3	1	4			0	SPEC GREEN
Sparrowhawk	2	7	9		1	1	SPEC GREEN
Woodpigeon	13	0	13			0	SPEC GREEN
Magpie	5	1	6			0	SPEC GREEN
Chiffchaff	1	25	26			0	SPEC GREEN
Bullfinch	3	45	48		1	1	UK BAP, SPEC AMBER

Song Thrush	3	40	43
Treecreeper	1	10	11
Coal Tit	6	14	20
Collared Dove	1	7	8
Goldcrest	3	20	23
Blackcap	1	25	26
Willow Tit	1	15	16
Redwing	0	11	11
Tree Sparrow	0	60	60
Brambling	0	3	3
Rook	0	1	1
Great Sp Woodpecker	0	11	11
Marsh Tit	0	14	14

			0
	1		1
	20		20
			0
	1		1
			0
	17		17
			0
	2		2
			0
			0
	19		19
	62		62

UK BAP, SPEC RED
SPEC GREEN
SPEC GREEN
SPEC GREEN
SPEC GREEN
SPEC GREEN
SPEC GREEN
UK BAP, SPEC RED
UK BAP, SPEC RED
UK BAP, SPEC RED
SPEC GREEN
SPEC GREEN
SPEC GREEN
UK BAP, SPEC RED

Site A - southern boundary of proposed development

Site B - Melton Spinney Wood - 0.8 km from proposed development

Site C - Wold House Farm - 0.1 km from proposed development

NOTE:

UK BAP FLORA AND FAUNA = MOST THREATENED IN THE UK

NOTE:

BIRD SPECIES OF EUROPEAN CONSERVATION CONCERN

RED LIST (those of most concern) - SPECIES WHOSE POPULATIONS HAVE SERIOUSLY DECLINED - BY GREATER THAN 50% IN LAST 25 YEARS

AMBER LIST (those of moderate concern)- SPECIES WHOSE POPULATIONS HAVE DECLINED BETWEEN 25 - 49% IN LAST 25 YEARS

GREEN LIST (those of least concern)

RED LIST -SPECIES ALSO RECORDED BUT NOT CAUGHT FOR RINGING

Lapwing, Cuckoo, Skylark, Grasshopper Warbler, Yellow Wagtail,
Lesser Redpoll, Herring Gull

TOTAL RED LIST SPECIES RECORDED = 17/52 (32.7%)

AMBER LIST - SPECIES ALSO RECORDED BUT NOT CAUGHT FOR RINGING

Mallard, Red Kite, Kestrel, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Curlew,
Redshank, Stock Dove, Barn Owl, Swift, Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker,
Sand Martin, Willow Warbler, Mistel Thrush, Wheatear, Meadow Pipit,
Osprey, Merlin, Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull,
Greater Black-backed Gull

TOTAL AMBER LIST SPECIES RECORDED = 28/126 (22.2%)

GREEN LIST - SPECIES ALSO RECORDED BUT NOT CAUGHT FOR RINGING

Mute Swan, Grey Heron, Buzzard, Peregrine, Moorhen, Coot, Tawny Owl,
Jay, Jackdaw, Raven, Lesser Whitethroat, Siskin, Hobby, Cormorant

TOTAL GREEN LIST SPECIES RECORDED = 36/68 (52.9%)

MAMMALS ON UK BAP LIST RECORDED = 4/18 (22.2%)

Hedgehog, Brown Hare, Harvest Mouse, Dormouse

Note: Many other mammals e.g. Fox, Badger etc also are regularly recorded

REPTILES ON UK BAP LIST RECORDED = 3/10 (30%)

Great Crested Newt, Grass Snake, Common Toad

Note: Many other reptiles e.g Smooth Newt, Common Frog are also
regularly recorded

MOTHS ON UK BAP LIST RECORDED = 15/138 (10.9%)

Grey Dagger, Garden Tiger, Small square Spot, Dusky Thorn, Ghost Moth,

Rosy Minor, Mullein Wave, White Ermine, Buff Ermine, Blood Vein, Cinnabar, Oak Hook Tip, Ear Moth, Large Nutmeg, Dot Moth

Note: Many other moths e.g. Elephant Hawkmoth, Lime Hawkmoth are regularly recorded

OTHER FLORA AND FAUNA

The above records are just those identified and noted. There are many other species, especially invertebrates (spiders, ants, bugs etc) and plants that are not but which clearly must occur in such a rich, diverse habitat

(B)

The survey began at 8.45pm. Present from Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group were Neil Hughes, Jenny Harris, Ann Gleave, Mat Bridle, Barnaby Coupe, Tom Bennett and Hugh Bennett. Heterodyne bat detectors and one recording device were used. The survey started from the Willow Drive carpark, with one group walking along the western path (Route A), one group walking along the eastern path shown as part of Jubilee Way on the attached map (Route B). Both routes met at the small lake at the northern end of the park. Route A runs alongside the housing estate between Willow Drive and Wymondham Way; Redwood Avenue runs parallel to the edge of the park, where several pipistrelle bat roosts have been recorded by Jenny Harris over the years.

Species recorded from Route A:

1. From 9.40pm, numerous **common pipistrelles** and some **soprano pipistrelles** were heard foraging under trees at the edge of the grassland. Many of the bats appeared to be coming from the direction of Redwood Avenue. This area appeared to be an important first foraging area for possible bat roosts in the estate. As the light faded the bats foraged more over the open grassland.

2. **Common and soprano pipistrelles** were foraging under trees and over grassland next to the nearby allotments.

3. More or less continuous foraging activity by **both pipistrelle species** was heard all along the path beside the larger lake. This is obviously an important feeding area for the bats. Distant **noctule** sounds were heard, and Tom Bennett confirmed that he recorded three **noctules** to the east foraging over the open grassland and trees.

4. There was continuous feeding activity over the grassland area between the spinney and hedge, with both pipistrelles and a possible *Myotis* species. Grounded **whiskered** bats have been recorded in the town, and in 2015 a juvenile female **Natterer's** bat was found roosting in the porch of a house just off Nottingham Road, both are *Myotis* species.

5. In addition to pipistrelle species, a distant **noctule** was again heard, and **Daubenton's** bats were seen and heard over the small lake, where the survey teams gathered on the foot bridge.

Note: a **brown long-eared** bat was recorded by Tom Bennett along Route B at around 9.30pm.

Jenny and the two Bills left at this point, and on the way back to Willow Drive carpark noticed that all the pipistrelles heard at points 1. and 2. had moved on. Other members of the group continued with the survey, but no further species were identified.

Jenny Harris
August 2016.



BOTANICAL REPORT ON MELTON COUNTRY PARK

Local Wildlife Status

May 2016

The purpose-

The friends of Melton Country Park contacted the college to see if we could offer help by carrying out various botanical surveys, in order to enhance and develop the Local Wildlife Status of the Country park.

Local wildlife status was initially granted some 4 years ago, This was as a result of a survey carried out by Sue Timms, Senior ecologist with Leicester County Council.

This report only deals with the plant related categories, so in order to gain a complete picture it should be read in conjunction with other reports dealing with Fauna, and public use.

Indeed the use by the local community was included as one of the main criteria which initially gained the park Local wildlife status. Presumably the Borough council or Friends of the park will have access to data and detail on this, and I feel sure access and numbers will have increased significantly, for example the popular park runs which occur throughout the UK—regularly attract 100 + people on Saturday mornings to the park. this should be included to add weight and therefore enhancing the LWS.

The Surveyors-

Paul Greene—Master of Horticulture(RHS)- lecturer at Brooksby Melton College. Paul has been involved with botanical studies at the college for over 25 years, This has included aspects of landscaping, ecological studies and plant identification. For a number of years he was an examiner working for the Royal Horticultural Society covering both theory and practical papers.

Contact-pwgreene270@btinternet.com

01664 564270

Susan Alaway - Certificate in Ecology and conservation-(London University)-
Sue is a garden consultant /designer from Buckinghamshire .Her landscaping
work has a particular empathy with the use of native plants-She has
experience of managing large estates—currently she is developing a plan to
manage a large garden ,based on an old chalk pit—which contains a diverse
flora ,including orchids.

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01494 783637

Timing and content of the new survey-

It is recommended in the guidelines that marginal or vulnerable sites may
need reviewing every 3-5years.Well established habitats may not need a
review for up to 15 years.In the grand scheme of things- Melton Country Park
is still very young-so our review after 4 years is quite timely.The criteria which
relate to each habitat and determine the quality are looked at every 5 years.As
far as we know this survey is using the latest criteria released in 2016.It would
appear that the criteria now seem to cover a broader range of
features/habitats.This could work in favour of Melton country park,as there is
now a section on mature trees.The vast majority of tree cover /woodland at
the park is very young-however there is a veteran ash tree present on the park-
which seems to tick many of the boxes.

Melton country park - An overview

A popular leisure resource for the people of Melton Mowbray.It is used,by a
wide range of the population .From the active children in the playground-to
the passive perambulators-taking gentle exercise—frequently joined by man's
best friend.

The habitats are many and varied.The remainder of this report gives detail on a
number of these and how they satisfy or contribute to the criteria,which
designates them as being positive assets in terms of wildlife,and thereby
contributing to the Local Wildlife Status.

Lake/pools-

The dominant feature of the country park are the assorted pools /Lake. I am afraid these features were not surveyed in detail-prefering to concentrate on the areas of vegetation within the more accessible features eg grassland. Sue Timms also states that these aquatic features were not well surveyed and documented in her initial survey work a number of years ago. Despite this lack of quantitative data the value of the water component is not in doubt. A wide range of water fowl are attracted, and the fringe of vegetation surrounding much of the lake continues to thrive and offer a habitat to a wide range of species (list of plants documented in Sue's report)

Grassland south of the lower pool.-

This significant area was surveyed quite thoroughly. The actual species are detailed in the attached appendix No1. The primary criteria for mesotrophic grassland are still satisfied-10 species from list F were classified as present. A further 23 species were also recorded.

Railway line-

The next section we focussed on was the disused railway—both northern and southern sections. The reason for doing this is because it is given as one of the areas which contributed to meeting the necessary criteria in order to gain Local wildlife status.

The disused railway line has 2 contrasting areas - The Northern and the Southern sections. In Sue Timms initial report it was highlighted that this site meets the secondary scrub criteria with greater than 1 ha of mainly native scrub in a dense closed canopy-this is still the case.

The Northern piece, in contrast, is an embankment section of the former railway-which has provided for the development of species rich areas of grassland. Referring to appendix 2 a survey of grassland and ground flora has been made in the 2 sections. As detailed in appendix 2 -36 species of wildflower were found along this Northern area. In the Southern section - the railway cutting- which has a dense canopy of native trees/shrubs-17 ground flora species were identified. Access to this Southern section has been improved with a winding pathway being cut through at the top of the bank -

The Management plan-

Looking further forward-It is imperative if the quality of these habitats is to be maintained then the contents and guidelines contained in the Melton Country Park Management plan 2015/19 must be followed.The maintenance regimes detailed in there give positive practical detail on how to maintain the integrity of all sections of the park.In Sue Timms original report she constantly referred to the need for correct and timely maintenance strategies ,in order to maintain biodiversity-Continuity of inputs is vital-We wholeheartedly support those comments.

Paul Greene-May 2016.

Appendix 1

SINC Survey: GRASSLAND Site Number:

Other Species

Condition of Grassland/Management

Species found on grassland South of Lower Pool, survey dates 3rd April 2016 and 8th May 2016.

From List F:

Other Contd:
 Rumex obtusifolius
 Potentilla reptans
 Ranunculus ficaria
 Dipsacus fullonum
 Stachys sp. (palustris?)
 Heracleum sphondylium
 Urtica dioica
 Vicia sativa
 Taraxacum officinale
 Umbellifers (?)

Other:
 Achillea millefolium
 Bellis perennis
 Cirsium arvense
 Cardamine pratense
 Galium aparine
 Epilobium hirsutum
 Geranium molle
 Geranium pratense
 Glechoma hederacea
 Lamium album
 Plantago lanceolata
 Plantago major
 Ranunculus repens

Flora found, disused railway, embankment section

Other Species	Condition of Grassland/Management
Achillea millefolium	
Alliaria petiolata	
Anagallis arvensis	
Anthriscus sylvestris	
Armoriaea rusticana	
Arum maculatum	
Cardamine hirsuta	
Cerastium fontanum	
Centaurea nigra	
Daucus carota?	
Epilobium sp.	
Equisetum arvense	
Galium aparine	
Galium melle	
Geranium pratense	
Geum urbanum	
Glechoma hederacea	
Hyacinthoides hispanica	
Lamium album	
Plantago lanceolata	
Plantago major	
Potentilla reptans	
Ranunculus acris	
Rosa canina	
Rumex acetosa	
Sanguisorba minor	
Silene dioica	
Stachys sylvatica?	
Stellaria holostea	
Trifolium pratense	
Tussilago farfara	
Taraxacum officinale	
Trifolium repens	
Urtica dioica	
Veronica arvensis	
Vicia sativa	

Railway Cutting :

Alliaria petiolata

Arum maculatum

Convolvulus arvensis

Geranium robertianum

Clematis vitalba

Glechoma hederacea

Lamium album

Galium aparine

Stachys sylvatica

Rosa canina

Silene dioica

Taraxacum officinale

Urtica dioica

Veronica sp

Viola canina

Viola odorata

Tamus communis

Appendix 2

Mature Tree

Location Name	Melton Country Park	Surveyor(s)	Paul Greene and Susan Alaway
District		Date	
Parish		Owner Details	
Grid Reference (GPS)			

One isolated specimen Ash located in hedgerow of Northern boundary approximately 100m in from the Easton edge, adjoining agricultural pasture land.

Designated trees may be living, dead or fallen. Stumps should be at least 2m high.

1. Species and Physical Characteristics

Species	Girth	Threshold*	Girth Measured*	Living/Dead/Fallen
Native Oak species (<i>Quercus robur</i> , <i>Q. petraea</i>)	3.77			
Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	3.77			
Willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.)	3.77			
Sweet Chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>)	3.77			
Lime (<i>Tilia</i> sp.)	3.77			
Poplar (<i>Populus</i> sp.)	3.77			
Horse chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>)	3.77			
Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	3		3.1	Living
Elm (<i>Ulmus</i> sp.)	3			
Other e.g., other species of mature tree (specify)				

* at 1.3m above roots

AND 1.3m OWL NESTING BOX IS ATTACHED TO THE TREE.

2. Other Features

Feature	Present/Comments
Dead branches	Present
Evidence of heart-rot in the form of visible rot, hollows or bracket fungi	Evidence of decay and rot within major limbs in the canopy
Other (specify)	

blocks of woodland in between the two SSSIs (see points 7, 8 and 9 on Figure 5.5) would considerably reduce the SSSIs fragmented position in the landscape. Further specific suggestions for increasing the ecological connectivity between habitats and designated sites from corridors and stepping stones are shown on Figures 5.1 to 5.7 inclusive.

5.2.3 Buffer Zones

Introduction to Ecological 'Buffer Zones'

An ecological 'buffer zone' is an area of land or habitat which usually separates areas of ecologically important habitat from areas of poorer-quality habitats, disturbed/developed areas, and/or sources of pollution. The aim of the buffer zone is to provide a barrier to potential impacts, and is often important around isolated designated sites. In designing and creating ecological buffer zones, the source of potential impacts and pathway to effect may need to be considered. Buffer zones may also provide connectivity opportunities (see Section 5.2.1) and can enhance the areas they surround since the extent of habitat is increased.

Buffer Zones within Melton Borough

Buffer zones will be most important where valuable or potentially fragile ecosystems lie close to heavily populated or disturbed areas or close to areas where future development is proposed. Examples of areas which may benefit from the provision of buffer zones include:

*** Melton Country Park** – the park lies on the north-east edge of Melton Mowbray and is partially surrounded by residential areas. It is recommended that no further development encroaches on the country park and that a buffer zone is established around the north and east of the Park (Figure 3.18);

• Holwell Works area - three areas of the southern section of the former Holwell Works site comprise the Asfordby Hill non-statutory designated site (Figure 4.4). The designated site is situated on the outskirts of the town of Asfordby Hill and in close proximity to the western edge of Melton Mowbray. Establishing buffer zones around this designated site (or indeed expanding the designated site to take in more of the Holwell Works site) would increase the contribution this designated site makes to the biodiversity resources of the Borough as well as reducing the risk that the site would be impacted by development;

• Main watercourses – these could benefit from establishing suitable riparian corridors such as a margin of ranker grassland, and example include the River Eye and Scalford Brook (Figure 3.18); these watercourses currently reside within intensively managed landscapes.

Field margins can also be allowed to become rank where they are adjacent to more valuable areas, providing a buffer from agricultural activities and nutrient/sediment run-off.

Based on the information accessible within the scope of this study¹⁵, it is difficult to assess with certainty in the wider Borough which areas are likely to benefit the most from buffer zones, because some potential threats may be more cryptic than just urban encroachment, e.g.

¹⁵ Freely available OS maps, aerial photographs, and information received from LERC

The type of designation conferred upon a site will depend upon the relevant designation criteria and the biodiversity resources present on a site. A review of existing ecological information for a candidate site is therefore necessary along with additional surveys where appropriate. It is understood that Leicestershire County Council is reviewing its designated sites and it is recommended that Melton Borough Council liaise with the county council on this matter.

Additional Protection within Melton Borough

Although there is a well established network of statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites within Melton Borough, there are additional areas within the Borough that warrant further investigation with a view to designation. Based upon the information collected in this study, examples of areas that have been identified as potential candidates for designation include:

* **Melton Country Park** – from species records obtained during the study, it is clear that **Melton Country Park** is quite valuable to a variety of wildlife, particularly birds, and there appear to be range of habitats available within quite a sizeable area. Undoubtedly the park is also an important area of amenity, education and recreational value due to its accessibility to the public and variety of habitats believed to be present. The park is situated on an urban fringe which increases the risk of future development unless protected by a designation. Within a predominantly urban context it is considered that this area is of at least local importance. The site is currently under consideration as a Local Wildlife Site;

• **The Belvoir Estate** – although not necessarily at risk of impending development, desk-based studies revealed a large area of woodland on the estate in the north of the Borough, which mostly lies in between the settlements of Belvoir and Stathern. The area is by far the largest area of woodland within the Borough, and is surrounded by several smaller satellite woodland blocks. Two small areas of this woodland are designated as a SSSI and local wildlife site (Briery Wood Heronry and Terrace Hills Beetle Site respectively), and it is therefore possible that the woodland on the Belvoir Estate also has some inherent biodiversity value; of at least local importance;

• **The River Corridor** – the River Corridor Search Area through Melton Mowbray downstream of the River Eye SSSI has diverse range of habitats, and within a predominantly urban context it is considered that this area is of at least local importance.

It is considered that a statutory local designation (such as an LNR) or a non-statutory local designation (local Wildlife Site) may be appropriate for these three areas. It is recommended that existing available ecological data for these areas are reviewed in light of the criteria for local designation and further data collection undertaken where data gaps are highlighted. Other opportunities are presented on Figures 5.1 to 5.7 inclusive.

5.2.5 Education, Awareness, Access and Recreation

Melton Borough appears to already have a variety of initiatives and opportunities available that link biodiversity with outdoor recreation, access and education (see Table 5.2). In addition to these the following suggestions can be made: