

**Planning, Design and Access Statement in connection with Change of Use planning application including regularisation of 16 existing electric hook-up points, relocation of 10 existing electric hook-up points and location of 34 electric hook-up points (total 60 pitches on Camping Field) together with additional landscaping and environmental improvements at Woodside Lodges Country Park.**

*Applicant / Client: Woodside Lodges Country Park. Falcon Lane. Ledbury. Herefordshire. HR8 2JN.*



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Statement produced 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015  
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## 1.00 Context – Introduction and background.

**1.01 Woodside Lodges Country Park** is a long established, high quality award-winning Holiday Park located near Ledbury. It is a family owned and managed business (for over 45 years) with the original Holiday Lodges being developed by Mr & Mrs Ken Davies well over 20 years ago. For many years, Touring Caravan and Tent camping has also taken place on the landholding prior to the Holiday Lodges being developed. The Touring Caravan and Tent Camping is extremely popular. The Park employs 4 full time staff and 6 part-time staff.

**1.02** The Holiday Park is located in approximately 28 acres of land and is a unique enterprise which includes Holiday Lodges, Camping Pods, bunkhouse barn accommodation, a fishing lake / pools, wildlife ponds and conservation areas. Great emphasis is placed by the owners on enhancing the surrounding environment, encouraging wildlife and conservation aspects. The Park has won a Gold Bellamy Conservation Award for 10 consecutive years (Gold being the highest award) and has also been a runner up in the Rural Family Business of the Year Award. The David Bellamy Conservation Awards are made each year to parks which can demonstrate policies showing active concern for the environment. The Park has also achieved numerous Diamond awards from Hoseasons (for exceptional quality and outstanding customer service), these awards have been obtained on an annual basis. Woodside Lodges Country Park has also been awarded the Best Holiday Park in the Heart of England by Hoseasons.

**1.03** The Park owners have maintained an ethos of delivering a high quality holiday experience for visitors to Herefordshire. This is demonstrated by the awards consistently achieved and the significant amount of repeat business generated from both UK and overseas visitors.

**1.04 Location.** The holiday park lies approximately 2.9km to the west of Ledbury and 17km to the East of Hereford. Access to the Park is along Falcon Lane.

**1.05** The application site (known as the "Cider Mill" Field) is an existing Camping and amenity field located to the South of Falcon Lane. The Camping Field is well screened with mature hedgerow cover lying to the North East South and West. These hedgerows are traditional field hedges approximately 2.0m to 3.5m in height and are particularly dense. The application site is generally level, with a very gentle slope running in a North East to South West direction towards the existing fishing lake. The lake is also used by holidaymakers for wild swimming.

**1.06** Camping (Touring caravanning, tenting and motor-caravanning) has taken place at Woodside Lodges Country Park for well over 20 years. Between 40 and 65 pitches have been occupied during the bank holidays and peak summer months. There are existing toilets and washing facilities located at the Holiday Park, with an existing facility directly adjacent to the Cider Mill Field.

**1.07** Sixteen electric hook-up points are located in the south eastern section of the Cider Mill Field, these were located in Spring 2007. Ten electric hook-up points have been located to the North in the Orchard area since approximately 1989.

**1.08** Over the last two seasons particularly, there has been a strong demand for Tent and Touring caravan pitches having electric hook-up points. As there are insufficient electric hook-up points to cater for demand, the owners of Woodside Lodges Country Park have been turning custom away due to not being able to accommodate them. Trade is therefore being lost not only to the Park, but also to the facilities and attractions in the surrounding



area. The proposal is therefore to locate additional electric hook-up points to cater for demand, also to regularise the existing use for up to 60 pitches on the Cider Mill Field. The proposed layout is to be far more informal, with pitches located in small enclaves with new belts of landscaping.



Above: Aerial photograph denoting the location of Woodside Lodges Country Park.

*Image courtesy of Google Earth*



Above: Aerial photograph denoting the land ownership boundary of Woodside Lodges Country Park.

*Image courtesy of Google Earth*





Above: Aerial photograph denoting the boundary of the “Cider Mill” Field (existing Camping and Amenity Field) at Woodside Lodges Country Park. *Image courtesy of Google Earth*

**1.09 Detailed pre-application consultations** have taken place with Herefordshire Council including a meeting on site in January 2015 with Mr Roland Close (Principal Planning Officer) and Mr Andrew Stock (Area Planning Officer). The proposals have been the subject of follow up written consultations with Mr Roland Close. There is an Agreement in Principle from Herefordshire Council for the application proposal.

**1.10** A Transport Statement and Automated Traffic Count has been undertaken along Falcon Lane in August 2015 (during the peak holiday season).

**1.11** An Ecological Assessment and Habitat Enhancement Plan Report has also been undertaken in support of the planning application.

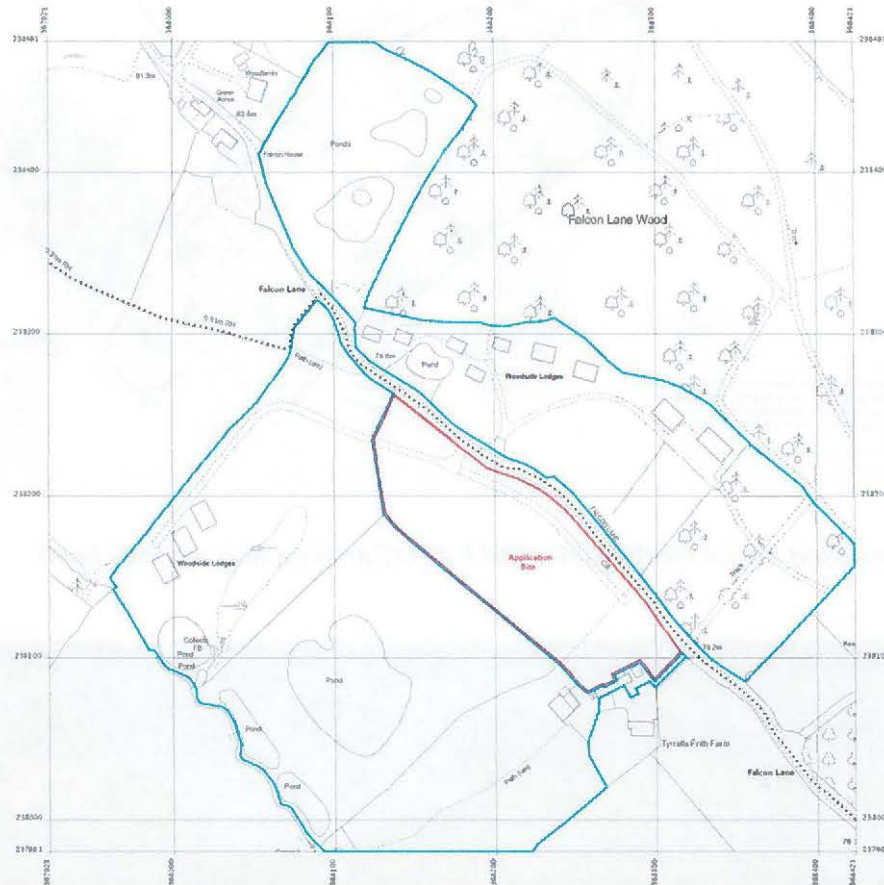
## 2.00 Design and Development context.

**2.01** The application site (the Cider Mill field) is currently utilised for tent camping and touring caravans and also as an informal amenity and recreation area. The application site is well screened with mature hedgerows on all boundaries and the Camping Field is not overlooked by any properties. The property to the South East known as Tyrrells Frith Farm is in the ownership of the family.

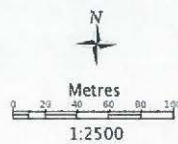
**2.02** To the North of the application site lies Falcon Lane, the dense boundary hedgerow (approximately 3.5m in height and up to 3.0m in width) ensures that the site is totally screened from public viewpoints along this Lane.

**2.03** The application site location Plan (drawing number LPD/WSL/LP2) is denoted on the following page.

**Location Plan - Woodside Lodges Country Park, Falcon Lane, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2JN.**  
**Applicant: Woodside Lodges Country Park, Falcon Lane, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2JN.**



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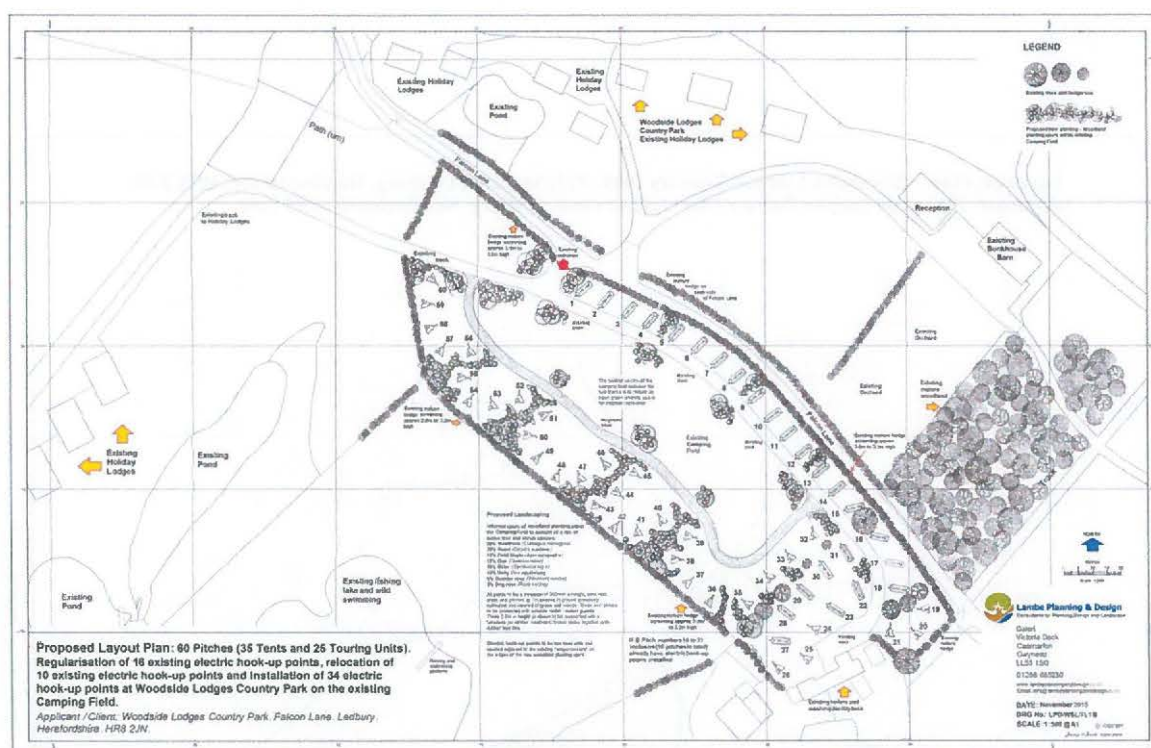


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 DRG No: LPD/WSL/P2  
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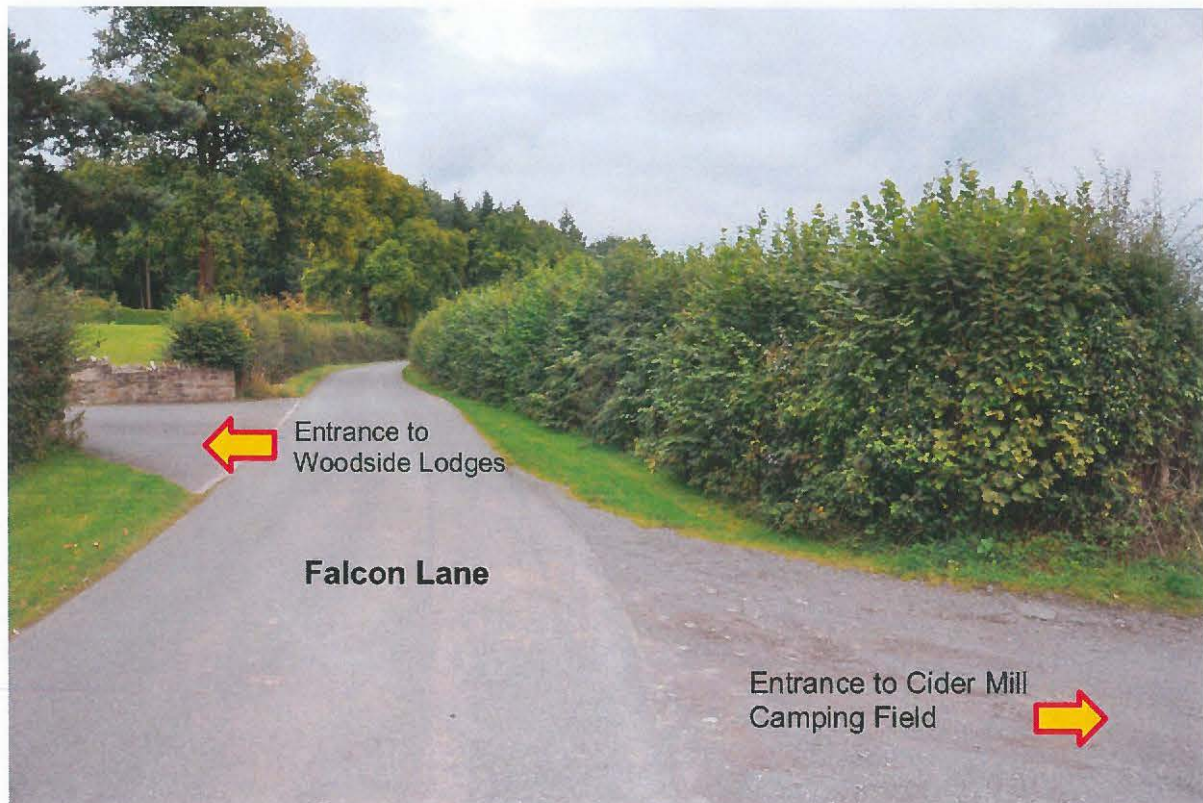


*Above: The proposed layout for the Cider Mill Field (Camping and amenity field).*



*Above: Entrance to Woodside Lodges off Falcon Lane with reception lodge in centre of photograph. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.*





Above: Looking East along Falcon Lane (photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015)



Above: Looking West along Falcon Lane (photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015)





*Above: Looking South into the Camping Field from the entrance off Falcon Lane (photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015)*



*Above: Looking South East into the Camping Field towards Tyrells Frith Farm from the Camping Field entrance off Falcon Lane (photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015).*





Above: Looking South East into the Camping Field with entrance off Falcon Lane in centre of photograph. Existing mature hedgerow cover (seen at left) adjoins Falcon Lane. Existing hook-up points are visible at centre right in the photograph. Photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.



Above: Looking North West in the Camping Field with Falcon Lane beyond the hedgerow at right in photograph. Existing hook-up points are visible at centre and centre right in the photograph. Photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.



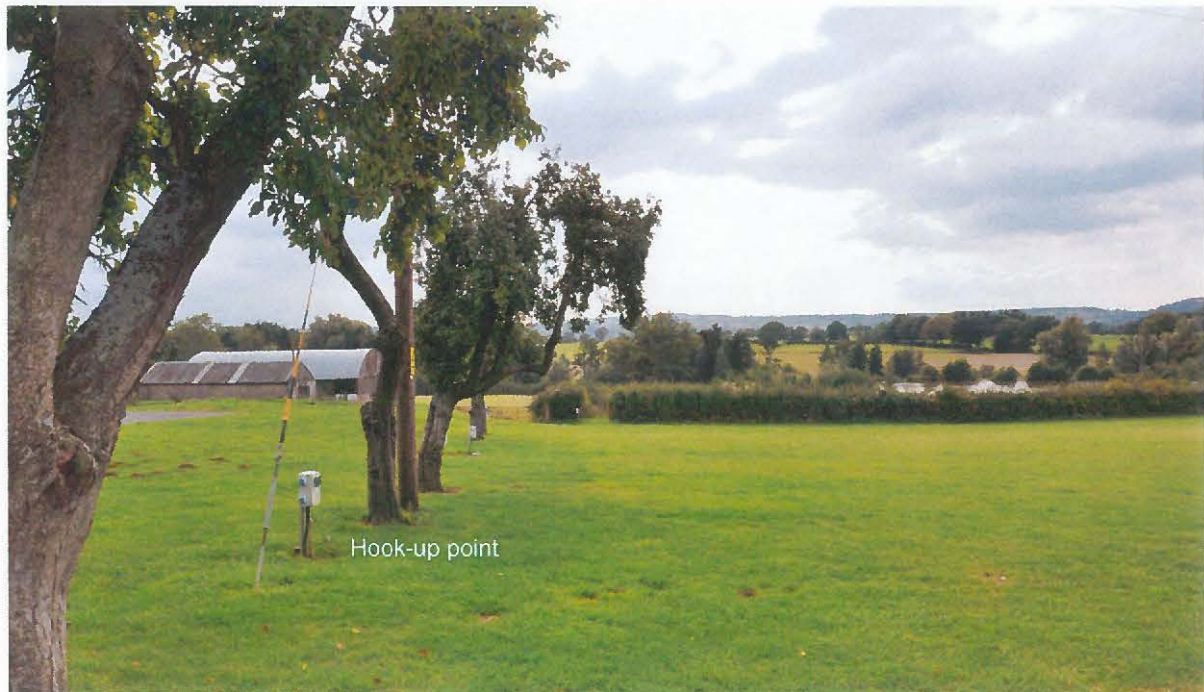


Above: Looking North West in the Camping Field with Falcon Lane beyond the hedgerow at right in photograph. The Touring Caravan pitches are to be located along this boundary between the existing access track and the mature hedge. The central area is to remain as open green amenity area. Photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.



Above: Looking West in the Camping Field with Fishing Lake beyond the hedgerow at centre in the photograph. Existing hook-up points are visible at centre in the photograph. Photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.





Above: Looking South West in the Camping Field with Fishing Lake beyond the hedgerow at centre in the photograph. Existing hook-up points are visible at centre left in the photograph. Photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.



Above: Looking North West in the Camping Field with Fishing Lake beyond the hedgerow at extreme left in the photograph and Falcon Lane beyond the hedgerow at centre right in photograph. Photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.





Above: Looking South East in the Camping Field. Falcon Lane beyond the hedgerow at centre left in photograph, Tyrells Frith Farm is just visible in the centre of the photograph. Photograph taken 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.



Above: The existing toilet and washing facility barn adjacent to the Camping Field. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.





Above: The high quality interior of the existing toilet and washing facility barn adjacent to the Camping Field. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.



Above: The interior of the existing toilet and washing facility barn adjacent to the Camping Field. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.





Above: Looking North East across the fishing lake towards the camping field which is well screened between the two hedgerows (marked with an X) in the centre of the photograph. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.



Above: Looking North East across the fishing lake towards the camping field which is well screened between the two hedgerows (marked with an X) in the centre of the photograph. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.





Above: Looking South West from the reception towards the camping field which is well screened between the two hedgerows (marked with an X) in the centre of the photograph with fishing lake beyond. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.



Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of touring caravanning on the Cider Mill Field. The proposal is to have a far more informal and low density layout.





*Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of touring caravanning on the Cider Mill Field*



*Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of tent camping and touring caravanning on the Cider Mill Field. The proposal is to have a far more informal and low density layout.*



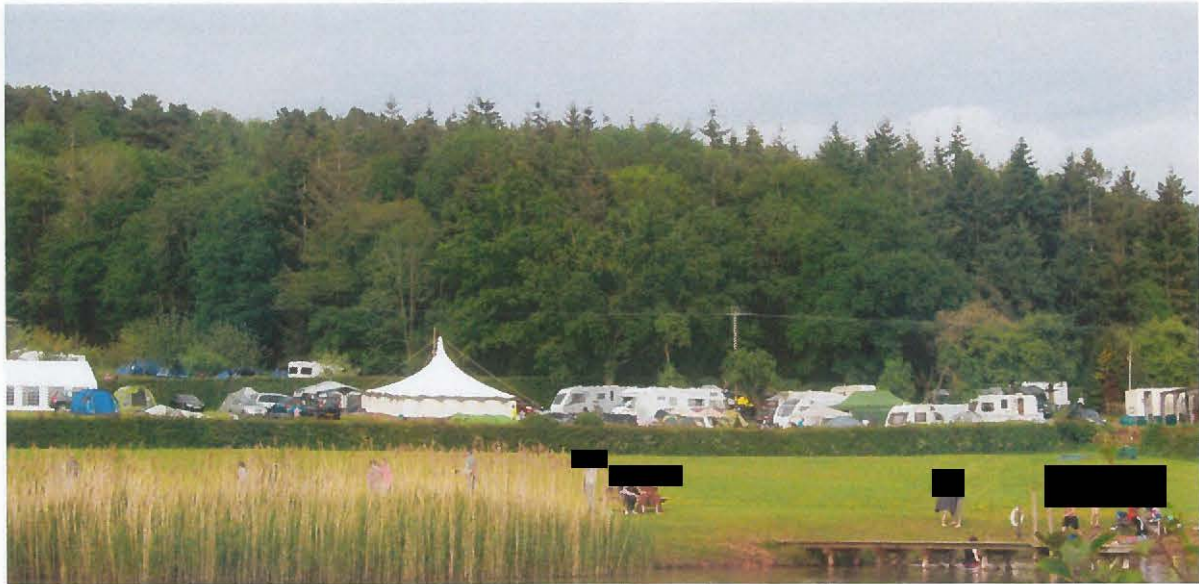


*Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of tent camping and motor-caravanning on the Cider Mill Field.*



*Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of touring caravanning and tent camping on the Cider Mill Field. The proposal is to have a far more informal and low density layout.*





Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of tent camping, motor-caravanning and touring caravanning on the Cider Mill Field. The proposal is to have a far more informal and low density layout.



Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of tent camping, motor-caravanning and touring caravanning on the Cider Mill Field.





*Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of tent camping on the Cider Mill Field*



*Above: Photograph supplied by applicant of touring caravanning on the Cider Mill Field. The proposal is to have a far more informal and low density layout.*

### **3.00 Amount.**

**3.01** Up to 65 pitches (for Tents, motor caravans and touring caravans) have been utilised at Woodside Lodges Country Park. The proposal is to create a more informal and low density layout for 60 pitches all having electric hook-up points. Out of the 60 pitches a maximum number of 25 pitches are to be for touring caravan use. The touring caravan pitches are to be located on the Northern boundary adjoining Falcon Lane and on the South Eastern section of the Cider Mill Field adjacent to the existing barn. 16 electric hook-up points already exist in the South Eastern section of the Camping Field. 10 electric hook-up points are located to the North in the Orchard area (these hook-up pitches are to be relocated to the Camping Field). Therefore, in total there are 34 new hook-up points to be located = a total of 60.

### **4.00 Layout scale and appearance.**

**4.01** The proposed layout is denoted on the 1:500 scale Layout drawing (Lambe Planning and Design drawing number LPD/WSL/TL1B).

**4.02** The pitches are laid out in a low density informal layout, with the tent camping pitches located in small enclaves with spurs of woodland planting between, to avoid a regimented



layout. The 25 pitches for touring caravans are located against a backdrop of mature hedgerow approximately 3.5m in height. This boundary adjoins Falcon Lane. The touring caravan pitches have direct access off the existing track. Spurs of planting are also located between the groups of touring caravan pitches to create a more informal layout.

**4.03** The central section of the Cider Mill Field is to remain as open green amenity area for informal recreation and ball games. Groups of planting are also located adjacent to the existing access track to create a more informal appearance.

**4.04** A curvilinear access track (surfaced with scalpings) is proposed for the tent camping pitches along the southern boundary, this will allow ease of access during periods of wet weather. The proposed tent camping pitches are generously spaced and greater than the requirements under Model Standard Site Licence requirements of a minimum of 6m apart.

**4.05** Each new touring unit pitch is to be provided with a low level 16 amp electric hook-up point which will be located along the edge of the planting areas. Water access points are also to be provided for the groups of pitches.

## 5.00 Landscaping.

**5.01** The application site is closely mown grassland. All existing mature trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site are to be retained.

**5.02** Substantial new spurs of landscaping are proposed on the Camping Field as denoted on the Proposed Layout plan at 1:500 scale (drawing number LPD/WSL/TL1B). The spurs of planting running out from the existing hedgerows are proposed to be primarily indigenous species and will create additional wildlife habitat areas.

**5.03** The informal spurs of woodland planting are to consist of a mix of native tree and shrub species:

- 20% Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- 20% Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- 15% Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- 15% Oak (*Quercus robur*)
- 10% Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
- 10% Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- 5% Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- 5% Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)

**5.04** All plants to be a minimum of 300mm in height, bare root stock and planted at 1m centres in ground previously cultivated and cleared of grass and weeds. Trees and shrubs are to be protected with suitable rabbit / rodent guards. Trees planted at 2.0m in height or above, are to be supported with a tanalised (or similar treatment) timber stake, together with rubber tree ties.

**5.05** The applicant has already undertaken a significant amount of work on the park creating conservation and wildlife habitat areas, the additional landscaping proposed will also create new habitat and bio-diversity areas. Over 500 native water plants, trees and shrubs have already been planted, together with 100 varieties of wildflowers for all year round interest, colour and bio-diversity benefits.

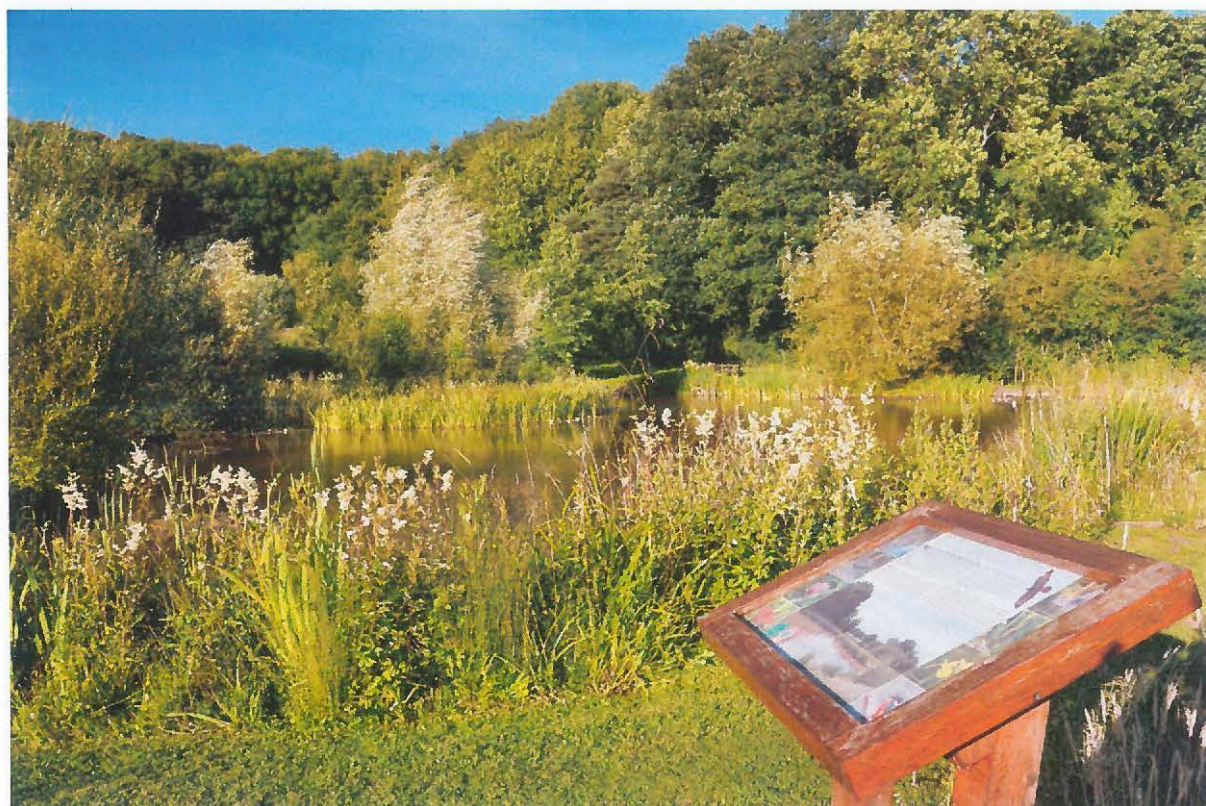
**5.06 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Ecological Assessment** has been undertaken on the Park. A copy of the report and Habitat Enhancement Plan dated October 2015 by Pure Ecology is submitted as supporting information.



**5.07 The Recommendations section of the Report states that: “The proposed scheme will not directly impact any habitats of importance for protected species or alter the character of the site. Further survey for protected species is therefore not required”.**



Above: Photograph looking over part of the existing conservation and wildlife habitat area created by the applicant. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.



Above: Photograph looking over part of the existing conservation and wildlife habitat area created by the applicant. Wildlife Interpretation boards are located at various positions within the conservation areas to help increase visitor's knowledge and understanding of the area. Photograph taken 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.



## **6.00 Sustainability.**

**6.01** The Park is located approximately 2.9km to the west of Ledbury and is a well-established existing holiday accommodation provider. The Park has been in existence for 45 years.

**6.02** Bunkhouse accommodation is provided on Park for walkers and cyclists. Cycling and walking is actively promoted on the Park, together with wild water swimming in the lake. The Park lies in close proximity to the long distance Herefordshire Trail and the tent camping pitches are well-used by backpackers.

**6.03** Re-cycling areas have been created on the Park and the applicant is continually investigating further recycling opportunities to help minimise waste disposal at Woodside Lodges Country Park.

## **7.00 Flood Risk.**

**7.01** The Park is not located within an area designated at risk of flooding within Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 3. The substantial new areas of planting will also assist with reducing rainwater run-off.

## **8.00 Economic Benefits.**

**8.01** The economic benefits that can be derived from Holiday / Leisure Park proposals can be significant, the following information is of relevance: Holiday Park operations contribute significantly to sustainable local communities, by providing a market for local goods and services and facilities.

**8.02** In 2012 figures were published following a study undertaken in 2011 by Visit Wales / The British Holiday and Homes Parks Association (BH&HPA) into the industry in Wales. The findings were extrapolated to cover the whole of the UK. The figures demonstrate that: The total turnover and visitor expenditure of the UK holiday and touring parks industry is approximately £4billion per annum. The total economic impact to the UK has been calculated as a Gross Value Added (GVA) contribution of £1.4 billion per annum, supporting a total of 53,000 direct and indirect jobs in the UK.

Therefore, the contribution to the local economy from holiday parks is significant and can be fundamental to the viability of marginal local businesses – particularly in rural areas.

**8.03** Holiday Parks create much needed local employment in rural areas and offer a wide range of employment opportunities. The proposals at Woodside Lodges Country Park will help to reinforce and safeguard the existing employment on the Park which is 4 full time and 6 part time employment positions.

## **9.00 Community Safety.**

**9.01** All visitors to Woodside Lodges Country Park have to report to the reception upon arrival.

**9.02** There is a 24 hour continual on-site management presence at the Park. Regular patrols are undertaken by park staff during the hours of darkness.



**9.03** Speed restrictions are in place throughout the Holiday Park for the benefit of all users of the Park.

**9.04** Fire fighting equipment is located at strategic positions throughout the Holiday Park to meet the requirements of the Site Licence conditions.

**9.05** Grass cutting machinery and groundwork equipment associated with the maintenance of the Holiday Park is located in a locked secure storage area, away from members of the public.

## **10.00 Access and traffic.**

**10.01** The Holiday Park is accessed directly off Falcon Lane. The planning application does not involve any alterations to the existing access which has good visibility in both directions. The existing entrance into the Cider Mill Field is approximately 6.0m in width, the existing access track is approximately 4.0m in width.

**10.02 Access Roads.** The internal road details for the Park are dealt with under the requirements of "Model Standard" Site Licence Conditions.

**10.03 Traffic.** The proposal regularises the tent camping, motor caravanning and touring caravanning use and by restricting the number of touring caravan pitches to 25, there will be a reduction in vehicles with trailers using Falcon Lane. By capping the application site to a total of 60 electric hook-up points, there is the potential to provide a net reduction in vehicle trips to and from the site and especially during the peak summer months when up to 65 pitches are occupied.

**10.04** A Transport Statement and Automated Traffic Count has been undertaken by consulting engineers (M-EC Transport Planning) during August 2015 at the peak Holiday period. A copy of the Transport Statement (ref 21603/10-15/4040) dated October 2015 is submitted as supporting information.

**10.05** The Transport Statement demonstrates that the proposed development does not lead to an intensification of Falcon Lane. Existing vehicle speeds and flows along Falcon Lane are low (28.5 mph eastbound and 26.4mph westbound).

**10.06** The Transport Statement concludes that there are no highways or transportation reasons why the proposed development should not be granted planning permission.

## **11.00 Planning Policy.**

**National Planning Policy.** The DCLG National Planning Policy Framework NPPF published in March 2012 specifically refers to a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

**Paragraph 19. – Building a strong competitive economy -** states: *The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.*

**Paragraph 28 – Supporting a Prosperous rural economy –** states: *Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs, by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development and to support sustainable rural tourism and*



*leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.*

The bullet points relating to Paragraph 28 are particularly relevant and state:

*Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;*

*Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*

*Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and*

*Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

The NPPF also states: *"The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However, the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas".*

The NPPF therefore recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions are likely to be less frequent in rural areas than in an urban area.

**Paragraph 187 - Decision Taking** states:

*Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.*

**Local Plan Policy. The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031** was adopted in October 2015 and is therefore current and up to date. The Tourism section and particularly Policy E4 is the most relevant.

**Paragraph 5.2.20** of the Tourism section states: *The Herefordshire STEAM Report 2011 shows that tourism makes an important contribution to the county's economy. Herefordshire has many historic and natural assets which are of national interest for example the Mappa Mundi and the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Hereford, the market towns and rural areas are popular destinations for a range of different types of visits and activities. Tourism in Herefordshire can help to strengthen the economy through diversification and new business development in both urban and rural areas.*

**Paragraph 5.2.21** of the Tourism section states: *By encouraging more overnight stays and associated increased expenditure, there is potential for revenue from tourism to make a greater contribution to the county's economic well-being. The provision of new accommodation and the enhancement of existing accommodation will help achieve this goal. Many visitors to the county come to enjoy the beautiful countryside and there is likely to be a demand for new facilities and accommodations associated with this.*

**Policy E4 – Tourism.** The Policy states: *Herefordshire will be promoted as a destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by utilising, conserving and enhancing the*



county's unique environmental and heritage assets and by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. In particular, the tourist industry will be supported by a number of measures including: 1. recognising the unique historic character of Hereford and the market towns as key visitor attractions and as locations to focus the provision of new larger scale tourist development; 2. the development of sustainable tourism opportunities, capitalising on assets such as the county's landscape, rivers, other waterways and attractive rural settlements, where there is no detrimental impact on the county's varied natural and heritage assets or on the overall character and quality of the environment. Particular regard will be had to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; 3. **retaining and enhancing existing, and encouraging new, accommodation and attractions throughout the county, which will help to diversify the tourist provision, extend the tourist season and increase the number of visitors staying overnight.** In particular proposals for new hotels in Hereford will be encouraged. Applicants will be encouraged to provide a 'Hotel Needs Assessment' for any applications for new hotels; 4. ensuring that cycling, walking and heritage tourism is encouraged by facilitating the development of long distance walking and cycling routes, food and drink trails and heritage trails, including improvements to public rights of way, whilst having special regard for the visual amenity of such routes and trails, and for the setting of heritage assets in their vicinity; and 5. the safeguarding of the historic route of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal.

## 12.00 Summary.

**12.01** It is proposed that the planning application (for the regularisation of 16 existing electric hook-up points, relocation of 10 existing hook-up points and location of 34 electric hook-up points - total 60 pitches on Camping Field, together with additional landscaping and environmental improvements at Woodside Lodges Country Park) meets the aims and objectives of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework for the following reasons:

**12.02** The proposal creates a more informal low density layout on the existing camping field and restricts the number of touring caravan pitches to a maximum of 25. The total number of pitches on the Camping Field is to be restricted to 60 which represents an overall reduction on the peak season use.

**12.03** The central section of the Camping Field is to be maintained as an open green amenity area, no camping will take place on this area. At present the camping use on this area is un-restricted.

**12.04** There is a strong demand for electric hook-up points by holidaymakers. The electric hook-up facility will help ensure that trade is not lost on the Park and is not also lost to facilities and attractions in the surrounding area, as holidaymakers will continue to choose Woodside Lodges Country Park as their holiday destination.

**12.05** The upgrading proposed to the Camping Field and amenity area will benefit local businesses and attractions through increased visitor spending.

**12.06** The new planting will reinforce existing screening and will create additional wildlife corridor links, increased bio-diversity and habitat areas.

**12.07** Significant re-investment has already taken place at Woodside Lodges Country Park, and the proposal will allow the reinvestment to continue. The improved layout, environmental improvements and additional landscaping, will ensure that the local family owned business



of Woodside Lodges Country Park will be strengthened, remain competitive in the holiday sector market and will continue to be a valuable asset to tourism in Herefordshire.

**12.08** It is therefore proposed that the planning application is fully in line with both National and Local Planning Policy and particularly Policy E4 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031.

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