



Email: Eleanor King <Eleanor@atlasplanninggroup.co.uk>
Copied to: Dan Roycroft <dan@atlasplanninggroup.co.uk>

23rd of February 2025

Dear Ms King,

Advice regarding:

**1) yet to be submitted application at Salisbury High Post and
2) Application at Appeal Stage; PL/2024/09682 Erection of 2no buildings
amounting to 3,712 sqm GIA (Use Classes E(g), B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage
and distribution)) with external areas, access, parking, landscaping and associated
works.**

We are aware that these 2 applications are/will be from different developers, however we have decided to advise on them together due to the need to consider cumulative impacts. It is RSPB's opinion that the mitigation required for one development would be the same as that required for the 2nd development because the 2km potential impact zone is almost identical. Therefore, appropriate mitigation for both developments combined is the same as for either development individually. It is our opinion that if only one development is consented, it would still necessitate the mitigation advised here.

These applications seek to develop land adjacent to High Post Business Park, Salisbury (hereby referred to as "the site"). This site lies within an important area for stone-curlew (*Burhinus oedipnemos*), protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and a qualifying feature of the nearby Porton Down and Salisbury Plain SPAs. The RSPB has a long running programme of stone-curlew monitoring across Wessex. In recent years this has strategically focused on Salisbury Plain and the surrounding farmland buffer, however the wider farmland in this area is known to be a stronghold for these birds.

The applicant for the proposal numbered 1 above (yet to be submitted for planning application) has indicated that they are not able to undertake the monitoring required to determine how many pair of breeding stone-curlew may be impacted by the development of the site. The applicant has therefore sought advice from the RSPB in preparation for submission of a development application.

The RSPB has agreed to provide advice on how best to mitigate for breeding stone-curlew based on a reasonable assumption of how many pairs might be using the habitats within 2km

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of the site. A 2km zone is used because this is how far stone-curlew fly to feed. We have conducted our own investigation regarding which areas may be reasonably impacted by development at this site based on: the location and size of the developments, topography, agricultural land use, natural and manmade features present on the ground, our own expertise on the habits of breeding stone-curlew and historical records. It is the RSPB's opinion that between 2 and 3 breeding pairs may use the potentially impacted area. It is our advice that this impact on breeding stone-curlew may be mitigated for by the provision of 2 fallow plots managed and maintained for breeding stone-curlew for the lifetime of the proposed developments.

As an area within 2km from the development may be impacted, it would be best to provide mitigation plots outside of this 2 km zone, however if there is no option for provision of plots outside of this zone of influence, it is still acceptable to create and maintain plots closer to the development as long as not within 500 m of the development site. RSPB have investigated your indicated preferred mitigation areas and believe that plot creation here would be acceptable if:

- 1) Mitigation is in addition to existing stone-curlew plot provision commitments from surrounding landowners except where: existing plots are outside of schemes or in schemes that are about to expire, in which case development mitigation would be a good way of securing these plots long term.
- 2) Fallow plots are at least 2ha in size but no bigger than 3ha in size. The optimal size for stone-curlew plots is 2ha in size.
- 3) There is a long-term agreement in place that would ensure created mitigation plots would be maintained appropriately for stone-curlew for the lifetime of development. RSPB have sought advice from Natural England regarding the best way to create this assurance over a decades long timeframe. We will provide further information as it becomes available.
- 4) Management guidelines in the attached information note are followed.

You have inquired if there are specific crops that may be planted in order to improve stone-curlew breeding success in this area. Our opinion is that if mitigation plots meet the 2ha threshold set out in the attached guidance, then that should provide enough foraging area. In general grassland planting is best for foraging and would be a good addition for an area that does not hold significant areas of grassland.

The current plot at Cusse's Gorse (red outline in below image) is apparently due to expire from HLS in 2028. If this plot will not be renewed under HLS or put under another scheme, then this plot or a nearby area could become a mitigation plot to account for any impacts on pairs in that area. If this is the case, it is our advice that the plot be moved away from the scrub and into the middle of that field (blue outline). A second mitigation plot could be placed on the other side of the scrub, once again in the field centre (second blue outline). Both of these locations are far enough and well screened from the development area. We do not advise that mitigation plots be placed to the west of the A345.

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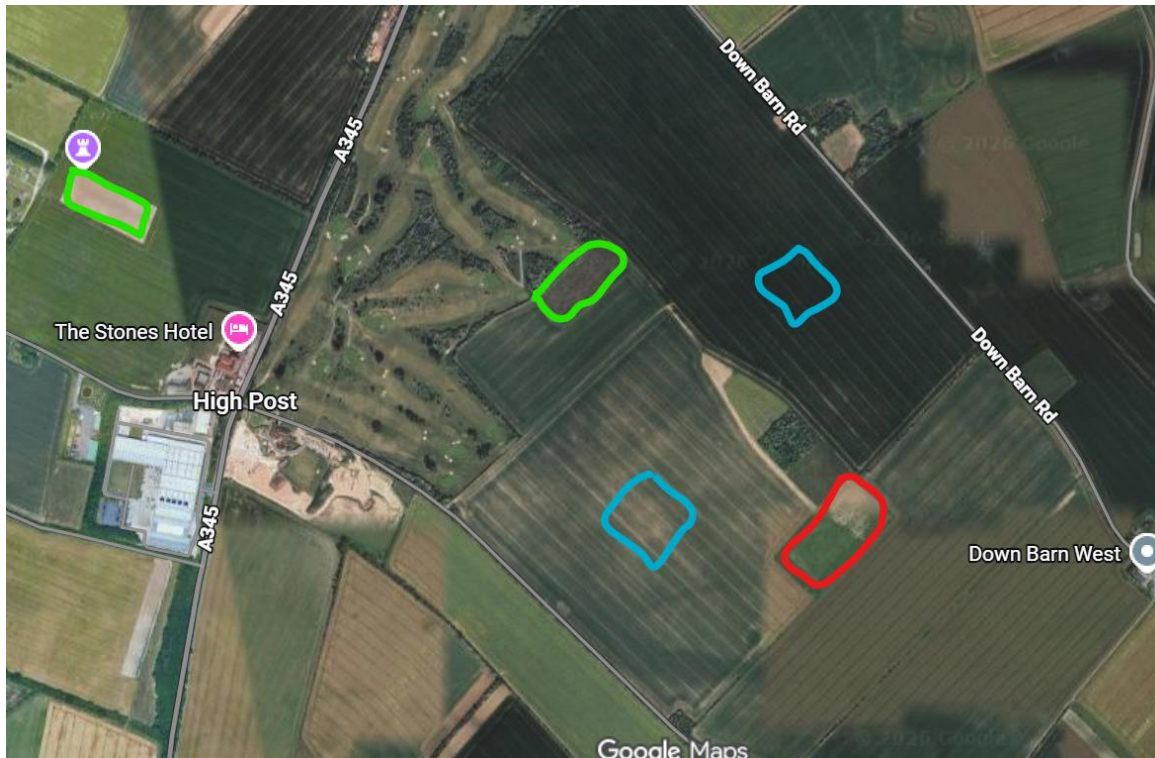
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We can see what looks like two fallow plots in the image below (green outlined areas). We would be grateful if you can confirm the nature of these plots, especially:

- Whether they are nesting plots for ground nesting birds
- What management has occurred
- Whether anyone has monitored them
- Whether any nesting activity has been recorded
- Whether they are part of an existing scheme or project



If for whatever reason it is not possible to place and manage these plots as suggested here, RSPB can help identify other areas and landowners that may be appropriate.

The last thing to consider is the need for sensible precautions during construction. For example, work outside of March to August, if possible, as this would avoid the stone-curlew breeding season. Noise and light are known to be disturbing factors when in proximity to stone-curlew nests, so plans to limit these, captured as part of the construction environmental management plan, would be appropriate. If the project involves bare ground creation, this might inadvertently provide suitable nesting habitat for stone-curlew. To minimise the chance of stone-curlew using any bare ground, spoil should be placed around the edge of the bare ground to create a buffer, as Stone-curlew rely on open lines of sight to see approaching danger. Additionally, areas should not be left unworked or undisturbed for more than a few days, otherwise they should be checked by a competent individual (eg ecological clerk of works) prior to works recommencing, in case stone-curlew have established a territory.

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I hope this advice is useful and we look forward to future engagement as the project progresses. We can advise further once detailed plans have been submitted. RSPB reserve the right to engage with the planning process as new information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Julie Sims

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