

**FERN WR ISH7 Biodiversity & Ecology
(FARNHAM ENVIRONMENT RESIDENTS & NEIGHBOURS)
TWO VILLAGE BYPASS
Supporting Submission No. 20026497**

23rd July, 2021

1 This submission is additional notes from Biodiversity & Ecology ISH7 on the 2VBR on behalf of FERN (Farnham Environment Residents & Neighbours)

2 Believe me FERN would rather not have to spend time continually highlighting where the Applicant has provided poor information. But we are driven as custodians who care deeply for this biodiversity, it has only been maintained at this level as it has mattered over hundreds of years to the people that live in this special place.

Here in Farnham our abundance of wildlife relies on our different habitats and constant water supply. It's a historic and safe place with established woods, old buildings, ancient trees, and meadow grassland. The species range varies each year but currently is home to house martins, swifts and bats, owls, kestrels and sparrowhawks, song thrush, hedgehog. Our ponds newts and toads, our woods badger, hares and red deer, a dormouse nest was seen here last year under hazel coppice. It's an established breeding ground that produces increased gene flow between local small and fragmented populations.

The applicant to date may think these details are inconsequential compared to the world's need for Net Zero by 2050. But let me put it this way, where once there were tens of toads crossing the lanes and plenty of hedgehogs, we now have few. Our Ash and oak trees are stressed, dying, or losing large branches, species numbers generally are lowering at an unprecedented rate.

The problem is the constant chipping away at nature, even if on paper they seem like small comparative losses, they contribute to where we find ourselves today, seeing ecosystems denude or fail.

The current bypass would put a 60mph extremely busy road on top of the best biodiversity in the area, it would suppress the range the current wildlife use to nest, breed, and feed. It would cut off the foraging corridor for the bats, the noise of the bypass at 60mph means birdsong imperative to mating will be hard to hear, bats will have echolocation overload and be frightened off by the lights of traffic. Proposed bat hop overs wouldn't be established for years (it's doubtful whether they are even effective). The offset planting follows the opposite direction so doesn't connect to the established foraging routes. This all adds up to a big shame when, living here, we know a better alternative has been proposed since 2017.

The wildlife would still be fed into this area, attracted by the ponds and habitats but there is nowhere for them to follow their normal west/east migration, where there is cover and greater chance of survival, unless they play Russian roulette on the A12,

an extremely busy road at 60mph isn't ideal for hedgehogs, badgers, dormice, bats, or deer to cross.

3 Our concern has always been about the lack of proper surveying as explained in **Bioscan Ecology Consultancy report (FERN WR2)**. For example, at Nuttery Belt the Applicant are proposing to take off chunks of a relatively high value habitat with records of Annex 11 bat species Barbastelle. The SBIS (Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service) have told Bioscan "*I don't think the site has been visited. As you may know, the Ancient Woodland Inventory only included woods of 2Ha or more. There are many sites below that threshold which may well be ancient but have not been assessed. SBIS is about to take on a 2-year contract with Natural England to improve the quality of the AWI as part of a national project.*

A quick look at the 1st series OS maps shows Nuttery Belt with a similar outline to the present day. It would therefore pass the first test for consideration in the new AWI process, but this simply means it is 'long-established'. Further research would then be required as well as perhaps ground survey to look for indicator species and other ancient woodland features.'

SBIS have as can be seen by the above correspondence been notified of Nuttery Belt by Bioscan Consultancy.

Concerns have been raised about AW Foxburrow Wood; we have shown the ExA the oak stress that is visible to the Western edge. The Applicant is putting a new footpath alongside 3 stressed and large oaks, they are unsafe to walk next to, especially after a large branch of one of them crashed down last summer, any tree deemed a danger along a public footpath will have to be felled. This will cause further sad and unnecessary degradation, it will open gaps and change the ground flora, and of course remove more species habitats.

4 At the end of the day it comes down to whether the value of the habitats and biodiversity around Farnham Hall & Mollett's Farm and the damage the Applicant route will do outweighs the value of the gap between Foxburrow Wood and Palant's Grove and the damage that would cause. We would not be working so hard if we didn't believe which one was the right choice.