

**RESPONSE BY EYKE PARISH COUNCIL TO
C10/3239 BENTWATERS PARKS REVISED APPLICATION.
15th May 2014**

Bentwaters Parks sits wholly within the AONB and covers some 390 hectares (964 acres) – Trinity Park and Felixstowe Docks together with its container area is some 150 hectares – and has the potential to be one of the largest industrialised sites in the country.

It is serviced by a completely inadequate road infrastructure.

At present approximately 80% of operations carried out on this industrial site do not have planning permission.

In 2010 an application to regularise the site was made: *C10/3239 – change of use of buildings and moving a section of fence*. A site meeting at Bentwaters Parks, prior to the September 2012 meeting, gave every indication that the application would receive approval. It was after this point that the application stalled, as the owners/developers decided to include an airport to allow flying, plus an annual air show.

We are disappointed that Suffolk Coastal District Council did not proceed with the regularisation of the site and insist that separate application be made to cover the airport, flying and air show.

We are concerned as to why the developer did not reveal that flying and the building/maintaining of aerobatic aircraft, which has been in existence for some 5 years, was not included in the C10/3239 masterplan. This would suggest that the developer has not been open and transparent in the whole matter.

Steve Milligan's letter of 12th June 2013 to the developer highlights this point:

I must state at this stage my disappointment with the inclusion of this amendment late in the consideration of C10/3239, given you state that the aircraft housed in building 669 'have been operating from the site for approximately 4 years', which pre-dates the submission of C10/3239 and the EIA, which made reference to only a single spitfire flying from the site. The position of the Council to defer enforcement action in 2009 to allow your client to prepare and submit an application for authorisation of activities at the site, was taken in good faith and I believed that the information and use schedule you submitted with C10/32239 was comprehensive and correct. For this to be shown otherwise is clearly disappointing.

The applicant/developer has been very astute in adding an airport and flying to the original application and must have been confident that the original proposals would be approved. Taking advantage of the fact that SCDC are keen to regularise the site, and knowing that one cannot 'cherry pick' an application, which has to be refused or approved – albeit with conditions – they decide to include an airport and flying facilities.

It is appreciated that the owners want to maximise their commercial interests, but at what costs to the AONB, Eyke and its community?

115 and 116 in NPPF states:

Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

1. Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:-

2. The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local community

3. The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way, and

Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

The developer/owners appear to want to dismiss the planning inspector's report as being no longer relevant; however, the refusal of the airport was, among other issues, based on the AONB and the inadequate infrastructure and this has not changed.

On 31st July 1999 HM Government Planning Inspector George Mapson stated

'The use of the former RAF Bentwaters base for civil aviation is unacceptable'
He also stated there was **'a lack of a realistic or effective strategy for imposing controls over aircraft movements and ground based activities.'**

We believe this remains true today, and SCDC have indicated that enforcement of limits is extremely difficult.

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This relates to business flying and says that 10 business flights per month are to be expected; these flight figures are not included in the 960 associated aerobatic flying. Pilots are required to log flight plans and flying in and out of Bentwaters would require permission and no doubt landing fees, and as such would come under the rules and regulations of the Civil Aviation Authority. This would make Bentwaters a commercial airport.

There has been no prediction of traffic that will be generated by an annual air show; indeed, at a parish council meeting with the developer's agent, the agent stated that they do need planning permission to have an annual air show.

Lowestoft air show attracted 340,000 visitors; Clacton air show 140,000; Bournemouth air show in 2009 – 1,344,000.

It is not an overstatement to estimate that the Bentwaters Air Show would attract some 50,000 vehicles which can only be detrimental to the AONB and certainly to the village of Eyke and the principle of the “Quiet Lanes” initiative.

The 28 day rule should not be used to circumvent planning permission and because of the abuse of this rule, the Government are considering changing it. To have an air show, with its vehicular impact on the local area will be seriously detrimental to the AONB and surely an abuse of this rule.

What is being proposed will have a major impact which will irrevocably change the tranquillity of the area for ever.

When the owners/developers held Golf GTI days, they generated literally thousands of vehicles, which backed up from the A12 and through the village of Eyke – some 4 miles of stationary traffic – as you can imagine this caused total mayhem. An air show will subject this village to thousands of additional vehicles on an already totally inadequate road structure.

Part of the village does not have footpaths and pedestrians have to walk in the road with the traffic.



With the development of Rendlesham and the irregular operations at Bentwaters Parks, the quality of life for the villagers of Eyke has been greatly diminished. We accept that it is a changing world, but must it be so brutal in destroying the tranquillity of this area? Does SCDC not care about, or even consider, what is happening to Eyke, its community and the AONB? What will be left for future generations?

To quote jobs as a reason for development cannot be accepted, as this area has one of the

highest employment levels in the country. If allowed, this application will create considerable wealth for a few individuals, but at the expense of the serenity of the AONB as well as the surrounding area. The approval of flying and air shows is incompatible with and unacceptable to the AONB.

Many of the operations at Bentwaters have been relocations of businesses sited from elsewhere, for example Woodbridge, allowing land to be used for housing development. Since the original application, there have been more operations established, possibly with – or without- planning permission. Clearly this is having the effect of creating more traffic through Eyke.

Suffolk is largely a rural and farming community, generating some £400 million to the local economy from field to table. There is now great pressure to urbanise and industrialise Suffolk, but at what cost to the AONB and its surrounding areas?

The flying of the Spitfire has been accepted but is the establishment of an airport, flying club and their associated facilities just the beginning of, perhaps, unstated ambitions?

The approval of 960 aircraft movements per year, together with 'business' flying, will be the start of a **commercial airport**. What would SCDC do if this increased to 5000, when they have been already woefully inadequate with any enforcement issues on this site?

The permission to fly in principle will make it easier to increase greatly flying levels in future, with, or without, necessary planning applications.

As one cannot select only parts of an application, the approval of an airport and flying would be entirely inappropriate and out of keeping with the principles of the AONB. It would be detrimental to the village of Eyke and quality of life of its residents. The inclusion of flying should be removed and subject to a separate planning application. Therefore, we request that the application be refused.



