

JESKYNsnews

March 2006

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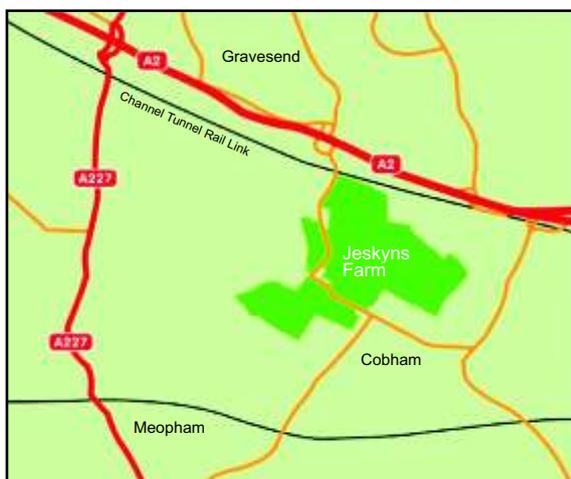
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What is the Jeskyns Farm project?

In April 2005 the Forestry Commission purchased Jeskyns Farm, a 360 acre site just south of the A2 in the village of Cobham, Gravesend. We plan to transform this site into a brand new open space for the local community and local wildlife to enjoy.



Site Design Unveiling

During Autumn 2005, we asked residents, local groups and schools what sorts of facilities and features they would like to see created on the site. We received a good response and from this feedback in conjunction with recommendations made by the undertaking of an Environmental Impact Assessment (see page 4 for further details) we are in the process of creating a site design which we hope to have ready for public viewing by the middle of March 2006.

Where can I see the site design?

We will be publicising the design via posters and leaflets which will be distributed in the local area. We will also be organising two public drop-in sessions where people can come and have a look at a series of displays explaining the design and the process undertaken to create it. Members of the project team will be available at both of these sessions to answer any questions that you may have.

1st Drop In Session

Wednesday 22nd March 2006, 4pm-8pm.

2nd Drop In Session

Tuesday 28th March 2006, 4pm-8pm

Both events will be held in the Meadow Rooms, The Street, Cobham. These sessions are open to everyone, just drop in!

How will I be able to comment upon the proposed design?

As this consultation process forms part of the official Environmental Impact Assessment, all comments on the design will need to be in writing and directed to:

Matthew Woodcock, Forestry Commission Authority Office, Alice Holt, South East England Conservancy, Farnham, Surrey. GU10 4LF

However, comments boxes will be available at the drop-in sessions, the contents of which will all be passed to the Forestry Commission Authority Office.

For more information please contact:

Denise Culley, Community Ranger, North Kent Project, Shorne Wood Country Park, Brewers Road, Shorne, Kent DA12 3HX
Tel: 01474 825 118 / 07785 744921 Email: denise.culley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk Web: www.forestry.gov.uk/northkent

Lights, camera, action!

Jeskyns has recently been host to a group of students from mid Kent College.

Rebekah Clarke, Paul Bullock and Richard Gibbons have been filming on site and in neighbouring areas to create a short information video about the project as part of their media studies course.



The film crew.

For the project they have become the production company "Crystal Video Creations" and have been interviewing residents and project staff about their views on the project. We hope to be able to show the video alongside a proposed site design for the site at our consultation drop in sessions during March.

New hedgerows created.

During February you may have spotted a team of very hardworking individuals on the Jeskyns site.

This welly clad group have been planting our newest acquisitions to site young hedging plants. Hedgerow is a traditional Kentish landscape feature and is also an important habitat for many British birds, mammals and insects. Once mature a hedgerow also makes an attractive and natural boundary, increasing the security of the site. Unfortunately with the intensification of farming and the recent pressures on land use, hedgerow has been disappearing from our Kentish landscape at an alarming pace.

By planting new hedgerows and increasing old ones

on the Jeskyns site we hope to try and redress that balance, if only in a small way.



The hedge planting team.

And whilst our young plants wrapped in their green protective tubes may look a little insignificant at the moment, we hope that in a few years time they will be providing food and homes for local wildlife and will become an attractive feature of the local landscape.

Poetry please.....

Back in the autumn of 2005, Gravesend resident, Mrs Clisby sent us a wonderful poem in response to the public consultation to find out what people would like to see on Jeskyns Farm.

Whilst we don't have space to print all of it here, we have included some of the verses and would like to extend our thanks to Mrs Clisby for taking the time to write such an inventive poem!

"As we approach our twilight years,
my special friend and I,
We count ourselves so lucky
to have Jeskyns Farm nearby.

Exercise and well being,
lead to a healthy mind
And so whenever possible
we take time to unwind.

It only takes ten minutes,
when we're feeling fine
To cross the A2 flyover
and the Channel Tunnel line.

We've had some happy times,
walking path and track.
We've seen sights sure to raise our hopes
and bring our childhoods back.

We appreciate the need to save
Cobham's peace and charm,

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But only a few mindless people
are bent on destruction and harm.
The majority of us townies
are made of the same hopes and fears
And want to protect the countryside
for many future years.

We don't need things like cafes and swings,
just a loo would do.
The rest can be found at Shorne nearby
and very successfully too.

Our children and grandchildren
enjoy their visits there,
But what when they are older?
Green spaces will be rare”

***Be sure to attend our drop-in sessions
Mrs Clisby, to see how our design
matches up to your vision!***

Access for All.

During February, a group of local residents with disabilities and restricted mobility joined us for a visit to our Thames Chase Community Forest site in Essex.



Attendees at the Thames Chase centre event.

Their job was to test run some of the facilities there such as the all ability access paths and site signage. **“The meeting was very positive”** said Derek Lynch, Chairman of the Medway Access Group, **“and we are very pleased to have an input at this this early stage of the project.”**

Many of the attendees found some of the paths quite hard going but were keen to stress that every potential user is different and therefore sites should have a variety of levels of challenges for all users. We will be using the feedback given by attendees on the day to help us create a range of suitable facilities for all potential users at the Jeskyns site.

Environmental Impact Assessment what is it?

As mentioned previously in this newsletter, the Jeskyns Farm project is being assessed under The Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (1999).

But what is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and why do we need one?

An EIA is an assessment of the potential significant environmental effects of a proposal or project. The result of undertaking an EIA is an Environmental Statement (ES). The purpose of an EIA and its ES is to provide decision makers and other interested parties with as full an understanding of the proposal as possible.

Decisions can then be made on whether or not the proposal can proceed or should be amended before any work is started.

The undertaking of this EIA should result in an improved knowledge of possible consequences of undertaking this project. This will in turn allow us to identify any possible adverse effects and therefore minimise them. Just as importantly alongside this it will also allow us to identify any beneficial impacts and therefore maximise them.

The table on page 4 shows a summary of the main issues that will be covered by the EIA. Each issue is given a proposed significance rating which reflects the level of assessment proposed for each topic.

A **'Low'** significance rating indicates impacts that are not considered to be significant and which will be considered only briefly.

A **'Medium'** significance rating indicates a likelihood of moderately significant impacts and will be given general consideration within the ES.

A **'High'** significance rating indicates impacts that are potentially of high significance which will be covered by a specialist assessment.

If you have any questions about the EIA process then please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Summary of the issues being investigated by the EIA

Main Issue and Author	Significance Rating	Sub-issues
Population <i>The Landscape Partnership and Odyssey Consulting Engineers</i>	High	Impact upon character of local settlements
	High	Impact upon security and amenity of adjacent properties
	Low	Impact upon health and fitness of the local population
	Medium	Impact upon accessibility to the countryside
	Medium	Impact upon local facilities (including schools)
Fauna and flora <i>The Landscape Partnership</i>	High	Relationship to Bio-diversity Action Plans and Habitat Action Plans
		Impact upon existing wildlife
		<input type="checkbox"/> Breeding birds
		<input type="checkbox"/> Mammals
		<input type="checkbox"/> Invertebrates
Soils and land use <i>Land Research Associates</i>	High	Non-farming use of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land
		Impacts upon soil quality
Water quality and hydrology <i>The Landscape Partnership</i>	Low	Groundwater recharge
Air quality <i>The Landscape Partnership</i>	Low	Potential for air quality improvement
Climate <i>The Landscape Partnership</i>	Low	Impact upon local climate and possibility of acting as a carbon sink.
		Impact of climate change upon species of choice and plant provenance.
Material assets including the architectural and archaeological heritage <i>Gifford</i>	High	Assessment of the archaeological potential of the site
		Assessment of potential impacts upon archaeological remains
		Suggestions for further archaeological investigations
		Impact upon listed buildings e.g. Owletts
Landscape and visual environment <i>The Landscape Partnership</i>	High	Historic field boundaries
		Character and quality of the Kent Downs AONB
		North Downs Special Landscape Area
		Metropolitan Green Belt
		Landscape features hedgerows, veteran trees
		Landscape character
		Views from surrounding properties and public rights of way towards the site
Views from the site surrounding area (particularly long distance views)		
Policy Context <i>The Landscape Partnership</i>	High	Views from CTRL and A2
		International designations/policies
		National designations/policies/PPG's
		Regional Planning Guidance and policies emerging from the LDF
		Structure plan policies and local plan policies
		Forestry policies

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