

GALLAGHER

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REPLY TO: 

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5th April 2005

Our ref: AJ/jms/ge778/04

David Hussell
Director of Development Services
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
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Cambridge CB3 6EA

For the attention of John Pym

Dear John

ARBURY CAMP, CAMBRIDGE – REMOVAL OF HEDGEROWS, MARCH 2005

I refer to your letter dated 31st March 2005 in connection with the work that has been done to the hedges on the Arbury Camp site at Kings Hedges Road. Our Project Engineer, Steve Riley, wrote to you about this on 30th March 2005 to explain the circumstances.

Steve tells me that initial contact was made with your Council by letter dated 17th January 2005 with a view to cutting and trimming hedges where this was required to implement the accesses from Kings Hedges Road, for which full Planning Permission was granted last year. Quotations were sought from contractors at this time. An initial site meeting with Officers from your Council, the County Council and our landscaping and ecology consultants took place on 4th February 2005. The scope of works was discussed and as a result the extent of hedge cutting on the site was reduced and a revised plan submitted to your Council.

Gallagher appointed contractors in mid-February and a second site meeting took place on 23rd February 2005 with the same people as before and with the contractor in attendance, who was to start work as soon as possible after the meeting.

The earliest the contractor could mobilise to start work following this second meeting late in February was the week commencing 7th March 2005 and the intention was to finish during the week commencing 21st March 2005. He was told that no further cutting was to take place after the 25th March. The field hedge cutting was carried out first and completed during the first week with the cutting and shredding of the conifers following quickly after. The work to the remaining hedges was completed by 21st March, although the shredding of the arisings has continued since the Easter break.

The contractor tells us that he has flayed the hedges which has left them in an untidy state, and that he would normally go back over the work and tidy it with a tractor mounted saw. However, due to the adverse reaction to the work, Steve Riley has instructed the contractor not to undertake any further trimming. Steve will be inspecting the site tomorrow, Wednesday 6th April.

The latest version of the Biodiversity and Ecological Management Plan was produced by CPM consultants on 23rd February 2005 and will be submitted for approval under the requirements of a Condition to be attached to the Outline Planning Permission when issued. Details of landscaping for the accesses were submitted to you on 1st March 2005 for discharge under the Conditions attached to the Planning Permissions (S/1956/02/F and S/0352/03/F).

Your letter refers to grass cutting in the Management Plan but the document confirms that only a limited range of common birds were found to utilise the site's hedges and eastern rough grassland areas for nesting and that nesting usually occurs between March and the end of July. Although the hedge cutting work took place during early to mid-March at the beginning of the nesting season, the exceptionally cold weather at that time will have minimised any disturbance to birdlife.

As you will see from the account given above every reasonable effort was made by our contract engineer to involve our ecological and landscaping consultants and the Council's specialist officers prior to the work being carried out, which was unfortunately thereafter delayed following the second meeting which could not be held until late February. The works were however carried out as soon as possible in March to minimise any disturbance to birdlife.

However, please accept my reassurance that in future our consultants will continue to be made aware of the requirements of the Management Plan, and other strategies and documents, which have been prepared for this site.

Yours sincerely

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cc. Steve Riley
Andy Lawson