



04 March 2013

For the attention of E Gilbert
Development Control
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall
Royal Tunbridge Wells
TN1 1RS

Kent Wildlife Trust
Tyland Barn
Sandling, Maidstone
Kent ME14 3BD



Dear Ellen

Benenden Hospital

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the revised details submitted recently in support of this planning application.

The Local Wildlife Site (LWS) Management Plan has been extensively adjusted to reflect the findings of the Autumn 2012 fungal survey. I can commend all of those changes.

The 2012 survey has demonstrated that Benenden Hospital LWS is more valuable than previously believed. The applicant's consultant is now more firmly of the belief that the Site would fulfil the criteria for it to be considered a Site of Special Scientific Interest (paragraph 4.3.6). The waxcap community is of national importance when judged against both the Reid classification (para 4.3.4) and the JNCC Guideline (para 4.3.5).

In consequence, the Council's decision on this planning application must, in my opinion, seek to achieve four key objectives:

- It should require (by condition or legal agreement) implementation of the LWS Management Plan (including its monitoring and review arrangements);
- It should do nothing to undermine the Hospital Trust's continuing commitment to a sensitive grassland management regime;
- It should ensure that the housing developer is required to safeguard the grassland under its control and commit to the LWS Management Plan; and
- It should require arrangements to be put in place to ensure that future residents are made aware of the precious fungal community on their doorstep.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Nicholson
Planning & Conservation Officer



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