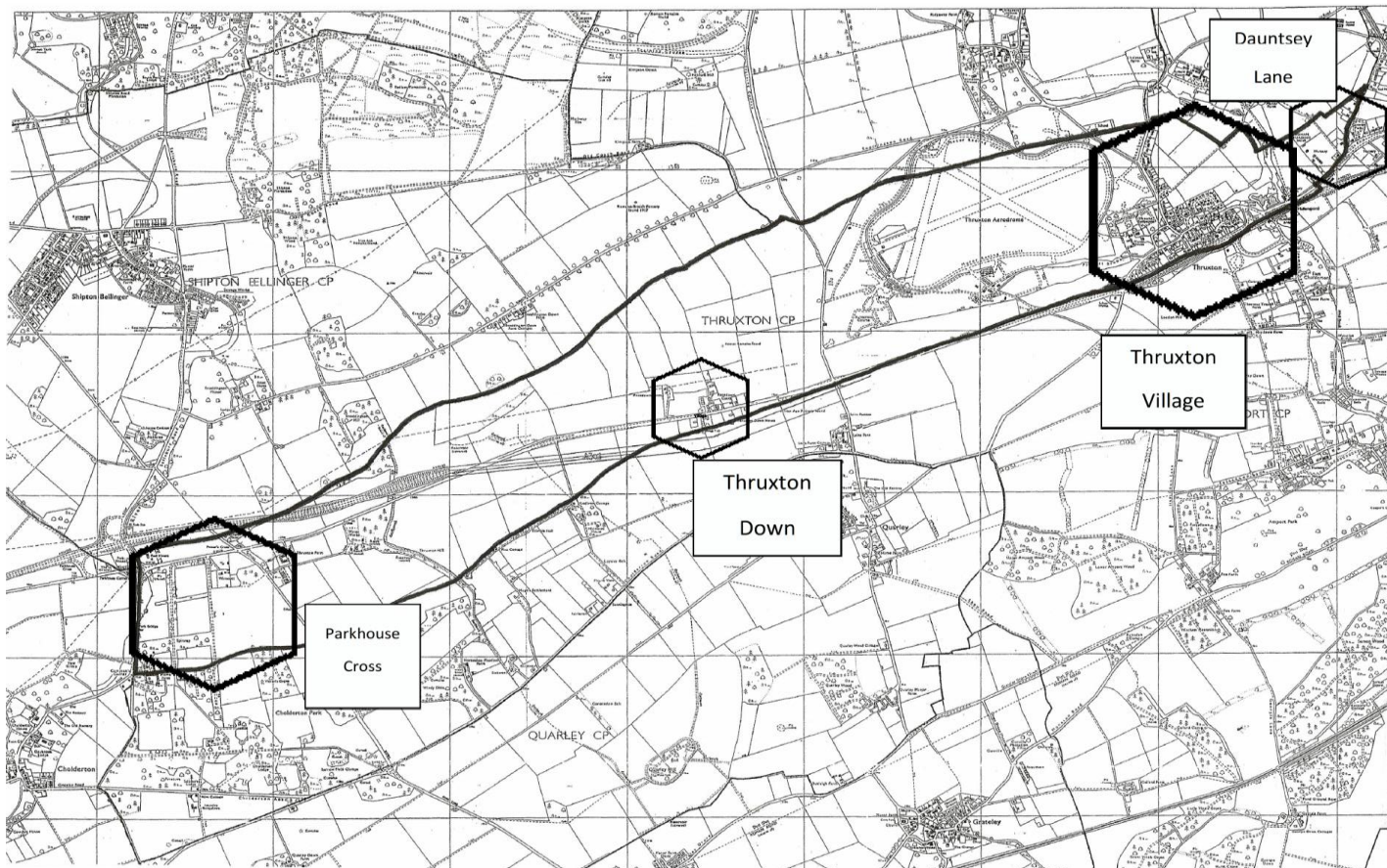


Thrupton Airfield and Sports Field



Thrupton Parish

Prepared August 2016

Last revised 24 October 2016 (v1.5)

Revised January 2017 (v 2.0)

Land appraisal

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Introduction

This document refers to a parcel of land with-in the Parish of Thruxton, in the County of Hampshire. The Parish is located in the North West corner of the County, bordering the County of Wiltshire¹. The Parish is approximately 4.50 miles long x 0.75 miles wide at its extremities. The area of Thruxton Airfield (within the Parish) and Sports Field comprise around 25% of the Parish land area. An overview of the circuit can be seen by clicking on one of the videos from Western Air Training below.

<https://youtu.be/zkZkB2RRl68>

<https://youtu.be/z8r6wyl8m68>

<https://youtu.be/yDqxZdITx6M>

<https://youtu.be/idGVe027F8>

<https://youtu.be/7QiIdqVDvXY>

Location

This discussion refers to the areas known as Thruxton Airfield and Thruxton Sports Field, which extend eastwards from The Ox Drove and Kimpton Lane to Stanbury Road. The Airfield extends beyond the northern Parish boundary to Snoddington Lane but for the purposes of this paper "Airfield" only relates to that section within the Thruxton Parish boundary. The Airfield is bounded to the South by the A303 road² for two thirds of its length. The remaining third is an isolated field that was Glebe (Church) land until well into the twentieth century and will be referred to as "The Glebe Land". The triangle of land between the Ox Drove and Kimpton Land will not be addressed further in this discussion as its nature and usage can be included with the Thruxton Down and Parkhouse Cross Appraisal.

The area grid reference(s)

The following are references for the intersection of the two active, runways of the Airfield that are aligned at 070°/250° Magnetic (paved) and 120°/310° Magnetic (grass):

¹ Area map 1 page 1

² Area map 1 page 1

Latitude 51° 12' 39"N
Longitude 1° 35' 56"W

National Grid reference SU 281458

Topography

At the eastern extremity of Thruxton Airfield and Sports Field, the land elevation is 92m AMSL (**A**bove **M**ean **S**ea **L**evel), rising to 94m AMSL on its western boundary on Kimpton lane and 97m at the high point along Snoddington Lane. The lowest point of the area is along the Pillhill Brook in its south eastern corner where it dips to below 80m.

Land Usage

The Sports Field is primarily a sports area used for Cricket and Football in their season. There is a children's play area and a hard surfaced parking area. The parking area is utilised by residents playing football but is also extensively used by parents dropping off and collecting their children from Kimpton School. There are current plans to improve and expand the car park to take more cars off the road waiting for children to exit the school. Native tree planting has been carried out recently to enhance the area's visual amenity. The field is accessible at all times and so serves as an informal recreation area as well as an organised sports venue. Many local residents use the field for dog walking.

The Sports Field is owned by the owner of the airfield and leased back to the Parish Council (peppercorn rent) who in turn leases it to the Three Villages Sports Trust. The Trust has been active since 2003 and is a registered charity.

The Three Villages Sports Trust is a registered Charity that exists to promote sport amongst the young people of Kimpton, Thruxton and Fyfield. Currently there are two football teams within the FA that play in the Sunday Morning Andover League. Kimpton, Thruxton and Fyfield. football club (KTF) use the Trust's ground as their home field and have built up a good reputation for a quality team over the past few seasons.

The Airfield [International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) code EGHO] has a mixture of fixed and rotary wing flying facilities managed by the licenced operator Western Air (Thruxton) Limited. Maintenance, fuelling and other ancillary services are available. It is the base for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance. The perimeter track also serves as a motor racing circuit operated by a subsidiary of the British Automobile Racing Club (BARC). Motor sports activities on the Airfield include:

- car, motorbike and truck racing on the circuit
- Experience events, opportunities to be driven in and to drive high performance vehicles round the circuit

-
- Track days, organised to promote specific vehicle marques
 - Skid Pan training
 - Motor cycle training
 - Go Karting on a dedicated track
 - Off road, 4x4 and autocross areas

On the southern side of the Airfield is an Industrial area (Thrupton Industrial Estate) based in a mixture of residual hangars and buildings from the original Royal Air Force (RAF) site and newer buildings added since the end of RAF occupation. In addition there is a waste management, recycling and landfill business operated in the southwestern corner of the Airfield.

Being an active airfield the majority of the land is closely mown grass inside and immediately adjacent to the perimeter track/racetrack. At a little more distant are "bunds" (large grass and shrub covered earth banks), built to alleviate noise pollution from the Airfield's activities.

A strip of land in the southeastern corner of the Airfield is a riparian area where the Pillhill Brook runs from a pipe that brings it from its source, in the fields to the west of the Airfield, to run into Thrupton Village below the Manor's "Snowdrop Field". There are Environmental Agency approved plans to change this area to improve Racetrack safety, to allow for more control over the Pillhill Brook flow in times of potential flooding and improve the wildlife habitat.

History

The ownership of the land that is now Thrupton Airfield and Sports Field is closely linked with that of Thrupton Manor until the Second World War. Prior to that the land has been agricultural for as far back as records exist (traceable to the Doomesday Book) and beyond. The RAF requisitioned the land for the Airfield in 1940. That requisitioned land included the Sports Field, the Glebe Land and the triangle of land bounded by the Ox Drove and Kimpton Lane. The airfield (and presumably the other areas of Ministry owned land) was leased in 1947. The current owner bought the Airfield, Ox Drove triangle and Glebe Land in 1959. Motor racing, using the RAF Airfield perimeter track, had been practiced from the early 1950s. This was resurfaced and established as a racing circuit in 1960. A high Court ruling in 1972 limits the number and nature of racing events that can be held at the Circuit.

Habitat & Wild Life

[Priority Habitat Map to be downloaded here.](#)

Much more needed here as the Airfield provides a unique (in this Parish) environment where a close mown grassland is largely untroubled by human presence. Look at surveys of similar sites?

Hedgerows and trees

Around Thruxton Airfield and Sports Field boundaries are mainly mixed species of hedgerows, principally hawthorne with bramble and a sprinkling of other plants.

Deep root plants such as hedgerows, trees and bushes are difficult to establish in the chalk grassland due to the sparse topsoil covering. The existing trees and hedgerows have been established over a long period.

Commercial usage

Commercial operations are:

There are a number of Commercial Enterprises based at the airfield including

- Western Air Training
- BARC
- Pug Performance Motor Sport
- Border Coach Works
- West Tuning
- MotaLita
- Norman White Norton
- Thruxton Racing Services
- Moto-Lita
- Knight Engineering
- Carrera Sport Ltd
- Martin & Walker
- Plasterboard Recycling
- Thruxton Motorsports
- PK Tyre Collection
- Trickett
- Sovereign Joinery
- German Auto Services
- Blakeney
- 999 South
- Border Coachworks
- Life Accessories
- Norman White
- Hodge Air
- Tintinit

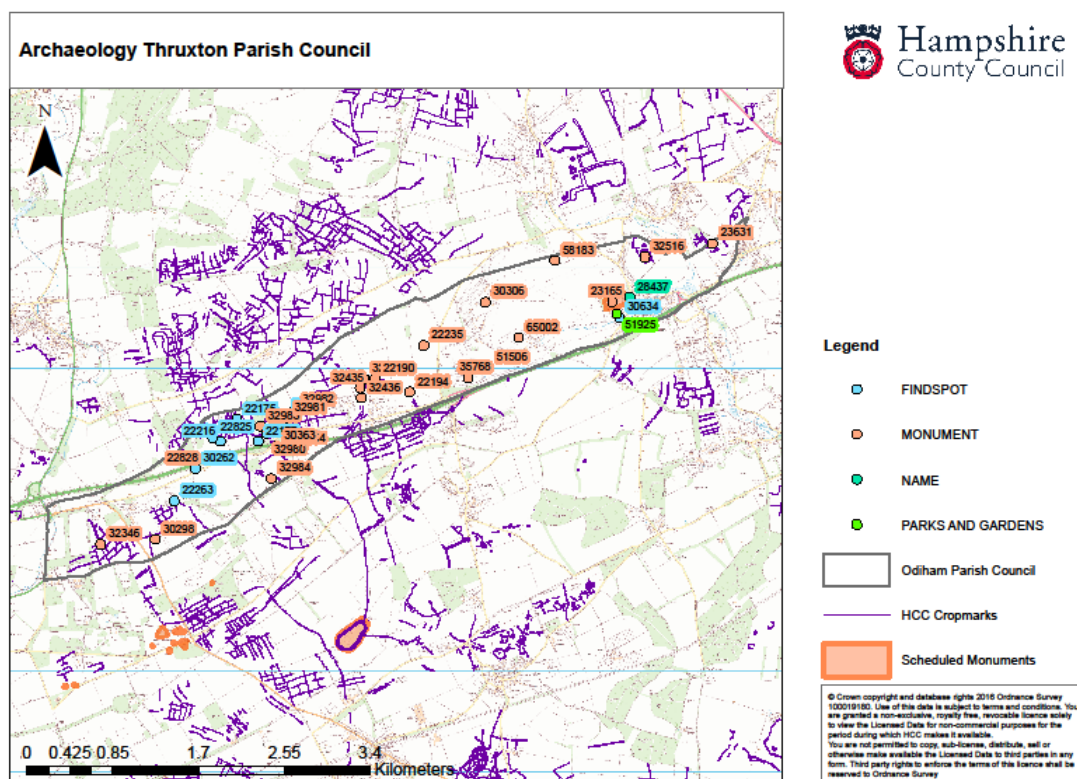
- Graytrack
- Heliworks
- Heliar
- Marsden
- HIOWAA
- Edmondson Aviation Coatings & Consultancy
- Recovair
- Composite Technology
- Aerofab
- Reborn Aviation

Historic Buildings

Hampshire County Council have not identified any significant buildings within the area being considered.

Monuments

In and around Thruxton Airfield and Sports Field Hampshire County Council (HCC) have identified several monuments, shown in brown on the map below.



Monuments:

Site: 30306

EVENT AIRFIELD Built Modern - 1941 to 1942

Thruxton Airfield began in construction in 1941 - troops were present from 225 Squadron RAF and Westland Lysanders during the construction process. The airfield officially opened in 1942 and became a base for both British troops from the Royal Airforce and American Troops from United States Army Airforce, the airfield was decommissioned in 1946. Large numbers of buildings are associated with this airfield that have been classified into nine separate areas of buildings.

MODERN EVENT

1) Observations during the stripping of topsoil, excavation of foundation trenches and ground leveling at Thruxton Airfield in 1991 failed to note any features of archaeological interest (1991).

SOURCE Thruxton Wartime Record Site Plan

Site: 35768 Lithic scatter **Parish:** Thruxton

SU 427400144900

Seven shards of probable Iron Age/Roman date found during field walking for evaluation. It is unlikely that these represent a settlement and more likely due to manuring.

EVENT LITHIC SCATTER Deposited Lower Paleolithic - - to 42 50000

A dense concentration of flint tools and debitage was found to the south of Thruxton Airport during field walking as part of an evaluation. Over struck flints were recovered with a particular concentration to the west of the centre of the study area. Early Iron Age - -800 to 409

Parish: Thruxton SU 427600145000

Two ditches were recorded during the watching brief. One was a wide linear feature with a V-shaped profile. Two pieces of worked flint were recovered from the fill; probably prehistoric in date. The second ditch was a wide curvilinear feature, with a flat bottom. A few pieces of worked flint were recovered from the ditch fill.

Watching Brief Modern - 1997 to 2004 Watching Brief by Wessex Archaeology between April and June 1997.

Site: 51506

Thruxton Airport, near Andover, Hampshire. An archaeological evaluation

DITCH 1994 Early Neolithic - -4000 to -801

10/11/2004.

EVENT PIT Unassigned Early Neolithic - Two pits were recorded during the watching brief. The first pit was a large oval feature located close to the second pit. The first pit had and possibly cut the second pit which contained ten sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery.

FIND ANIMAL REMAINS BONE

FIND BURNT FLINT

A watching brief was carried out by Albion Archaeology during the construction of noise reduction bunds at Thruxton Airport. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

SOURCE

Noise Reduction Bunds, Thruxton Airport, Andover, Hampshire: Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording and Reporting

Albion Archaeology 2008

Site List Report Inc. Events and Sources

Site: 65002 Thruxton Airfield Area 1 **Parish:** Thruxton SU 427900145300

EVENT AIRFIELD Built Area 1 of the Airfield contained the largest distribution of buildings and included amongst other buildings Barrack Blocks, the dinner room, officers' quarters, flight office and hangers.

EVENT AIRFIELD Built Modern - 1941 to 1942

Thruxton Airfield began in construction in 1941 - troops were present from 225 Squadron RAF and Westland Lysanders during the construction process. The airfield officially opened in 1942 and became a base for both British troops from the Royal Airforce and American Troops from United States Army Airforce, the airfield was decommissioned in 1946. Large numbers of buildings are associated with this airfield that have been classified into nine separate areas of buildings.

Site: 22235 – Thruxton Airfield and Sports Field

Map: SU 42495 0144270

Four Iron Age beehive pits were revealed in gas pipeline construction in 1969, produced a number of finds (B-D). Unassigned Early Iron Age. No other details.

Finds: Burnt flint – early iron age -800 to 42

Animal remains Bone – early iron age -800 to 42

Acknowledgements for contributions: (In no particular order)

Internet
The Parish Council
TVBC
Hampshire County Council
The committee
Thruxton Village Statement

Place check

To assist in the production of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, a Place Check review was carried out for the Airfield and is reproduced below.

Section: Thruxton Airfield and Circuit/Racetrack

Prepared by: Bill Brewer and Steve Counsell

Carried out: June 2016

A special place

[What makes this area of the Parish special or unique?](#)

Thruxton Airfield/Race Circuit is situated immediately to the west of Thruxton Village and abuts the Village Conservation Area. It extends from the bottom to the top of the Parish, extends into the adjacent Parish of Kimpton and accounts for circa 25% of the Thruxton Parish land area. The land now occupied by Thruxton Airfield was purchased by the Air Ministry in 1940 and was opened in 1941 as a satellite airfield for RAF Andover. It had previously been part of the Thruxton Manor Farm and the Manor was used as the Officers Mess during the War.

When the airfield became inactive at the end of the war, flying facilities were leased to the Wiltshire School of Flying in 1947 and there has been flying activity there ever since. The current owner purchased the site from the Air Ministry in 1959. The Manor and adjacent historical sites have been returned to private ownership

Light aircraft have been joined by gliders, helicopters, parachutists and parascenders at various times in the Airfield's post war usage. Western Air Training took over fixed wing aircraft training from the Wiltshire School of Flying in 1967 and a host of other companies are now based at Thruxton Airfield operating and maintaining light aircraft and helicopters. The Airfield is also the base of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance (HIOWAA).

The Inkpen Gliding Club moved to Thruxton in 1976 and was later renamed the Thruxton Gliding Club before gliding activity eventually ceased in 1995. The RSA Parachuting Club operated at the airfield from 1973 until 1989 but a fatal accident involving a helicopter in 1988 highlighted the danger of continuing to parachute onto a busy airfield.

Other activities around the airfield that safely coexist with flying include auto-cross, go-carting, skid-pan and motorcycle rider training. A small industrial estate with a recycling station has also grown up in the group of old RAF buildings to the southeast of the site. A major landfill company "Earthline" have a symbiotic relationship with the Airfield that is discussed below.

Access to the site is either from the lane bounding the Airfield to the west or from the A303 junction at the western end of Thruxton Village and then using the Airfield's private road. There are emergency vehicle access gates at strategic points around the site's periphery. There is no need for Airfield/Racetrack traffic to use the Village Roads and generally it does not cause a problem although there are still incidents of "lost" spectators and lorry drivers ignoring the signs on the A303.





Views of the Airfield from the southeast and southwest. The view from the southwest shows the southern boundary of the Parish along the A303 and the Airfield abutting Thruxton Village and its Conservation Area. It also shows the green spaces between the neighbouring villages of Kimpton (to the north) and Fyfield (to the east).

The view from the southwest is used with the kind permission of the Airfield owner.

Why does it look the way it does?

Thirty years ago the Airfield had little visual impact other than being visible on a relatively flat area of previous farmland to the north of the A303 and slightly raised above Thruxton Village. The Pillhill Brook runs within the boundary of the site in a valley along its southern edge. The spring sources of the Brook are to the west of the Airfield and are supplemented by springs along the length of the valley through Thruxton Village to Mullens Pond. The volume of flow in this "winterbourne" is dependent on seasonal rainfall but through the centre of Thruxton Village it generally runs from Christmas to the end of July. The Brook runs in a culvert from its source to a point just east of the original RAF buildings that now form the industrial area at the southern edge of the site. From that point it runs naturally to Mullens Pond. With the cooperation of the Airfield owner the fields in the south eastern corner of the site have been allowed to flood in high water table conditions to alleviate flooding or potential flooding through Thruxton Village.

In the last twenty years large "bunds" (banks composed of cleaned, ground and graded building waste with a top soil and vegetation covering) have been constructed round most of the periphery of the site with planning and Environmental Agency (EA) approval. These serve a number of purposes; they are noise abatement measures deflecting/absorbing motorsport and ground based aircraft noise, provide elevated spectator areas, in some areas provide additional motorsport safety features and are a profitable commercial waste disposal/landfill venture. Where they are visible these now present a uniform grassy bank aspect with bushes and plant cover. The majority of the site

is bound by well maintained mixed hedging and the nature of what is behind these hedges is not immediately evident.



Main Entrance



Road from village to Industrial Estate



What local activities or events have made it like this?

World War 2 necessitated the building of the Airfield on what had previously been farmland, commercial endeavour has continued its use as a viable airfield. The desire for recreational motorsports has stimulated an adjunct to the Airfields primary purpose and commercial pressures, to make best use of the inherited wartime infrastructure, have given rise to the Industrial usage of existing buildings. As these become obsolete or uneconomic to maintain it is only to be expected that they will be replaced and supplemented. Increasing sensitivity to noise nuisance and abatement has led to the symbiotic relationship with the recycling/landfill operator that also increases the utility of otherwise unproductive land giving elevated spectator viewing areas.



Industrial Estate - Inherited wartime units



Earthline – building waste recycling



Why do we like this place?

Some Parishioners do not like the Airfield and Racetrack, some love it and others are ambivalent but there are no known residents who have lived in the Parish for longer than the Airfield has existed or been used as a racetrack. Thus it has been a fact of life known to residents before they took up occupation.

The reasons for disliking the Airfield arise principally from noise. Race and Practice day noise, unsilenced testing days and rotary wing aircraft unnecessarily overflying the Village are sources of irritation.

The story of motor racing at Thruxton began in 1950 for motorcycles and in 1952 for cars. The first to users of the airfield were the Southampton and District Motor Cycle Club. They used parts of the perimeter and sections of the runways for their meetings. Motorcycle racing continued right through until 1965 when the condition of the circuit became poor. However, the real history of Thruxton circuit as we know it today began when the British Automobile Racing Club (BARC) started looking for a permanent venue to replace Goodwood in 1966 and entered into negotiations with the owner of the airfield. By 1968, the new 2.356 mile perimeter circuit was resurfaced, and spectator banks, pits and race-control buildings were built. The first race meeting was held on the new circuit on 17 March 1968 and there were a total of eight car and seven motorcycle meetings in this first season.

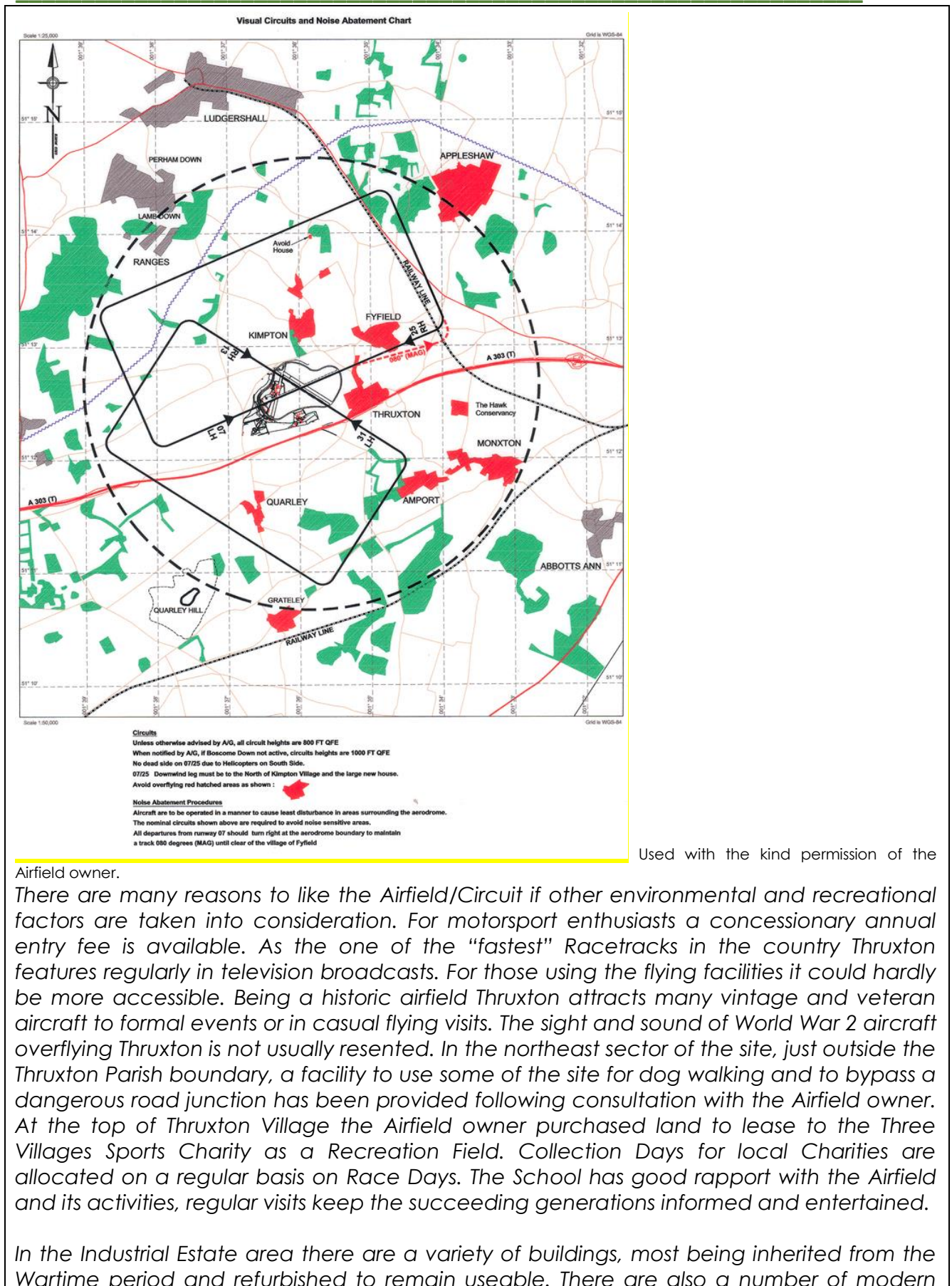
In the summer of 1970 Hampshire County Council challenged the use of the Airfield perimeter track as a racing circuit. A public enquiry was held that lasted 22 days but the decision of the Minister was not announced until March 1972 when his ruling limited racing to 21 days per year, even though the inquiry inspector recommended a maximum of 12 days. Immediately, a small group of local objectors announced plans to continue their attempts to have use of the circuit further reduced. Fearing complete closure of the circuit, BARC reached an out-of-court settlement limiting racing to 12 days a year, a situation that remains to this day. The Thruxton and District Protection Society is still actively opposing additional motor racing at the circuit and consults the surrounding six parish councils to police and when necessary take up issues as they arise. This group meet with the owner

annually.

Whilst the number of race days has remained at 12, the number of Corporate Days staged have increased considerably, all of which require the use of the circuit. As the cars involved are road silenced, there has been relatively little cause for complaints of noise from the village. In 2008/9, additional banking was erected on that part of the racetrack directly overlooking Kimpton Church and school, which has reduced noise levels at both places. Since that time additional banking has been constructed around the circuit and noise levels have significantly reduced due to this and the fact that modern racing cars are much quieter than they used to be mainly due to the introduction of turbo charging. Currently (June 2016) a very large operation to increase bank height and level off a large part of the airfield to be used for corporate entertaining in the future. The site will host mobile/temporary vendors and is not seen as a development of buildings.

In addition, the current owners are addressing the safety problem on Church Corner that has been the site of three accidents recently, thankfully non-fatal. It is the intention to dramatically improve the run off from this corner by building up the area so that it does not run downhill to the trees. Also to erect barriers at the end of the run off – this is a large long term project. To complete this work it will be necessary to move Pillhill Brook and introduce further underground pipework. This has the blessing of the Environmental Agency as the owner will be constructing holding ponds and sluice gates to control the flow of water. This action will not affect the normal flow of water through the village but will be very useful in times of flooding as the water into the village can be reduced to alleviate flooding. An existing borehole is in very little use at the circuit but there may be a small water treatment plant built (subject to permission) however, this will have no effect on water flow of the brook.

Flying activity has reached a fairly steady level but with more helicopter activity. Helicopters overflying the village have caused annoyance. Thruxton Air Traffic Control (772352) will remind pilots that they are required to route away from residential houses if specific incidents are reported. Despite this aircraft overflying residential areas still continues in contravention of the airfield's noise abatement policies (see the summary sketch below).



buildings being used including a plasterboard recycling service and the famous Mota Lita steering wheel and flying jacket manufacturers.

The owner currently rents the older buildings to a range of small "start-up" style companies at very low rent therefore helping the local economy and start-up businesses. Many of these buildings are coming to the end of their useful life so replacement will be necessary in the not too distant future. None of these building are listed. A number of small businesses operate on the estate, which are more or less one-man-operations

In environmental terms the large areas of grass, woodland, hedgerows and to a lesser extent the riparian area along the Pillhill Brook, all of which is little disturbed by human activity, provide diverse wildlife habitats.

What can we make more of/What potential is there to enhance the place?

Western Air Training provides professional pilot training for fixed wing and rotary aircraft and have a busy operation based from the main 'terminal' building. This building was originally a second world war Control Tower and operation but has been recently greatly improved both in the access, offices and the restaurant that serves the whole airfield including pilots and staff. The control tower may be increased in height at a later date subject to planning permission. There are no listed buildings on the site.

In 2008 the Hampshire Air Ambulance Service was formed stationed on the airfield, and its yellow helicopter in now a familiar feature as it speeds to whatever emergency it has been summoned. Considerable investment on the facility is continuing to provide a permanent and state of the art facility. On many "call outs" doctors now fly with paramedics and the helicopter can be used right over Hampshire and IOW or if necessary Wiltshire and beyond.

The owner has no plans to reduce activity on the Circuit/Airfield. Flying, both fixed and rotary wing is planned to continue as well as providing driving experiences such as the skid pan, Go Kart racing and 4x4 driving.

The relationship with BARC goes back to 1967 and there are no plans to change it. The owner has an agreement with BARC that is not a lease but is a legal agreement for the provision of services and profits. There are no plans to increase unsilenced racing activity.

A well-connected, accessible and welcoming place

How accessible is the place? What limits how easy it is to get around?

This is an operational Airfield and Racetrack, public access is necessarily restricted by safety considerations of operation. The Industrial Estate operates independently and can be accessed at all times via the p. Parishioners and the public at large, although not publicised, are granted permissive access along this transport.

How understandable is the place? Does anything make it confusing?

This is a commercial site with public access that is controlled by the owning organisation. Signage from and the temporary AA signs prior to and on race days help to keep traffic out of Thruxton Village.

How well does the parking work?

This is a commercial site with public access that is controlled by the owning organisation. Parking is controlled and has never been shown to be inadequate.

How can the place be made more accessible and more welcoming?

Improvement of the public highway/lane to the west of the Airfield would improve vehicular access. The use of the lane and elsewhere might reduce individual personal transport use.

A safe and pleasant place

What makes this place – and its street(s) and public spaces – safe and pleasant? What detracts from this?
Pleasant is in the eyes of the beholder. To an aviation or motor sport participant/enthusiast it is heaven. To a non-enthusiast or alternative persuasion it is tolerable as it is.

How successful are the streets and spaces underfoot? What could be improved?

Not applicable.

How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?

Possibly by returning it to agricultural use, but an extremely unrealistic eventuality and unlikely to happen.

How do people enjoy nature here? What is missing?

As a large area, circa 600 acres of green space with very limited controlled public access it is a haven for wildlife population. Due to the constrained public access enjoyment of the open spaces are limited and nature by their presence.

A planet-friendly place

What makes this place planet-friendly? How are scarce resources wasted?

If the use of aviation and motor fuel for recreational purposes is considered un-planet friendly then the use of fuel in all its forms is a human necessity.

Alternatives to the private car and local access issues

Public transport on Race Days might be a way of reducing some private transport usage.

What other features makes the place planet-friendly?

See the comments above and note that there is an intention to improve water management of the Ponds, lagoons and sluices with the approval of the EA to help better control of local flooding risk. This will provide a sheltered habitat for wildlife.

Any other considerations that may be relevant?

Earthline will continue to operate and are actively building the new areas of ground referred to in the comments. The operation will last another four years at the least.

Fly tipping can be an issue especially on the Western side of the circuit. The owner has erected concrete barriers to reduce the nuisance but it is still an issue. There seems to be no issue on the road from the village to Earthline at the moment.

The owner has a very long and amicable relationship with the Parish Council and the village as a whole. The Villages Sports Trust field for the benefit of the village.

This area is an integral part of the Parish and brings a great sense of identity to it. It's history, although with the village. The Parish benefits from its existence in economic terms and the detrimental noise issue.