

# Conservation Update

Spring 2021

Dear all,

The primary purpose of Conservation Update is to communicate conservation and sustainability matters to Ministry of Defence (MOD) Conservation Groups and to reach out to others involved in these disciplines across the MOD estate. Please therefore circulate this document to all Conservation Group members and anyone else you feel may be interested.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, access to MOD land is currently under the discretion of the Head of Establishment (HOE) on a site by site basis. We ask that you seek advice from the HOE before conducting any conservation work on the estate. Please also continue to adhere to specific [government guidelines](#) which are regularly changing. It remains essential that we continue to be guided by the latest government advice when carrying out activity across the Defence estate.

Conservation Groups are remaining in contact through online meetings and where this is not possible, Chairmen have been collecting important updates and reports from members and communicating these via email as a way of keeping everyone up to date.

Your adherence to the guidance is greatly appreciated and as ever, we highly value the input and support from our Conservation Groups and we will endeavor to keep Conservation Groups updated as and when the guidance changes.

Richard Brooks  
Principal Environmental Support & Compliance



## Joint Service Publication (JSP) 850: Infrastructure and Estate Policy – MOD Conservation Groups

Joint Service Publications are an authoritative series of instructional and regulatory guidance superseding both MOD manuals and numerous single-service publications and covering a wide variety of subjects, both administrative and technical with Defence-wide applicability.

The scope of the JSP 850 Infrastructure and Estate Policy is to provide the mandated framework for all Defence infrastructure and estate outputs. The JSP 850 was published in October 2018 as a single document output to rationalise and consolidate several interrelated JSPs.

### JSP 850 – A bit of background:

A DIO internal review concluded that elements of the JSP 850 should be refreshed to provide a more concise overarching Asset Management Policy. In November 2018, FMC issued a renewed DIO tasking to develop JSP 850 into Parts 1 and 2. The DIO want to see policy that facilitates best practice asset management, involves and engages the audience and meets all the requirements of delivering Defence capabilities now and into the future. So, the aim of JSP 850 is to provide the policy and direction applicable to all functions of property and estate management including those attributable to sustainable development and environmental compliance.

Part 1 provides the policy framework and the all-embracing direction within which the estate must be operated, i.e. we will comply with legislation. The direction must be followed and is in accordance with statute and policy mandated by Defence or on Defence by UK Government. The policy contains the overarching infrastructure and estate management principles, direction and mandates applicable to the whole lifecycle of the Defence Estate and its assets, meeting the objectives set by overarching Defence strategy and setting the framework within which the guidance and standards in Part 2 operate.

Part 2 provides the detail of `what` and `how` operations should be conducted. This section gives detailed guidance and standards relating to the operation of the Defence Estate.

The JSP 850 has links to other relevant JSPs, some of which may be published by different Defence Authorities. Where particular dependencies exist, these other Defence Authorities have been consulted in the formulation of the policy detailed in the publication.

JSP 850's role is to provide the one source of direction regarding the operation of the Defence Estate and its Infrastructure ensuring control measures are in place for



Stone curlew nest survey

compliance and assurance. It will become `The one-stop shop` for all Defence infrastructure and estate policy and guidance and hosted on the Knowledge In Defence (KiD) platform.

### To whom does JSP 850 apply?

JSP 850 applies to all users, operators, and delivery agents of the Defence Estate and is applicable to all stakeholders within the Defence Infrastructure and Estate. This includes all Military Commands, Enabling Organisations and Contractors in support of MOD.

The initial [JSP850 update](#) became available on the KiD digital platform in December 2020 (accessible to internal MOD personnel). Failure to adhere to JSP 850 in the operation, use, delivery and management of Defence Infrastructure and Estate assets and its related services will be a failure to meet policy

As content continues to be created and developed, DIO Estate Strategy will work towards a second updated release, scheduled for 01 April 2021. For further detailed information, internal MOD personnel can see: [JSP850 Webinar Recording](#) – starts at 03:47 mins

### JSP 850 and Conservation Groups

Under the [JSP 850 Part 2 Standards and Guidance, Use, Maintain and Operate section](#), Estate Management, you can find a chapter on MOD Conservation Groups, which identifies the purpose and applicability for MOD Personnel and Industry Partners towards MOD Conservation Groups on the Defence Estate both in the UK and overseas.

The section outlines the guidance and how MOD Conservation Groups, with a breadth of expert local knowledge and vital links with the Statutory Bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations, support the Department in delivering its statutory and policy obligations for a Sustainable Estate. MOD Conservation Groups advise on and assist with monitoring, maintaining and enhancing historic and natural environment assets. MOD Conservation Groups shall be mandatory for all sites on the Defence Estate with significant historic or natural environment assets.

*Teresa James*  
Estate Asset Policy  
Defence Infrastructure Organisation



Dreamers Bay, Cyprus

## Ruralink

Service leavers have mixed emotions about the Training Estate. But they all have stories to tell... and most of those stories involve the power of nature. For instance, everyone remembers a night spent freezing in a large puddle wrapped in a sodden sleeping bag listening to the trees creaking above them. For some, this is but the first of a career-long series of increasingly positive interactions with the Training Estate and its natural wonders and many go on to volunteer on environmental conservation projects around the globe. But what members of Conservation Groups often do not realise is that, when the time comes to move on, it is possible to actually earn a living in conservation too.



### Gateway Jobs

Ruralink works to create sustainable career pathways for resettling personnel across the land-based sector. As well as environmental conservation, this includes the huge range of careers in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and land-management. In all cases, the "Gateway Job" is key, enabling a service-leaver to bring their existing (military) skills to bear whilst learning about their new career.

### Rural Careers Insight Days

Ruralink showcases these careers, explains how to prepare for them, what qualifications are needed and signposts Gateway Jobs at "Rural Careers Insight Days". These are currently being hosted online with the next one planned for 27 May 2021. For more information you can visit [ruralink.org.uk/insight-days](https://ruralink.org.uk/insight-days).

### The Rural List

A community of interested employers also supports The Rural List which meets monthly. This too is currently running online but will hopefully soon revert to meeting in regional bars where resettling personnel can relax and form longlasting friendships to support them into their new careers on the land. See [www.linkedin.com/company/the-rural-list](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-rural-list).



Ruralink volunteer group at the River Avon

Anyone interested in supporting or participating in future events can find out more via [ruralink.org.uk/building-experience](https://ruralink.org.uk/building-experience). Any Conservation Group wishing to host an experience day is welcome to get in contact via [volunteering@ruralink.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ruralink.org.uk). Service leavers interested in finding out more about potential careers on the land are very welcome to get in touch with Ruralink – just scan the QR code or email Fiona Galbraith at: [info@ruralink.org.uk](mailto:info@ruralink.org.uk)



### Conservation Group Grant

The Conservation Group Grant consists of £10,000 of Conservation Stewardship Funding which has been put aside for the sole use of MOD Conservation Groups. If your Conservation Group requires any tools, equipment or other items that may facilitate the completion of a conservation project at your site then your Chairperson can bid for monies from the Conservation Group Grant.

As we are now into the next financial year the fund has renewed for 2021/22 therefore we are encouraging Conservation Groups to apply for a grant. Over the last year the Conservation Group Grant has been used to purchase barn owl nest boxes, wildflower seed for the improvement of pollinator habitat, bird rings, trail cameras, invertebrate surveying equipment and bat detectors for surveying foraging bats.

To apply for a grant, the Conservation Group Chairperson can email [DIO-ConservationGroups@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DIO-ConservationGroups@mod.gov.uk) to request an application form. Alternatively, the application form can be found on our Conservation Groups Sharepoint page (add link). The Conservation Groups Team can offer advice on potential grant applications so please get in contact if you require any assistance.

In addition to the Conservation Group grant, we have a separate grant fund available for conservation projects which will benefit pollinators. If you are a Conservation Group with a project in mind that will benefit pollinator species, please do get in touch and the team will be more than happy to assist.

## Celebrating the Sanctuary Awards 2020

On the 16 March 2021, we hosted the first ever virtual Sanctuary Awards ceremony. The Sanctuary Awards have been showcasing outstanding sustainability and conservation efforts across the MOD estate since 1991, celebrating the achievements of teams and individuals in the UK and overseas. Whilst the awards ceremony is usually held at MOD Main Building, the Covid-19 restrictions meant that the 2020 ceremony had to be rescheduled and delivered virtually in March 2021. The awards were presented by the Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin MP and Lt Gen Richard Nugee, MOD's Climate Change and Sustainability Review Lead. Julia Powell and Richard Brooks hosted the ceremony, as part of their roles as both members of the Sanctuary Awards judging panel and the Sanctuary magazine editorial board.



Lt Gen Nugee presenting the Sanctuary Awards 2020 virtual ceremony

The Sanctuary Awards categories were refreshed for 2020 to reflect the MOD's sustainability agenda and to further demonstrate MOD's commitment to its climate change, environmental and sustainability goals. Every year, the winners of each category are also considered for the Silver Otter and Sustainable Business Awards. We are delighted to share the Sanctuary Awards 2020 winning and highly commended projects with you and the team would like to extend their congratulations.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Social Value, Community and Heritage Award</b>         | Winner - The Restoration of Chicksands' Historic Walled Garden Project<br>Highly commended - Be Seen Be Safer, RAF Shawbury                                |
| <b>Environmental Protection &amp; Enhancement Award</b>   | Winner - The Curlew Headstart Project<br>Highly Commended - Reintroduction of the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly Project                                       |
| <b>Sustainable Procurement Award</b>                      | Winner - Corrugated Board for use in Military Packaging Project  |
| <b>Individual Achievement Award</b>                       | Winner - Sgt Ryan Duffy, RAF Brize Norton<br>Highly Commended - Rebecca Wooldridge, Panthera<br>Highly Commended - Peter Feakes, STANTA Conservation Group |
| <b>Energy, Low Carbon &amp; Resource Efficiency Award</b> | Winner - Combined Heat and Power Plant, HMNB Portsmouth<br>Highly Commended - Software Defined Electricity   |
| <b>Sustainable Construction Award</b>                     | Winner- The Princess Royal and Victory Jetties Project, HMNB Portsmouth<br>Highly Commended - Westdown Camp's Modular Build Project                        |
| <b>Silver Otter Trophy</b>                                | The Restoration of Chicksands' Historic Walled Garden Project  |
| <b>Sustainable Business Award</b>                         | The Princess Royal and Victory Jetties Project, HMNB Portsmouth  |



The Chicksands walled garden restoration project, winner of the Silver Otter Trophy

### Sanctuary 2021

Sanctuary 2021 will see the 30th anniversary of the Awards and the 50th edition of the magazine. If you would like to nominate a project or individual for a 2021 Sanctuary Award or if you would like to feature a project in the 2021 Sanctuary magazine by authoring an article, then please get in touch. The Team will be sending out the calling notices at the end of May 2021 which will contain all the details needed.

If you would like to learn more about the Sanctuary Awards or magazine, you can contact the team at: [DIO-Sanctuary@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DIO-Sanctuary@mod.gov.uk). You can read further about the 2020 winning and highly commended projects in the 2020 [Sanctuary magazine](#).

## Conservation Snippets

### Did you spot any spawn?

You can help collect data on the location of frog and toad spawn across the country by taking part in the [Freshwater Habitats Trust's PondNet Spawn Survey for 2021](#), running from January-May. Frogs and toads lay their spawn in the early Spring. You may have spotted frog or toad spawn in a pond within your MOD establishment, within the local community or simply in a garden pond. To register your findings just follow the link above to fill in the survey form. The data collected will be fed into the wider WaterNet database where it becomes freely available to Government bodies, NGOs and local citizens who are able to feed it into important local wildlife plans and other surveys.



### The importance of biological recording and [iRecord](#).

iRecord is a website and app that enables you to get involved with biological recording of UK species, making a real contribution to science and conservation. iRecord enables you to upload your species sightings including GPS coordinates of its location, descriptions relating to abundance and life stage, photographs and other information, providing scientists with new biodiversity data that contributes to both nature conservation, planning, research and education and supports research and decision making at local and national levels. During 2019 over 2 million records were made available via iRecord. You can download iRecord by clicking the button.

### Awe walks

For those of us living under lockdown, psychologist Virginia Strum recommends awe walks. These are walks during which you deliberately look out for things to be amazed by which can boost your emotional wellbeing. You don't have to travel to spectacular scenery: awe walks can work just as well in a city as out in nature. This could be from the complex structure of fallen leaves to the wondering of how we managed to build such an impressive building. The study, published in the journal *Emotion*, found that older adults who took 15-minute "awe walks" for eight weeks said they felt more positive emotions and less distress in their daily lives. For more information listen to the recent podcast from BBC World Service Health Check titled '[the first year of the pandemic](#)'.



### How to do a flower insect timed count (FIT)

[This video](#) from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust shows you how to conduct a flower insect timed count (FIT). FIT counts are organised by the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme, you can download the FIT count recording sheet and find more information on how to perform one [here](#).

### Take part in the British Trust for Ornithology's '[Nesting Neighbours](#)' project

It is that time of year where we are beginning to see birds nesting in our nest boxes. To take part in 'nesting neighbours' all you need to do is monitor your nest boxes at regular intervals throughout the season and record what happens! BTO want to know about both successful and unsuccessful nests as well as nest boxes that are not used, it is all useful information. Keep an eye out for second broods as well. Please note that due to differing legislation, it is necessary to apply for licence prior to participating in Nesting Neighbours if you are in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

### Oil beetle recording scheme

The National Oil Beetle Recording Scheme collates records for oil beetles and allies in the family Meloidae, of which there are 11 UK species. The scheme was established in February 2021. Oil beetles have an extraordinary life cycle that is intricately linked with solitary bees. Such specialised life cycles make the oil beetle particularly vulnerable to environmental change with 3 of the UK's oil beetles now presumed extinct. Keep an eye out for oil beetles and record your sightings using the iRecord app. [You can find out more information here.](#)



### [National Gardening Week](#) starts 27th April

National Gardening week is the nation's biggest celebration of gardening and raises awareness of the difference that gardens and gardening can make to the lives of everyone in the UK. It inspires more people to experience the joy of growing and creating beautiful green spaces which benefit both nature and wildlife as well as our physical and mental wellbeing.

### How to make a habitat for ground nesting bees

Bees are incredibly important pollinating insects. Ground nesting or mining bees are solitary bees that create underground galleries, with queens living individually and raising their own young. The entrances to the nests are small piles or patches of bare soil. Several females may nest in the same area. Ground nesting bees are docile and unlikely to sting! [Using a few simple materials](#), you can attract some of these beneficial insects to your garden or local area.

## Bird ringing highlights from across the estate

Bird ringing generates information on the survival, productivity and movements of birds, helping us to understand why populations are changing. Ringing data make a major contribution to the study of bird population changes and to our understanding of species declines. Bird populations are determined by the number of fledglings raised and the survival of both juveniles and adults. MOD bird ringers collect this important data across the Defence estate.



Despite the constraints of the Covid-19 restrictions, some bird ringing activity was able to occur across the estate and we would like to share some of the highlights of the season with you.

On Salisbury Plain, the ringing highlights of 2020 included the capture of a long-eared owl, a nightjar and a re-trapped meadow pipit which was originally ringed in Iceland! It has also been reported that blackcap and whitethroat numbers had seen a general increase on Salisbury Plain this year.

Jill Warwick from the East Dales Ringing Group recorded the highest ever number of birds processed in 2020 with 3602 birds having been ringed. The most ever great tits (102) and chaffinch (69) were ringed this year which could be put down to an earlier start, along with the tree pipit sound lure which had a short phrase reminiscent of the 'pink' call of chaffinch. The East Dales ringing group put their success with thrush capture in Autumn down to the use of elevator nets (a technique borrowed from Swedish ringers). Other species of note included warblers, thrushes and pipits.

At RAF Honington, ringer Lee Barber noted red listed skylark, woodcock and grey partridge to be present on site. Owls were also present in good numbers and all 5 resident species were caught by Lee, with little owls being the most numerous! The main species caught during dazzling sessions at RAF Honington were skylark, grey partridge and meadow pipit.

At Foulness, captures of note included a pied flycatcher on 31st August, coinciding with a large number on the east coast over the previous week and two cetti's warblers on 6th September which are resident close to the ringing site.

MOD Bicester Garisson is of particular note for its breeding warblers which is thought to be reflective of the excellent mix of scrub and rough grassland that the site boasts. Seven different warbler species were ringed this year and proven to breed on site (blackcap, chiffchaff, common whitethroat, garden warbler, grasshopper warbler, lesser whitethroat and willow warbler). Bicester Garisson have been carrying out habitat management to improve the site for nightingales in the hope that this species will continue to breed on site.

At Kircudbright, an area of fairly steep cliffs dropping to rocky shore enabled ringer Ed Tooth to catch 13 storm petrels across 2 visits. A particularly prosperous catch of 9 birds was made on one night. Overall there have been some great captures and highly valuable data on bird species and their survival. All MOD bird ringing data is sent to the local record centre and used to contribute to future management plans.

Having shared the ringing season highlights, we would like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to Maj (ret'd) Tony Crease, a highly respected bird ringing trainer for the British Trust for Ornithology and valued Conservation Group chairman who sadly passed away earlier this year. Tony was known nationally for his commitment to training new ringers. For 28 years Tony planned and led Operation Auk, the annual trip to Cape Wrath Ranges to carry out the Environmental Impact Survey, ringing over 55,000 seabirds, contributing to a variety of research projects. We would like to celebrate Tony's considerable achievements and contribution to both bird ringing and conservation.

Lesser whitethroat © Paul Watts



Grasshopper warbler © Paul Watts



Nest of eggs © Jack Daw



## Defence Green Network

[The Defence Green Network](#) is for everyone in Defence with an interest in the environment and sustainability issues, bringing together TLB and local networks and providing news, events and progress within the Defence Climate Change and Sustainability agenda. Please note this site can only be accessed internally.

## Tick Awareness

As we approach the Spring and Summer months, please remember to be [tick aware](#). Ticks can survive in many places but prefer moist areas with dense vegetation or long grass. Ticks bite and attach to the skin where they feed on blood and in some cases can transmit microbes that cause infections such as Lyme Disease. You could be exposed to ticks whenever you spend time outdoors, particularly during the completion of conservation activity and survey work so we remind you to be vigilant, remove a tick safely and as quickly as possible and contact your GP if you begin to feel unwell following a tick bite.

A tick following a blood meal



## The Countryside Code

The Countryside Code is for visitors to the countryside. It includes the rules you must follow when you are enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside. It is available to [read online or to download as a PDF here](#).

## Ministry of Defence Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy

Last Month, The Ministry of Defence Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach was released in which seeks to inspire all those in and connected to Defence through three interlocking ambitions, set around adaptation and resilience, sustainability and net zero, and global leadership, [read more here](#).

## Upcoming Dates

27th April - National Gardening Week  
1st May - No Mow May  
2nd May - Hedgehog Awareness Week

22nd May - International Day for Biological Diversity  
24th May - Invasive Species Week  
5th June - World Environment Day  
8th June - World Oceans Day

Okehampton Range



## Useful Apps:



iRecord



BirdTrack



Bloomin Algae



British Red Cross First Aid



LeafWatch



Living Record



Mammal Tracker



Plant Tracker



OS Locate

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## Contact Us

For all enquiries relating to Sanctuary magazine and Sanctuary Awards [DIO-Sanctuary@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DIO-Sanctuary@mod.gov.uk)

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