

## Our policy on powered UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) or drone use

This policy note covers the use of powered UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) or drones being flown from or over land owned or managed by the Earth Trust. It does not cover the use of unpowered remote controlled aircraft.

### Current legislation relating to the use of drones.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the statutory corporation which oversees and regulates all aspects of civil aviation in the United Kingdom. It is responsible for the legislation around drones. All information about the law surrounding drones and their use can be found here <https://dronesafe.uk/>

### Use of drones on land owned and managed by the Earth Trust

We are experiencing increasing numbers of people wanting to use drones over our green spaces and we expect this to continue as the technology becomes more readily available. While we understand the desire to fly drones, their use can present the following issues:

- Users without the correct training or permission can create a serious risk to our staff, volunteers, visitors, property and wildlife.
- Our green spaces are important areas for wildlife and some areas are covered by national and international conservation designations. Much of the wildlife use our sites for breeding and are sensitive to disturbance. Many birds see drones as a threat and may abandon nests.<sup>1</sup>
- Drones should not be flown over people as this may infringe data protection laws<sup>2</sup> (filming people without permission); as much of our land is open access we cannot guarantee an area, even if remote, is completely empty.
- The presence of drones can be detrimental to the quiet recreation many of our visitors enjoy in our green spaces.

Because of the above, **the use of drones is not permitted on or over Earth Trust land**. However, in certain circumstances, for example to capture images for marketing or surveying purposes on behalf of Earth Trust, Earth Trust will grant a short term permission. **The use of drones is not permitted on land managed on behalf of RWE Generation, SODC & Vale Council's by Earth Trust without prior consent**. Requests to film/fly will be considered by Earth Trust in conjunction with the landowner where appropriate. Approved use of drones will look to mitigate and minimise the impacts highlighted above.

If you would like to use a drone over land owned or managed by Earth Trust you will need to be able to provide the following:

- A current and valid Permit for Commercial Operation (PfCo) from the CAA
- Evidence of valid drone and public liability insurance
- A risk assessment for the proposed drone flight
- A flight plan for the proposed drone flight
- Drone Registration Identification numbers for the drone operator, as per new government guidance introduced in November 2019.

If you are interested in flying a drone for filming or surveying purposes over Earth Trust land, please contact Naomi Douglas, Head of Marketing & Communications, [admin@earthtrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@earthtrust.org.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> David Jarrett, John Calladine, Anne Cotton, Mark William Wilson & Elizabeth Humphreys (2020) Behavioural responses of non-breeding waterbirds to drone approach are associated with flock size and habitat, *Bird Study*, 67:2, 190-196, DOI: 10.1080/00063657.2020.1808587; <https://www.thespruce.com/birds-and-drones-3571688>

<sup>2</sup> <https://asg.ltd/drones-and-privacy-law/>