

Adventure Forest Ltd. T/A Go Ape, Proposed Tree Top Junior at Dalby Forest.

Transport Statement

Introduction

The proposed development is for a 'Tree Top Junior' high ropes course at Dalby Forest. The course would be very similar in nature to the existing Go Ape 'Tree Top Adventure' course that is already established at the site but accessible to anyone over one metre tall.

Go Ape currently operate two Tree Top Junior courses within the UK, one at Moors Valley Country Park, Hampshire and the other at Thetford Forest, Suffolk. Moors Valley opened in 2011 and is the more popular of the two sites, Thetford opened in March 2012 and has now successfully operated over the peak summer period.

This document considers the likely effects on traffic levels and any subsequent pressure on parking provision at Dalby Forest should the proposed Tree Top Junior development take place.

Current Parking Provision

Dalby Forest has a large car park with space for 280 cars with charges in use. The FC are currently marking the bays in the main car park to maximise these spaces.

How the Tree Top Junior Operates

The Tree Top Junior course (TTJ) would be managed from the existing Go Ape reception cabin with the same team of staff managing both activities. As such sessions would be run in-line with the regular Go Ape Tree Top Adventure course (TTA), which has an operating season that runs from February half term to the end of November (closed December and January, generally only open weekends during February, March and November). The longest opening hours for the Tree Top Adventure are between 8am and 9pm during the peak summer period. The last participants are admitted onto the Tree Top Adventure course just after 6pm (it takes approximately 3 hours to complete). Due to the target audience it is very likely that the last admittance for the Tree Top Junior would also be at 6pm. The Tree Top Junior course would take approximately 1 hour to complete.

Tree Top Junior sessions are run half hourly throughout the day, the number of participants in a session is 15 so 30 every hour. The likely maximum number of sessions to be run on a peak day in

the summer is 21 (based on two sessions per hour, the first session starting at 8am and the last session starting at 6pm). However during the 2012 summer season the 'mode' number of daily sessions was actually 15¹.

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Tree Top Junior's Busiest Day

The busiest day since Tree Top Juniors started operating was at Moors Valley Country Park on 22nd August 2012, with 261 participants spread over 9 hours and 18, almost full, sessions.

Possible Effects on Traffic Levels and Parking Provision

In order to better understand the possible effects on traffic levels and any subsequent pressure on parking provision at Dalby a voluntary survey was undertaken by Tree Top Junior participants and/or members of their groups, at our Moors Valley Country Park and Thetford Forest sites. The survey was conducted over the whole of the peak summer period, from 14th July 2012 till the end of the English schools summer holiday on 3rd September 2012 (inclusive).

The survey asked the following questions:

Question	Total responses
<i>How many people are in your group?</i>	2941
<i>How many cars have you arrived in?</i>	906
<i>How many of your group are booked on Tree Top Junior?</i>	2004
<i>Were you planning on visiting the park today anyway? (Y/N)</i>	Y = 298 (1654 in groups) / N = 238 (1285 in groups)

The survey was undertaken by 536 individuals who answered on behalf of their groups. The number of individuals within their groups totalled to 2941. Of this, 2004 were Tree Top Junior participants. The data shows that TTJ participants do not generally travel on their own, they are usually accompanied by others including people within their group who are not taking part in the activity. This is not surprising given the target age group of Tree Top Junior but it does mean we have to consider these accompanying visitors also. If we divide the number of participants by the total number of people within their groups we can see that for every 1 participant, 0.7 people accompany them – an extra 7 people come to the site for every 10 TTJ participants. As the maximum number of participants on the course every hour is 30 we can multiply this by 0.7 and conclude that for every

¹ Based on the daily number of sessions run at Moors Valley from the first weekend of the English schools summer holidays on 21/07/2012 until the last day of the holidays on 03/09/2012.

hour of operation there is on average a maximum of 51 people associated with Tree Top Junior (participants and accompanying visitors).

The groups that were surveyed arrived in 906 vehicles, giving us an average of 3.2 persons per vehicle and so an average of 16 vehicles per hour (this includes transport for accompanying non participants).

The survey also asked whether people were planning on visiting the site regardless of their TTJ booking. Of those surveyed 298 answered 'yes'. These individuals equated to a total of 1654 people within their groups. By dividing this number by 2941 (the total number of people within the 'groups') we can see that 56% of people who visited the site, with some association to TTJ, were planning on visiting regardless. This section of those surveyed arrived in 512 cars (56% of the total) and accounted for over half the TTJ participants at 1096 (55% of the total). These figures suggest that just over half of all TTJ participants are made up of people who are not coming solely for the Tree Top Junior. As such half the participants should not be classed as newly generated car journeys and the pressure they put on parking is not totally associated with Tree Top Junior, but comes from the general site traffic.

Based on the presumption that 50% of all TTJ participants are already coming to site we can conclude that the number of cars created by TTJ participants and their groups per hour will be 8. This figure of 8 cars is likely to be the very maximum or 'worst case scenario'. For the majority of the time the figure will be a lot lower. The reason being that for the majority of the year, outside peak times, the TTJ will not be at full capacity. As stated above Moors Valley Country Park, a much busier site than Dalby, which as a visitor destination receives around 800,000 visitors a year compared to Dalby which receives around 450,00, did not have completely full sessions on the busiest day.

Obviously Go Ape has little influence over the 50% of participants who are coming to site regardless. However for the remaining 50% it is worth mentioning that Go Ape actively encourages *participants* to come during off peak periods and to book in advance. Throughout the year Go Ape offers discount codes, only valid when booking in advance and during off peak periods. As the activity is not weather dependant, the course only closes and refunds are only offered in the most severe weather. All this spreads participants out over the year, including off peak periods, and helps to stop participants concentrating on the best, fair-weather days. The advance bookings enable people to

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arrive just in time for their session, avoiding added pressure on the traffic arriving at the forest during the peak hours (Friday to Sunday 10:00 – 13:00).

Staff Parking

The maximum number of 8 generated cars per hour does not include a slight increase in the overall number of Go Ape staff and any associated vehicle journeys and parking.

As mentioned above the Tree Top Junior course would be managed by the existing Go Ape TTA team. The overall number of staff needed to manage the two activities at peak times² would however need to increase to 12 (currently 8 staff can effectively manage the TTA course).

With four extra staff there would be a maximum of four new car journeys per day to the site and a maximum need of four extra car parking spaces. Although as Go Ape is an equal opportunities employer and advertise all jobs locally there is a good chance that members of staff will share transport and/or travel by sustainable means.

Conclusion

The proposed Tree Top Junior course at Dalby Forest, Pickering will not cause major increases in traffic to the site or put undue parking pressure on the existing car parks. There will be a likely maximum increase of 8 car journeys per hour to site caused by people solely coming for the Tree Top Junior and this will be matched in the need for parking. Extra Go Ape staff will create a maximum of 4 new car journeys to site and a need for this many parking spaces.

Whilst this will not have any major effect on the site or the surrounding area and the car park on site will be more than adequate it should be stressed again that all figures quoted are based on the maximum number of participants filling each available session to capacity. For the majority of the year sessions will not be full and as has been shown at Moors Valley, a much bigger site, even on the busiest of days sessions are not always full, reinforcing the point that the actual numbers are likely to be less.



² Peak times are the school's summer holidays and Bank Holiday weekends.