[redacted]

30 November 2023

Steve Tapscott
Planning Case Officer
Wiltshire Council
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Dear Mr Tapscott

PL/2023/09303 - change of use, entrance, access, campsite - Charlcutt Farm/Charlcote Farm

I write to object to the above planning application for "Change of use of agricultural land for camping, associated toilet block, car parking and widening of access" at Charlcutt Farm, Charlcutt, Wiltshire, SN11 9HL, also referred to as Charlcote Farm.

To begin, I do not believe that the planning application has been advertised in accordance with requirements. No green notice has been posted at the site of the proposed development nor anywhere in the village.

There is a lack of detail throughout the application:

Entrance to the site

The application lacks detail regarding access particularly regarding safe and timely passage from the lane to the track and vice versa. No measurements are given about how wide the entrance will be or how far back the entrance will be situated. There will need to be some redesign but the planning lacks detail.

Access track – existing

The existing track is currently unused and measures 3 m from the lane and reduces in width when it reaches the pond. Therefore, it may need widening. There is no detail about how this will be completed. Until drawings with measurements of the existing track and the proposed track and supplied there is no way of knowing how access will be achieved.

Passing place

The application recognises there needs to be passing places. There is no detail of the exact location regarding this or how wide and long each passing place will be.

Access track – new

Mentions it will be 3 m wide but no detail on how long or materials to be used or how it will be built. Drawings to reflect what is to be developed would be essential.

Tree and hedgerow removal

From the report within the application, it is not clear how many meters of hedgerow will be removed, or the size of the area for shrub and tree removal.

It is stated that there will be a landscaping scheme, agreed with the Local Planning Authority, on new planting of trees and hedgerows to mitigate the removal of existing ones. There are no further details, should these not be included in the planning application?

Surface water

Such removal of trees and shrub will impact the ability of the area to retain water and with the introduction of a parking area, there will be water run off associated with the development. The widening of the access track and creating additional track will also introduce the potential for water run off and included oil/diesel to end up in the pond.

There is no answer to question on the application form as to "how will surface water be disposed of?"

Treatment of foul waste, wet waste and rubbish/recycling

The applicant has stated that the disposal of foul waste is 'unknown' but will not be via the existing drainage system. In the supporting documents, there is no mention of how this waste will be collected, treated and disposed of in an environmentally safe way. This is of paramount importance for an application of this type and detail needs to be provided and adhered to should the application be approved.

There is also no detail in the application of how wet waste such as washing up waste and general water disposal will be dealt with. The converted shipping container only contains a toilet and shower.

And what of the rubbish and food waste that will be generated by what could possibly be 40 people (based on 4 people per tent)? There is no mention of where the rubbish will be kept, managed or stored or how it will be disposed of. There is no mention of recyclable waste and how it will be separated from general rubbish. Without these processes in place, the campers could easily end up littering the hedgerow and/or the road side.

Car parking area

Referring to the block plan, it appears that the parking area will be situated near or directly opposite an open slurry pit. Are there any Health and Safety considerations required?
There are no other details associated with the parking area such as the length, depth and width of the proposed area. What materials will be used to construct the parking area?

Toilet / shower block

It is not clear within the application how many toilets / shower blocks are envisaged. Or how the blocks will be supplied with water for showering, flushing and drinking water. How is this water going to be stored, where is it being generated from and where it will be disposed of?

If there are ten tents, with the possibility of 4 occupants per tent and if the campsite is at full capacity, will one toilet/shower block be enough to fulfil demand? What will happen if people have to wait, will the hedgerow be used?

Traffic

It is stated within the application that there should be no increase in additional traffic as the campers can walk to the local amenities such at the pubs and shops.

Firstly, the nearest pub, The Foxham (in the village of Foxham) is 2.2 miles away and cannot be accessed solely using the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network. There is about a mile of road to walk before reaching a footpath (BREM16) and it is down a 1:6 hill. In total, it would take 50 mins on average to walk one way. There are no pavements nor street lighting.

The Dumb Post, situated in the village of Bremhill, can be visited by mainly using the PROW network but at 2.8 miles away it will take on average 60 mins to walk one way.

The other pub, outside of the Parish, is in Christian Malford, as is a local general shop and post office. These can only be accessed via the road network. Again, there are no pavements or street lighting and would be extremely difficult for families with young children to visit these amenities on foot, a car would have to be used.

Local Economy

The application states the campsite will support the local economy through selling vegetable and meat boxes.

There are no local vegetable growers in the area and buying meat from local suppliers is also uncertain. I therefore presume the produce will be purchased from a supermarket. However, how will this produce be stored, there must be a stated approach in the application to food handling, hygiene etc and that produce is stored in the correct refrigeration units.

Scale

It is noted in the application that the site for pitching ten tents is 0.77 ha or nearly 2 acres (1.9) of land. This seems quite large for the amount of tents. In the past, the applicant has only talked about a caravan site and there is potential that this site grows to incorporate caravans, motorhomes and the like.

Camping

There is no mention of how the campsite is going to be managed. It would be good to have an idea of the following considerations so that neighbours will know what to expect:-

- Only tents bought in from the public can be used; no permanent structures
- Families only to avoid potential for hen and stag dos.
- No more than three tents per group No amplified music at any time and curfew of music between 10 pm and 7 am.
- No fireworks what so ever (there is livestock grazing in the adjoining fields on both sides of the farm)
- Will there be lighting required for the campsite? If so how will the power be generated, what height, what voltage, when will the lighting be turned off every night?
- Are open fires allowed or is it just bbq? Will there be fire extinguishers available?
- Will dogs be allowed on site? Not allowing dogs will help alleviate any potential for livestock worrying should a dog roam from the campsite

Having the above guidelines in place will help prevent anti-social behaviour, loud music and noise and keep the general peace and quiet for all residents and visitors alike to enjoy.

Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

- The applicant has not considered the presence of Great Crested Newts on site and in the immediate locality.
- The site lies in a CORE AREA Great Crested Newt Strategic Opportunity Area.
- Charlcutt Farm lies in a CORE AREA (score >5) Great Crested Newt Strategic Opportunity Area – meaning it has a pond density of at least 2 ponds and is located within a 1km square where GCN presence has been predicted. Higher scores (within the range 1-10) represent a greater presence of suitable habitat features. This can be seen clearly on Magic Maps (Land Based Schemes; Other Schemes; GCN Strategic Opportunity Areas (England)).
- GCNs were recorded in Spirthill as recently as 12th September 2023.
- A pond restoration project for GCN District Level Licensing purposes has been approved on farmland within Charlcutt village and will be completed in 2024.
- A GCN survey and impact assessment should be carried out on the 2 adjacent ponds and associated hedgerow and scrub vegetation for great crested newts, and mitigation needs to be considered.
- Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, it is an offence to: damage or destroy the breeding sites and resting places of GCNs (even if they are not present); to intentionally or recklessly disturb GCN while they occupy a structure or place used for shelter or protection; and to obstruct access to a place of shelter or protection. It is essential that these potential impacts are fully assessed.
- The application does not provide a timescale for carrying out work to remove trees and scrub which may impact nesting birds during the bird breeding season.

Other Considerations

I share an equine yard on the other side to the hedgerow where the campsite is planned.

Our arena sits alongside this hedgerow. We use this facility for three horses on a regular basis. Horses are flight animals and if spooked will run.

This campsite will prove a challenging situation for our horses and for myself as a rider and impacts hugely on the safety of myself, the person I share the yard with, and to the horses themselves.

As already stated above, there is no detail on how this campsite will be managed regarding noise disturbances, fireworks, bonfires, the size of each party, the possibility of hen and stag dos, dogs etc. All of these things will impact greatly on our yard.

And what security will be put in place in order that campers will not gain access to our yard?

For all the reasons stated above, I object to this planning application.

Yours sincerely
Hazel Challis