

Patron: His Majesty the King

15 September 2026

For the attention of Planning Officers: David Millinship and Samantha Stockley

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Dear David and Samantha

Planning Reference: PL/2026/01724 (Variation of condition 2 relating to PL/2021/04663) "Development"

Site: Poulton Mill, Poulton Hill, Marlborough, SN8 2LN

OBJECTION: Application for Variation of Condition 2 – Retrospective Regularisation of Equine Building

CPRE Wiltshire maintains its serious objections to the development at Poulton Mill. Having reviewed the submission for **PL/2026/01724** (with our previous objection submitted 16 April 2026 and further additional objection letter submitted 18th July 2026), and now the recent submission of a Lighting Management Statement, we still wish to record and maintain our strongest possible objection to what is, in effect, a retrospective attempt to regularise significant and unauthorized departures from the original consent.

We reiterate that it is a matter of significant concern that this application is framed as a "minor" variation. The development as built represents a flagrant departure from the approved plans under **PL/2021/04663** ("the 2024 decision"). The scale of these changes is material and cannot be reasonably classified as "minor" under Section 73.

In terms of this recently published Lighting Management Statement ("Statement") document we make the following objections and comments:

It was a surprise that the Lighting Statement does not give or state any technical data or numeric quantitative lighting values it will comply with, particularly regarding stray light emissions. Statements of the form "*Minimise light visible through the translucent roof panels during periods of darkness.*" has no scientific or technical value and is very open to interpretation.

We reiterate our concerns here that the down light from the Echo 3 DALI Circular High-bay 200W 5000K (Max 30,000Lumen) lamps will have the light reflecting around the barn and this reflected light will certainly pass out of the barn through the 72 roof lights (An increase of 260% from the original 20 roof light design submitted in 2024) but also reflect light through the open areas in the sides of the barn as its not fully enclosed. As we stated previously, this is increased **Light Pollution and has a "Dark Skies" Impact:**

- **The "Lantern Effect":** This massive 260% increase in glazing, combined with the currently open sides, creates a significant "lantern effect" that is wholly inappropriate for this rural landscape.
- **Lack of Evidence:** No light spillage calculations (e.g. ILP GN01:2021, lux contours, isolux drawings, luminaire specifications and shielding, number/position of lamps etc) have been provided in this Lighting Management Statement to assess the impact on the identified "Wildlife Corridor", nor a review from asking, say, the Bat Conservation Society itself on whether this increased lighting spill complies, or neighbouring residential privacy.
- **Compliance & Conditions:** Whilst the 2024 Decision Notice Section 15 deals with "External Lighting", we question what enforcement will be imposed to maintain these conditions which effectively will be imposed on adhering to the "Internal Lighting" specification which will be governing the spillage into

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the external environment as this is very important in this corridor and domestic neighbourhood.

Cumulative Impact: Combined with existing ménage floodlighting, this development still undermines local "Dark Skies" policies and disrupts nocturnal wildlife.

Ecology: Given all these changes and now the specification of the lighting system but not the lamp layout or number being installed, we still question whether the ecological mitigation required by the original permission remains effective or needs updating to reflect the revised design given that Bats are known to forage this river Og valley? Furthermore, in the Ecology Report (Reptile Survey Included) June 2021 in PL/2021/04663 it states, which was based on a completely different design with less roof lights and closed sides:

*"5.10 The site provides high quality habitat for bats with the river running through the centre of the site and semi-improved fields to the south. The development is small scale and impacts to bats will be minimised with a **sensitive lighting** (our emphasis) design for the development which will minimise any light spill along the river and boundary habitats. In line with current guidelines, on-site lighting will:*

Bats

- *not exceed 1lux on boundary features and lighting will be hooded or cowled to avoid light spill on these features (ILP, 2018).*
- *Any necessary lighting within the development will utilise security timers where possible and be LED lighting of a warm white spectrum (<2700 Kelvin) which will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550 nm.*
- *Only lighting with an upward light ratio of 0% will be used."*

As the stray light emitting from the roof lights and the open side panels and other open areas has not been defined in terms of the Lux/Lumin levels, effects on Bats and other reptiles is not calculated and we suggest will very likely be affected. Furthermore, the lights specified are 5,000K (Kelvin) which are far higher than the 2,700K (less than <2,700 Kelvin) limit that was asked for in the Ecology report to protect the Bats. Nor does it seem likely that with each lamp capable of 30,000Lumen output, reflective light spills will be insignificant!

Overall View of Lack of Regulation Compliance: for this Development, the original planning permission contains a very specific lighting condition, and the Statement does not seem to actually demonstrate compliance with the standards and evidence that the Wiltshire Planning Dept, seemingly required.

Our objection is not to the legitimate use of appropriate lighting necessary for animal welfare, veterinary treatment or staff safety. Rather, it is that the submitted Lighting Management Scheme does not provide sufficient, measurable or enforceable safeguards to demonstrate that artificial light escaping from the building will not adversely affect the surrounding countryside, the River Og corridor, biodiversity or the Dark Skies of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

The Statement consists principally of operational aspirations and does not seem to provide the technical evidence necessary for the Council to establish that the amended development will comply with the relevant planning requirements or with the environmental objectives underpinning the original permission. We further note:

1. Failure to demonstrate compliance with the original lighting requirements:

The original permission, PL/2021/04663, contains specific lighting controls intended to protect the surrounding environment, including the Dark Skies of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

In particular, the original permission includes Condition 15 – External Lighting, which requires details including the type, position and height of lighting, total illumination levels and light spillage, together with compliance with relevant Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance and subsequent verification through a post-development lighting survey.

The current submission does not adequately demonstrate that the amended building and its proposed internal lighting arrangements will satisfy those requirements. This is particularly important because the amended building incorporates translucent roof panels, and side openings etc through which artificial light from inside the building can become visible externally. The fact that the luminaires themselves are internal does not remove the environmental impact of light escaping from the building.

2. No quantitative assessment of light escaping through the translucent roof and other large open side wall areas:

The submitted Statement expressly acknowledges that its purpose is to "minimise light spill from the translucent

roof panels". However, it does not quantify that light spill.

In other words there is no assessment of:

External illuminance resulting from internal lighting,

- Vertical illuminance at the building perimeter,
- Light spill towards surrounding land,
- Light spill towards the River Og,
- Illumination of nearby habitat,
- Maximum light levels through the roof panels, side openings and other areas such as doors,
- Cumulative illumination when several lighting zones are operating simultaneously or
- Worst-case illumination during veterinary treatment or emergency use.

Consequently, the Council cannot seemingly establish from the submitted Statement whether the proposed measures will actually achieve the stated objective of protecting the surrounding dark landscape. A statement that light spill will be "minimised" is not, by itself, an objective planning control.

3. Failure to demonstrate compliance with ILP guidance:

The original permission refers to ILP GN01:2021 – Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. The submitted Internal Lighting Management Scheme does not expressly commit the Development to compliance with the relevant provisions of that guidance, nor does it identify the applicable environmental zone or provide calculations demonstrating compliance.

This is a significant omission given the sensitive rural location and the stated objective of protecting the dark skies of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. We would have thought that the Council should seemingly require the applicant to demonstrate, by appropriate technical assessment, that the resulting external light emission from the building, including light transmitted through the translucent roof panels, open side walls and other open areas complies with the applicable standards.

4. The proposed controls are insufficiently precise and enforceable:

Much of the proposed scheme and Statement relies upon subjective wording, including:

"wherever practicable";
"minimum reasonably required";
"operationally necessary";
"where necessary"; and
"where practicable".

Such wording gives the operator considerable discretion and does not establish a clear standard against which compliance can subsequently be assessed. For example, the statement permits lighting after 20:30 where it is considered "operationally necessary", but provides no objective definition of the circumstances in which this would be permitted and no maximum illumination level.

If this document is intended to operate as a planning control, then we are surprised that the Council does not require precise and measurable requirements rather than relying principally upon discretionary operational judgements.

5. The 20:30–07:00 restriction does not adequately address the issue:

The Statement proposes additional restrictions between 20:30 and 07:00. However, no evidence is provided to demonstrate why 20:30 is an appropriate commencement time for the lighting restrictions. This is particularly relevant during winter, when darkness occurs substantially earlier than 20:30.

The important planning question is not simply whether lights are switched off after 20:30, but what level of artificial light is emitted whenever darkness occurs. Surely the Council should therefore require the applicant to

assess the lighting impact throughout periods of darkness rather than relying upon an arbitrary clock-time restriction.

6. Downward-facing lights do not demonstrate that roof light emissions will be prevented:

The Statement proposes that "Internal lighting shall be directed downward towards working areas."

This may reduce direct upward illumination from the luminaires, but it does not demonstrate that light will not subsequently be reflected from floors, walls, horses, equipment and other surfaces onto the translucent roof panels and side wall openings, door ways etc. Consequently, luminaire orientation alone cannot establish that external light emission through the roof and open side walls etc will be adequately controlled.

The relevant assessment should be of the actual resulting external light emission, rather than simply the direction in which the luminaires are initially aimed.

7. Insufficient consideration of biodiversity and bats:

The original lighting controls recognise the ecological sensitivity of the site and the need to consider artificial lighting in relation to biodiversity. The submitted Statement contains no substantive ecological assessment of the effects of artificial light escaping through the roof panels and side openings etc.

In other words there is no assessment identifying:

- i) Sensitive ecological receptors,
- ii) Bat commuting or foraging habitat,
- iii) The River Og corridor,
- iv) Potential effects upon nocturnal wildlife,
- v) Acceptable illumination levels at ecological receptors or
- vi) How the proposed lighting scheme will preserve dark ecological corridors.

Given the rural location and the Council's previous concern regarding light spill along the River Og corridor, we suggest this omission should be addressed before the application is determined.

8. No worst-case lighting scenario has been assessed and addressed:

The scheme does not establish what constitutes the maximum permissible lighting arrangement. We would have thought the Council should require assessment of realistic worst-case scenarios, including:

- i) Simultaneous operation of multiple stable areas,
- ii) Illumination of clinic/treatment areas,
- iii) Cleaning operations,
- iv) Staff movements,
- v) Emergency veterinary treatment,
- vi) Horse welfare checks,
- vii) Security activity and
- viii) Prolonged winter periods of darkness.

It is insufficient simply to state that lighting will only be used when "reasonably required".

The applicant should demonstrate the maximum external light emission that could arise under each relevant operational scenario.

9. No adequate post-installation verification is proposed:

The statement proposes that the operator will "regularly review the effectiveness of this Lighting Management Scheme". However, an operator's internal review is not an adequate substitute for objective post-installation verification.

Again we would have thought the Council should require a suitably qualified lighting professional to undertake a

post-installation lighting survey demonstrating that the development performs in accordance with the approved lighting limits. The survey should include appropriate measurements of light spill and illumination at relevant sensitive receptors, including the site boundary and the River Og corridor where applicable and including with/without the ménage flood lighting factor also.

Where regulation failures are identified, the applicant should be required to implement remedial measures and undertake further testing.

10. Protection of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape:

The application site is located within the highly sensitive landscape setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Protection of the area's rural character and intrinsically dark skies is an important material consideration. The submitted statement acknowledges this sensitivity but does not provide sufficient technical evidence to demonstrate that the amended building will avoid unacceptable artificial-light pollution.

Again we would have thought that the Council should therefore apply a precautionary approach and require the applicant to demonstrate objectively and quantitatively that the proposed lighting arrangements will not result in unacceptable harm to the dark landscape character.

11. The submitted scheme does not provide sufficient evidence to justify approval:

Taken as a whole, the submitted documents and Statement is primarily a statement of intended behaviour rather than a properly specified lighting design and mitigation scheme.

It does not establish:

- A) The maximum permitted illumination,
- B) The maximum permitted light spill,
- C) The applicable environmental-zone criteria,
- D) The precise lighting specification and spacial locations,
- E) The measurable effect of lighting through the translucent roof, side wall openings, door ways and other places,
- F) The effect on the River Og corridor,
- G) The effect upon bats and other nocturnal wildlife,
- H) The maximum permissible operating configuration,
- I) A sufficiently precise emergency-lighting protocol,
- J) A robust independent post-installation verification procedure.

As we see the situation, the Council does not have sufficient information to conclude that the proposed amendments will maintain the environmental safeguards associated with the original permission.

Conclusion

The proposed Internal Lighting Management Scheme and Statement does not presently provide sufficient technical, ecological or enforceable evidence to demonstrate that artificial light from the amended building will not cause unacceptable harm to the surrounding rural environment, biodiversity, the River Og corridor or the intrinsically Dark Skies landscape of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

As previously mentioned and restated here, the applicant has demonstrated a clear disregard for the planning process by constructing a building that vastly exceeds approved parameters, with Dark Skies light pollution and Bat & Reptile disruption. To approve this variation would set a dangerous precedent that developers may build beyond their permissions and expect retrospective "regularisation" as a formality.

CPRE Wiltshire urges the Council to **refuse** this application and take appropriate enforcement action to ensure the building is corrected to the original approved design under **PL/2021/04663**.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Henshaw

CPRE Wiltshire

cc Sue Hine Clerk to Mildenhall Parish Council
cc Richard Spencer-Williams Town Clerk, Marlborough Town Council
cc Kymee Cleasby Wiltshire Councillor for Marlborough East