

APPENDIX to MINUTES of a meeting of WEST FELTON PARISH COUNCIL held on TUESDAY 10 November 2020 at 8pm
Minute ref 68.20(a)

Planning Application 20/03319/FUL Tedsmore Lakes
West Felton Parish Council Objection

West Felton Parish Council **strongly object** to the application on the following grounds:

Since 2018 this previously unspoiled agricultural field has been developed with engineering works taking place without seeking 'change of use' or indeed any other form of planning permission. When pre application advice was sought (May 2019) and advice given that the development was not appropriate in this location, work continued and escalated. This shows a complete disregard for the planning process and a contempt for the wildlife and habitat as the required surveys were not commissioned.

The only permit obtained has been the exemption certificate issued by Freedom Camping during the Summer of 2020. This should not have been granted as by then the site was under an Enforcement Order by Shropshire Council. Without this exemption certificate there would be no existing 'tourism activity', which is what the applicant is attempting to base this on.

Contrary to requirement **CS5** of the Core Strategy this site does not 'enhance the vitality of the area' and brings no 'economic or community benefit'. Neither does it comply with SAMDev's **MD11** requirement that it 'compliments the character and qualities of its surroundings'. The proposed log cabins, camping pods, caravans, shower block, toilets, laundry, additional entrance and tracks, together with the potential of some 60 plus vehicles would harm the visual amenity of the area by creating a development on a scale which is totally out of place in an unspoiled isolated rural area.

The site is not located in a recognised settlement, and it is in a totally unsustainable location. It has been created from unspoiled agricultural land and is not diversification of an existing dwelling or business. It is not served by facilities and services, as required by **C16** of the Core Strategy. To access any of these a journey through narrow country lanes is necessary with Oswestry being the nearest market town some 5 miles distant and Ellesmere more than 8 miles.

The site lies in open countryside, where there is no public transport. It is nearly 2 miles to the nearest shop in West Felton via narrow country lanes which have few passing places The nearest Farm Shop is some 5 miles distant in Baschurch. These and any other shops, restaurants, facilities or activities would all necessitate the use of a vehicle. If permission were granted it would be possible for some 60 plus vehicles to be using the site at any one time. The surrounding lanes are simply not adequate to cope with this influx of traffic and even less so, motorhomes and caravans. The access route suggested via Rednal is already heavily used by large agricultural machinery on a regular basis and again is via narrow country lanes. This route also involves use of a railway bridge which is likely to cause grounding for towing long-wheel base vehicles and is currently closed due to subsidence. In any event, the applicant could only suggest this route, but would have no control over the route chosen by visitors. The potential disruption and damage to the adjacent communities which would be caused by this huge increase of traffic is completely unacceptable.

There is currently no southern access and there never has been an entrance to the field at the proposed location. To create this would require hedge removal and the culverting of a ditch, which would then result in an access/egress point where the visibility to the south is poor due to the proximity of a bend. The current

northern access which has been created across a verge is single track and is inadequate for towing long-wheel base vehicles such as caravans entering and exiting the site.

Rather than compliment the holiday accommodation at Tedsmore Hall half a mile away (as suggested) the further development of this site would increase the density in the area to a totally unsustainable level. There are also log cabins providing holiday accommodation located at Wykey, approximately 2 miles away and so the area is already well provided for in terms of holiday lettings.

Despite the advice given by Mark Perry in his pre application letter (May 2019) that ecological assessments of the land for protected species, Extended Phase 1 habitat surveys, various other evaluations and assessments would be required, none of these were undertaken. Neither it seems were the botanical or bat surveys. Limited and incomplete surveys were conducted in the spring of 2020, but by this time the pool had been created and ditches cleared, engineering works had taken place and it was too late to protect the original habitat of the site. This shows a disregard for the conservation of the area and the suggested benefits of the planting and landscaping are outweighed by the harm and change created in a previously unspoiled landscape.

The 'supplementary survey' submitted by Camlad Ecology Ltd was conducted in May this year and concentrated on Great Crested Newts, which are a protected species and were found. The survey is incomplete, only two of the required six visits were made and therefore the conclusions reached are inadequate. The GCN which were found were in the ditch and as the ditches interconnect it is highly probable that these were present in the area before work commenced. The report does not demonstrate compliance with legislation, best practice, nor conform to professional guidance as it is misleading. The report does not demonstrate any biodiversity net gain.

Reference is made to a survey conducted by Pearson Environmental Ltd in April 2020, but this has not been included in the documents, why is this?

The mature oak trees which border the site and connect with Bentleys Marsh Wood and Well Coppice would provide a wildlife corridor for foraging bats and other mammals. As mentioned in Camlad's survey there are also ancient oaks over 150 years old in the coppice and the wider area provides a core habitat. They also state that a botanical survey is 'ongoing' when this should clearly have commenced at least 12 months ago.

Without sight of these surveys there is no way of assessing the impact of the development on other protected species, nor provide for any mitigation which may be required.

To conclude then, this application should be refused as it clearly flouts several of the requirements of the adopted planning policies. It actually damages the character and qualities of the surroundings, brings no economic benefit to the community and is harmful to the rural character of the area. Need, demand or benefits have not been demonstrated. Any ecological benefits (as claimed) would be outweighed by policy harm. This is a totally inappropriate location for a business of this kind and the applicants have failed to provide many of the surveys as required in law. They also began creating this site without seeking permission and continued to expand when under an Enforcement Order. This site should be totally reinstated to its original condition as unspoiled agricultural land.

Chairman's Signature *M K Hesketh*

Dated *12 January 2021*