

# RIBCHESTER PARISH COUNCIL

*Parish Council Office*

30 June 2022

Planning Department  
RVBC Council Offices  
Church Walk  
CLITHEROE  
Lancashire  
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**FAO Kathryn Hughes**

Dear Planning Department

## **Planning Application 3/2022/0530 – Land at Preston Road, Ribchester**

Once again, Ribchester Parish Council is responding to this protracted exercise of raising objections to the proposed, changed and re-submitted plans for the development on land at Preston Road; which is referred to locally as ‘The Snail Farm’. The Council and a number of residents objected upon receipt of the initial proposal and there is nothing in any subsequent submission from the developers that has, or will ever, convince the village that its first response to the proposal was ill-judged or incorrect.

The developers have, admittedly, responded to the objections to the Variation of Conditions application but this has done nothing to persuade the Council or the residents that this is an appropriate development for the village; the changes which are now itemised in the current application are an attempt to return to the something more akin to the initial proposal, but there are further worrisome additions that suggest to people living here who are watching the way the project is developing and growing that this is turning into a significant industrial development, which is totally out of place in a village environment. If the Ribble Valley is genuinely in want of a ‘Snail Farm’ then it should have been positioned on a brownfield site. Recent Planning Applications which have been refused in the area of Ribchester have stated reasons such as the following for refusing a development:

[as] *‘it would represent a prominent and incongruous development in the open countryside with insufficient justification, which would be to the detriment of the visual amenities of the area’*

[and] *‘The proposal, by virtue of the external appearance .....would result in the introduction of an incongruous form of residential development which is overtly domestic and would result in a cumulative visually suburbanising effect of the landscape being of significant detriment of the character, appearance and visual amenities of the area contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.*

It is acknowledged that the latter refers to an application in respect of a domestic dwelling, but the principle being relied on here in both examples is incongruous development and detriment to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the area. Ribchester Parish Council would welcome an explanation as to how such reasons are applied to domestic developments but do not appear to apply to the incongruous development which is being undertaken in the heart of the village.

If the Planning Department is convinced by the written documentation submitted in respect of this application; the Councillors and the group of residents who attended the last Parish Council meeting will concur that the information and further elaboration of the plans by the Project Manager provided a greater insight into the true nature of this development. In the course of the presentation it was willingly revealed that what has currently been proposed and included in the written submissions is just the beginning of what will become, if this is not curtailed by RVBC, a major site for the Snail Farm business – comprising an incongruous industrial building, an increase to the number of lodges already stated in the current plans (on bases already prepared elsewhere on the site, as confirmed at the meeting), the installation of a Playground on the site – to include large scale children's playpark equipment, the installation of 'Charity Containers'; the provision of a Tea Room; a Tourism Unit, the grazing of animals (belonging to local residents) and so on and so forth. All of which, the meeting was assured, would be contained within Planning Applications – of which a further 5 were counted during the presentation.

If these proposals – although appearing somewhat fanciful, if not ludicrous, to those present – were to be put forward all would re-ignite the original objections on the grounds of traffic problems on Preston Road; noise – affecting adjoining properties; and Flooding. Much was made initially of the fact that the precise area of the development was outside the Flood zone and this was a major element in the decision to allow the Appeal on the first application. This myriad of further proposals would, if pursued, result in more land being built on, more concrete on the existing fields, more traffic onto the site etc. The Council has recently considered the Local Plan which is currently in the consultation stage – it notes the addition of a clause to the existing Vision statement in respect of ' [to] *reduce carbon and mitigate the effects of Climate Change...*'

RVBC may, quite properly, point out that none of these items is in the current Planning Application before it. Ribchester Council confirms this is correct but the basis of the following objections to the current Planning Application is that they represent the next stage of the much bigger development which is being planned.

From the start of this process it has been assumed that the first application was just the thin end of a much larger wedge and all present at the Parish Council meeting would have had that assumption confirmed.

In relation to the details of the Planning Application before the Council the following are noted:

1. That the site layout and the revised layout of the lodges remain as previously approved;

- 2 That the building will remain as a building for heliciculture and associated educational activities;
- 3 That the colour of the cladding will be goosewing grey and not blue;
- 4 That there is a proposed change to the configuration of the external appearance of the building to include the installation of a roller shutter 'to enable farm produce to be effectively distributed..'

The Council notes items 1 and 2 above and sincerely hopes that the developers will adhere to these and not seek to make further representations for adjustment to these in the future.

The Council has some concerns as to the use of 'goosewing grey' - no matter how bucolic it sounds. Council believes that the appearance is going to be of a large grey industrial unit at the approach to the village and bordering the rear of several private residences and therefore confirms an **objection** to this proposal.

The Council also **objects** to the installation of a large-size roller shutter on the building. This, in itself is incongruous, but is also suggestive of large vehicles requiring access and egress from the site onto Preston Road. There was no indication to this size of vehicle or related traffic movements in the initial proposal.

Ribchester Parish Council accepts that the Snail Farm development is underway. Further, it realises that it is here to stay, and there is nothing to be done but to learn to tolerate it within its current parameters. However, it urges the Planning Department of RVBC to take every action allowable to it to curtail any further expansion of the site, to take steps to contain its expansion and to do everything possible to reign in the vainglorious proposals for a cross between an industrial unit and a Snail Theme Park before this land on Preston Road becomes the eyesore of the Ribble Valley.

Yours sincerely

Deborah S Groves  
*Parish Clerk*