

Mellor Parish Council

FAO Mr. Stephen Kilmartin

Principal Planning Officer

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Council Offices

Church Walk

Clitheroe

BB7 2RA

BY EMAIL

13 September 2022

Dear Mr. Kilmartin

Planning Application 3/2022/0574 Rann Woodland, Off Saccary Lane, Mellor Blackburn

Retention of storage containers, vehicle parking and turning area. Reduction in the width of the track to an average width 2.9m. Proposed cladding and roofing over storage containers and the construction of a welfare unit.

I am writing on behalf of and authorised by Mellor Parish Council following the Parish Council Meetings on 07 July 2022 and 01 September 2022

The Parish Council was made aware of activity at this site in approximately November 2021 & sought advice from Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) Officers. Mellor Parish Council had previously applied for and obtained Asset of Community Value for part of The Rann Woodland – an area which Forestry Commission considered to be a young woodland, which had been planted approximately 20 years ago using grant funding. Parts of this larger parcel of land are therefore subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Due to funding issues, Mellor Parish Council did not pursue its Right to Buy the Rann Woodland.

Mellor Parish Council has continued to work with RVBC officers in order to ensure compliance with all legislation. Unfortunately this has proved to be difficult at least, since it has become obvious that the Applicants have not been prepared to comply with legislation. I received an email from xxxxxx (RVBC Enforcement Officer) on 07 December 2021 stating that he had been contacted by Applicants who confirmed that they would stop all works. That has not been the case and it has taken six months for them to even apply for Planning Permission (RVBC Planning Ref /3/2022/0574) for works which they have continued to carry out, despite numerous visits by RVBC officers in the intervening period.

Mellor Parish Council therefore supports the view of local residents the Applicants have acted contrary to RVBC Policies:

- DS1 – Development Strategy

- DS2 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

- ENV2 – Landscape

- DM12 – Transport Considerations

- DMG1 – General Considerations

- DMG2 – Strategic Considerations

- DMG3 – Transport & Mobility

It is evident that the Applicants have not been prepared to follow due process, but have continued to use the site as a commercial premises, without even seeking necessary consents. RVBC Officers have visited the site on numerous occasions, as requested by this Parish Council, xxxxxxxx has advised Applicants and their Agents to cease all works, but advice has not been followed. This Parish Council submits that the Applicants have had more than sufficient time to prepare a full Planning Application, rather than to continue with their abuse of the site. It may be considered that the Applicants' approach, including the perceived lack of co-operation with Ribble Valley Borough Council Officers has been contrary to any legal use of the site, despite its protected status.

Concerns have been expressed by residents, but also by Mellor Parish Councillors of the hazards posed by such a site. Storage of highly flammable substances at such a site proves a fire hazard to the neighbouring woodland, but also to residential properties. The narrow, winding lanes with sharp, blind bends are unsuitable for heavy plant & machinery. Hearsay evidence is that on occasion the lane has been obstructed by a large vehicle, when the driver has refused to clear the public highway. It is vital that emergency vehicles may access all properties & incidents in the wider area. The nearby A59 road has been closed on numerous occasions due to Road Traffic Incidents, when the lanes & minor roads of Mellor are utilised for emergency access. These lanes are used frequently by walkers and horse riders, as well as local residents: activities which could be deemed more suited to this rural environment, but an increased hazard if HGV's are frequently using a commercial site.

Ribble Valley Borough Council Enforcement notice requires the following steps to be taken:

- 1. Remove the containers, drainage works and driveway***
- 2. Remove from the land all building materials and rubble arising from compliance with requirement (1) above, and restore the land to its condition before the breach took place by levelling the ground and re-seeding it with grass, and plant trees to replace any removed during the unauthorised works.***

Mellor Parish Council strongly supports Ribble Valley Borough Council in this view and therefore requests that the Planning Application 3/2022/0574 is refused. It is then hoped that the Appeal made by the Applicants against the Enforcement Notice is lost & the site may be returned to its enhanced earlier status.

Kind regards

TERESA TAYLOR