

Mellor Parish Council

Mr Adam Birkett
Principal Planning Officer
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
BB7 2RA
BY EMAIL

05 September 2021

Dear Mr Birkett

Planning Application 3/2021/0788 – Wellbeing Centre, Pendle View, Mellor

I have been instructed my Mellor Parish Council to write to you about the above planning application following significant and numerous concerns raised at the Parish Council meeting held on the 2nd September 2021.

It came as no surprise to members that further planning applications would be submitted to RVBC regarding additional development at the site. In your own report following the initial application, para 3 states no more than 12 lodges at any time & para 6 that the lodge building is to have no other purpose. As this application is linked to the holiday cottages, surely your initial thoughts on a club house, accommodation etc should also be considered in relation to this application for a “Wellness Centre”

In “Live” magazine the following article appeared:

“A wellbeing centre and wine bar is set to be built at a Ribble Valley holiday park.

Louise Monk has submitted an application for planning permission to demolish stable buildings at Pendle View in Primrose Lane, Mellor.

If permission is granted the wellbeing centre will provide treatments and a relaxation meeting point for guests staying at the site’s 12 detached holiday lodges which were built last year.

Plans submitted with the application, from agent Gary Hoerty Associates, state: “The proposed development will involve the conversion of part of the existing timber stable buildings to provide treatment rooms and a reception and the demolition of the older stable buildings and their replacement with new timber buildings of a similar appearance to those being converted, which will be used **for a cafe and wine bar**.”

“Our client is aware of the growing demand for people being proactive about their health and the growth that arises from this in wellness tourism.

“Wellbeing tourism is expected to be the biggest trend in travel in 2021 with guests looking to deal with such things as stress management, weight loss etc with treatments including holistic therapy, massage and reiki being available.”

Mrs Moss, who lives at Cunliffe Moss Farm around five minutes away from the site, reveals in the plans that her daughter intends to live in the house at Pendle View.

The new facilities will only be for the use of guests at the lodges and will not be open to the general public. The development will include three treatment rooms, a kitchen, serving area and toilets.

A decision will be made on the plans by Ribble Valley Borough Council following a period of public consultation.”

Perhaps it is “convenient” that a change of use of a stable yard into a “wellbeing centre” is proposed. This represents a substantial expansion of facilities in this rural setting not directly related to the provision of holiday lodge accommodation. The proposal appears to support only one employee, so - given there’s a need for 20 car parking spaces do we assume that this “centre” is self-service or “practitioners” are self-employed and rent the rooms. In any case the need for so many car parking spaces seems to suggest an expectation of the facility being available to “non-residents”.

Crucially, in the planning submission statement by **GHA** it clearly states in 1.2 (line 10) that:

“it is **not proposed that it will **not** be open to the general public”.**

This sentence contains a double negative which implies that the centre **WILL BE OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC** - a slip of the hand perhaps, mistaken grammar or a deliberate attempt to obtain planning consent to open up the site by **smoke and mirrors tactics**?

Mellor Parish Council wishes to object, in the strongest possible terms, to this further development on the site on the basis (amongst other reasons) that the proposed development is out of character with the initial application, imparts a further “commercial” business in this rural location and has little, if any, economic benefit to the residents of Mellor and conflicts with many of the principles contained within the Ribble Valley core strategy.

Indeed, it confirms the Council’s long-held view that the applicants would “drip feed” applications in anticipation of approval which they know would have been refused if submitted at the outset.

Ribble Valley Borough Council adopted a Core Strategy for development and in our opinion many of the objectives and protections afforded by the strategy would be breached if this application is successful.

Below in red are some of the salient points which, whilst not exhaustive, we believe are not being properly considered or met by this further development of the site.

Policy dm1: general considerations

10.4 in determining planning applications, all development must:

DESIGN

2. Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.
3. Consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.
4. Use sustainable construction techniques where possible and provide evidence that energy efficiency, as described within policy dm5, has been incorporated into schemes where possible.

ACCESS

1. Consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.
2. Ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated.

AMENITY

1. Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.
2. Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances.
3. Have regard to public safety and secured by design principles.
4. Consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible.

ENVIRONMENT

1. Consider the environmental implications such as SSSI's, county heritage sites, local nature reserves, biodiversity action plan (bap) habitats and species, special areas of conservation and special protected areas, protected species, green corridors and other sites of nature conservation.

2. With regards to possible effects upon the natural environment, the council propose that the principles of the mitigation hierarchy be followed. This gives sequential preference to the following:

- 1) enhance the environment
- 2) avoid the impact
- 3) minimise the impact
- 4) restore the damage
- 5) compensate for the damage
- 6) offset the damage.

3. All development must protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings.

Mellor Parish Council considers that the “wellbeing centre”

- a) is not essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area and indeed could be detrimental to well established local facilities offering similar services.
- b) Is already provided for close by at the “Sanctuary of Healing” on the A59.
- c) does not provide for other than a very few employment opportunities – the application only highlights 1 FTE.
- d) may well in future be opened up for use by the general public as it is unlikely that footfall from 12 holiday lodges alone would create a viable business model
- e) may well be subject to a further application for change of use into holiday accommodation
- f) will cause additional traffic movements on Primrose Hill, the narrow steep country lane serving the entrance to the site on a tight right-angle bend.
- g) has long operating hours over 7 days with no respite for locals
- h) has potential to cause noise and nuisance to nearby residents

Policy dmb3: recreation and tourism development

10.25 planning permission will be granted for development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the borough.

This is subject to the following criteria being met:

1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;
2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village

Mellor Parish Council also considers that

- The development will undermine the character, quality and/or visual amenity of this open rural area by virtue of its position in the landscape, its scale, and purpose.
- The site is in an open rural area served by only one narrow, steep country lane and its further development will generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance.

We must also point out that there is no public transport network passing the entrance to the site and the 25A bus does not stop in close proximity to the site. In addition, as the site provides “holiday lets”, the visitors will be travelling to the site by car.

We also note that there is a clear error in the application.

ITEM 22 in the application form clearly asks the question –

Can the site be seen from a public road, public footpath, bridleway or other public land?

The answer given is **NO!**

We wish to point out that the site **can be clearly seen** from Mellor Lane, Saccary Lane and Primrose Hill. It is nestled in the triangle formed by the 3 lanes/roads.

This incorrect response appears to be a clear attempt to suggest that this development has little impact on its surroundings and its local residents, walkers etc as well as presenting a more favourable view to RVBC planning officers by false representation.

The site is incongruously situated outside of the village but is overlooked by residential properties on Primrose Hill and itself overlooks properties on Saccary Lane. To many locals it is already a blot on the landscape and has the potential to cause noise, nuisance and disturbance to those living locally.

As stated before, **there is a clear indication in the PLANNING STATEMENT submitted by GHA** (which differs from the PR release) that the “wellbeing centre” will be opened up to the public, which would cause additional traffic movements along these narrow country lanes. We also note that the operating hours proposed are 7 days per week until 10.00pm which does not afford local residents any respite from increased traffic flow, noise or disturbance.

We firmly believe that further planning applications will be submitted to RVBC over the coming years (there has already been a refused planning application relating to this site from the applicant) requesting permission to build further lodges on adjacent land, turning a once beautiful peaceful, green and bio diverse landscape into a “holiday park”.

We therefore request that this application be refused or, as an absolute minimum, strict conditions imposed on the operation of the site (opening hours, carbon footprint mitigation etc) with a moratorium on future development and non-resident use.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Venables

Interim clerk,
Mellor Parish Council