

BOLTON-BY-BOWLAND, GISBURN FOREST AND SAWLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Ms. Laura Eastwood
Principal Planning Officer Ribble Valley Borough Council Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
BB7 2AU
BY EMAIL

27 August 2021

Dear Ms. Eastwood

Planning Application 3/2021/0793

Bolton-by-Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley Parish Council objected to the original application, 3/2020/1091, and we do so again with this application. We believe that despite some down-sizing and minor variations the proposed development would still have a negative impact on the local area and on residents. Our councillors have received many objections from concerned residents.

The grounds we previously referred to are still relevant:

- The overall scale and size of the proposed development is contrary to the rural landscape of the area and the quiet enjoyment of the unspoilt landscape of the surroundings
- This will create a disturbance of the nearby SSSI and impact on the adjacent AONB
- A development of this size would generate excess nuisance to the local infrastructure
- It would give a negative economic and commercial impact on the local community which is already well served with visitor accommodation and garden centres
- Site access including the local roads is completely unsuitable for large construction plant and equipment, giving rise to longer term contamination of roads, water courses and drainage due to movements on and off site. We remain concerned about highways visibility.

Coars Farm Garden Centre, Settle Road, Bolton By Bowland, BD23 4SN

Proposed redevelopment of site for 15 holiday chalets, conversion of existing holiday house and adjacent barn to a 20 person holiday let. Extension of existing cafe, construction of

reception building with manager's flat, alteration to existing garden centre to form a farm shop and plant display area. Creation of car parking, landscaping and associated works.

The Parish Council notes that the Forest of Bowland AONB is now listed on the Consultee List on the RVBC Planning Portal, but we remain surprised that neither the Environment Agency nor Natural England appear to have been consulted. It is accepted that these statutory bodies may have been consulted, however the Parish Council would appreciate knowledge of such consultation, particularly due to the proximity of the site to AONB Boundary and the White Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Size and Scale: The green lungs of the Parish are appreciated by both residents and visitors as assets worthy of protection. It has previously been suggested that the original application looked more like a small housing estate in Clitheroe than a small holiday destination in the more rural parts of the tranquil Ribble Valley. We still feel that the proposed development would adversely increase the transient population of the area out of all proportion to the existing residential one. size and scale of each plot remains excessive. While the number of car parking spaces has been reduced, the effect would still be similar to that of having a small supermarket in this tranquil area. Local residents have expressed the concern that if this application was to be allowed it would be followed by a second application for a similar number of chalets.

Sustainability: The Parish Council has concerns about the sustainability of the site, both from a financial perspective, but also from the environmental standpoint. Whilst it is noted that part of Planning Law does not include the long-term financial state of an applicant, nevertheless we note that in the original application the applicant's own Planning Justification stated at para 5: ***"Whilst the site is currently not unviable, it does lack resources for reinvestment and development to enable the business to expand and grow to meet changing market demand. For example, plans for redevelopment of the café and garden centre approved in 2016 have not been implemented (application 3/2016/0088) refers."*** Despite changes in the proposed construction of the chalets, our original concerns remain. We again point to the evidence of another development project in the parish falling into dilapidation due to insufficient capital investment where the parish council has supported local residents' requests for planning enforcement.

Environmental Concerns: Note is taken that the site is intended to become at least carbon neutral, however there is little consideration of the effect of light pollution from 15 holiday chalets in addition to ancillary facilities inc. holiday lodge for 20 persons on the local environment, which is widely acknowledged as a Dark Skies area to be enjoyed for the lack of additional light. Latest technology is under consideration for PV panels to the roof, however what details are there for the number of Electronic Vehicle Charging Points to be installed and how will these be powered? A new septic tank mechanism is part of the application, but there is insufficient detail for waste collection, storage and removal in addition to a lack of policy on recycling. Noise pollution is a further concern, whilst the neighbours are at some distance, many have enjoyed very peaceful surroundings for much, if not all of their lives and wish to continue to enjoy the peace and tranquillity to which they are entitled.

SSSI and AONB Concerns: Natural England gives the nearby 13.43 hectare White Moss the Designation of Site of Special Scientific Interest due to its being "the best surviving

example in Lancashire of mire type” This type of peat bog is to be preserved and any potential run off from the site may cause irreparable damage. Paras 13a and 13b suggest that drainage operations would be likely to damage the special interest and therefore the mire type could be lost forever. In addition, the Management Plan for the adjacent Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty states in its aims “to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural beauty of the Forest of Bowland landscape” which does not suggest a significant holiday development.

Traffic and highways issues. We refer to our earlier observations which we still feel are pertinent.

Sustainable Transport: National and Local Planning policies refer to sustainability of transport linkage. There is no public transport to the site and, as has been highlighted, the local roads are narrow, unpaved and unlit. The application suggests that it is acceptable to walk 4.2 miles to the nearest local shop in Bolton-by-Bowland which is in our opinion disingenuous for use of a holiday outlet. Similarly, walking on the roads and the use of cycles by those unfamiliar could be extremely hazardous and would be most unlikely in dark, cold or wet conditions, even if access to the site was changed to link with PROW. The roads are completely unsuitable for those with disability or mobility issues and therefore the only reasonable means of access is by private vehicle, generating additional traffic, contrary to carbon neutral initiatives. The application will no doubt generate additional employment, however in this area of very low population this will probably not be local employment; again giving rise to additional vehicle usage by single users.

Construction; We note the changes in this latest application, but our concerns remain.

Site Management : A manager’s flat is included as part of the application, but the Parish Council wonders if there is evidence of how the site (if approved and opened) would be managed ; opening hours / limits, curfew, no fireworks etc are mentioned in the Management Plan, however this would be unenforceable by a single manager with a number of more difficult guests. Since there are no local leisure facilities, it may be assumed that some visitors will wish to create noise and disturbance for their entertainment, to the annoyance of other visitors and locals. Sites such as this need management of visitors on a 24-hour, daily basis but details of such plans are sketchy.

Bolton-by-Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley Parish Council remains deeply concerned about the effects this proposed development would have on the local area, and we therefore strongly object and request refusal by Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Yours sincerely

Hayden Fortune

Acting Clerk/Proper Officer