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From: Contact Centre (CRM) <contact@ribblevalley.gov.uk>
Sent: 21 February 2022 22:17
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application Comments - 3/2022/0082

Planning Application Reference No.: 3/2022/0082

Address of Development: OLD GARAGE SITE,
NEWTON ROAD,
DUNSOP BRIDGE,
BB7 3BB

Comments: OBJECTIONS TO PLANNING APPLICATION
3/2022/0082 OLD GARAGE SITE, NEWTON ROAD, DUNSOP BRIDGE, BB7 3BB

With reference to the above planning application submitted on behalf of The Duchy of Lancaster we write to inform the planning committee of our objections to such a development.

[REDACTED] there was a shop located at "puddleducks" and a bus service, albeit somewhat infrequent, but over the years these have gone, simply because they weren't used.

Our first objection questions the need Dunsop Bridge has for a Community Hub with a much larger café, shop, therapy rooms and workspaces.

The proposed development is large, and we are concerned that the size and design of the building is going to overpower the existing cottage properties.

The café has, over the years, successfully served the needs of visitors although in my experience has never been well used by residents. The shop area within the café has been remodelled over the years to provide more café space as very few people used the shop. So, whilst a shop is an attractive prospect, unless used on a regular basis by most of the village, it is not going to be economically viable.

The Duchy have provided no evidence to support the need for therapy rooms/workspace etc in the space vacated by the Church adjacent to the proposed development. Dunsop Bridge is already well served with a Village Hall and planning permission has recently been granted for several work units at another site in the village.

Dunsop Bridge is known for its "quirky" café and ducks on the green. A large open café, open at the rear, directing visitors across the playing fields is going to lose the essence of the village, its unique selling point. Para 1.14 in the application states their "overarching aim" is to not "disrupt the fine equilibrium balance and charm of Dunsop Bridge". And a larger café with many more covers is much more difficult to staff. A sunny day in June and the village is deserted, a wet windy Wednesday in November and the place is heaving. Whilst a planning decision does not have to consider the viability of the proposed business, consideration needs to be given to how the Duchy could adapt the use of the building. Recently whilst talking [REDACTED] that they were not considering a wedding venue as there were 4 already in the area. The worry being that "change of use" is much easier to get than planning permission.

Our second objection relates to the proposal to extend the carpark. In an AONB it cannot be right that green fields are dug up and covered in tarmac. A row of 20+ extra cars would be unsightly and over facing for the village and would detract from the overall appearance of the area. In the words of Joni Mitchell, "they paved paradise and put up a parking lot". There are ways to extend the carpark. Grassington has a very successful carpark. The parking spaces need to be interspersed with trees and grassed areas. The carpark though, no matter how big you make it, is only ever going to be used as a last resort whilst there are no parking restrictions on the roads in the village.

Our third objection is against the residents of the three cottages adjacent to the site losing a large proportion of their private gardens at the rear to accommodate a pathway. The Duchy have provided no evidence that this is necessary and would be used even if provided. Whilst the loss of the gardens does not directly impact us, we are appalled that the Duchy can have so little respect and regard for their own tenants. This does not instil us with confidence that the Duchy has the best interests for the village at heart. [REDACTED] concerned as to the direction the Duchy was taking the village that she googled "How to contact the Queen". These are established gardens and hedgerows, home to an abundance of wildlife which would be lost forever. The pathway would take visitors directly behind very much reduced gardens and a substantive fence would be replaced by open shrubs leading to a massive loss in privacy. We feel that there are much better and less impactful alternative ways of directing visitors from the car park and rear of the café.

Our 4th and main objection concern the plan to have open access onto the community sports field from the car parking area and the rear of the new building. At present, the sports field is used predominantly by residents of the village to exercise their dogs and local children to play football etc during better weather. We use the field at least once, if not twice, a day to allow our very energetic dog to run off the lead. Despite living in such a rural area, the opportunities for being off the lead are very few due to most fields having livestock in them and the need to protect other wildlife. The fact that it is fenced off nearly all the way round makes it a very safe environment for both children and dogs to use, without fear of them running into the car park or road. If the field were to be open onto the rear of the café and car park it would prevent most of its current users from using it as it would not be secure. A perfectly logical solution would be to construct a low open fence, as on the other three sides of the field, with gated access to the rear of the café. This would ensure the safety of younger children and dogs and prevent potential accidents. Visitors to the village will occasionally use the field but this is usually on weekends and school holidays and only when the weather is dry enough. Having the field open would prevent us residents who use it every day, all year round, whatever the weather, from ever using it again. We agree that the playing field needs to be used more but not at the expense of us never being able to use it. A fence and gate will not stop visitors to the village from accessing the field, but no fence and gate will stop us from being able to exercise our dog. Surely the development of the site should be inclusive and not penalise the residents of the village especially as the Duchy stresses all the way through their planning application their desire to improve facilities for the community. Also, if access to the field was open, visitors would choose to walk diagonally across the field towards the playground rather than use a path. This in time would wear a new pathway across the grass rendering it useless for the ball games it is intended for.

More general reasons for objecting to the proposed plans relate to parking and traffic issues. Dunsop Bridge has always been a popular tourist attraction when the weather is fine, at weekends and in the school holidays, and as residents we have come to expect inconsiderate parking through the village and on the road from the war memorial to the Trough Road, but this has only been on very hot days at weekend and during school holidays. Since Covid the issue has been a bigger problem, the weather doesn't have to be that good anymore. The council car park in the village is generally only used as a last resort, when all the roads in the village are full and it is the only place left to park. At times the inconsiderate parking is obstructive and dangerous and larger vehicles such as fire engines would struggle to pass. To be honest at times it is difficult for cars to pass and there have been times when we have resigned ourselves to staying at home rather than face the hassle of trying to drive out of the village. This also results in damage to grass verges and obstructions to fields for farmers and to private driveways. Therefore, any plan which seeks to increase visitor numbers is only going to exacerbate the problem. Without parking restrictions in place on the roads in the village, inconsiderate drivers will continue to leave their cars anywhere and everywhere to avoid paying to use the car parks provided. With two large construction projects planned, the increase in large goods vehicles and other associated traffic is going to have a severe impact on the quality of life for residents and visitors and it is likely to be so for several years. If Planning was to be passed Ribble Valley Council needs to be aware of these potential parking/traffic issues and provide resources, as necessary, to the village. The Duchy states that there has not been injury accident in the village in the last 5 years but that doesn't mean the road through the

village is not a hazard. That's like saying ski jumping isn't risky unless you injure yourself. Do we have to wait till someone is seriously injured? Also, the Duchy must accept there is some level of risk hence the need for a path across the sports field.

In conclusion, whilst we accept something needs to be done with the garage site, we have concerns about the size of the project and its impact on both the village as a whole and the residents. We have worries about the viability of the project, the possible alternative uses and on the flipside, if it becomes the popular place in the Ribble Valley for lunch, the effect the increased number of visitors will have. Whilst we have these concerns, we can accept the proposed café complex and the subsequent conversion of puddleducks back into residential use, but we feel we must object to the proposed plans regarding the carpark extension, the pathway, and the open access onto the field. These are only of potential benefit to visitors to the village and are of no practical use to those of us that live here and would result in a loss of village amenities. We would have to endure several years of large-scale disruption to village life and end up with less facilities and amenities than we currently have. There are alternative solutions that would satisfy everyone. In para 1.10 of the Duchy's application, they state their "overriding objective is to enhance the sustainability and quality of their historic estates for the benefit of the community living there".

