


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	KH	Date:	17/03/25	Manager:	LH	Date:	12/12/25
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Application Ref:	3/2024/0758	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk	
Date Inspected:	27/11/24		
Publicity Expired:	18/12/24		
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		Decision	REFUSAL

Development Description:	Change of use from a mixed use within Class F1(a) and Sui Generis use as a Wedding Venue for up to 40 days a year to Sui Generis use as a Wedding Venue for up to 100 events a year.
Site Address/Location:	The Outbarn Clough Bottom Rabbit Lane Bashall Eaves BB7 3NA

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No comments	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	

The site has two existing accesses both of which are unclassified subject to 60mph speed limits.

A one-way system was agreed upon as part of planning application 3/2016/0243. However, on-site observation found that the one-way system has not been permanently signed and gates have been erected which discourage vehicle movement along the one way. Satellite navigation systems also do not follow the one-way, therefore the one-way requires signification improvements for it to be self-enforcing and used appropriately.

The LHA would look for significant improvements through the one-way system to ensure self-enforcement. Improvements may include permanent signage with clear text Improvements may include permanent signage with clear text that has a minimum X-height of 50mm. The applicant should also consider the need for reflective backing which would allow for easy viewing in darkness. While the site is currently meant to have 3 signs in place, no such signs were noted to be in place during a site visit, the LHA would look for improved signage, with the one-way system clearly identified at the entrance point, entering and leaving the parking areas and at any further junction points.

The applicant should consider if the one-way system still remains the most suitable and appropriate route through the site.

Both Cross Lane and Rabbit Lane are in poor condition. Cross Lane would benefit from a resurfacing scheme and has been put forward for inclusion in a future capital programme. However, we cannot say when or if funding will be allocated as allocation of funding is determined on a countywide prioritisation, based on a number of factors.

The proposed increase in events will likely have a greater impact on travel movements than training and corporate events, particularly in hours of darkness. The LHA is of the opinion that events and weddings will also increase the number of vehicles bringing staff and supplies that would be presently required for training and corporate purposes.

The site is rural in nature. The nearest bus is over a kilometre from the site, which makes the use of public transport to the site unrealistic. The local road network is also unlit and lacks footway provisions which further makes public transport undesirable. Given the rural nature of the site, there is a reliance on the private car to access the site for staff as well as guests attending events at the site.

The LHA have concerns regarding the use of the one-way system in place and understands that this is not a permanent feature although the LHA would expect this to be permanently in place, outside of events, to support any deliveries received prior to events. Should there be a reason why the one-way system is no longer feasible the LHA would expect the applicant to provide additional information on the matter and make suggestions on how traffic could move through the site and any improvements internally to allow this to happen.

CONSULTATIONS:

Additional Representations.

Five responses received raising objections to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The applicant has indicated that there has been a breach of planning conditions since 2019 with more than 120 weddings in 2022;
- The applicant has ignored the conditions in place;
- The applicant has financially benefitted from the breach of these conditions;
- The applicant states there is space for 60 cars. Cross Lane is a singles track winding, narrow Lane which serves several farms and a few residences. The Lane has a handful of passing places along its length. Since planning permission was granted here has been a significant increase in the amount of traffic on the Lane. There have been confrontations between local farmers and wedding guests with cars manoeuvring into the verges to allow vehicles to exist Cross Lane resulting in damage to verges and collapsed drainage ditches;
- Wedding traffic does not only consist of cars, it also includes articulated trucks supplying drinks, flowers, cakes, linen and outside catering supplies. Large 40 and 50 seater coaches also go down the Lane together with minibuses and taxis. There is no traffic management in place and the traffic is excessive;
- Wedding traffic to Browsholme also uses Cross Lane;
- The Outbarn also hosts other events such as birth parties and christening parties;
- On warm nights when the windows are open, we can hear music which constitutes noise pollution;
- Wedding traffic leaves the venue much beyond the time constraints with the wedding traffic being significant and tidal, waking up our household on a regular basis when we must go to work the next morning and correlates with the wedding signs posted at the end on Cross Lane;
- Increase of 150% of events which together with the 10 holiday lodges will create further traffic pressure. The County Surveyor has recommended that traffic to and from the venue be one way and the exit route should be through Clough Bottom Farm and the village of Bashall Eaves;
- By their own admission, within their Business statement, the Out Barn held 57 weddings in 2019, a further 120+ in 2022 before stabilising at 90 per year
- The Outbarn has seen in increase in popularity over recent years and the number of wedding events consistently grow on a year-on-year basis. This rise in popularity has directly correlated with a negative impact on the surrounding residents; both from a noise pollution and local access perspective;
- The volume of traffic has continued to increase causing significant disruption including difficulties for resident's and businesses accessing their properties. Examples include:
 - A coach ending up on its dies attempting to pass a car;
 - A suspected drink driver running off the road and being abusive to residents;
- A formal increase in the number of events threatens not only the areas charm and tranquillity but the safety of residents and visitors alike;
- Many residents have expressed their concerns over the loud music and noise levels during events with the afternoon and evening entertainment is extremely noisy. Many residents believe that effective sound monitoring is not in place at the Out Barn, as the music stopping and restarting can often be

heard. We ask that this is investigated to ensure legislation for nighttime noise is adhered to prior to any further planning application being considered;

- Many weddings have outside entertainment, meaning live music is not contained inside the venue;
- Guests can be heard shouting in the early hours with vehicles leaving as late as 1.30-2am;
- Signs have been erected actively discouraging use of public footpaths around the applicant's property as well as "Private Road sign to ensue visitors do not use their property to turn around yet other residents are expected to deal with this;
- Whilst we acknowledge the importance of supporting local venues, we are concerned with the owners brazen lack of regard for their existing planning rules will see them continue to push to further increase their revenues with disregard to the impact on local communities;
- We would like the existing planning to stay at the number as corporate training events do not have as big of an impact and do not attract the same amount of noise and traffic as the wedding events;
- It is crucial to consider the cumulative impact of noise pollution and maintenance of the roads on the residential community particularly in such a serene environment;
- The noise survey was carried out in October and therefore not measured the impact during spring and summer months when the doors are open and music is played outside during the day and late into the evening.;
- Wedding Fayres are held and not counted in the current 40 limit on weddings;
- Consider the impact on displaced traffic that will avoid the fell road during the 7-year HARP project due to start in 2025;
- How will the use of the lodges and number of weddings be monitored going forward? A suggestion is for the Out Barn to publish and maintain a 12-month wedding event calendar that could show transparency for both Ribble Valley for both Ribble Valley Council and residents;
- We understand that jobs and livelihoods depend on the continued success of the Out Barn, its success as a wedding venue is to be supported, however, due to its rural location, with an AONB and current impact on both residents and highways, we feel that it has reached its maximum potential. Any further expansion in either events or buildings cannot be supported without the above considerations.

Eight responses have been received in support of the proposal stating:

- Many businesses are struggling with each pub and accommodation in the village benefitting from this venue. With guests staying a minimum of two nights and using local services such as pubs/restaurants, taxis, florists, hair and beauty and outside caterers;
- The local, jobs for many people created by these venues surely outweighs any traffic issues;
- The village will have traffic issues once UU commence work but that is not a reason to restrict business from growing/continuing;
- This affects the employees and all the other local suppliers who all work in and around the Ribble Valley;
- The Out Barn is a fantastic champion of local businesses, bringing visitors to Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley, and fostering growth across the area;
- Continued growth of the business will bring lasting benefits to the wider community; and
- The Out Barn choosing to source from independent shops and helps sustain independent shops in Clitheroe.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy

Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development

Key Statement EN2 – Landscape

Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development

Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy

Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3 – Transport & Mobility
Policy DME1 – Protecting Trees and Woodlands
Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy
Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2023/0448 – Proposed construction of ten holiday lodges, woodland path and landscaping – Approved.

3/2018/1067 - Erection of new building to provide eight-bedroom holiday accommodation in connection with existing wedding/training venue business – Approved.

3/2018/0368 – Application for the variation of condition 3 and 4 from planning permission 3/2016/0243 to vary the hours of operation and to allow 40 weddings per year – Approved.

3/2017/0367 – Discharge of condition 7 (one way system) from planning permission 3/2016/0243 – Approved.

3/2016/0243 – Change of use from Class D1 to a mixed use within Class D1 and D2 to allow D2 use as a wedding venue for up to 40 days per year – Approved.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a site known as The Out Barn at Clough Bottom, located to the east of Bashall Eaves, approximately 1.5 miles west of the village boundary of Waddington. The application site is located in a somewhat elevated and isolated position within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

The site has two existing accesses both of which are unclassified subject to 60mph speed limits. Condition 7 attached to planning permission 3/2016/0243 required access via a one-way system.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

The application seeks consent to increase the number of weddings that can be carried out at the venue from 40 weddings a year to 100 weddings a year. Whilst the application form states 100 days, the Planning Statement refers to 100 weddings / events (as per the 2018 condition wording) and the agent has confirmed the application is to be assessed on this basis. The application is also proposing to forfeit the approved D1 (now F1(a)) use making this solely a wedding venue.

Principle of Development:

The Out Barn was originally an agricultural barn and in 1996 planning permission was granted to convert the building into an office and management training centre. In 2012 a further application was approved to extend and alter the barn to its current appearance. In 2016 permission was granted to change the use of the Out Barn from a training centre to a mixed use that allowed the venue to host weddings. A condition was imposed restricting the D2 (wedding) use to 40 days per year. In 2018 permission was granted to vary the condition to substitute the word 'days' to allow for 40 weddings/events per year.

The Out Barn is an established business for both wedding and events. The recently approved lodges will provide accommodation on site to enhance the wedding offer.

The principle of a wedding venue at this site has previously been considered and found to be acceptable. The acceptability of the scheme does not require matters of principle to be reconsidered and is based on the impacts resulting from the proposed intensity of use.

Residential Amenity:

In terms of residential amenity, the nearest residential dwellings (not owned by the applicant) are located between 230m – 460m from the event site main building. At such distances the potential for noise and disturbance has to be considered in terms of whether this would result in any unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

In this respect, given the above-mentioned separation distances, and given the sites rural location meaning likely low levels of background noise, neighbouring residential properties would be impacted by the increased wedding activity at the site, in terms of activities associated with a daytime and night-time use (e.g. music playing) and associated comings and goings of people and vehicles.

Whilst the applicant is proposing to forfeit the F1(a) use, based on actual use of the building in recent years it is clear that its use as a wedding venue has had the biggest impact on neighbouring properties. As such the proposal to forfeit this use is given very little weight in determining the acceptability of an intensified wedding use.

A noise assessment has been submitted in support of the application which has been fully assessed. The report has a number of inaccuracies, with one of the measuring locations adjacent to a stream and a generous weighting of the of the background noise levels. One of the nearest noise receptors in the form of a residential property, Oakmere (239m) is in direct line of sight and is not mentioned in the list of locations. Cow Hey Farm also consists of a cottage and converted barn.

Moreover, the Code of Practice on Environmental Noise Control at Concerts is the wrong standard as this applies to one off events rather than regular events. This standard has been rescinded.

The Council's Environmental Health Team has confirmed that they have been in receipt of several noise complaints relating to the premises, particularly from music from the outdoor area and allegations of the venue over-riding the noise limiter. It is understood that the applicant is already operating above the approved number of events (40). If that is the case the fact that there have been complaints even with some noise mitigation measures is more reason to restrict the number of events being held each year to 40 in order to limit this impact. It is also understood that the majority of events such as weddings occur during the summer months when outside activities are more likely to occur. Nevertheless, the increase to 100 events would result in more seasonal activities in the spring and winter months such as Christmas Markets and birthdays particularly as approval has been granted for the ten lodges to accommodate event guests only and this would be likely to result in more during the evenings and mornings than at present.

The submitted noise management plan is generic and fails to enforce any of the proposed actions and therefore would not be effective in terms of ensuring the increased activities would not result in noise nuisance for the nearest residential receptors.

In view of the above concerns, and given the number of inaccuracies in the submitted noise assessment the proposal has not demonstrated that an intensified wedding use would have an acceptable impact on neighbouring residents, it is considered that the proposed development would likely result in an unacceptable impact on surrounding residential properties in the area due to noise nuisance and disturbance contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

The application site is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. As no external changes are proposed to the existing and approved structures on the site the impact on visual amenity would be limited to additional vehicles and a more intense form of activities including outside of the buildings and an increase in comings and goings to the site.

In this respect it is considered that the increased use of the development would not result in an unacceptable visual impact on the area and would therefore accord with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Highways and Parking:

There are a number of Public Right of Ways within and close to the site which are regularly used by walkers and cyclists.

The site is rural in nature with the nearest bus stop over a kilometre from the site, which makes the use of public transport to the site unrealistic. The local road network is unlit and lacks any public footway provisions which further makes public transport undesirable. Given the rural nature of the site, there is a reliance on private motor vehicles to access the site for staff as well as guests attending events at the site.

LCC Highways have advised that they have continue to have concerns over the increased use of the highway network to access the site and that this could result in highway safety issues.

In particular, the one-way system previously conditioned as part of application 3/2016/0243 (condition 7 discharge application 3/2017/0367) has not been adhered to and this together with the limited signage and erection of gates discourages vehicle movement along the one-way system to the detriment of highway safety.

The Local Highway Authority are wanting to see significant improvements through the one-way system to ensure self-enforcement including more effective permanent signage which allows for easy viewing in darkness. While the site is currently meant to have 3 signs in place, no such signs were noted to be in place during a site visit therefore improved signage is required, with the one-way system clearly identified at the entrance point, entering and leaving the parking areas and at any further junction points along its route.

Scaled drawings of the signs to be permanently in place along the internal private road network need to be provided together with a plan indicating the direction of the flow of traffic through the site and the placement of the signs.

Moreover, the applicant should consider if a one-way system is still the most suitable and appropriate route through the site. The application should provide an explanation of why the one-way is not being implemented and make alternative suggestions which supports two-way traffic through the site.

Rabbit Lane and Cross Lane are both very narrow roads with minimal passing places. Traffic that will be attending a wedding venue will likely to be large tidal movements all entering or leaving at similar times therefore there is a concern that should vehicles meet within the highway a number of vehicles will need to be reserved in order to locate an appropriate passing place. Both roads also have limited forward visibility whilst this may reduce speeds it also means that reversing any distance to find a suitable passing place to allow vehicles to pass is very difficult. There is also a concern that intensified movement along Cross Lane and Rabbit Lane will contribute to a further decline in the condition of the carriageway and verges.

Both Cross Lane and Rabbit Lane are in poor condition. The LHA acknowledge Cross Lane would benefit from a resurfacing scheme and have put it forward for inclusion in a future capital programme. However, it is not possible to say when or if funding will be allocated as funding is determined on a countywide prioritisation,

based on a number of factors. The LHA's Highway Maintenance team will continue to monitor the condition of both Cross Lane and Rabbit Lane repairing any defects which meet the minimum intervention levels.

The proposed increase in events will have a greater impact on travel movements than the permitted training and corporate events, particularly in the evenings/hours of darkness. Events and weddings will also result in an increase in the number of vehicles bringing staff and supplies beyond that would be presently required for training and corporate purposes.

The LHA state these impacts are not acceptable without mitigation. In particular the applicant would need to demonstrate that a comprehensive traffic management plan (TMP) in relation to the one-way system can be implemented in order to mitigate the impact of vehicle movements on Cross Lane and the surrounding area. This plan must include clear signage implemented from the access along the entire one-way system throughout the site in order to ensure smooth traffic flow and prevent congestion on the surrounding narrow rural roads. The venue would be expected to clearly communicate the approved travel route, parking arrangements, and traffic management measures to all suppliers and visitors to the site in advance of each wedding/event in order to minimise disruption to local residents and other road users.

Any supplementary suppliers diverting outside of the standard wedding event suppliers, such as stage hires, fairground rides or other attractions are likely to increase vehicle movements including HGV's on the local network and must be fully considered as part of the TMP to ensure that they can be accommodated in terms of size and number before any agreements are made with clients.

The LHA goes onto state that they will not support further diversity at the site, such as additional events outside of weddings or holiday letting etc as the local roads do not support this kind of traffic movement.

In view of the above concerns, and in the absence of a TMP to demonstrate that the impacts of the proposed development can be adequately and effectively mitigated to an acceptable level, the proposed development would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety contrary to policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Para 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Furthermore, due to the non-compliance and ineffectiveness of the current approved mitigation for the existing development, the local planning authority cannot be sure that sufficient and effective mitigation can be identified.

Landscape/Ecology:

There would be no greater impact on the landscape than already approved in terms of built form and therefore there would be no greater impact on the biodiversity and landscaping of this site within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

At the time of submission this application would not have been subject to Biodiversity Net Gain.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

As such, for the reasons outlined above and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION:

Refused on the following grounds: -

01

The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the resultant activity from the increased use of this rural site as a wedding venue would have an acceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring receptors in the vicinity in terms of noise disturbance. This is contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Paragraph 198 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

02

The increased use of the site as a wedding venue would result in additional vehicle movements on rural lanes which would be of significant detriment to highway safety due to the single width track and failure to implement a satisfactory one-way system. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that a suitable and effective solution to mitigate the impact on highway safety to a satisfactory level is achievable. This is contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.