

28th January, 2026

For the attention of Emily Pickup

Planning Department,
Ribble Valley Borough Council,
Council Offices,
Church Walk,
CLITHEROE,
BB7 2RA.

Dear Ms. Pickup,

Planning Application No: 3/2025/0002

Grid Ref: 378091 437641

Location: Land rear of Sabden Village Hall, Wesley Street, Sabden, BB7 9EH.

With regard to the above, we have great concerns of the impact on us, the day-to-day implications it would give if approved, along with a number of inaccuracies in the submission, particularly the fact that [REDACTED] the proposed car park.

We were very surprised that this application was submitted as we know that this was first mooted a few years ago when the church hall was in temporary use as a café. Other than for this short-lived period, parking for daily church and church hall use has never been an issue and there has almost always been adequate on-site parking.

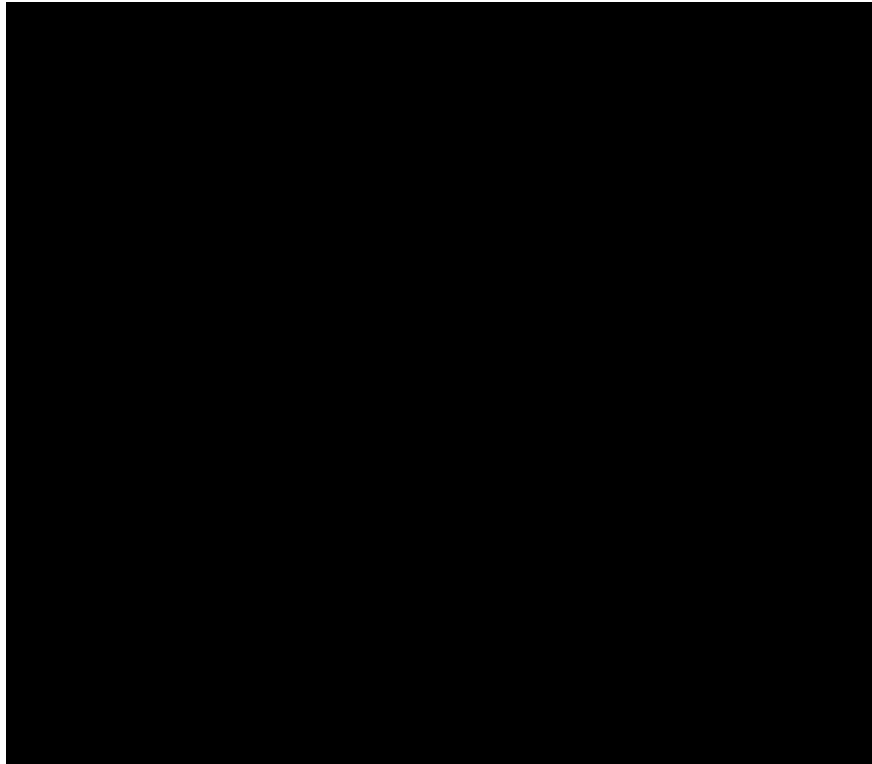
At this stage, we would apologise for any repetition you find below, we felt it important to adhere to the format of the submitted planning application documents, which also contains repetition.

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

6. Pedestrian and Vehicle Access, Roads and Rights of Way

There will be an increase to parking along the church path.

Any parking along the church path would block any other vehicle accessing or egressing the proposed site, so we cannot understand this statement. We demonstrate this with the following photo [REDACTED] along the church path.



10. Vehicle Parking

The Planning Application states that there is currently one parking space and no disability parking spaces. This is incorrect.

There are already on-site parking bays for 6 (5+1) vehicles and additional parking for at least 6 cars on the tarmac immediately adjacent to the grassed area planned for the new car park, equating to 12 current spaces. The photo below shows the 5-space parking bay.



These photos show the available parking outside the church during normal working hours.



Another inaccuracy is the statement that there is no disabled parking. There is already a marked disabled parking space immediately outside the church gates (closer to the church than the proposed disability space on the plans), the paint on which has eroded though poor maintenance.



These spaces already adequately serve the needs of the church hall and the church, which has not required additional car parking during its existence and has a declining congregation. It is very unusual for the existing parking to be full during the day (as can be seen from the photos on pages 2 and 3) and, therefore, we would question the need for additional spaces if they were only intended for the use of the church and church hall users as stated on the planning application documents.

Knocking down two established trees in a conservation area and replacing a grassed area with plastic mesh flooring seems to be an unnecessary destruction of a wildlife habitat for very little gain (if the new car park is established the current parking available in front of the church would be inaccessible).

13. Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Protected and Geological Conservation

.....is there a reasonable likelihood of the following (biodiversity or geological conservation features) being affected adversely or conserved and enhanced within the application site, or on land adjacent to or near the application site?

- a) Protected and priority species*** – the ‘no’ box has been ticked.
- b) Designated sites, important habitats or other biodiversity features*** – the ‘no’ box has been ticked.

This surprised [REDACTED], there are colonies of bats, including pipistrelles, [REDACTED] and are frequently seen at dusk in all the trees in the vicinity during the Summer months, including those earmarked for removal in the plans. R.V.B.C. informed us of this on inspection when we had initially suspected squirrels in

ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This states that the proposed car park is in the grounds of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church!

Obviously incorrect, it is actually the Parish Church of St. Nicholas Heyhouses Sabden.

Project Overview

This states that the flowering cherry is 5 metres and that the beech tree is 9 metres, these have been materially understated. The flowering cherry is at least 10 metres, and the beech tree is at least 12 metres tall.

Arboricultural Impact Assessment Summary – Trees to be Removed.

Tree 1 – Cherry - Its removal poses minimal arboricultural impact due to its moderate ecological and amenity value.

This is a specimen cherry tree due to the combination of the two distinct plant parts that have been joined together (scion and rootstock) to create pink blossoms on one side and white on the other. Contrary to having 'moderate amenity value' it is actually the only flowering tree on the grass area, it was obviously deliberately planted centrally, and as such, is very impactful. Its loss would be notable.

Tree 2 – Beech – described twice as semi-mature and once as mature! T4, the tree behind T2, is described as a mature oak tree and yet the beech tree is far more substantial as anyone looking at it can see.

We would suggest that the applicants re-visit their arboricultural report to ensure it reflects the correct facts.

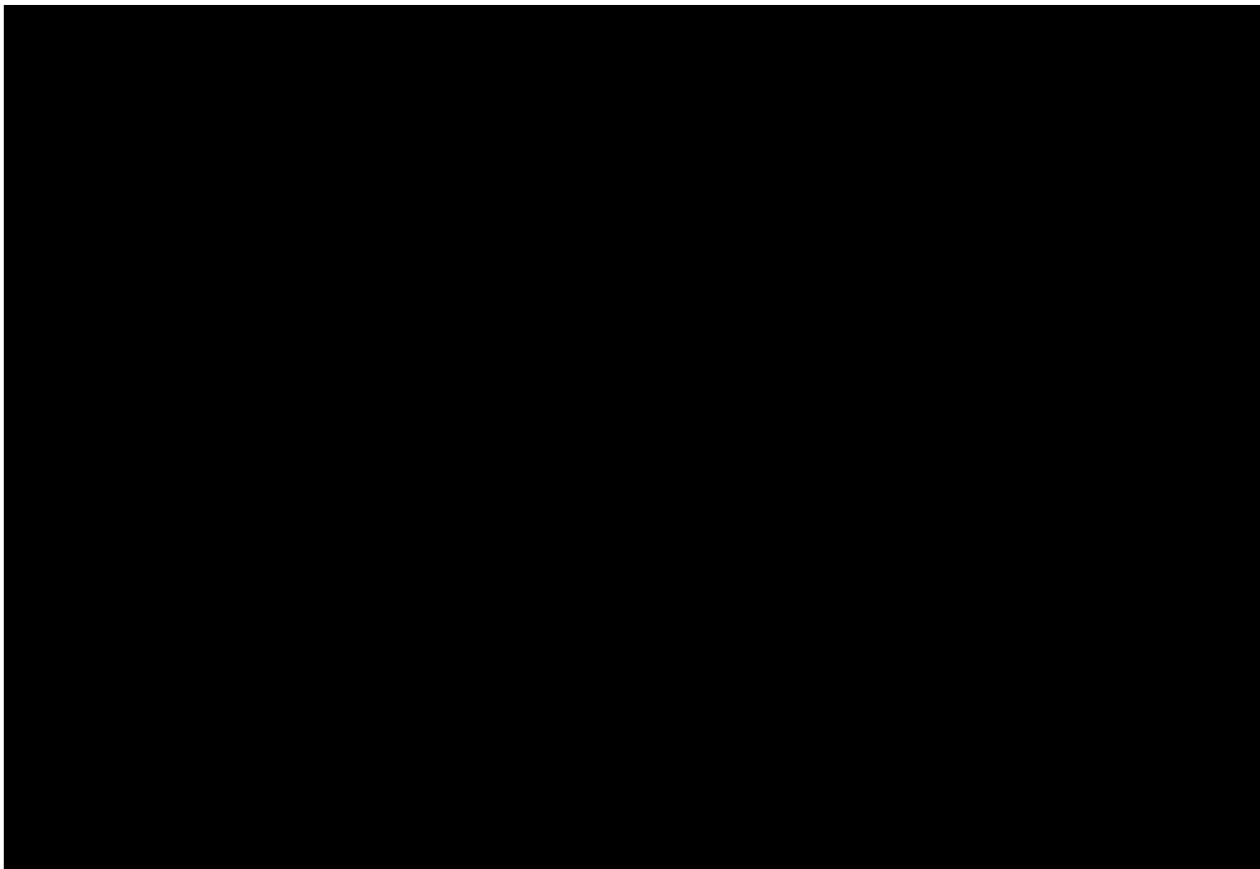
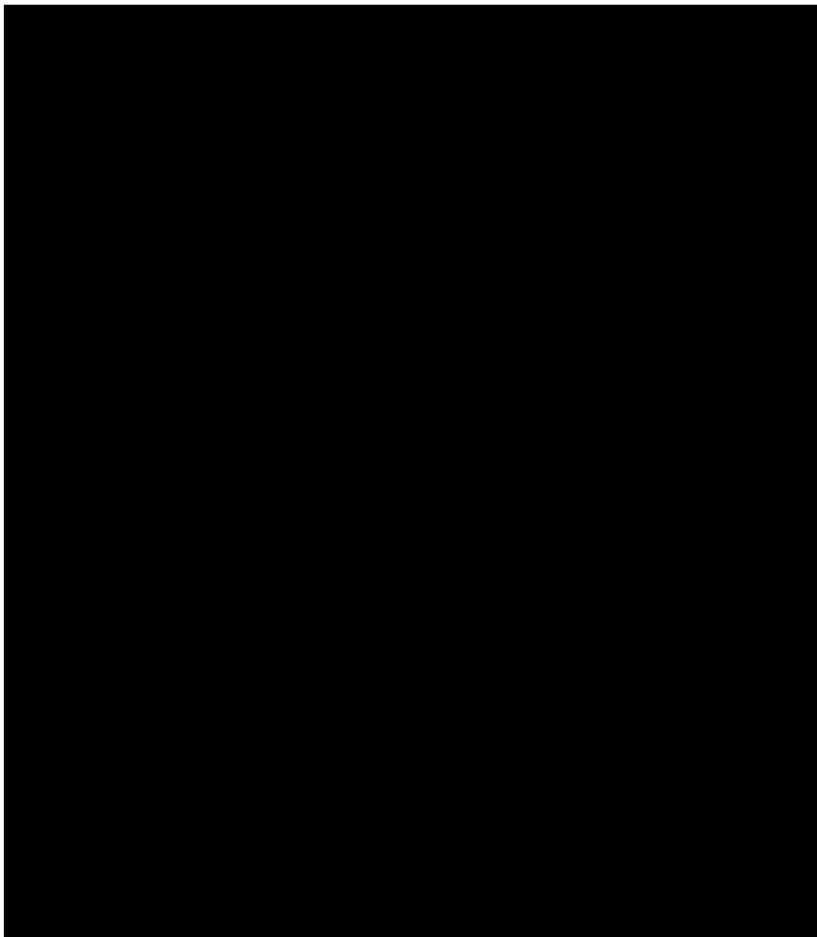
Nowhere in the assessment summary does it mention the impact [REDACTED] The proposed development [REDACTED] and removal of the trees would increase noise and light pollution.

DESIGN ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Location Details

This states that the car park is not overlooked by any dwellings.

This is completely inaccurate as it is [REDACTED] intended car park as the following photos illustrate.



Project Aims

This application seeks to create parking for the church to aid accessibility and to reduce excessive parking along Wesley Street and Stubbins Lane.

Wesley Street consists of small, terraced cottages. Most houses have more than one vehicle. The parking on Wesley Street is due to this and not due to those using the church or church hall.

At present there is very little parking dedicated to the Church and Village Hall, with no exclusive provisions for those with disabilities.

As previously stated, there is already adequate parking for the church and village hall needs (approximately 12 spaces not 1 as stated in the application) and there is already a disabled parking space, albeit now poorly marked.

Design Objective

To allow parking for church and village hall users

Again, in our view and from our [REDACTED], there are already adequate spaces. In view of this application, we checked during the church services (busiest times for daytime parking) on Sunday 11.01.26, 18.01.26, 25.01.26 and 01.02.26, there were spaces available for parking in the parking bay on each occasion. A commissioned audit would substantiate our anecdotal claim, but we also have date stamped photos if required, example from 01.02.26 on page 5.

To provide accessible parking within reasonable distance for church users

This is already in place as vehicles currently park directly outside the church gates with the designated disabled space being immediately outside the church gates and, therefore, closer than the one on the plans.

To reduce excessive parking along Wesley Street and Stubbins Lane - which can often cause obstructions to passing vehicles, especially larger vehicles accessing the farms...

As previously stated, the vehicles parked along Wesley Street are residents' vehicles and not those of users of the church and church hall. When speaking to the [REDACTED] about this claim, he confirmed that, when any obstruction occurs, it is caused at the bottom of Wesley Street, not the top, and that this is due to resident parking. We were given [REDACTED] permission to include this fact in our submission. For information, whilst the farm backs on to the proposed car park (see photos on page 7), [REDACTED] was not included on the list of consultees?

Applicant Conclusion

However, it will drastically improve the accessibility, parking provisions and access as well as reducing obstructions to Wesley Street and Stubbins Lane.

As previously stated, the vehicles parked on Wesley Street are those belonging to residents, and the properties on Stubbins Lane have driveways with space for two vehicles. Cars, vans and farm vehicles navigate these streets daily without major issue.

Overall, this will be a beneficial project for the Church and local residents.

The reality is that this will have minimal to zero impact on the church and local residents if its intended use is for church and church hall users as stated on the planning application, but it will have a negative impact on [REDACTED], as well as increasing risk to the church and church hall, and will

require the loss of a grassed area in a conservation area that supports local wildlife habitats, including some protected species, and which is used by local community groups.

[REDACTED] **BY THE APPLICATION**

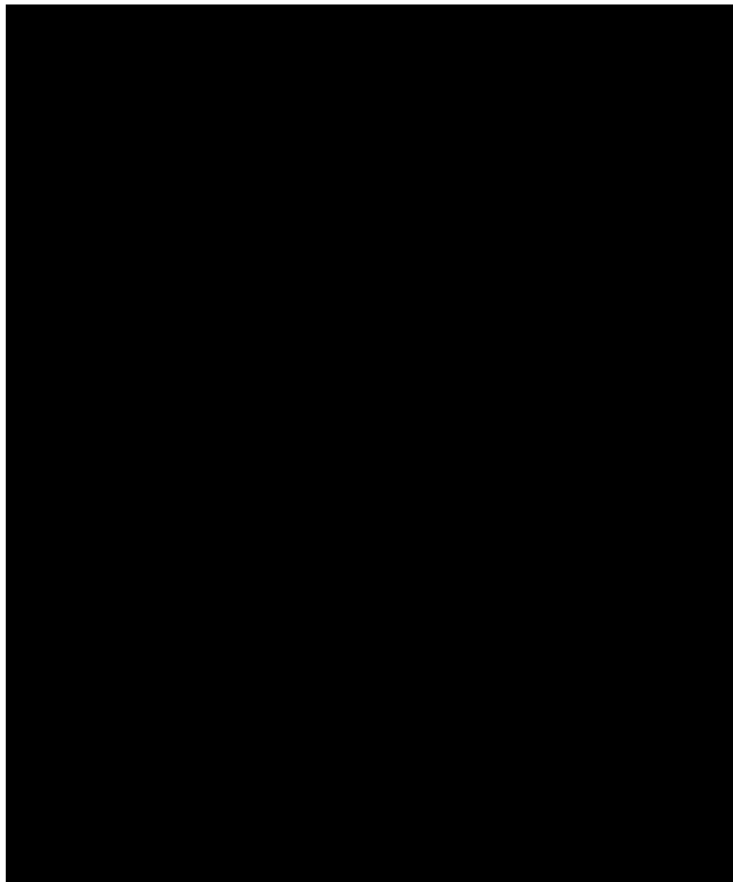
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

The proposed car park will not be visible from the main road and is only [REDACTED].

Since [REDACTED] aware that late night, anti-social behaviour takes place from time-to-time in the area of the proposed car park, particularly the existing parking bay, just outside the church gates. This tends to be drug related and teenage drinking. On occasion, cars drive up to the area late at night (usually with more than one occupant), park up for a time and then leave sometime later. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the proposed car park.

More recently, we have witnessed people parking up and indulging in sexual activity. We have previously [REDACTED]. Back Lane car park and the Nick O'Pendle are both notorious for 'dogging' but nothing seems to be done about it. As there have already been incidents of this type of behaviour on the area intended for the car park, if an official car park (hidden from the road) is established, we are seriously concerned that this would become a 'destination' car park for such activities. Please see photo below.



Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership 2025 highlighted key issues of serious organised crime in the Ribble Valley as being *'rural acquisitive crime and drug supply by locally based organised crime groups'* and the N.F.U. Mutual Rural Crime Report 2024 stated that *'organised gangs are increasingly targeting isolated farms and countryside properties, stealing valuable agricultural machinery and causing mental health strain on rural residents'*. On the 17th January vehicles were stolen from Sabden during the night and entry was gained to two properties by smashing a rear window and rear patio door. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As a result of this we installed C.C.T.V. and electric gates. Of the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] as the area of greatest risk. The proposed car park would be [REDACTED] at the rear of a large church building, 60 metres away from the road and unseen. On these grounds we feel that it would be entirely inappropriate for planning permission to be granted.

This would greatly increase our feeling of vulnerability. We feel that our safety, privacy and security will be compromised further if vehicles were parked overnight or had access to the car park during the hours of darkness. The cars themselves would also very likely become targets of car thieves due to the car park being hidden from the road. Two local security companies who work in the Ribble Valley have told us that rural, out of the way car parks are "magnets for crime".

Noise from vehicles in a previously quiet place will obviously increase and, additionally, at night, vehicles and people will trigger the church hall sensor lights and this will impact on local wildlife [REDACTED]

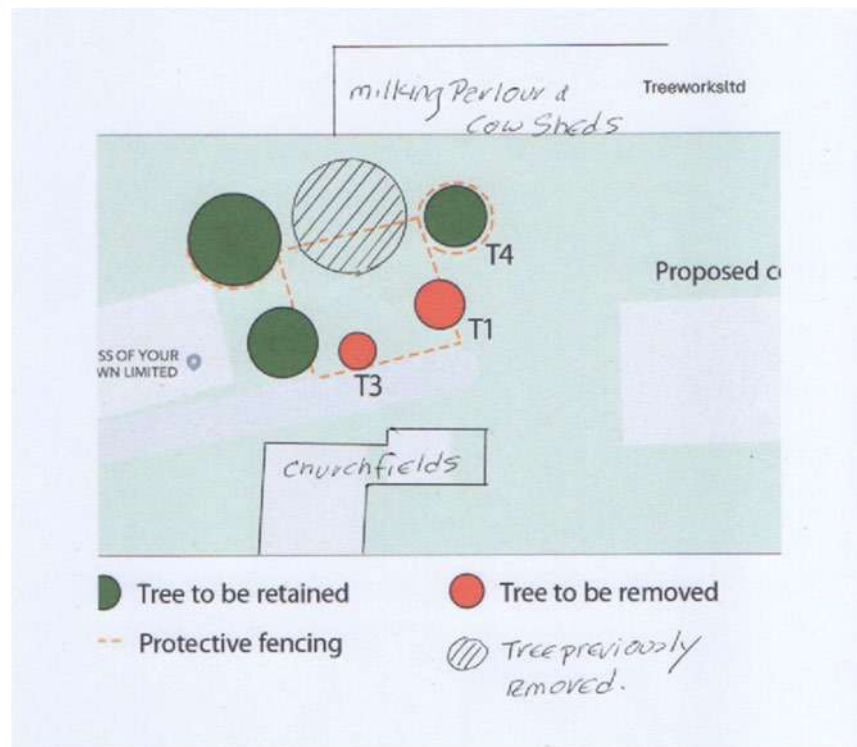
The church hall must have had similar concerns, as their external sensor lights were upgraded a few years ago with much brighter lights that, [REDACTED] every time a person or a vehicle passes. If the car park is accessible outside operating hours this [REDACTED]

Vehicles coming and going in the evening and at night will also cause inevitable light pollution as the headlights [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] as they enter/egress the car park.

As previously stated, the proposed car park [REDACTED]. The trees provide much welcome noise and light reduction as the farm operates from 5.00 a.m. and finishes at around 7.00 p.m. During calving they operate throughout the night. This noise and light is unavoidable. Last year the largest tree on the grassed area, a fully mature sycamore, was cut down due to disease (application no. 3/2023/0743). As a result, the light and noise pollution was increased [REDACTED] to the spot lights that illuminate the milking shed and the noise of the motors running during the milking process. If these additional two trees are felled, three of the original six trees between the properties will be lost, meaning at least 50% of the noise and light reduction will also be lost.

We have used a diagram from the applicant's Arboricultural Impact Assessment for context, we trust this is acceptable.



The proximity of the cow sheds and milking parlour is illustrated in the photos on page 7, the dark area at the back showing the site of the felled sycamore, which required planning permission to remove as it was in a conservation area.

To reiterate, the grassed area is in a conservation area and is an attractive space used as a play area for church users. Flattening it, removing trees and replacing the grass with plastic mesh will obviously have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.

We understand that the plans have been put forward by Sabden Village Hall Trust, who are hoping to secure a council grant to carry out the works. We believe it would be inappropriate for the council to pass plans and provide funding for a concealed car park within [REDACTED], especially given that the need for a car park is greatly arguable as we have demonstrated.

It is easy for those who only use the area during [REDACTED]

To summarise, this car park [REDACTED] the security of the church and church hall; it would significantly increase noise and light pollution from the farm and from vehicle headlights and engine noise; it would significantly damage the wildlife habitat (including protected species) in a conservation area; it would remove a play area accessible by local community groups and church hall users; it would destroy a much loved part of the community.

We have always enjoyed [REDACTED] mutual co-operation and respect with the church, and we do not take the decision to object to the planning permission lightly, however, we feel it very necessary because of the reasons given in this document.

We therefore respectfully request that planning permission be declined. Even if there were a current need for this carpark, which we dispute, for the reasons outlined above we believe that this is not the correct, appropriate or safe location and is not the solution to this perceived problem.

If it is recommended at officer level, then we would wish it to go before the planning committee where we can present first hand our objections.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]