From: clerk@ribchesterparishcouncil.org.uk

Sent: 28 March 2025 10:18

To: Planning

Cc:

Subject: Planning Application 3/2025/0107 - Boadicea Park, Preston Road, Ribchester

Attachments: RVBC application 3-2025-0107.docx



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Dear Maya Cullen

Once again, Ribchester Parish Council wishes to record its continuing concerns (and strong opposition) in respect of the above planning application. The Councillors have consistently responded at length to the proposals for the development of this site and despite the objections raised, concerns registered and the continuing opposition from residents who are directly affected the work continues to despoil the area off Preston Road.

I attach a document prepared by – and on behalf of – the Councillors which gives a clear representation of the current position. I request that this document is subjected to very careful scrutiny by the Planning Department, and Committee.

In addition to the contents of the document, expert opinion has been received in respect of the current disturbances to Boyce's Brook. As follows:

'Boyce's Brook is home to threatened and endangered species, which will have been directly, negatively impacted by this work, and there appears to be no temporary works or mitigation. Was a fish rescue undertaken?'

The Parish Council requests that a thorough reconsideration of this application is undertaken and the concerns outlined in the document are investigated thoroughly; these requests being made to avoid what may well become an environmental disaster for this area of Ribchester.

Deborah S Groves
MA LLB Chartered MCIPD
Parish Clerk

Once again, there has been another application for variance of planning permission on this site (previous applications include 3/2022/0530, 3/2022/0271, 3/2022/0315, 3/2021/0595, 3/2020/0940, 3/2020/0513).

Work has been ongoing, together with the associated noise and disruption, for over 3 years now (since Christmas 2021) and yet they still seem little further on.

This is a retrospective application.

The statement accompanying the application makes several assertions:

"The site of the proposed development is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at limited risk in this regard. Wider parts of the land fall within Zones 2 and 3, though are avoided as part of the scheme under consideration."

This is true; although following the approval of application 3/2021/0940, the site was levelled.



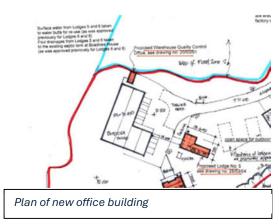


Southern aspect of the site March 2025

It could be argued that the existing flood zones are no longer up-to-date.

"The proposed office building, which is to serve Boadicea House, is already in place and located adjacent to the roller shutter door on the south facing elevation. This is shown in the layout plan below shaded in red."





This is indeed the case, although it is set further back towards the river than the plan would suggest.

"The proposed lodges are to be finished in horizontally clad timber to the walls and dark grey roof tile sheets to reflect the units already in place. This will allow for visual consistency in this element of the site and an appearance which is suitable within the open countryside."

One of the proposed lodges is already in place; it doesn't look especially 'visually consistent' with the existing lodges.





Existing lodges no. 1 & 2

The statement references several Key Statements from the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2014).

"Key Statement DS1 outlines the Council's development strategy with regard to housing, employment, retail and leisure: "

In Key statement DS1, it mentions the areas that development should be directed towards Barrow & Samlesbury Enterprise Zones as well as the more sustainable Tier 1 villages. Ribchester is a Tier 2 village (i.e., less sustainable) and thus development would need to meet proven needs or deliver regeneration benefits.

"Key Statement DS2 confirms that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Wherever possible, it will aim to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area;"

It is debatable how sustainable extra hard standing in a flood-prone village adjacent to Boyce's Brook might be.

"Key Statement EN2 seeks to protect landscape character and expects new development to reflect local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials;"

With reference to the previous images, 'local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, feature and building materials' are not really being protected in this application.

"Policy DMG2 seeks to control new development in accordance with the Council's spatial vision. Within the open countryside, schemes will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting."

It also states that within Tier 2 villages, such as Ribchester, development should meet at least one of the following considerations:

- 1. Essential to local economy or social well-being of the area
- 2. Needed for forestry or agriculture
- 3. For local needs housing
- 4. For small scale tourism or recreational development

- 5. For local small-scale uses where a local need can be demonstrated
- 6. Compatible with the Enterprise Zone Designation.

The only one of these considerations which might be met could be no. 4. Given that in over 3 years, only two lodges have been built, this seems tenuous.

"Policy DMG3 supports the provision of sustainable and accessible development;"

It does this by means of promoting:

- 1. The relationship of the site to the primary route network and the strategic road network.
- 2. The provision made for access to the development by pedestrian, cyclists and those with reduced mobility.
- 3. Proposals which promote development within existing developed areas or extensions to them at locations which are highly accessible by means other than the private car.
- 4. Proposals which locate major generators of travel demand in existing centres which are highly accessible by means other than the private car.
- 5. Proposals which strengthen existing town and village centres which offer a range of everyday community shopping and employment opportunities by protecting and enhancing their vitality and viability.
- 6. Proposals which locate development in areas which maintain and improve choice for people to walk, cycle or catch public transport rather than drive between homes and facilities which they need to visit regularly.
- 7. Proposals which limit parking provision for developments and other on or off street parking provision to discourage reliance on the car for work and other journeys where there are effective alternatives.

This site is a long way from the bus stop; there is no pavement on that side of the road. Thus anybody wishing to access the site by means of anything other than private car would have to negotiate a minimum of one major road crossing (without a pedestrian crossing facility) as well as negotiating a heavily parked pavement. The route between the site and village amenities (including the bus stops) is an accessibility nightmare for anybody with a wheelchair or pushchair.

"Policy DMB3 confirms the development which extends the range of tourism and visitor facilities will be supported, subject to consideration of a number of listed criteria."

Amongst these criteria are that "The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;" – the visual discrepancies have already been addressed.

In addition, it reiterates the need for any development to be well-related to the existing public transport network and that it should not generate significant additional traffic movements of a type likely to cause problems or disturbance. The Parish Council is very well aware of the stress that speeding traffic and parked cars causes to the residents of Ribchester. An additional driveway being used by people unfamiliar with the speed of traffic at this point is dangerous.

Not cited by the applicants, but also of relevance to this development is Key Statement EN3, which covers sustainable development and climate change. While some construction noise is unavoidable,

the fact that this development has been ongoing with heavy machinery for over 3 years has been considerably disturbing, both to the local residents and wildlife.

It's over a year since the Borough Council has been made aware of the high level flood lighting on the site. When the Local Enforcement Officer brings this to the developers' attention, the lights are left off for a night or two, then they're back. This is contrary to the approval conditions on applications 3/2022/0530 and 3/2021/0595.



Lights at 10.30pm, 17th March 2025

Lately, there has been activity in Boyce's Brook, where the developers have been digging in the brook.



Boyce's Brook adjacent to main office building,



Ariel view of the work undertaken, March 2025

This is not detailed in any of the applications. The water level is exceptionally low at the moment and this digging would considerably alter the water course at other times.

The number of applications and residents' observations seem to imply that the developers have little overall plan in place. This leads to increased disturbance repeatedly.

The development originally seemed to meet RVBC's criteria by virtue of recreational and educational opportunities afforded via the heliculture and holiday accommodation businesses. However, there is little evidence of such benefits materialising any time soon. It also benefits from a business tax waiver as a 'agricultural venture'. A quick internet search reveals 52 businesses registered to this site. An equally quick search fails to show an easy way of actually purchasing snails.