

WESTON AND BASFORD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
4th 2017 MAY

PRESENT	Councillor J Cornell (Vice Chairman) Councillors J Chamberlain, J Chambers T Eatough, S Edgar, L Gill, T Gill and A Kiddie
APOLOGIES	Councillors, J Densem J Edwards and P Grant.
IN ATTENDANCE	36 Members of the Public

144. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare their interest in any item on the Agenda.
No declarations were made.

145. PLANNING APPLICATION

16/3829W - Casey Lane Stables, CASEY LANE, BASFORD, CW2 5NH

Improvement of land via removal of previously deposited ash/clinker, and restoration to agricultural and equestrian after use via importation and placement of inert and soil-forming material (including ancillary works)

RESOLVED: That the following comments be submitted:-

It has been confirmed that there has been no pre-application advice sought. A letter to selected residents distributed on behalf of the applicant in May 2016 advising of the applicant's intentions cannot be described as a comprehensive community involvement exercise which one would expect to be associated with an application of this nature and magnitude. At an Open Meeting on 25th April 2017, attended by over 50 residents from both Weston & Basford and Hough & Chorlton Parishes along with senior officers of Cheshire East Council, there was unanimously, a high degree of scepticism, shock and much concern expressed about the proposal.

The Parish Council is extremely concerned about this application and objects in the strongest terms for the following reasons:

- The disruption and danger to the community of 44 HGV vehicle movements a day in both directions along Casey Lane whilst attempting to negotiate the already difficult junction with Back Lane, Newcastle Road and Cobbs Lane, albeit with the proposed minor junction improvements, is totally unacceptable. This will result in misery for the householders living around this junction. Casey Lane forms part of the network of narrow country lanes which typify the character of large parts of Weston & Basford Parish, some of which, including the nearby Weston Lane are used as rat runs to circumnavigate the primary road system. Casey Lane forms part of the Cheshire cycle route and is used regularly by horse riders, walkers and agricultural vehicles. The narrow bridge over the West Coast Main Line is adjacent to the proposed entrance to the site and is a favourite and heavily used location for train spotters. The Parish Council questions the structural stability of this bridge to accommodate the constant weight of HGVs despite the assurances of the applicant.

It is understood that the foul and surface water infrastructure in Casey Lane is already outworn and incapable of accommodating the constant pounding of HGVs.

The impact of associated HGV and other traffic movements carrying material from the site in the already heavily trafficked wider area, including the Hough, Chorlton, Weston Village, and Shavington, does not appear to feature in the applicant's appraisal. Equally the impact of importing fill material potentially from Crewe, Nantwich, Stoke and Newcastle as well as a possibly much wider area with access to the Motorway network does not seem to have been considered. All of this indicates that the proposal would create a real issue with conflict of potential users along our narrow country lanes and wider highway network, raising extreme safety and amenity issues.

- The proposed length of time that the site would be operational – 14 years+ (for extraction alone) is also considered to be totally unacceptable. There is no guarantee that the continuing availability for the market of the materials will be available over this extended period. This could well mean that a major scar is created within our parish which will last at least a generation! It could well be 20 years before the site is fully restored. No civilised community should be subjected to this!
- A proper in depth analysis needs to take place of the ash to be removed from the site to ensure the safety, treatment and removal of harmful contaminants. A statement has been made to the Parish Council that other dumping may have taken place including asbestos and other heavy metal contaminants from the ex-railway works.
- The whole of the application site is shown to be within the safeguarding corridor for HS2 and is right at the heart of the reconfiguration of the highway system associated with this project. The proposal as presented is clearly a separate project from HS2. There is a major conflict here both in terms of time scale and co-ordination of implementation, again, to the extreme detriment of quality of life for the nearby residents. The question must also be asked what are the ground stability implications, given the proposed depth of extraction, relating to the West Coast Main Line and HS2. In addition, the HS2 plans in the possession of the Parish Council indicate that Casey Lane will become a cul de sac as part of the scheme and the bridge over the West Coast Main Line will be demolished. This will mean that the rerouting of material to and from the application site along with the reconfiguring of the access from the north, will inevitably result in severe HGV congestion in the other minor roads in the immediate vicinity of Weston Village, Basford and Shavington.
- Separated by a single field to the east, beyond the Basford Brook and Burrow Coppice (deciduous) will be the Gladman development of 90+ dwellings which was allowed on appeal last year. Adjoining this site is Weston Primary School which caters for over 260 pupils. The Gladman development will be relatively close to the application site and will be promoted and implemented as a high-quality village living environment during the period of excavation and infill - there will also be a high degree of construction traffic associated with this housing development. The prevailing wind is West/South West which means that both this proposed development and the western side of Weston Village including the school, will be exposed to additional dust, noise and lighting (in the winter months) associated with the application site. Given that Burrow Coppice is deciduous this side of Weston Village will be very much aware of the operation particularly during the winter months. In addition to the Gladman site, both Basford East and the proposed South Cheshire Growth Village will be implemented over the same period - potentially 1500 dwellings!
- The combination of, and proximity of these proposals to that of the current application, and the fact that they will all be potentially implemented within the same time scale as the current application, will greatly affect residential amenity, incur additional construction traffic congestion on our already overloaded local road system and result in a nightmare scenario. In addition to all of this, an appeal decision is currently awaited on the development of 900 dwellings on Gorsty Hill Golf Course at Wychwood Village – this is no more than 500 yards from the application site as the crow flies.

- The application site is within the Open Countryside as defined in both the emerging Local Plan for Cheshire East (Policy PG5) and the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (Policy NE2). These policies state that: “Within the Open Countryside only development that is essential for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, public infrastructure, essential works undertaken by public services or statutory undertakers, or for other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted”. Whilst the end use might fall into this category, the 14+ years of excavation, infill, dust, noise, lighting nuisance and traffic chaos certainly does not!
- The emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Weston & Basford has now been submitted to Cheshire East under Regulation 15 and over the next few months will be subject to independent examination. A study carried out by Cheshire Wildlife Trust which has been embodied into the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Basford Brook Corridor, one field away to the east of the application site, as an area of high and medium wildlife habitats. Indeed, the southern end of the application site is also included within this classification. Basford Brook constitutes one of the major wildlife corridors within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. A study in 2012 carried out on behalf of Cheshire East Council in relation to the Crewe Green Link Road identified ‘White Clawed Crayfish’ in Basford Brook which were of a “regional nature conservation value”. A significant question here is the likely prejudicial impact that the application will have on this watercourse and habitat because of environmental and groundwater contamination, despite the assurances of the applicant. In summary, the Parish Council considers that this proposal will have a devastating impact on the immediate and surrounding area from a traffic, highway, environmental and quality of life perspective over a sustained period, particularly given the fact that the Parish is currently facing unprecedented development pressures of a significant nature, several of which in the immediate vicinity of this application site will be implemented whilst the excavation of this large site is taking place. Many questions are also left unanswered!

The Parish Council urges the Local Planning Authority to refuse this application.

The Parish Council requests that the Strategic Planning Board carry out a thorough site inspection along with the surrounding roads.

The Parish Council also wishes to address the Strategic Planning Board.

CHAIRMAN