

Longwick-cum-Ilmer Parish Council

Serving the villages of
Longwick, Ilmer, Horsenden, Meadle and Owlswick.

Mr. David Dewar
Planning Department
Wycombe District Council,
Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe,
Bucks HP11 1BB.

15th December 2009

Dear Sir,

Reference the Baker Report on Gypsy and Traveller Services

We would like to comment on proposed site GT020 adjacent to Pettigrove, Lower Icknield Way, Longwick, which we consider to be unsuitable for development as either a site for Travelling Show People or Gypsies for the following reasons.

Executive Study 3.6 states *".....emphasis on avoiding locations in open countryside"*.

This proposal would create a large linear development fronting the Lower Icknield Way out of keeping with the open countryside. This effect would be created because the adjacent site, Pettigroves to the North East and the adjacent site to that, Twin Oaks Park are both already occupied by travelling communities; this would mean that a very long stretch of road in open countryside would be "urbanised".

Executive Study 6.3 *".....preferred option allocating a number of smaller sites..."*

This proposal would be adjacent to an existing site for Travelling Show People (7 families, plus vehicles facilities and equipment), which in itself is adjacent to a site for Gypsy families (8 families plus vehicles and facilities) and this would give the appearance of a very large site indeed. It should also be pointed out that the Show People have a totally different ethos to the Gypsies meaning that they are not compatible or comfortable neighbours for each other.

The summary states *that "Further development in this locality could accentuate the scattered settlement pattern, eroding local character"* we would strongly agree with this and do not believe that boundary planting along the south eastern boundary would prevent this proposal being detrimental to the open countryside from all directions.

Main Report 3.24 *"...new travellers in particular identified the wish to live in a rural area..."* If you asked anyone in the entire country where they would like to live you could guarantee that the majority would like to live in a rural area, if everyone was given the right to live where they want to there would be no rural areas at all.

Main Report 3.56 *"...should not be highly visible or prominent landscape character.....site should be located at some distance from existing residents"*

This site is the highest piece of land in the entire parish, clearly visible from all directions including from Whiteleaf Cross, which is within the AONB. The existing adjacent residents are extremely unhappy with this proposal. Pettigroves are Travelling Show People, they are an established part of the community having been in residence for 84 years, their business supports at least 7 families who live on this site and it is unacceptable that no one has sought their point of view, since not only are they themselves Travelling Show People they are also directly affected by these proposals.

Main Report 3.58 *"...we also spoke with the gypsy and travelling community"* See comments above.

3.58 *"...there is always a desire to live amicably with neighbours"* It should be reiterated that there are many different travellers, and they have totally different ethos from each other putting new travellers next to an existing site could be a recipe for disaster.

6.23 *"The Council will need to consult with gypsies, travellers and travelling show people."* We would recommend discussing this proposal with Mr. W. Pettigrove, he is a Travelling Showman, he owns the adjacent site and he is very much against this proposal.

Appendix 4

Description *"...the site appears to have previously been used as a Gypsy and Traveller site..."*

No one in the parish has any recollection of this site being previously used by either gypsies or travelling show people. The occupants of the adjacent site, Pettigroves have been in residence for the last 84 years and are adamant that the proposed site has never been used for anything other than agriculture.

"...alongside a smaller enclosed former field which is now occupied by various scattered buildings and vehicles (including fairground equipment)..." This description is totally inaccurate; this former field supports 7 families of travelling showman and a vast quantity of large fairground equipment plus the vehicles necessary to move the equipment and the spares to keep the equipment running.

Access *"The site has access to a primary school, secondary school and a hospital within a 1 mile radius"* The only hospital within a one-mile radius is private!

"The site is also outside 200m of a bus stop" Access to this site is along a very busy road with no pavement, walking to any of the reported services would be hazardous for adults and unacceptably dangerous for children, therefore it is believed that access to this site would only take place in vehicles.

Landscape Impact *"consolidate development in land to the east"* The land to the east is owned and occupied the Pettigroves, it is already fully occupied.

Achievability "The site is close to an existing Travelling show people site" this is correct, but why assume this makes it acceptable. The existing travelling show people are extremely unhappy about this proposal and should have been consulted. *"It is believed that the site is already in the ownership of the Travelling Community"* Whilst we cannot be sure of this, local knowledge believes that this is very unlikely, there has been no recent change in this field and it has been used only for agricultural purposes for as long as anyone can remember.

Conclusion *"Adjacent uses would be conducive to the proposed use with existing Travelling show People to the east"*. The Travelling Show People to the east (Pettigroves) should be consulted; it is not acceptable to either assume that they would welcome newcomers to "their patch" or to assume that every travelling community is the same.

In conclusion the Parish Council would like to object to the proposal to change the use of land adjacent to Pettigroves to a traveller's site because it is an unacceptable visual intrusion into open countryside and would cause distress to the occupants of the neighbouring property (Pettigroves) who are Travelling Show People.

Yours faithfully,

Susanne Griffiths
Clerk to the Parish Council

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