

**Ellastone Parish Council. 23 March 2022**  
**P/2021/00999 : Siting of five holiday cabins**

In our previous detailed submission regarding the above, Ellastone Parish Council objected to the proposed development due to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the village, a designated, conservation area and also with equal concern re. the severe detrimental effect on amenity for local residents.

When this proposal was discussed at our meeting on the 16 September 2021 representatives from 12 households in the village attended because of their objections to this proposed development, and 34 people wrote to the Borough Council to object to it.

It is unusual for a proposal to attract such widespread objections and to be so unwelcome in the community.

The new documents that have been submitted by the applicants add some more detail regarding the design, such as facilities for waste disposal, sewerage, paths and lighting, plus the "Planning Statement Addendum" which attempts to address some of the objections. We do not feel that this in any way addresses our concerns about the total unsuitability of this site, in the heart of the village and surrounded by residential properties. We sincerely hope that this planning Application will be refused.

Our counter arguments to the "Planning Statement Addendum" are as follows: (in Red)

*"What are the roads like? (Narrow, obscured etc. -  
The access is provided with good visibility in both directions."*

Not the case – visibility to the right on exiting the site is obscured by a curve in the road and by gardens. The current issues with speeding vehicles coming down Wootton Road from Wootton further exacerbates the situation, and the pending proposal to allow additional heavy vehicular movement to the local quarry will also increase the possibility of accidents, as well as raising noise levels for any proposed visitor.

*"Is there sufficient lighting to accommodating walking and cycling to and from the site? - Street lighting is provided to Wootton Road outside of the site with lit footpaths available directly to nearby bus-stops and the public house."*

There are no footpaths on the same side of the road as the proposed development, and no street lights. A busy road must be crossed to gain access to any pedestrian footpath. Due to a step down on the opposite pavement footing is very treacherous.

*"Does the site have access to public transport, and does the application encourage its use? The site is located a 600m walk from a bus stop on the B5032 where the Swift bus service stops hourly. The service connects the villages to Uttoxeter, Ashbourne and Derby where there is a vast array of businesses and leisure opportunities, as well as transport links to larger cities. As part of the welcome pack provided by the applicant a copy of the bus timetable will be provided to guests."*

There is no bus service in the village after about 6.00pm so visitors will have to use their cars if they wish to go out in the evening, unless to the village pub. Given the small numbers of guests visiting each lodge the benefit to this business will be negligible. (It is anyway a very busy place) Visitors are more likely to use their cars for travelling for entertainment and shopping, adding to the damaging environmental footprint of the site.

*“How far is the nearest settlement and what facilities does the settlement have?”*

*The site is set within the village of Ellastone which has a renowned and popular public house, in addition the village has a parish church as well as a Tennis Court and bowling green immediately adjacent to the site. As set out above the settlement has a regular bus service that links the site to larger conurbations.”*

It is unlikely given the expected profile of the visitors and the site's proximity to Alton Towers that many people want to use the bowling green, the tennis court or the Church. The village pub is very busy anyway, the tennis courts are run as a private club and would not be available for visitors and the same applies to the bowls club. The Playground - the land was donated with the intent that the facility would be for local children. This proposal would put our children at a disadvantage, having to compete for the small number of attractions. We are already looking at having to do fundraise to carry out repairs to bring the facility up to standard. Visitors would be greatly increasing the wear and tear and maintenance costs currently paid by donations from the visitors.

The proximity of the busy local pub is also likely to increase noise and disruption levels late into the evening. A bus service which runs hourly, and not in the evening, is unlikely to be used by urban visitors.

*“What is the speed limit along the route?”*

*The speed limit along Wootton Road is 30mph. –“*

and is currently not adhered to – reference local efforts to manage the problem, information from the Speedwatch group relating to checks on Wootton Road show 760 vehicles over 5 sessions of which 167 were travelling at over 30 mph (22%) 70 at over 40 mph (9%) 19 at over 50 mph (2.5%) and one at over 60 mph! 33% are breaking the speed limit, this is people driving past a very visible manned speed check. Unfortunately this is not a safe road due to excessive traffic speeds, irrespective of the 30 mph speed limit. Lastly why would visitors want to stay in a camping pod in close proximity to a noisy, busy road?

*“Where else are the visitors likely to be travelling to and how are they likely to get there? Impact on the countryside*

*Visitors to the site are likely to be couples who will be likely to visit local towns and also undertake local walks in the Peak District, or the Roaches. Owing to the scale of the pods it is unlikely that they will provide family accommodation and therefore traffic movements are likely to be at a low level. There is a vast footpath network adjacent to the site and this is likely to be heavily used by visitors, as will the local bus service.”*

There is still no real clarity over the number of occupants each pod will be holding – “unlikely” seems a very vague definition? Heavy use of the local footpaths and bus service is actually very unlikely in our view. Amazingly or perhaps deliberately, no mention is made here of ALTON TOWERS. This is one of the obvious destinations for users of this site, and would cause extra traffic up the single lane back roads leading to the theme park. The parish council is currently seeking ways to stop sat navs taking cars up these lanes as local knowledge is needed to safely navigate them as JCB farm vehicles dominate the lanes. We are trying to reduce the traffic on these lanes and not increase it! We do not want extra traffic.

*What are the local characteristics of the immediate and wider area?*

*The site is located within the village envelope and is adjoined by residential development. Whilst rural in character, the provision of development on the site will not be incongruous or appear as an anomaly as they would in an entirely rural location. The pods will be viewed against the backdrop of existing built form from all available views.*

We disagree entirely. The appearance of these pods will be totally incongruous and out of place in this setting in the heart of the village. The proposed site is in the middle of a rural village,

surrounded by residential properties on all sides. It is close to the historic Grade 2 \* listed church - Church of St Peter's - and other listed buildings and is a conservation area and the creation of this proposed development is more likely to diminish the attractiveness of the village rather than enhance it.

*"How will the proposal impact on the area's appearance and setting?"*

*The field itself is currently green and nestled within the middle of the village. The proposed development has been carefully designed to utilise existing topography (which rises up the field) with pods sited on existing levels with very little re-profiling required. In addition, infrastructure requirements will be kept to an absolute minimum, all car parking will be located immediately adjacent to the entrance with only small access paths and low level lighting being provided in addition to the pods. This will ensure that the sites setting, and character is retained."*

The last sentence is plainly absurd! This development would totally destroy the sites setting and character. That also applies to the first sentence, which actually enhances the arguments against the development. Research regarding other Glamping sites within East Staffs identifies 8 locations, all of which are either on existing tourist sites – caravan parks etc. or are well away from rural locations, probably to minimise the effect on any residential locations, but also to allow visitors to have more freedom of enjoyment.

*"Will increased car parking in the area or the likely use of residential trappings such as outside benches, gazebos, play equipment etc. alter the character of the countryside in this location? - All parking is to be provided to the rear of the existing hedgerow along with the bin store. No other infrastructure is required or proposed across the site."*

Will that be written into the development in the unlikely event this application is approved? Will visitors really not sit outside the Pods to eat, drink and enjoy themselves? We don't think so!

*"Is the proposal of an appropriate scale to the nature of the location?"*

*The proposal is on a very small scale, it is commensurate with the size of the village and will support local amenities."*

In what way will this development support local amenities?·

*"Will features of historic or landscape value be impacted upon?"*

*The site is located within the Ellastone Conservation Area and adjoins a number of listed buildings. The impact of the proposals on these assets are covered within the Heritage Statement completed by JMI Planning which concludes that the scheme results in less than substantial harm to heritage assets, and this harm is outweighed by significant benefits of the scheme"*

We disagree, we believe that the proposed development will cause significant damage setting of Heritage Assets for no discernible benefits except for the applicants.

The view of the grade 1\* listed church used for the main header of the Ellastone website for the last 22 years and used in publicity material is aimed at capturing the essence of the village - the grazing land is the current proposal for glamping pods!

*"How will it impact on local biodiversity?"*

*The scheme will have no impact on protected species."*

Based on what research?

*"How will the proposal impact on the amenity of local residents?"*

*The pods are located some distance from the closest residential properties and as such will not impact on amenity. The scale of the development is such that it will not provide accommodation for large groups, there will be no group bookings allowed or stag or hen*

groups. This will ensure that occupiers of the pods are respectful of the village and its residents. The scheme does not propose any hot tubs, or any central facilities that could be used for late night activities.

Nonsense! The pods are very close to properties, one of them, no. 5, is only about 7-8 mtrs from the boundary of a neighbouring garden and only about 15 mtrs from the actual house! Pod no. 3 is almost as close to the same property! What does "some distance" mean? There are residential properties all around the site, as well as properties across the road.

If one set of families get together and book all 5 pods – which is very likely in this type of location – does that not constitute a large group, with all the inherent issues that will create in a small rural village.

Who will enforce this "respectful" nature of the visitors. With respect these are just words – people want to relax and enjoy themselves whilst on holiday, and are not overly concerned about the consequences for others.

Our Borough Councillor, Mr Ed Barker, has referred us to Council's guidance document:

**Tourism Technical Guide**  
**Overnight Visitor Accommodation**  
**(Planning Technical Advice Note)**  
**September 2021**  
Tourism Technical Guide  
Overnight Visitor Accommodation

He suggested that the proposed development complied with this guide, but we disagree, and would like to point out that this document is "guidance", not rules or regulations. We have studied this document and comment as follows:

1.5 The types of development it covers are: camping fields, holiday lodges / lets, huts, log cabins, tourist pods etc. These types of development can often be referred to as 'Glamping', which is short for glamorous camping. **So this guidance applies to this proposal.**

**The refusal of a similar proposal 2 miles away in Wootton is relevant:**

- P/2020/00155 – COU of agricultural land to facilitate siting of 8 holiday lodges at Wootton – officer recommended refusal concluding that the proposal was unnecessary, unsustainable and visually unacceptable development in the countryside.

**We agree completely with these comments and believe they apply equally to the proposal in our village.**

**And another refusal:**

- P/2019/00904 – 6 glamping pods at Dale Lane, Stanton Dale – officer recommended refusal concluding that the proposal was unnecessary, unsustainable and visually unacceptable development in the countryside. **Owe believe that these comments also apply to the proposal in Ellastone.**

The Council, document also includes interesting quotes from the Inspector's comments where appeals have been refused:

- P/2019/01058 – 3 holiday cabins – dismissed *Policies SP1, SP8 and SP15 of the LP are*

*generally supportive, in principle, of tourist development which support economic growth in rural areas. However, these Policies are clear that tourist accommodation are only supported where they have good accessibility to existing infrastructure **and will not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside. Paragraph 83 of the Framework also recognises that a prosperous rural economy should be supported, however sustainable rural tourism developments should respect the character of the countryside.***

**The proposed development here does not respect the local character of the area..**

*The small benefits of the proposals would not be outweighed by the reliance on private motor vehicles and the harmful effect the buildings have on the character of the immediate area.*

**Relevant here also..**

1.16 The economic benefit of the application should be considered against the above considerations as a material consideration. Strong evidence will be required to support the argument that the benefit outweighs the reliance on private motor vehicles and other elements of potential harm detailed above.

**The economic benefits of the application would be minimal and would not outweigh the very real harms caused by the possible approval of this proposal.**

**Ellastone Parish Council are well aware of the importance of tourism to the economy but feel very strongly that the benefits must be balanced by the needs and amenity of local residents, and in the case of this proposal the negatives far outweigh any economic benefit and we hope that you refuse this application. .**