

 Akeley Parish Council

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Parish Clerk Helen Butcher

Minutes Planning Meeting 26th October 2022

58/22 **Public Open Forum (under adjournment);** for members of the public to bring issues to the Council's attention. Any issues not on the agenda cannot be discussed but will be noted and discussed at the next meeting if appropriate. Issues relating to the agenda will be taken into consideration when the item is discussed in the meeting

Members of the public raised concerns regarding the Akeley Wood Lodge Road

59/22 **Attendance and apologies;** present were Councillors Holland (Chair), George and Hockley & County Councillor Mordue

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Goodger & Coxall

5 members of the public were present

60/22 **Members Interests;** Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Akeley Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor George declared interest in scout field

61/22 **Approval of Minutes;** To agree the minutes from the general meeting held at Akeley Village Hall on Monday 26th September 2022. signed and approved

62/22 **PLANNING;**

- To consider and compile a response to Planning Application Consultation 22/03402/VRC – Land adjacent to Leckhampstead Road
- **The Council RESOLVED to object to this planning application. Objection attached to minutes**
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- **Scout Field** - To receive the email from the Scout Group Secretary regarding the rented field and consider a response to the request to put down some hard standing.
- Councillor Hockley stated that the site is well run. Container sits on concrete slab, the Scouts want to add another container there with concrete slab in between. He suggested they consider whether the new container be put on sleepers instead
Council **RESOLVED** to ask scouts again for more details about exactly what is being asked for including dimensions, invite someone to attend, and consider putting new container on sleepers
- To consider and compile a response to Planning Application Consultation 22/03491/APP AKELEY-Lodge fields Akeley Wood Lodge Road
Council **RESOLVED** to object to this planning application as the original planning application was granted under permitted agricultural development which did not offer the local community the chance to consider its impact and object had they seen fit to. As such it was not subject to the due diligence an application detailing the true size of development and scale of the business would have allowed. Had it been so the Council would have objected as the site is not considered suitable for the scale of the business and the size of the vehicles involved. A copy of the objection is attached.

63/22 **Date and time of next meeting; Monday 14th November 2022 at 7.30pm - Date to be confirmed**

Pursuant to the 1960 Public Bodies Act (amended), the Chairman advises that the participants & proceedings of this meeting may be reported upon (filmed, recorded, photographed, blogged, tweeted or streamed) but verbal reporting may not take place whilst in session. Non-participating attendees not wishing to be subject to such media should indicate this by sitting to one side.

Planning Application Consultation 22/03402/VRC – Land adjacent to Leckhampstead Road
Akeley Parish Council feels this should be a retrospective planning application as two of the garages have already been built to thus new specification. So clearly this was the plan from the outset as the plumbing etc has already been put in place. Had the original plans contained this design for the garage with a home office above, would it have been approved? If so why was it not submitted like this in the first place.

Potentially this gives these plots an additional separate residence which has not been agreed.

Akeley Parish Council objects on the grounds that

- parking would be reduced on site leading to more cars being parked outside causing obstructions and reducing the appearance of the site for those living opposite.
- there is an increase in habitable rooms
- two of the garages have already been built therefore it should be a retrospective application

Should this application be approved can a condition be attached that the additional room cannot be used as bedrooms? If not this additional potential living space should be taken into account when assessing the Council Tax band of the properties

Akeley Parish Council response to Planning Application Consultation 22/03491/APP AKELEY- Lodge fields Akeley Wood Lodge Road

Akeley Parish Council objects to the above retrospective planning application on the grounds detailed below.

The original planning application was uncontested as it appeared to be within the remit of permitted agricultural development. The design and access statement stated that the straw would be transported to the site from within the local area using tractor and trailers. There appeared to be no reason to stand in the way of a farmer simply putting a barn on their land nor indeed any real option to object as it fell under permitted development. However the reality has been very different.

The owners of the land would have known at the outset that the quantity of hay and straw they had contracted for would necessitate a larger barn than that allowed under the permitted agricultural development. In fact their own Planning Consultant has stated that “the decision was made to build the barn larger than permitted in one operation rather than extending it at a later date” and that “the scale of the building is justified by the scale of straw needing to be accommodated and the scale of the overall agricultural (haulage in our opinion) operation”. However had the original, or an amended application, been submitted it would have fallen outside the scope of permitted agricultural development and thus been subject to full public consultation and scrutiny. The local residents would have had the opportunity to contest the development and this opportunity was denied.

With reference to the Design and Access statement from Whitehead Planning the Parish Council disputes the statement 4.1d that the use of the building does not unreasonably harm any aspect of the amenity of nearby residents. The road the site is situated on is the only access to five properties. Other than that it

was used by dog walkers, horse riders and ramblers. Now the local residents have had to amend their families use of the road due to the heavy goods traffic and the state of the road which was never intended to withstand the frequency of the weight of vehicles used to transport the straw. The road surface has been badly affected by the heavy use in just one harvest season. The road has also been blocked on occasion by articulated lorries arriving before the site is unlocked posing potential risk to these residents should an emergency vehicle need access, not to mention inconvenience in getting to and from their properties for work and school.

The Parish Council disputes the description of the building as a “modestly larger building” 4.10 as it is one third larger and as stated before falls outside of the scope of permitted development.

Section 4.13 wrongly states that “the transport impacts of the use are limited”. The straw is not just brought in from the local area, it is also brought in from Bedfordshire, and other areas, on large artic lorries which the local roads are not built to take. Akeley is an old, small village with narrow roads and overhanging trees. The lorries regularly hold up the flow of traffic, shed straw along the road and break branches off the trees which residents have been left to clear. This shows a lack of respect for the local community and the safety of the residents. The site itself is situated on an awkward bend in a road which is in constant use, especially at school drop off and pick up times as it is en route between the two sites of the local school.

Akeley is a rural community and as such is used to increased farm traffic during the harvest season however there was not typical agricultural traffic connected with this site. Large artic lorries were transporting the hay and straw through the village at frequent intervals throughout the day and night. There is usually limited large vehicle movements through Akeley as the roads are too narrow so the impact this site made was dramatic and very obvious. It was certainly not the use of the odd tractor and trailer alluded to in the original application.

Akeley Parish Council disputes Section 4.36 which refers to the fact that “the development is close to the farms providing straw which reduces the travel distance and hence fossil fuel use”. This site is further away from many of the farms covered i.e. in Bedfordshire than the family’s previous site in Milton Keynes. Therefore the mileage and use of fossil fuels has in fact increased.

The Ecology report states in section 2.2.13 that the scale of traffic generated should be appropriate for the function and standard of the roads serving the area. This is not the case. Some significant damage to the road surface has already been repaired by the County Council and this will be an ongoing issue due to the weight and frequency of the vehicles transporting the straw to and from the site. Damage has already been caused to residents cars and workmen’s vehicles by the effects on the road surface of the increased heavy vehicles using the road. Whilst it is acknowledged that the family business is a mixed business including some agriculture, Akeley Parish Council considers the current use of this land to be primarily a storage depot for the haulage operation and draw attention to the companies website [D J Wills Haulier - Home](#) to see the scale of the business and size of their vehicles.

Section 4.22 states that the building would be screened to some extent by trees and would not be in a prominent position. However due to the size of the building and the size of the additional stacks of straw this is definitely not the case. It can be seen from some distance along the roads, footpaths and from the houses along Buckingham Road. The attached photos clearly demonstrate that the site is not close to any other agricultural buildings and is not in keeping with the surrounding Stowe Area of attractive landscapes.

The bales stacked outside of the barn pose a potential health and safety risk as the stacks tilt badly. Should this development be allowed to continue there will no doubt follow applications for more barns as the

photos show the scale of the straw stored far exceeds the current storage capacity even taking into account the larger than permitted barn having been built. There will also be the additional impact should the appeal be permitted for the accommodation on site.

In summary Akeley Parish Council objects to this retrospective planning permission as the scale of the operation is totally unsuitable for the site which does not have the infrastructure to support the volume of heavy goods traffic. It is not an industrial site which is what this enterprise requires. Had the original application truly reflected the scale of the business proposed it would have been strongly contested from the outset.

Should the County Council be minded to approve this application some consideration needs to be given to applying restrictions on weight, speed and type of vehicles used, the route they take and time of operation. Plus some restrictions on the further industrialisation of this rural site.