

**9. FULL APPLICATION - CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL FIELD TO SITE FOR FIVE MOTOR HOMES, INCLUDING HARDSTANDINGS, NEW ACCESS TRACK AND NEW SITE ACCESS AT CHURCH LANE FARM, CHURCH LANE, GREAT LONGSTONE (NP/DDD/0721/0795, ALN)**

**APPLICANT: MR DAN COX**

**Summary**

1. The site is an open field beyond the edge of the northern boundary of Great Longstone village
2. The application proposes the change of use of the land from agriculture to a site for five motor homes, with associated hardstandings, new access track and new access onto Beggarway Lane.
3. The development would harm the established landscape character of the area and the setting of the Great Longstone Conservation Area.
4. The development is likely to cause harm to residential amenity by virtue of noise and disturbance.
5. The application is recommended for refusal.

**Site and Surroundings**

6. The application site is the western end of a larger field parcel, abutting the northern side of Beggarway in Great Longstone. The land is currently used for grazing. There is a gateway that gives vehicular access from Beggarway Lane in the south western corner of the field.
7. The western and northern boundaries of the site are bounded by public footpaths. A further public footpath runs diagonally through the field from south west to north east.
8. The site is just outside of the Great Longstone Conservation Area - its northern boundary runs along Beggarway Lane.
9. There are residential properties to the south, the nearest being 'Croft Lodge' and 'Barley Close', and a property known as 'Church Croft' lies directly to the west.

**Proposal**

10. The change of use of the land from agriculture to use for the siting of five motor homes. The vans would be sited along the eastern half of the application site, in a double staggered row. Vehicle hardstandings would be created and a new surfaced access track would run northwards from the boundary with Beggarway Lane.
11. A new vehicular access would be formed in the south eastern corner of the field, onto Beggarway Lane.
12. A new hedgerow and post and rail fence would form the eastern boundary of the site, separating it from the unaltered part of the field parcel to the east.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. **The siting of five motorhomes and the associated hardstandings, access track, and associated paraphernalia would cause harm to the established landscape character of the area and setting of the Great Longstone Conservation Area, contrary to Development Management Plan policies GSP1, L1, L3 and RT3 and Development Management Plan policies DMC3, DMC8 and DMR1 and the National Planning Policy Framework. The public benefits would not outweigh the harm that has been identified.**
2. **By virtue of its close proximity to nearby dwellings, the development would cause harm to residential amenity through noise and disturbance, contrary to Core Strategy polices GSP3 and RT3 and Development Management policies DMC3, DMC14 and DMR1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.**

## **Key Issues**

13. The impact of the development on the landscape character of the area and the setting of the Great Longstone Conservation Area.
14. Highway issues.
15. The impact of the development on the amenity of neighbouring properties.
16. Wider public benefits.

## **History**

1960 – outline application for erection of bungalow refused on the grounds that the site lay beyond the confines of the village.

## **Consultations**

**Highway Authority** – *‘The new access will be formed on a classified road Beggarway Lane which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. From the Design and Access statement, I note that the existing access will be retained; however, this access will not be used by the motor homes and therefore needs to be reinstated. The proposed access road needs to be widened to at least 5.5m to allow two vehicles to pass effectively. The visibility splays shown on the site plan in Y-Directions appear less than 50m and may need to be revised to show 2.4m x 43m on both sides.*

*The details submitted do not demonstrate a parking layout for the proposal; however, it appears from the plan that the site has sufficient space for parking and manoeuvring within site; however, to demonstrate this, a revised drawing should be submitted for approval.*

*I will request that the applicant provide information about the waste collection procedure and highlight the waste collection area on the revised plan. The waste collection strategy should also be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.’* Recommends conditions if the Authority is minded to approve the application.

**District Council** – no response

**Parish Council** – no objections

**Authority’s Archaeologist** - no archaeological comments

**Authority's Rights of Way Officer** – no objections. The right of way through the site must remain open across its whole width at all time.

### **Representations**

Twenty three letters of support have been received raising the following points:

- Proposals would provide a means of diversification for a long standing local farm business.
- Site would support and benefit other local businesses.
- The addition of trees and hedges would contribute to wildlife and help screen the site.
- The site is in close proximity to the village.
- The site could be a 'Certified Site' without permission.
- Proposals would reduce the number of roadside/free camper vans in the area.
- No external lighting proposed so minimal impact on bats.

Five letter of objection have been received on the following grounds:

- The site would be clearly visible from Longstone edge and surrounding footpaths. Proposals would cause harm to the landscape character of the area.
- Landscaping would take time to mature and screen the site.
- Development would detract from the Conservation Area and historic landscape
- Highway concerns – adjoining lanes are narrow, have poor visibility and are often congested. Development would increase problems.
- Impact on amenity of neighbouring properties. No on site management to control activities. No operating times specified.
- Lack of information on sewage and refuse disposal.
- Concerns about impacts on ecology.
- Concerns about future expansion.

The representations can be viewed in full on the Authority's website.

### **Main Policies**

Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L1, L2, L3, RT3, CC1

Relevant Development Management Plan policies: DME2, DMR1, DMC12, DMC13, DMC14, DMT3

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

17. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. The latest revised NPPF was published on 20 July 2021. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and Development Management Policies (adopted May 2019) in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance in the NPPF.

18. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states that *'great weight should be given to conserving*

*landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.'*

19. Paragraph 84 states that decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; and sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.

### Core Strategy

20. Policy GSP3 sets out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities
21. RT3 states that small touring camping and caravan sites will be permitted, particularly in areas where there are few existing sites, provided that they are well screened, have appropriate access to the road network and do not adversely affect living conditions
22. Policies L1 and L3 say that development must conserve or enhance the landscape character and cultural heritage of the National Park. Development that harms the landscape or cultural heritage will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
23. Policy L2 states the development must conserve and enhance any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance and where appropriate their setting. Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where is likely to have an adverse impact on any site, features or species of biodiversity importance or their setting.
24. Policy CC1 states that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources, taking into account the energy hierarchy and achieving the highest possible standards of carbon reductions and water efficiency.

### Development Management Plan

25. Policy DMC3 expects a high standard of design that respects, protects and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape.
26. Development Management Policy DMT3 states the development will only be permitted where, having regard to the standard, function, nature and use of the road, a safe access that is achievable for all people, can be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and where possible enhances it.
27. Policy DMC8 seeks to protect the character and appearance and setting of Conservation Areas.
28. DMC12 states that development for sites, features and species of biodiversity importance, development will only be permitted where significant harm can be avoided and the conservation status of the purposes is maintained and the need for, and the benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh any adverse effects
29. DMC13 seeks to protect trees put at risk by development and requires that sufficient

information be submitted to enable impacts to be properly considered.

30. DMC14 sets out that development that presents a risk of pollution or disturbance including soil, air, light, water or noise pollution, or odour will not be permitted unless adequate control measures are put in place to bring the pollution within acceptable limits:
31. DMR1 states that the development of a new camping or touring caravan sites will not be permitted unless the scale, location, access, landscape setting and impact upon neighbouring uses are acceptable and it does not dominate its surroundings.
32. DME2 states that development for farm diversification will be permitted if there is clear evidence that the new business use will remain ancillary to the agricultural operation of the farm business and provided there is no net harm to valued landscape character.

## **Assessment**

### **Principle of Development**

33. In principle, Core Strategy policy RT3 and Development Management Policy DMR1 allow for the development of small scale camping and caravanning sites provided that they do not cause harm to the landscape character of the area or neighbouring uses. The proposed development, being for 5 motor homes, is considered to be 'small' in the context of policy RT3. The key issues are therefore the impact on the character of the area and on the amenity of neighbouring uses.

### **Impact of the development on the landscape character of the area and the setting of the Great Longstone Conservation Area.**

34. The application site is in open countryside, beyond the built edge of the village of Great Longstone. Beggarway Lane forms a distinct northern boundary to the village and except for one dwelling (Church Croft) the land to the north of the lane is distinctly agricultural in character. It consists of an open fieldscape with drystone field boundaries, some hedgerows and trees along boundary features. This is consistent with the landscape character type for the area, as described in the Authority's Landscape Strategy (Valley Farmlands with Villages). The Strategy describes this landscape as 'a settled pastoral landscape', with farmland 'enclosed by hedgerows and some drystone walls'.
35. Whilst the site is not within the Conservation Area, views into the Conservation Area are available across the site from the surrounding footpaths. And from within the Conservation Area, there are open views across the outlying field system. Consequently the site contributes to the setting and therefore the significance of the Conservation Area.
36. The proposed motorhomes and the associated hardstandings and access track would be highly prominent when viewed in close proximity from the road and public rights of way that bound, and cross the site, They would also be prominent in more medium range views from the public rights of way as they head into the village from the east and north, and would also be visible in longer range views from Longstone Edge. By virtue of their shape, colour, external appearance and siting, the vans would appear as discordant and jarring features, strung out across the open field. They would catch the eye and would detract significantly from the pastoral landscape in which the site sits.
37. As well as the vans themselves there is likely to be other paraphernalia associated with the use of the site as a touring site including awnings, refuse bins, hook up points,

external lighting etc., all of which would contribute to the harmful visual impact of the development.

38. As the field is laid out at present, the vans and the associated hardstandings and track project straight out into the open field from Beggarway Lane, around halfway across it. As such the development would appear isolated and unrelated to existing development and boundary features. A new boundary treatment is proposed to the east of the proposed pitches, running north to south. It would take the form of a linear hedgerow, trees and post and rail fence and would effectively create a new, smaller field parcel in which the proposed motorhomes would sit. New native planting is also proposed along the south (roadside) boundary of the site. Post and rail fencing is not a characteristic boundary treatment for the area. Native hedgerows are more common, but nonetheless the new planting would take a considerable length of time to mature and adequately screen the site from the south and east and in the meantime, harm to the distinctive character of the landscape would occur.
39. The planting would not screen the vans in views from the north, west and so they would interrupt and cause harm to open views into and out of the Conservation Area. At present Beggarway Lane forms a distinct edge to the built development of the village. The presence of motor homes in the field would blur this boundary and would erode the characteristic way in which the farmland butts up to the edge of the village.
40. In summary the proposed use of the site for 5 motorhomes and the associated access track and hardstandings would cause harm to the landscape character of the area and the setting of the Conservation Area, contrary to policies L1, L3 DMC3, DMC8 and DMR1.

### **Highway and Access Issues**

41. At present vehicular access is gained off Beggarway Lane in the south west corner of the field. The plans show that this access would be retained and a new, second access formed further to the east. The access bellmouth would be 3.8m in width. A new hedgerow would be planted along the roadside boundary on either side of the access, set back behind the visibility splay. An existing low boundary wall would be retained.
42. The Highway Authority has advised that the access would need to be widened to a minimum of 5.5m to allow effective two way movements of camper vans to and from Beggarway lane. This would be achievable, however we have concerns about the visual impact of the wide new opening, especially in that at 5.5m it would provide clear views into the site towards the proposed camper vans, access track and hardstandings when viewed from the lane. In addition, the arrangement of planting, set back into the field would not reflect the boundary planting patterns that are characteristic of the area.
43. The Highway Authority has queried the visibility splays but we are satisfied that close to 2.4m x 43m could be achieved in both directions. The existing access is shown to be retained. However, visibility from it is substandard and it would need to be blocked up in order to prevent visitors to the site from making use of it. This could be required by condition.
44. Local residents have raised concerns about the potential for the development to lead to more congestion on narrow local roads, especially due to the large size of some camper vans. However the Highway Authority has not raised any objections in these respects and on balance we are satisfied that due to the modest scale of the development, the impact on the local road network would not be so significant as to warrant refusal on highway grounds.

### **The impact of the development on the amenity of neighbouring properties**

45. There are a number of residential properties in close proximity to the application site, the nearest being 'Croft Lodge' and 'Barley Close' to the south on the opposite side of Beggarway Lane, and a property known as 'Church Croft' which lies directly to the west. By the nature of the proposed use for the siting of camper vans, inevitably vehicles will arrive at various times during the day and evening, and due to the outdoor nature of a camping use, visitors themselves are likely to generate noise when staying there.
46. Because of the close proximity to these dwellings (Croft Lodge is approximately 7m away from the boundary and Church Croft is 18m away), it is considered that the proposed use is likely to cause harm to the residential amenity of these properties through noise generation. It is not reasonable to append conditions to restrict the timing of vehicle movements, and conditions to limit noise emissions would be impossible to frame precisely or in a way that could be enforced. The issue is exacerbated by the fact that the site is remote from the applicant's farmstead and so there would be no permanent management presence at the site.
47. Because of its close proximity to neighbouring residential properties, the proposed development would be harmful to the amenity of the occupiers of those dwellings. The application is therefore contrary to policies GSP3, RT3, DMC3, DMC14 and DMR1.

### **Wider public benefits**

48. The representations received in support of the application and the design and access statement argue that the development would diversify and support the applicant's agricultural business. No further information has been provided in these respects and so it is difficult to assign weight to it. It is accepted however that the provision of camping and caravanning sites can bring positive financial benefits to individual farm businesses. Nonetheless our view is that the benefits to the continuation of land management in this part of the National Park do not outweigh the harm that has been identified above.
49. It is also suggested that the proposals would bring wider benefits to the community because visitors to the site would make use of and support other local facilities. This is a public benefit, but given the scale of the proposed development it would be limited and in any case it does not outweigh the significant harm to the landscape and to residential amenity that have been outlined above.

### **Other Issues**

50. No information has been provided with regard to waste storage and collection, We consider that the storage of waste could be accommodated in a way that does not cause harm to residential amenity, but the siting of refuse bins would add to the issue of visual 'clutter' that has already been identified.
51. No information has been provided with regard to the disposal of foul sewage. If the development had been acceptable in all other respects this information would have been requested.
52. There are mature trees growing along the northern boundary of the site. The crown spread of these trees is not shown on the plans and so it is not clear whether the proposals would have any impact upon them. Had the application been acceptable in all other respects we would have asked for more information with regard to impact on trees.
53. With regard to ecology, the development does not fall within a category that is likely to affect protected species as defined in the Authority's Practice Note and so a protected species survey was not required in this case.

54. No information has been provided with regard to the provision of external lighting.

### **Conclusion**

55. The siting of five motor homes and the associated surfacing works and new access would cause harm to the valued landscape character of the area and the setting of the Great Longstone conservation area. By virtue of the nature of the use and the close proximity to adjacent dwellings, the development is likely to cause harm to residential amenity through the generation of noise and disturbance.

56. Consequently the development is contrary to the development plan and having assessed all other material considerations, the application is recommended for refusal.

### **Human Rights**

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

### **List of Background Papers** (not previously published)

Nil

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