

MARTON PARISH COUNCIL

Objection to planning Application No: 18/2652M

Location Marton Meadows Golf Club

July 2018

The Parish Council has reviewed the application in the light of the Marton Neighbourhood Plan, the Cheshire East Local Plan, and after a meeting with the residents of Marton.

The Parish Council objects strongly to the proposed development of Marton Meadows Golf Club as set out in Application 18/2652M for the following reasons.

1. Open Countryside.

The village of Marton is located in Open Countryside, defined as an area outside of any settlement with a defined settlement boundary. The application is in direct conflict with Policy PG 6 which details the extent and criteria for development in Open Countryside.

- The proposed 19 Glamping Pods are fixed installations with plumbing and electrical services located in a green field.
- The provision of 19 structures for start-up business ventures also involves fixed installations with all necessary services and parking spaces. The proposed location was previously the garden/orchard for the farmhouse.
- The conversion of the existing barns adjacent to the A34 into 12/13 holiday lets, plus an office, will require extensive alterations and re-building, contrary to PG6/3ii.

2. Impact on Local Residents.

The application is also in conflict with Policy DC3 which states "Developments, including change of use, should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property or sensitive uses due to: loss of privacy; noise; car parking.

- A significant section of the glamping site and business start-up units border Oak Lane and are in close proximity (approx 25m) to houses and a listed building, namely Pump Cottage.
- The increase in traffic resulting from the development and the close proximity of the car park would significantly increase air pollution.
- The close location of the glamping pods, start-up business units, children's play and picnic area and a 55 space car-park, are bound to create noise and disturbance to the residents of nearby Oak Lane

- The proposed new two storey club house has located on the upper floor a bar, dance floor and a lounge area. A balcony is included that stretches the full length of the front elevation. It is not difficult to imagine that when the facility is used for weddings and parties the balcony will be well used resulting in significant noise. The club house is approximately 80m from Oak Lane and as the balcony is at high level the residents will be subjected to regular noise.

3. Sustainability

Marion is a small rural village with very limited infrastructure or facilities. The village lacks basics such as mains gas, a village shop or any public transport services. The nearest bus stop is over 2 miles away along a road without a safe pedestrian footpath. There are 4 shops at the centre of the village: Dog Grooming Parlour, Health Spa, Cafe, and a Games Workshop (note: the village farm shop has closed). There is also a French restaurant and an Italian restaurant (which was previously the village pub). All these businesses rely on trade from outside the village and can only be reached by car. The amount of business coming from local residents is relatively small.

It would not be possible for visitors to reach the proposed development site by any other means than private car. The amenities that would be offered by the development would not meet any of the needs of the local residents which means that the development does not comply with policy RCD3 of the Marion Neighbourhood Plan. Policy SD2 of the adopted local plan strategy provides an outline of the principles that development should adhere to, which includes providing access to a range of forms of public transport. Policy SD2 sets out a list of services/amenities in Table 9.1 that proposed developers should aspire to meet. Of the 20 items listed Marion only has 4: Public Right of Way - (Footpath) Outdoor Sports - (Golf Course), Post Box and Primary School.

In August 2017 the Northern Planning Committee unanimously rejected a planning application for 23 houses off School Lane (15/5637M), which is close to the proposed development site. Cheshire East Planning recommended refusal, stating "the proposed residential development is unsustainable because it is located within the Open Countryside, in a location with limited access to services and facilities, contrary to the Policy PG6 (Open Countryside), SD1, SD2 and FE4 (landscape) of the Adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy and the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to ensure development is directed to the right location and open countryside is protected from inappropriate development and maintained for future generations enjoyment and use. As such it creates harm to the interests of acknowledged importance."

4. Neighbourhood Plan.

The application is in conflict with the Marton Neighbourhood Plan policies RCD2, RCD4 and RCD5.

- RCD2 states "Development on a given plot should be of a scale appropriate to the location, of appropriate density and fit in with the existing rural character and surroundings of the village as detailed in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment and Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance".

The proposed development is disproportionate to the size of the village and does not fulfil any local needs. It would result in over 50 additional structures and a car-park for 55 cars.

The total number of dwellings in Marton is approximately 105 and fewer than 50 are within 500m of the site.

- RCD4 states: "Development should be in keeping with existing buildings in the village, as detailed in the LSCA and reflect the traditional vernacular of the village in terms of layout, density and appearance".

The glamping pods and start-up business units are alien in design and construction. This makes them completely out of character with the existing buildings in the village.

- RCD5 states: Development must not have a negative impact on the natural and historic environment of Marton and to this end should conform with the spatial policy maps of this plan.

The introduction of glamping pods, picnic/play areas, start-up business units, and car parks, all on green land, with the associated noise, will significantly impact on the natural environment.

The proposed development is in close proximity of 7 Grade II listed buildings and one Grade I listed building. The Davenport Arms is immediately opposite the application site which is an 18th Century building. This development will have significant impact on the historic environment of Marton.

5. Jodrell Bank Observatory.

Jodrell Bank Observatory is a prominent feature within the Cheshire landscape and is of significant scientific and historic value. The telescope is protected by a conservation zone and policy SE14 states "Development will not be permitted if it impairs the efficiency of the telescope".

- The proposed development site is located within the inner Consultation Zone (within 4 mile radius of the telescope).
- It is envisaged that the glamping pods will have a range of electrical equipment, e.g.: electric showers, 2 ring hobs, microwave ovens, toasters, etc. Occupiers would be able to charge their mobile phones and use their tablets and laptops.
- The 12/13 holiday lets would have a similar range of electrical equipment to the glamping pods plus the use of TV sets.
- The business start-up units would be connected to the mains services and would employ a range of electrical equipment depending on the type of business.

6. Transport: Traffic

The calculations of site traffic do not account for:

- 19 separate businesses and their staff

The calculation used is based on total floor space, without taking into account that these will be separate businesses, with at least one person staffing each business, i.e. 19 separate businesses, each requiring at least one in/out car trip per day, ignoring the extra trips conducted by clients/customers.

Transport Statement 5.9 has calculated trip rates based on office use, but these are intended as retail units. Weekday surveys only have been included, despite the fact that these are retail units, and will therefore be open on Saturday and Sunday in order to get sales.

- the additional 10 employees at the golf club identified in the application form, each of whom will need to drive to site
- weekend retail and accommodation traffic

Transport Statement 5.4-6 states that they have calculated trips for the accommodation element of the proposal on weekday surveys only. This is inappropriate, as most holiday let/glamping visitors will come for the weekend.

- the additional traffic due to proposed weddings/functions in the new clubhouse, as non-residential guests will have to arrive by private car, as will any additional staff
- deliveries to site - of supplies for the shop, for the two bars and the kitchen in the proposed clubhouse or food and other supplies for weddings/functions, of supermarket

deliveries for holidaymakers, of laundry for the accommodation etc – each of which will require an in/out trip

- the internal inconsistency within the application as to whether there will be 12 or 13 holiday lets – the calculation used is based on 12 holiday lets, where the Planning Statement and other documents refer to 13 holiday lets.

Transport Statement 5.2 is disingenuous in claiming that there will be no additional trips to the golf course itself as there are no proposed improvements. The applicants have said that they are improving, and will continue to improve the golf course; and this can be for no other purpose than to generate additional visitors.

Furthermore, the lets/glamping will require at least one vehicle per unit, each of which will need to leave the village multiple times to buy supplies as we have no village shop. These extra trips to visit shops, pharmacies, banks, or to sightsee around Cheshire have not been accounted for.

7. Parking

The parking proposed is inadequate for the size of the development:

- Transport Statement 3.8 – 3.13 calculates an allocation of 12 parking bays for the business units. This has been calculated on the basis of total floor space and has taken no account of the fact that there are 19 separate units, each of which will need minimum of 1 staff member. That means 19 parking bays will be required for staff, which will contain staff cars all day for the businesses, and doesn't count any customers/clients for those businesses. The Planning Design and Access document states that these are to attract users to the site – these customers/clients have not been counted into the traffic generation statistics.
- Transport Statement 3.12 further states that the 55 spaces required are in addition to the 12 spaces already required to service the existing golf club. This has not been taken into account.
- Moreover, the expected expansion of the golf club itself, the expected increase in number of employees within the complex (up to 10) and the use of the new clubhouse for functions and weddings will mean that still more car parking will be required for non-residential guests and for staffing the functions
- Transport Statement 3.13 assumes that there will be higher parking requirements for the business units during weekdays, whereas these are intended, according to the

applicants, to be retail units targeting the residents of the glamping/lerts/golf club (proposals include a florist and a golf shop), and so will be open on Saturdays and Sundays.

The development proposals do not provide sufficient parking for the business requirements, and the extent of the parking provisions proposed is already disproportionate to the size of Marton without further expansion of the car parks.

8. Accessibility

Transport Statement 4.3 says A34 has footways on both sides of the carriageways. While there is a footway at the entrance to the site, the footpath on the east side of the A34 runs out less than 70m to the north of the site, at Oak Lane. Much of the A34 to the north and south does not have footways on both sides (or at all, in some places). And none of the country lanes in Marton have footways.

The 2km walking radius and 5km cycling radius that have been mapped bear no relation to the likely users of the site. The intended users of the site will not live within this distance, and will not walk or cycle to the site. There are not enough people living within that radius to support the site because it is Open Countryside.

Transport Statement 4.10 states that prospective site users will not be wholly reliant on private cars. However, all site users will have to arrive in cars as there is no public transport in the village.

Transport Statement 6.3 states that pedestrian access to the site will be in the same location as the main vehicular access. We are concerned that it may not be safe to do so because of the extent of the extra traffic coming in/out of the site at that point – there is no indication that there will be pedestrian walkways.

9. Lack of clarity.

There is a lack of clarity over the exact proposal

- Inconsistency about the plans for the existing clubhouse, which is either to be holiday accommodation or a community hub and local facilities, depending on which section of the application is under review
 - Planning Statement 5.2, 5.5 and 8.2 state that the existing clubhouse will be used for local community activities such as meetings, an office, a crèche and a small shop.

- However Planning Statement 4.2, the Planning Design and Access statement 4.1 and the Landscape and Visual Appraisal document 1.20 all state that this building will become 4 holiday lets. The pre-application enquiry also says this would be holiday accommodation, staff facilities, a crèche and a shop.
- Planning Statement 7.10 states that it is the new clubhouse that will provide key community facilities including meeting rooms while the proposed holiday lettings layout shows the small shop and office as in one of the former barns.
- Missing documentation for proposals for the upper floor of the proposed office, which the Planning, Design and Access document 4.1 states will be a further holiday let, making the total number of holiday lets 13, not 12 as stated.

10. No Local Need for Development

It has not been established that there is a need for the type of services and accommodation that this development would provide.

It is proposed that the clubhouse is to serve as a wedding and function venue, but there are already a number of businesses offering these facilities in the Congleton and Macclesfield area, including a dedicated wedding venue 1.5 miles away at Sandhole Farm.

Additional accommodation is available in the area. Ladera Lodge is 2 miles away and websites indicate that there are vacancies throughout July, August and September.

It is difficult to see how there will be a demand for the start-up business units. There is a range of commercial units available throughout Congleton and Macclesfield offering premises for workshops, offices, retail units and storage facilities.

11. Local Buildings and Heritage

Planning Design and Access (PDA) 2.5 states that the area immediately around the site contains brick buildings of no significant architectural merit. This is plainly false. The village contains multiple Grade I and Grade II listed buildings (of which there are 7 within 300m radius of the site), including:

- the Grade I listed church, which is less than 150m away
- Pump Cottage (shown on the site plan as a neighbour) is a Grade II listed building.
- Oak Farm (also a neighbour) is a Grade II listed building.
- The Davenport Arms (now Pesto) is just over the road from the site (<25m away) is an 18th Century building.

The Church of St James and St Paul, Marton, was described by Nikolaus Pevsner as “one of the architectural gems of Cheshire.” It is Grade I listed. The medieval timber framed church is the oldest of its kind, and the second oldest timber framed church in Britain. The adjoining timber spire and belfry are unique. Because of the historical and architectural significance of the building any proposed developments which may interfere with the setting of the church should be considered in consultation with relevant heritage bodies.

It is not the case that the area immediately around the site contains buildings of no architectural merit.

Recommendations and Summary

The Parish Council recommends the refusal of planning application No.18/2652M at Marton Meadows Golf Club for the following reasons:

1. The proposed commercial development is unsustainable because it is located within Open Countryside contrary to Policy PG6 and the principles of the National Planning Framework. These policies seek to ensure development is directed to the right location and open countryside is protected from inappropriate development and maintained for future generations’ enjoyment.
2. The development is locally unsustainable due to the lack of public facilities and infrastructure and contrary to Policies SD1, SD2 and FE4 of the Adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.
3. The application is in conflict with Policy DC3 and will cause nuisance to nearby residential properties through the loss of privacy, noise and pollution due to the close proximity of the car park.
4. The application is in conflict with the made Marton Neighbourhood Plan, Policies RCD2, RCD4 and RCD5. The size of the development is significant and disproportionate to the size of the village. The proposed structures are not in keeping with the existing buildings in the village.
5. The size of the development and the associated electrical equipment has the potential to impair the efficiency of the Jodrell Bank telescope. The development site is located within the Observatory’s Consultation Zone and Policy SE14 states development will not be permitted if it impairs the efficiency of the telescope.

Appendix: Errors and Inconsistencies

We have noted the following issues with the application, which are further causes for concern:

- The children's play area mentioned on the application form and cover letter (and shown in the photo-mockup illustrations as in the location of the new clubhouse) is not shown on the site plan.
- The 3D images of the site do not show the biggest building (the new clubhouse)
- The application form indicates that there are no parking spaces currently. This is not the case. The Transport Statement correctly indicates that there is space for 12 cars currently.
- The application refers only to B1 use of the commercial area, yet the applicants are expecting that the commercial units will include services such as: golf shop, florist – A1/A2 uses.
- Transport Statement 2.5 states that the A34 has footways on both sides of the carriageway. While this is true in the immediate vicinity of the site, there is no footway on the eastern side of the A34 between Oak Lane and School Lane. Moreover, there is no footway on one or more sides of the A34 for substantial distances to the north and south.
- Transport Statement 2.7 states that there has been one fatal accident in the most recently available 5 year period. This is correct. However, the stretch of road considered has been truncated to the north just enough (a few metres) to exclude a tractor that lost its load, and the van that ended up on the Folly, and to the south enough to exclude the serious accident referred to in that study.