

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8/1(a)

Parish:	Snettisham	
Proposal:	Change of use from livery yard to camping with associated camping pods and amenities block	
Location:	Snettisham Park Bircham Road Snettisham Norfolk	
Applicant:	Stanton Farms Ltd	
Case No:	15/00190/FM (Full Application - Major Development)	
Case Officer:	Mrs K Lawty Tel: 01553 616403	Date for Determination: 14 May 2015 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 11 June 2015

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – The views of Snettisham Parish Council is contrary to the Officer recommendation and raises matters of wider concern.

Case Summary

The site consists of an existing livery yard within part of Park Farm, a large farm holding (and established tourist site) situated on the eastern side of the village of Snettisham. The application site is a paddock and stable block with existing hedging and fencing to the site boundary. It is located to the north of the main visitor centre buildings.

Park Farm itself covers an area of approximately 9.2 hectares and includes an existing small caravan site and a series of farm buildings, fields and paddocks.

The site is surrounded by allotments to the north, open fields to the east, fields and camp site to the west and the visitor centre building and parking to the south.

The application proposes the change of use of the livery yard into a campsite with the conversion of the existing stable block into an amenities block including washing facilities, reception and campsite shop.

Vehicular access will be via the existing access to the visitor facilities off Bircham Road.

Key Issues

Principle of development

Character and appearance and impact upon the countryside;

Impact upon residential amenity;

Tourism and local economy;

Highway issues;

Flood Risk;

Ecology; and

Other material considerations

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The project aims to provide the following facilities:

- 6 wooden camping pods for short term holiday lets
- 24 touring caravan pitches
- 55 camping pitches
- Modern ablution (washing) facilities
- On site shop supplying local farm produce to guests including meat and eggs from the farm.
- Communal facilities including BBQ, seating and play areas.
- Disabled access around the site.

SUPPORTING CASE

The application has been supported by a raft of planning documents including:-

- Design and Access Statement
- Supporting Statement
- Business Plan
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Ecology statement
- Flood Risk Assessment

The **Design and Access Statement** concludes:

‘The proposal seeks to provide added accommodation to the North West Norfolk Coast which from the applicant’s experience within the tourism industry is in high demand.

The proposal, by its nature, is one that needs to be located in a rural area on a working farm as the applicant’s aim is to provide accommodation for those who wish to enjoy and experience ‘life on a farm’.

Diversification of the site to a campsite will help sustain the family business and allow the applicant, Mrs Caroline Kerss to help run the family farm with her father Mr Edward Stanton.

The applicant’s father has operated a tourist attraction for many years without any highway problems being created. In the previous year’s Snettisham Park attracted many more visitors than it does now, therefore indicating there is capacity for more vehicles to use the entrance. It has also been found that the very popular existing Caravan CL site adjacent to the proposed new campsite entrance shows that large vehicles have no problems accessing the site.

The applicants would like to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport for occupiers. They will promote cycling by providing cycles for hire and provide information for walkers within the Reception particularly with the view of enticing people to use the established farm trails.

The proposal will not have any detrimental effect upon adjoining landowners or property in visual or noise terms. The siting of pitches and the access has been carefully designed to avoid such problems.’

The application includes a **Planning Supporting Statement**. It concludes ‘The proposed development will broaden the tourist facilities available at Snettisham Park Farm and will

have a neutral impact on the setting and character of the local area and therefore should be supported.'

The application has been supported by a **Business Plan** which refers:

'The Business Plan is provided in support of a planning submission for the development of a campsite to be located at Snettisham Park, Snettisham. The new business will be developed as part of Stanton Farms Limited by Caroline Kerss daughter of the owner Edward Stanton.

The proposed site occupies an area of land immediately to the east of the existing main entrance of the tourist attraction, Snettisham Park. It is located on a small area of grassed fields which have been used for grazing and stabling horses. To the South of the site lies the Visitor Centre and Car Park of Snettisham Park and to the west are two large pastoral fields and the existing Caravan Certified Location site. The North and East are enclosed by the roadways of Bircham Road and St Thomas's Lane. The proposed site is fully enclosed by mature hedgerows.

The development proposed is to install a set of 79 grassed pitches, 24 electric hook up pitches for the use of caravans and tents, 55 pitches for tents and 6 wooden camping pods. It is however planned to provide the site in phases with expansion to the full site dependent on its success.

At its core the business will seek to provide modern camping accommodation for those who wish to enjoy and experience 'life on a farm'. It will be an extension to the existing farm park which will help improve and enhance tourism in the local area.

The project aims to create:

- A traditional campsite allowing a variety of different accommodation
- Modern ablution facilities
- On site shop supplying local farm produce to guests including meat and eggs from the farm.
- Communal facilities including BBQ, seating and play areas.
- Encourage guests to visit Snettisham Park open farm.
- Safeguard the future of the family farm
- Create at least 3 new posts'

A **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** has been submitted in support of the application. It summarises:

'The significance of the landscape effect depends largely on the scale of the effect, and the sensitivity of the location of the development.

This is a small scale development and the scale of the effect is limited by the extent of visibility which is contained within a very small area where there are few visual receptors. The location of the site is not in open countryside, but is on the edge of the village and does not extend the extent of development of the settlement nor alter the settlement pattern. The proposed site has an existing use as a livery yard and is not a particularly sensitive location.

The development of a campsite will have very limited visibility and will not create a new focal point in the landscape. The proposed developments on site are low level and will be set against a background of low level vegetation and will not project into the skyline.

The development will not result in the loss of any of the characteristic landscape features, and the pattern of settlement within the landscape is unaltered.

The establishment of new hedgerows within the site, as proposed, will add to the sense of enclosure and also provide additional visual screening.

The infilling of the gaps in the external boundary hedgerow along the roadside in front of the site with native woody shrub species would help to enclose the site and in time obscure any direct views into the site from that direction and help to strengthen local landscape character. Allowing the existing hedgerows to reach a greater height, but still maintaining their managed profile, would help to further screen the development proposals while maintaining the local landscape character.'

The **Ecology Statement** concludes:

'The site currently has low potential to support most protected species, but is not without biodiversity value. This lies mainly in the hedgerows and the semi-improved grass sward. Protected or valued species which the hedgerows could support include nesting birds, foraging bats and terrestrial species such as hedgehogs and common toads. The hedgerows and grassland are considered to be of no more than local value.

It is considered that the occurrence of great crested newts on the site is extremely unlikely, since the nearest pond (which may or may not hold great crested newts) is a considerable distance away, and is situated within much more suitable terrestrial habitat than that presented by the proposal site itself.

Bat species will almost certainly forage across the site, as they would do on almost any site, most likely staying close to hedgerows and buildings. However, the site does not have any particular attracting features for foraging bats. The building is considered to offer a low potential for roosting bats, as are the other structures on the site (a wooden shed and a caravan).

The site provides a suboptimal habitat for reptiles, and although conceivably low numbers could shelter in the hedgerows, the biological record does not indicate high numbers in the area. In any case, the proposal will not involve hedgerow removal.

There are no aquatic habitats on the site, therefore semi-aquatic species such as otter and water vole will not be affected by the proposal.

There is no suitable habitat on the site to support any nesting Schedule 1 bird species. The site will almost certainly support generally protected nesting birds in the hedgerows and possibly in some of the lone bushes and field edges.

In summary, no further specialised surveys are recommended for the site. The main receptors for which some potential for impacts are anticipated are designated sites, hedgerows, semi-improved grassland, nesting birds and terrestrial animals.'

The **Flood Risk Assessment** concludes that the proposal falls outside the areas affected by flood zone 2 & 3 and poses no additional risk to flooding of the site or adjoining property.

PLANNING HISTORY

09/00578/F: Application Permitted: 02/06/09 - Variation of condition 3 of application 05/02131/FM

05/02131/FM: Application Permitted: 20/01/06 - Construction of new visitors centre and associated buildings to house animals

05/01054/FM: Application Withdrawn: 23/08/05 - Construction of new visitor centre and associated buildings to house animals

2/93/1681/CU: Application Permitted: 19/01/94 - Change of use from poultry house to riding stables

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT - The proposed development clearly meets the criteria for growth and expansion of business, diversification of agricultural business and the support of rural tourism and leisure. There were concerns over the need to “respect the character of the countryside”.

There was consensus that there would be a likely positive effect in the Village generally. - The present site itself is not the most attractive – so Council would seek adequate assurance of planting to reduce the visual impact. There should be guarantees that the temporary and refashioned buildings on-site should be time-limited, with the design proviso strictly adhered to when further planning permission is sought at such time as they may be rebuilt.

Regarding DM11 (2015 LDF submission documents, recently under consultation) assurance is sought that the required business plan is satisfactory, the occupation limits are strictly adhered to, and that the site is not open during the winter months, as per the developer’s statement. Regarding access, there are many specific issues.

Access via Station Road and Alma/Common Roads are realistically impossible for touring caravans. Poppyfields has humps which make this unsuitable. This leaves access only via the Lynn Road, which possesses a chicane which has already been an issue in planning applications. From here both Church Road and Old Church Road have major issues, both of these with width and visibility problems, and the second with three 90 degree corners, school access etc.

In the summer there are regular (almost daily) functions at the halls in each road, and car boot sales at weekends, as well as school-run waiting. At such times, these are almost impassable for cars alone, and would simply not allow caravan access – we would stress that any viewing of this by officials or committee members must be at a time when the problem exists. This has been conceded by NCC Highways in a recent application (Solar Farm development) where they insisted, following our comments, that all traffic should be diverted via Bircham. We would recommend a similar approach, requiring consultation with Highways, and the use of signage to prevent caravans coming through the Village at all, and all site literature/reservations etc. making this clear. This would also avoid the tight corner on the approach to the site on the Bircham Road from the Village, the final obstacle to access via the Village.

There is great risk to pedestrians given that there is no footway on the road. There is also considerable equine activity in the area, using the narrow roads.

Council seeks assurances that an adequate analysis of the speed of such drainage is such that this does not lead to any increase in water levels beyond those currently experienced. This is one reason that winter use of the site is not appropriate.

The ability of the proposed waste water system to cope with chemicals etc. from caravan and other sources has been questioned to us, and we seek re-assurance that in the event of the plans being accepted that this is investigated.

Council is supportive of the general principle of the site, but must **OBJECT** to the proposal in its current state, on the grounds that:

- the access to the site needs to be dealt with such that caravan users avoid the Village entirely,
- there is real danger to pedestrians and other non-motor vehicle road users along the route into the Village
- there are currently inadequate details of the amount of additional water going into the drainage system, and how this will impact on the Village downstream.
- It also requests that its concerns outlined above (character, enhancement etc.) are included in the detailed review of this by the Borough.

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION - conditionally

Environmental Health & Housing - CSNN: NO OBJECTION - conditionally

REPRESENTATIONS

57 third party representations received referring to the following:-

- General highway safety (1)
- Parking issues in locality (1)
- Caravans parking and waiting to enter site (1)
- Caravans will be hazardous (1)
- Narrow roads (28)
- Roads unsuitable for caravans (20)
- Two cars cannot pass each other (11)
- Congestion / Additional traffic (particularly during summer months) (41)
- Inadequate provision of pedestrian footpaths in the area (17)
- Primary school children / pedestrians at risk (21)
- Dangerous for cyclists (4)
- Blind bends (21)
- Poor visibility (4)
- Increased number of accidents in the village (6)
- No regular bus service on Sundays (1)
- Damage to verges and existing roads (2)
- Damage to the screen walls (1)
- Dangerous for horse riders (2)
- Increase in the number of visitors in the summer months (6)
- Increased use of local services / local services not able to cope with additional visitors / trade (5)
- Late night drinking (1)
- No benefit to the local community - jobs (6)
- Adverse impact on residential amenity – general (3)
- Close proximity to neighbouring properties (2)
- Noise – general (6)
- Noise nuisance from users of the camp site (15)
- Concerned about the 'no noise policy' after 10pm (12)
- Pollution – general (1)
- Car fume pollution (1)
- Light pollution from campsite (9)
- Odour from ablutions block (1)

- BBQ smoke and smells (2)
- Increase in vermin (1)
- Litter (4)
- Cause stress to local residents (1)
- Devalue homes (2)
- Neighbouring property may be at risk (open fronted cart sheds) (1)
- Compromised security (1)
- Loss of privacy (1)
- Affect peace and tranquillity of village (3)
- Impact on the night sky (3)
- Impact on wildlife – general (3)
- Impact on bats and owls (1)
- Impact on birds (1)
- Impact on existing hedgerow (2)
- Inadequate soak-away system (5)
- Localised flooding (3)
- Sewage – inadequate chemical treatment (4)
- Ground water pollution (2)
- Impact on character of the area (4)
- Impact on visual amenity (3)
- Excessive scale (3)
- Detrimental impact upon the rural setting of the village (7)
- Small historic village (1)
- No screening to the site (3)
- Change of use of farm land (1)
- Impact on the Conservation Area (1)
- Lack of infrastructure (2)
- Not a need for more camping facilities within the area (6)
- Campsite users will have no right of way through Park Farm Barns (1)
- Planning Officer advised applicant that the application is likely to be approved. (1)
- Justification of proposal - Personal circumstances should not be taken into consideration. (1)
- Recommends screening around the site (1)
- Reduce the intensity of the site (4)
- More planting between pitches (1)
- Increase pitch sizes (1)
- More pods (1)
- Less tents (1)
- Less caravans (only 12) (1)
- Allow touring caravans to book for the year (avoid towing to and from site) (1)
- A cabin could be built to allow groups of children / disabled people to visit (1)
- Site could provide a mini bus to bring people into the village (1)
- Car boot days already bad – will make worse (4)

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS07 - Development in Coastal Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS10 - The Economy

CS11 – Transport

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PRE-SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM11 – Touring and Permanent Holiday Sites

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The application raises the following issues:-

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance and impact upon the countryside;
- Impact upon residential amenity;
- Tourism and local economy;
- Highway issues;
- Flood Risk;
- Ecology; and
- Other material considerations

Principle of new development

The site comprises stables and field/paddock associated with the existing Snettisham Park site. It is grassed with hedgerow planting to the field boundaries.

The site is within the countryside as depicted on the Local Plan inset map.

In the Core Strategy Policy CS06 states that in the countryside and rural areas the strategy will be to protect the countryside for its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife and its natural resources to be enjoyed by all. Development is therefore restricted to that appropriate in a rural area.

Tourism plays a significant role in the Borough's local economy and the Council takes a positive approach to the development of tourism. The main tourist appeal is based on the unique natural environmental assets and the historic built environment. Locations for

proposed holiday accommodation need careful consideration. Proposals for holiday accommodation should also provide for a range of accommodation which will continue to positively contribute to the local economy. With this regard CS10 is relevant.

CS12 refers that proposals to protect and enhance the historic environment and landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity will be encouraged and supported.

Nationally, the NPPF seeks to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment whilst contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It also recognises the need to support sustainable development, and this should be given significant weight.

It states that rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and respect the character of the countryside, should be supported.

The proposed use is therefore acceptable in principle subject to the scale of the development being appropriate and that it does not harm the natural environmental assets or nature conservation.

Character and appearance and impact upon the countryside

The development proposal is for the change of use of the existing stables, livery yard and paddocks to a touring caravan/camping site. The proposal is for 79 grassed pitches, 24 for the use of caravans and 55 for tents. It is also planned to provide 6 wooden camping pods. The 24 pitches proposed for touring caravans shall be provided with electric hook-ups.

The proposal includes the installation of camping pods and also portable buildings for sanitation purposes. Long term the stable building would be converted to an office and amenities block.

The site has a certain degree of screening from existing planting to the field boundaries. From longer views across the fields from public highways there are views of the paddock. These are softened to some degree by existing planting, but there are some long views where there are gaps in the hedgerow which could be infilled. The applicant has submitted a landscape plan to show that there will be some infill planting to the north east corner of the site and to the southern boundary. The existing hedgerows and tree planting to the site boundary is shown to be retained.

The boundary hedge at its current height does not fully screen the whole site from longer views due to the topography of the surrounding countryside, although it certainly helps to soften the impact of the existing development and would assist with future development.

The applicant has also supported the planning application with a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to demonstrate that the proposed development would sit comfortably within the surrounding landscape.

The LVIA concludes that 'This is a small scale development and the scale of the effect is limited by the extent of visibility which is contained within a very small area where there are few visual receptors. The location of the site is not in open countryside, but is on the edge of the village and does not extend the extent of development of the settlement nor alter the settlement pattern. The proposed site has an existing use as a livery yard and is not a particularly sensitive location.

The development of a campsite will have very limited visibility and will not create a new focal point in the landscape. The proposed developments on site are low level and will be set against a background of low level vegetation and will not project into the skyline.

The development will not result in the loss of any of the characteristic landscape features, and the pattern of settlement within the landscape is unaltered.

The establishment of new hedgerows within the site, as proposed, will add to the sense of enclosure and also provide additional visual screening.

The infilling of the gaps in the external boundary hedgerow along the roadside in front of the site with native woody shrub species would help to enclose the site and in time obscure any direct views into the site from that direction and help to strengthen local landscape character.

Allowing the existing hedgerows to reach a greater height, but still maintaining their managed profile, would help to further screen the development proposals while maintaining the local landscape character.'

Yours Officer's agree with this assessment and consider that the proposed use will not have significant harm on the wider landscape and it is recommended that allowing the height of the hedgerow to increase over time and infilling the gaps would further assist the successful assimilation into the countryside. This could be controlled through planning condition.

Tourism and local economy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to support a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 28 states inter alia:

"Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres..."

Policy CS10 states that opportunities to improve and enhance the visitor economy will be promoted. Smaller tourism opportunities will be supported in rural areas to sustain the local economy, providing these are in sustainable locations and are not detrimental to the valuable natural environment.

The policy also states that the Council will permit the development of new tourism accommodation in rural areas provided it is located in or adjacent to villages and towns, it is of a high standard of design, will not be detrimental to the landscape and mechanisms will be in place to permanently retain the tourism related use.

In this case the site adjoins an existing well established tourist attraction and, although it is not immediately adjacent to the village of Snettisham, the facilities of the village are in relatively close proximity.

The proposal would allow for a mix of visitor accommodation appropriate to this area which would add to the tourist facilities of the Borough. The proposal accords with the general provisions of the NPPF and policy CS10.

Proposed development management policy DM11 allows new touring holiday caravan sites outside the AONB subject to meeting a number of criteria. Amongst other requirements this policy refers to the need to produce a Business Plan, which has been provided by the applicant. This explains that diversification of the site to a campsite will help sustain the family business and allows the applicant, Mrs Caroline Kerss, to help run the family farm with her father Mr Edward Stanton.

The applicant's father has operated a tourist attraction for many years. In the previous year's Snettisham Park attracted many more visitors than it does now. The Business Plan also refers to the existing Caravan CL site adjacent to the proposed new campsite entrance. The Business Plan sets out a financial appraisal of the business ongoing and how it is intended to function over a five year period. The camping pods are intended to be introduced gradually over this time period as the business grows.

Policy DM11 also refers to the need to ensure that the accommodation is maintained for tourist facilities in the future. This is through the use of occupancy conditions relating to the length of stay of the occupant and maintaining a register of lettings/occupation. It is recommended that appropriate conditions are imposed in this case.

Impact upon Residential Amenity

The site is separated from any residential properties in Snettisham by open fields. The use of the site will, however, generate noise from the increased amount of traffic and general activity from people using the site.

Third party concerns were raised regarding the impact of the proposed use upon the amenity of local residents, with particular regard to noise and activities, especially at night. The applicant has submitted details to say that they will operate a 'no noise' policy after 10pm which shall be enforced by a member of staff visiting the site in the evening.

The Environmental Health Officer has been consulted and raises no objection to the proposal, subject to the imposition of an appropriate condition relating to noise protection of the neighbours. This is in order to protect the nearest residential properties from noise from the new proposed activities on site. However, the Environmental Health Officer considers the details of the noise protection scheme can be further assessed through planning condition.

Snettisham Park already has a small certified caravan site for up to five caravans or motorhomes (no tents) on another part of the farm site. It is worth noting that of all the third party comments received, none of the objectors has referred to any problems with regard to noise from caravans or motorhomes using the existing certified caravan site. This small camp site is closer to the nearest residential properties than the camp site currently proposed. No formal complaints about noise or disturbance have ever been recorded by the Environmental Health Team regarding this existing site.

Third party concern has referred to the impact of lighting from the site in this rural area. This issue has also been raised by the Environmental Health Officer who recommends that a

condition is imposed relating to the submission of details of any outdoor lighting scheme prior to installation to ensure there are no neighbour amenity issues.

Highway Issues

The site already has a vehicle access point onto the public highway and this is also the existing Snettisham Park entrance track that is accessed from Bircham Road. The access is well established and has good visibility splays in both directions. This access point is already used by caravans and motorhomes using the existing certified camp site.

Clearly the use of the application site for additional vehicles in connection with the proposed camping and caravan site will have an impact on the local road network and the Highways Authority has been consulted.

Nearly all of the third party objections received relate to the impact on the village and road network from additional traffic, with many concerns relating to vehicles pulling touring caravans. Concern is raised regarding the fact that the local roads are narrow, with blind bends and the road network is not adequate to cater for additional vehicles towing caravans as they are not wide enough for vehicles to pass one another safely.

Concern is raised regarding the additional traffic and the dangerous implications for impacts with pedestrians, particularly children, cyclists and horses. Concern is raised that the roads are already congested on event days (e.g. car boots held at the Halls on School Road) and this will add to road safety issues.

Specific reports have been submitted by third parties to demonstrate the extent of their concern.

The Highways Authority has closely examined the proposal, including the route taken by vehicles, including towing vehicles, which would follow the brown tourist information road signs. Their response to the proposal and the third party reports is included, verbatim, below:

‘In terms of traffic generation, the applicant’s design and access statement indicates the site is expected to generate up to 175 additional vehicular movements per day. From past experience of such sites, the Highway Authority anticipates the figure being higher at 255 movements and we have based our assessment against that higher figure. There is no breakdown between the traffic figures associated with each element - i.e. the figures for the 24 caravans in isolation to the much larger number of tents.

We note local concerns have been raised with regard to the suitability of the surrounding highways for use by caravans towed by 4x4 vehicles and residents have commissioned a report by a local agent (Adrian Parker). At paragraph 4.5 of his report, Mr Parker indicates that a typical towed caravan is about 2.2m wide and a tow car could be 2.3m wide.

When assessing this application, we have made our assessment against the maximum sizes allowed for a towing vehicle (under 3500kg GVW), which allows a maximum towed width of 2.3m. With regard to the tow car itself, a Land rover Discovery (for example) measures 2.2m wide between the wing mirrors, slightly less with the mirrors folded back.

Accordingly, the anticipated widths of the towed vehicle/trailer combination are broadly similar to those quoted by Mr Parker.

Mr Parker’s report is accompanied by swept path analysis drawings produced by Create consulting. The drawings cover Bircham Road between the site access and the Church Road junction. The drawings indicate that if two caravans approach from opposite directions,

then in places one or the other vehicle would need to wait for an oncoming vehicle to pass before proceeding. The drawings are indicative of the fact that it should be possible for vehicles to wait, other than for a short section between the site access and the first bend to the west.

The ability for vehicles to wait in safety is governed by the frequency of such an occurrence - in this instance limited to a maximum of 24 caravans allowed on site. We note the applicants propose to reduce the probability of towed vehicles meeting in opposing directions by staggering the arrival and departure times. Departures will be before 11am and arrivals will be made after 2pm. Whilst staggering the times in the manner suggested would help to overcome the problems associated with two vehicles from this site meeting, it would not overcome the issue of a towed vehicle associated with this site meeting a vehicle already on the network from elsewhere.

Nevertheless, the Highway Authority also notes that the site is unlikely to be fully occupied at all times of the year. The greatest occupancy is expected to occur during school holidays when school traffic is absent.

In addition, the vast majority of caravan movements will not occur every day as tourists are expected to stay for more than one day at a time (potentially 1 to 2 weeks) - leaving the caravan on site whilst they explore the wider area by car.

On the problematic section of Bircham Road (between the site access and the first bend to the west) there are wide highway verges. It would be possible for the applicants to undertake minor widening to the carriageway within those verges at this point sufficient to allow two towed vehicles to pass in safety and thereby overcoming the problem identified by Create.

On the remaining section of Bircham Road, caravans should be able to wait in safety, provided the numbers are limited to the 24 proposed.

In the circumstances, we have no objection to this proposal subject to minor carriageway widening on Bircham Road between the site access and the first bend to the west.'

Accordingly the limitations of the road network and the narrow sections of road close to the access to the site are noted. However, given the nature of the use of the site (proposed for only 24 caravans at any one time) and the anticipated staggered time of arrival and departure of vehicles, the Highways Authority does not consider the proposed use would result in significant highway safety issues. Consequently the application can be supported in terms of highways matters, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

It is of note that of the 57 representations received none of these have referred to any problems from traffic using the existing certified caravan site on the Snettisham Park site. Albeit this is a much larger proposal, this site for five units has been in use by caravans and motorhomes now for several years without complaint.

Given the comments above it is considered that with regard to highways matters the proposal accords with national and local planning policy, specifically Policies CS11 and DM11.

Other material considerations and third party considerations

The site is currently an active field and paddock. The site lies within 2km of a SSSI. The applicant has supported the planning application with an ecology statement and protected species survey.

This concludes that the site currently has low potential to support most protected species, but is not without biodiversity value. There are no protected species present and benefits can be made on the site to improve biodiversity.

Third party concerns about the impact on wildlife are noted but the ecology statement addresses these concerns. It is recommended that if planning permission is forthcoming a condition is imposed ensuring that the mitigation measures and biodiversity improvements referred to within the ecology statement are implemented.

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and a flood risk assessment has been submitted with the planning application. This raises no flood risk issues.

The Licensing Enforcement Officer who monitors caravan sites has raised no objection to the proposal. The site will be controlled by licence under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and operation of the site will be subject to conditions attached and Model Standards issued by the Government under HO Circular 23/83. There are no outstanding issues regarding the layout of the site or the way it has been set out.

Third party concern has been received regarding drainage and localised flooding. Details of the drainage of the site in terms of foul and surface water drainage have been submitted with the application.

The Environmental Health Officer raises no objection to the proposal with regard to drainage, based on the information submitted. Notwithstanding this, a planning condition requiring that the drainage is implemented as submitted prior to commencement of the use is recommended to be added to any planning permission granted.

The majority of third party objections received have related to highways issues and have been addressed above. However, some issues are addressed below.

Concern has been raised regarding the impact on the village centre and its historic character. However, the site is far enough away not to be visible from the village centre. Traffic may stop off in the village but this would be a temporary arrangement and would not have a long term harmful impact upon the village or Conservation Area.

Concern has been raised regarding the loss of farmland, but the site is currently used as paddocks.

Concern is raised to the pollution from additional car fumes as a result of this proposal. However, this is not significant enough to create a statutory nuisance, and is certainly no reason to object to the application.

Concern has been raised regarding odour from the ablutions block, litter, vermin on the site and BBQ smoke. However, these matters would affect other holiday visitors on the site to their detriment if left unmanaged. These matters are therefore self-governing and will be controlled by the managers of the site.

Third party concern has been raised regarding crime and compromised security for local residents as a direct result of the proposed use. However, there is nothing to suggest such a use has a significant impact on crime.

Third party concern has been raised regarding the impact on the depreciation of the value of surrounding residential properties. However, this is not a matter able to be considered as part of the planning process.

Suggestions have been made that the scale and intensity of the site could be reduced by offering fewer, larger pitches. Some third parties have no objection to a camp site in principle but oppose the size of the one proposed. Whilst these comments are noted, this is not the application being proposed and consideration needs to be given to the details of this particular development proposal.

Suggestions have been made to provide a mini bus to bring people into the village. However, this is not essential to the granting of a consent. The applicant however, states that they will maintain the public footpath across their land so that it is fit for wheelchairs and pushchairs to use. They also intend to ensure that notice boards are incorporated around the site and 'information leaflets' given to every camper to explain how they can access the village by using the site footpath gate, walking down the farm track past Snettisham Park and onto the public footpath. Therefore campers would not need to access the site via Bircham Road.

Suggestions have been made that more pods should be incorporated into the scheme to avoid touring caravans using the road network. Whilst this is noted, this is not part of the application currently under consideration.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the principle of the use of the stable building, livery and paddocks for a camping and caravanning site generally accords with the provisions of planning policy at a national and local level. The site is partially screened and planting is proposed to be enhanced as part of the proposal. With improved planting it is considered that the development could be undertaken without significant harm to the wider landscape character of the area in general.

The proposed use of this site is for a significant number of touring caravans and will have implications on the local road network. After consideration the Highways Authority raises no objection on highway safety grounds, subject to the imposition of conditions relating to highway improvement works, parking and turning etc.

Subject to planning conditions, the proposal raises no significant neighbour amenity issues.

The proposal raises no flood risk issues, ecology or landscaping issues.

Accordingly, it is considered that the development proposal accords with the provisions of national and local planning policy and for this reason it can be supported subject to the following conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.

- 2 Condition The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:-
- Drawing SPC001, Rev B, Site Location Plan, Scale 1:2500
 - Drawing SPC002, Rev B, Site Layout Plan, Scale 1:100
 - Drawing SPC004, Rev B, Amenity Block, Proposed Plans & Elevations, Scale 1:100
 - Drawing SPC005, Rev B, Amenity Block, Existing & Proposed Roof Plans, Scale 1:100
 - Drawing SPC006, Rev B, Proposed Drainage Layout, Scale 1:500
 - Drawing SPC009, Rev A, Proposed Landscape Plan, Scale 1:100
 - Drawing POD – 02, 2.01, Camping Pod, Front Elevation, Scale 1:20
 - Drawing POD – 02, 2.02, Camping Pod, Side Elevation, Scale 1:20
 - Drawing POD – 02, 2.03, Camping Pod, Rear Elevation, Scale 1:20
 - Drawing POD – 02, 1.05, Camping Pod, Roof Layout, Scale 1:20
- 2 Reason For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details shown on drawing no SPC009 Rev A. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation or use of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The hedgerow to the boundary of the site shall be allowed to grow to a height of at least 2m in height. Any trees or plants that within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species as those originally planted, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation.
- 3 Reason To ensure that the work is carried out within a reasonable period in accordance with the NPPF.
- 4 Condition The foul and surface water drainage scheme shown on drawing SPC006 Rev B shall be implemented and ready for use prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved.
- 4 Reason In order to minimise the risk of flooding in accordance with the NPPF.
- 5 Condition Notwithstanding the details indicated on the submitted drawings no works shall commence on site unless otherwise agreed in writing until a detailed scheme for off-site highway improvement works to widen part of Bircham Road have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.
- 5 Reason To ensure highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and to protect the environment of the local highway corridor.
- 6 Condition Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the off-site highway improvement works referred to in condition 5 of this condition shall be completed to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.
- 6 Reason To ensure that the highway network is adequate to cater for the development proposed.

- 7 Condition No development above foundation level shall take place on site until a scheme to protect the nearby residents from noise has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved before the development is brought into use.
- 7 Reason To ensure that the amenities of future occupants are safeguarded in accordance with the NPPF.
- 8 Condition Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, a detailed outdoor lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the type of lights, the orientation/angle of the luminaries, the spacing and height of the lighting columns, the extent/levels of illumination over the site and on adjacent land and the measures to contain light within the curtilage of the site. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with approved scheme and thereafter maintained and retained as agreed.
- 8 Reason In the interests of minimising light pollution and to safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 9 Condition No more than 24 touring caravans or motorhomes and 61 tents (including camping pods) shall be stationed on the site at any one time.
- 9 Reason To ensure that the use of the site and the occupation of the accommodation is restricted to holiday use since permanent occupation is inappropriate in this location in accordance with the NPPF.
- 10 Condition This permission relates to the use of the site for holiday use only and holiday accommodation shall not be used as permanent residences at any time. No caravan shall remain on site for more than 28 days, be fixed to a hard standing or drain, or be stationed for the purposes of letting.
- 10 Reason To ensure that the use of the site and the occupation of the caravan(s) is restricted to holiday use since permanent occupation is inappropriate in this location in accordance with the NPPF.
- 11 Condition The owners/operators of the site shall maintain an up-to-date register of lettings/occupation and shall make this available at all reasonable times to the local planning authority.
- 11 Reason To ensure that the use of the site and the occupation of the caravan(s) is restricted to holiday use since permanent occupation is inappropriate in this location in accordance with the NPPF.
- 12 Condition The development shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the Ecology Report unless provided for in any other conditions attached to this planning permission.
- 12 Reason In the interests of the amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.