

Ellastone Parish Council
Comments on P/2021/00999 : Ecology report 7 July 2022

This application was originally made on 20 July 2021 for the siting of five holiday cabins and Ellastone Parish Council made strong and detailed objections in our response of October 2021. We were then sent a **Planning Statement Addendum** dated 8 February 2022. We replied on 22 March 2022 that this showed more detail of the proposals it went no way towards addressing our concerns about the various negative effects of this proposal on the village.

We have now to comment on an **Ecology Report** of 7 July 2022.

It states: *“Under the current proposals, the land is proposed to be developed with the construction of five glamping pods along with an access road. These works will result in both the permanent and temporary loss and/or alteration of some of the habitats located on the proposed re-development site.”*

And proposes:

“Site Enhancements: For the proposed site enhancements, please see section 5.4 of this report.”

This is simply an ecological report on the site and makes no changes to the plans, though it suggests a number of “enhancements” that could be incorporated into the site, were it developed, to enhance wildlife and biodiversity. These are just suggestions from the authors of the report, nothing is compulsory. This in no way addresses our previously stated concerns about this proposal but simply makes suggestions which could appear to be positive aspects of the proposal to balance the many negatives, One of the caveats at the end of the report seem to go some way to invalidating its contents:

The survey results purport the current status of the site and its potential for protected species utilisation at the time of surveying. It should not be viewed as a complete list of the possible flora and fauna species that could be using the site at different times of the year. So what is the use of the report if it admits that it is not a complete survey?

The suggestion to improve the biodiversity of the site include a pond or ponds, a “wild meadow area”, bat boxes, bird boxes, hedgehog boxes, bee boxes and bug hotels. Most of these in themselves are admirable suggestions, but we would object to the suggestion of wildlife ponds on the site. Though they may well be a positive from an ecological point of view, this is not a feature that would naturally occur on this site, which is devoid of watercourses. Aesthetically they would make the site into an artificial wildlife garden further “suburbanising” the area, going against the aims of the Ellastone Conservation area to conserve the *“rich variation in types of buildings, trees, **open spaces** form an important part of the national hertiage.”* where *“any additional development should be concentrated within minor building groups and avoid infilling between isolated buildings. The latter course would destroy the informality and openness characteristic of Ellastone and create ribbons of development.”*

The Parish Council have studied this new survey but we must say that though it contains much of interest and good suggestions from an ecological perspective, it does nothing to allay our grave concerns about the suitability of this site for this type of development.

We still firmly believe that this proposal contains absolutely no benefits for the village (except for possible extra business for the Duncombe Arms, which we do not object to) and does nothing to counter the very many problems we have already outlined in our previous objections

Specifically, there is no mention in this Ecological Survey of noise pollution – a significant factor in the protection of the wildlife habitat. It can be expected that vehicular movement, late night “festive” activities and general site use will significantly impact upon local wildlife in a much wider area than just the location itself

Furthermore, we still do not know how many people the pods can sleep. the drawings of the interiors looks like up to 4 so 1-2 cars per pod. We would like this answered as only one place is allotted to each pod and Parish Hall car park is not available overnight or when the Parish Hall being used for an event.

There is poor access to public transport, though there are hourly buses during the day there is no evening service, the last bus towards Uttoxeter leaves at 17.27 The last bus towards Ashbourne leaves at 18.16 and no service to return, so encouraging the use of private cars in the evenings, with a negative environmental impact.

Surprisingly there is no mention of the nearest and most popular tourist attraction. Alton Towers Resort is only just over 3 miles away and is not served by public transport from the site, meaning more use of private cars, again a negative environmental impact.

The Tennis Court and the Bowling Green immediately adjacent to the site are only available to members of those clubs and would not be an amenity available to visitors.

We still believe that this site in the heart of the village is entirely inappropriate for this development, which would not be of benefit to the village and would have so many negative effects that we sincerely hope that permission will be refused.