

Appeal by Laver Leisure for the Moneystone development Reserved matters application
SMD/2019/0646. Ref APP/B3438/W/24/3344014

Summary of the Kingsley Parish Council position.

Kingsley Parish Council (KPC) completely agree with the decision by the Planning Application Committee decision of 26.10.2023 to refuse this application.

The reasons given for refusal are only part of the many objections raised by KPC on behalf of its Whiston parishioners and other residents of the Churnet Valley since this development first saw light as a part of the Churnet Valley Masterplan (CVMP). All our letters of objection can be found on the Planning Application Details for the various Moneystone applications:

-SMD/2014/0682 Outline Application which was refused.

-SMD/2016/0378 Outline Application which was granted despite, in our opinion, a clearly understated traffic and environmental impact in an unsuitable and unsustainable location, and in the face of the Council declared Climate Change Emergency.

-SMD/2019/0646 Reserved Matters, again refused.

The main thrust of our desire to see this appeal refused is that having been ignored at the consultation stage the development would at least be of a high quality with an installation and its visitors in harmony with the natural environment. In fact the portrayal of the lodges in the CVMP was reasonably sympathetic.

Picture 7.5 Moneystone Quarry Artist Impression of part of Zone 2



On this basis the various applications were brought forward culminating in the Outline approval given for SMD/2016/0378.

It is not until the first reserved application SMD/2019/0464 that the real intentions of the appellant are revealed. The lodges are not properly built structures in a scenic setting but rows of lightly disguised caravans. All we have are artist's impressions which if true would be completely out of place and a true blot on the landscape.



So we come to the decision notice of the PAC on the 26th October 2023

It is considered that the proposed lodges, which are little more than caravans with cladding, fail to deliver the required high standard of design. Owing to the proposed materials and lack of any green roofs, lack of creativity and detailing the lodges could not be said to be of an appropriate high quality nor do they add value to the local area.

They have not been designed to respect this sensitive site or its surroundings, noting that it is in part adjacent to the Whiston Eaves SSSI

For these reasons the proposal fails to comply with Policies SS1, SS11, DC1 and E4 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework including but not limited to Chapters 12 which says that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and Chapter 15 which says that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other matters recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and minimising impacts on biodiversity.

KPC does not consider that cosmetic changes are sufficient and that the appellant should reconsider the whole approach to the development.

Substance of KPC objections.

KPC originally believed that a development of some 50 ecologically designed and built attractive lodges set in landscaped surroundings were the maximum that should be allowed. These would be for countryside and nature loving visitors who would enjoy and respect the Churnet Valley.

It became obvious in 2014 with the publication by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) of their **Core Strategy (CS) and Churnet Valley Masterplan (CVMP)** that the wishes of local people were to be ignored. This despite a public consultation which overwhelmingly rejected the developments proposed.

Firstly in the CVMP we find the consultation exercise:

3 Consultation

3.0.1 *The Churnet Valley Masterplan has been the subject of extensive consultation and community engagement which has informed its vision, principles and final option. In autumn 2010, a leaflet was produced to raise awareness that the Masterplan was to be produced which was made available at the Leek and Cheadle One-Stop Shops and the Leek Tourist Information*

Centre. A letter and leaflet were sent to each parish council clerk in October 2010 to inform them of work being undertaken to produce a masterplan for the Churnet Valley.

3.0.2 In October/ November 2010, a planning officer was in attendance at each of the four Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership roadshow events to raise awareness about the Masterplan and the key stages in production of the document. These events provided an early opportunity to inform the public of forthcoming masterplan work, and to add the contact details of those who expressed an interest in being informed of future consultation on the Masterplan to the Council's consultation database. There were 20 requests to be added to the consultation database. An officer attended a further CVLLP event at Cauldon Lowe Village Hall on the 8 June 2011 in order to answer any questions on the Churnet Valley Masterplan.

3.0.3 The Council was successful, through the Rural Masterplanning Fund, in receiving support through a CABE appointed enabler to undertake visioning work. A major visioning event took place on the 4th March 2011 at Consall Hall Gardens which all local Parish Councils, specific organisations and businesses were invited to attend. The purpose of the event was to explore issues and challenges relating to the Churnet Valley and to establish a vision and key principles for the Masterplan. A feedback event followed on the 15th March 2011 at the Nicholson Museum and Art Gallery.

3.0.4 The Council received Rural Masterplanning Fund support to develop a draft Masterplan for Bolton Copperworks.

3.0.5 During summer 2011, a number of 'Community Conversation' events were held in villages across the Churnet Valley. These were widely publicised and open to local residents to attend. Whilst these were held principally to inform the LDF on future site allocations, the opportunity was also taken at each of these events to request comments from those present on issues relating to the Churnet Valley relevant to their area and the presentation which was given covered the purpose and timetable for producing the Masterplan and how local residents could get involved.

3.0.6 The Council consulted on the Churnet Valley Masterplan Options for a six week period from the 16th January to the 24th February 2012. Letters and emails notifying Parish Councils, organisations and those on the LDF database of contacts were sent. There was a Council press release on the 5th January 2012 and a reminder press release prior to the consultation ending. Posters were put up in the Churnet Valley area detailing the consultation events and how to find out more information about the Churnet Valley Masterplan Options consultation. The event venues were also asked to display the posters in advance of the events. Flyers were produced which were made available in public libraries and One-stop shops and Leek Tourist Information. Requests were made to visitor attractions to display the flyers at their venue. The Council's twitter account was used to raise awareness of the options consultation and to provide reminders about the events.

3.0.7 At the options consultation events exhibition boards were displayed summarising the options consultation, summary booklets were distributed, officers attended the events and copies of the relevant consultation documentation was available. In response to their request, the Churnet Valley Conservation Society was provided with space to display their material at the events.

3.0.8 There were 226 responses to the consultation plus one received much later. There were some 3695 individual comments. The summary of comments can be viewed on the Council's website - Summary of Main Issues from Options Consultation - the full comments are on the Council's LDF consultation portal. These responses have informed the production of the Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan. Further details of the consultation can be found in the Churnet Valley Masterplan Consultation Statement.

3.0.9 The responses to the consultation raised a number of important issues, concerns and opportunities which officers have given careful consideration to. Officers have had further meetings with English Heritage, Staffordshire County Council, Moorlands and City Railway, North Staffs Railway, Caldron and Uttoxeter Canals Trust, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Churnet Valley Conservation Society, the Landmark Trust and Foxt Action Group to discuss further issues relating to transport, biodiversity and heritage and additional work needed which have also informed the Draft Masterplan.

3.0.10 In winter/ spring 2013, officers met with various organisations, voluntary groups and developers to discuss the Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan. Meetings also took place around specific topic areas such as biodiversity, heritage and transport. This targeted consultation has been used to inform the refined Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan.

3.0.11 There were over 270 individual representations to the Draft Masterplan statutory public consultation. A number of modifications have been made to the Masterplan in response to these representations. These are detailed in the Consultation Statement (March 2014).

To understand the responses we must delve into the **CVMP Consultation Statement of March 2014** within which it becomes obvious how the consultation was a tick box exercise and that SMDC were going ahead regardless:

4 How comments have influenced the Masterplan

4.1 *The comments made at options stage and through the key issues meetings have been used to inform the Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan. The Churnet Valley Masterplan Summary of Main Issues from Options Consultation sets out the main issues raised to the options consultation and this has been used to inform the production of the Draft Masterplan. There were 226 respondents to the consultation and 3695 separate comments plus one representation received much later. The detailed comments made on each of the options and the preferences and alternative suggestions have been used to develop the Draft Masterplan approach of 'Balanced Development'. **The majority of respondents supported Minimal Change followed by none of the options put forward.** The reason why the 'Balanced Development' has been taken forward is the range of benefits it has including economic, it is not just about protecting the natural environment however this approach focuses development to key locations which can best accommodate change and allows only minimal change in other parts in order to protect sensitive areas. The balanced approach supports existing businesses. The detailed comments on each of the sections of the document including the sustainable tourism, masterplan principles, vision and, challenges and opportunities sections have been used to refine the relevant sections of the Draft Masterplan. The opportunities are identified in the Draft Masterplan rather than projects. There are a significant number of opportunities identified ranging from the very small to major schemes.*

Our understanding of 'balanced development' is that SMDC would just do what they intended despite public rejection.

The first test of reality was the application SMD/2014/0682 for which the decision notice stated the following reasons for refusal:

*Mr Jon Suckley HOW Planning LLP Peter Street
United Kingdom M2 5GP
C/O Agent*

Application no: SMD/2014/0682

Determined on: 2nd December 2015

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(England) Order 2015

REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION Location of Development:

Moneystone Quarry Whiston Eaves Lane Whiston Staffordshire ST10 2DZ

Description of Development:

*Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except access for the erection of a **high quality leisure development comprising holiday lodges**; a new central hub building (providing swimming pool, restaurant, bowling alley, spa, gym, informal screen/cinema room, children's soft play area, café, climbing wall and shop); café; visitor centre; administration building; maintenance building; archery centre; water sports centre; equipped play and adventure play areas; multi-sports area; car parking, and managed footpaths and cycleways set in attractive landscaping and ecological enhancements.*

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in pursuance of powers under the above mentioned Act hereby REFUSE to permit the development described above in accordance with plans ref:

PL1088.M.106 Rev 3, PL1088.M.110 Rev 3, PL1088.M.113 rev 2, PL 1088.M004 Rev 02, PB 1608-SK001 Rev B, PB1608-SK004 Rev E, for the reason(s) specified below:-

1. Notwithstanding the fact that this site is identified in the Churnet Valley Masterplan as an Opportunity Site for a high quality leisure venue with a maximum of 250 lodges, the Masterplan is clear in the Concept Statement for the Moneystone Quarry Opportunity Site at paragraph 7.6.5 that development needs to be of a scale which does not undermine the tranquillity and character of this sensitive part of the Churnet Valley. Policy DC 3 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document requires the Council to protect and, where possible, enhance the local landscape. Policy SS7 refers specifically to development within the Churnet Valley and, whilst it provides support for visitor accommodation and the provision of new tourist attractions and facilities, it requires them to be both compatible with the area and to be of a scale and nature which conserves and enhances the landscape. It further confirms that consideration of landscape protection will be paramount in all development proposals.

It is considered that within the area identified as Multi Activity Hub area on the submitted Parameters Plan the intensity of activity, the extent of built development (see indicative Schedule of Accommodation) and height of buildings (up to 12m in parts) would result in a development that was visually intrusive, particularly from the public footpath which runs directly to the west of this part of the site and in wider views from Eaves Lane to the north and from public footpaths to the west and east. It would fail to respond to and respect this small scale landscape which the Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment confirms to be particularly sensitive to change. Similarly the area identified as Black Plantation occupies an elevated location, visually and physically isolated from the remainder of the proposed development. In this location and notwithstanding the submitted Woodland Approach Notes setting out a proposed phasing approach to development within this woodland, it is considered that there is potential for development to be readily visible near the skyline in near and more distant views to the south. As such the proposal is in conflict with Policies DC3 and SS7 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document, the Adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes.

2. The traffic generated from the proposed leisure development comprising up to 250 holiday lodges together with traffic generated from day visitors to the proposed leisure facilities would result in a significant increase in the amount of traffic accessing the surrounding rural road network and particularly Eaves Lane/ Carr Bank to the east of the site access which would provide a direct route from the development to Alton Towers and Farley Lane which links Oakamoor and Farley. It is considered that the increase in traffic would lead to unacceptable congestion on these narrow country roads. Carr Bank, for example is largely single track with limited passing places and a steep gradient as the road enters the village of Oakamoor. Although there is an offer to agree a signage scheme, an intention to run a shuttle bus to Alton Towers as part of a Travel Plan to be secured by way of planning obligation and improve the A52/Whiston Eaves junction, these measures would not prevent guests using the aforementioned rural routes. Furthermore guests from Black Plantation will be heavily reliant upon the car to access all facilities within the Hub area via the wider rural highway network given that it is physically detached and remote from the main venue with no pedestrian connectivity provided due to the change in levels in this area. It is for these reasons that it is considered that traffic from the proposal will not be satisfactorily accommodated on the highway network and that the proposal fails to provide and /or encourage satisfactorily the use of sustainable travel modes contrary to Policy T1 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

3. The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the setting of Little Eaves Farm, a Grade II Listed building which lies to the west of the site. There will be direct views from this heritage asset to the south/south east into the Multi Activity Hub Area owing to gaps in existing planting. Although it may be possible to provide landscaping within this area to filter views, the exact siting of the buildings, their form, mass and design is unknown. The existence of overhead power lines crossing into the site will compromise the ability to provide effective screening and in any event planting will take many years to establish. In the wider landscape there would be views of the heritage asset particularly from Whiston Eaves Lane, from the public footpath which runs

through the site and from the site itself. In these views the asset would be read in conjunction with the proposed development which would erode the agricultural hinterland in which the asset is experienced. The close proximity of the asset to the central Multi Activity Hub Area would also result in loss of tranquillity and seclusion, elements which also make a positive contribution to the significance of the asset. Considerable weight has been given to the harm that would be caused to the heritage asset as required by section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 when carrying out that exercise. The harm is judged to be less than substantial in terms of paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework but it is not considered that the public benefits arising from the proposal outweigh the harm. As such there is conflict with Policy DC 2 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document which seeks to safeguard and where possible enhance the historic environment.

4. Overall, the benefits of this leisure scheme when considered together would not be sufficient in this case to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm identified above contrary to Policies DC2, DC3, SS7 and T1 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document; the Adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD and the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework)

Informatives

It is considered that the proposals are unsustainable and do not conform with the provisions of the NPPF.

From our point of view so far so good, however step onwards to the next application SMD/2016/0378 which had only minor modifications which improved the impact on the nearby listed building, moved a small number lodges and reduced the height of the hub building. This was inexplicably approved by the then PAC who did not reaffirm the still completely valid objections in sections 1 and 2, and summarised in 4 above. Only part of the approval notice is shown below:

*Mr Jon Suckley HOW Planning LLP Peter Street
United Kingdom M2 5GP*

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

GRANT OF OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION

This permission does not carry any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, bylaw, order or regulation (e.g. in relation to Building Regulations or the Diversion of Footpaths etc) other than Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

Location of Development:

Moneystone Quarry Cheadle Road Oakamoor Staffordshire ST10 2DZ

Description of Development:

*Outline application with some matters reserved for the erection of a **high quality leisure development comprising holiday lodges**; a new central hub building (providing swimming pool, restaurant, bowling alley, spa, gym, informal screen/cinema room, children's soft play area, cafe, shop and sports hall); cafe; visitor centre with farm shop; administration building; maintenance building; archery centre; watersports centre; equipped play areas; multi-sports area; ropewalks; car parking; and managed footpaths, cycleways and bridleways set in attractive landscaping and ecological enhancements (re-submission of Planning Application SMD/2014/0682)*

In pursuance of their power under the above mentioned Act, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Planning Authority, HEREBY GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION for the works described above subject to the following condition(s):

1. No phase of the development (as approved under Condition 5) except for works of site clearance and demolition hereby permitted shall be commenced until full details of the:

- a) Layout;*
- b) Scale;*
- c) Appearance, and*
- d) Landscaping;*

(hereinafter called “the reserved matters”) for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:- The application is an outline application under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure)England Order 2015 and no particulars have been submitted with respect to the matters reserved in this permission (excepting access).

The reasons for refusal of the first outline application relating to traffic and the overall negative impact were simply not addressed in the this second application. The local residents had also commissioned traffic studies by Paul Mew Associates which rebutted the assertions of the studies carried on behalf of the Applicant.

Notice, nonetheless, that at all times we are led to believe that this is to be a **high quality leisure development comprising holiday lodges.**

Coming to the first Reserved Matters application SMD/2019/0646 in the enormous volume of documents can be found the following in the Design and Access Statement Part 2 of 06/11/2019

8.0 ACCOMMODATION

All of the accommodation is within Lodges, which will fall under the Caravan Sites Act 1968 and all will be factory built and transported to site by road on a low loader. This Act dictates fundamental aspects of the shape and size of the Lodges.

All of the accommodation is to be solely for holiday use and approximately 60% will be Hire Fleet and 40% Sales, albeit the final mix will be determined by market requirements. Please refer to Chapter 6 of the Supporting Planning Statement which addresses this in great detail. The hire fleet units will be sited and operational to enable the park to open for holidays and the areas where these units are sited will be fully completed with decking and landscaping. Upon completion of the development works the sales plots will be left as concrete slabs and the lodges will be sited when purchased by individual owners. Due to the fact that they will need to be wheeled/craned into place it is not feasible to carry out all landscaping works around the plots until all of the local works associated with the actual siting have been completed. The timescale for this will be dictated by the sales process.

It should also be noted that as the lodges are manufactured units, exact internal layouts and window positions will vary depending upon the products that individual manufacturers are producing at any particular time. However, the external appearance and cladding materials, window/doorframe colours and roof finish etc can be dictated.

9.0 LODGE FORM AND FINISHES

All Lodges will comply with the definition of a caravan as set out within the Mobile Homes Act 2013 (Published 2015).

9.1 DEFINITION OF A CARAVAN

Appendix 2 of this act confirms the ‘Definition of a Caravan’ as set out below:

Appendix 2 – Definition of a caravan

Section 29 of Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960:

“caravan” means any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted, but does not include—

- (a) any railway rolling stock which is for the time being on rails forming part of a railway system, or*
- (b) any tent;*

Caravan Sites Act 1968 Section 13 – definition of twin unit caravans as amended by the Caravan Sites Act 1968 and Social Landlords (Permissible Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2006 (Definition of Caravan) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006

- (1) A structure designed or adapted for human habitation which—*
 - (a) is composed of not more than two sections separately constructed and designed to be assembled on a site by means of bolts, clamps or other devices; and*
 - (b) is, when assembled, physically capable of being moved by road from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer), shall not be treated as not being (or as not having been) a caravan within the meaning of Part 1 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 by reason only that it cannot lawfully be so moved on a highway when assembled.*
- (2) For the purposes of Part 1 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, the expression “caravan” shall not include a structure designed or adapted for human habitation which falls within paragraphs (a) and (b) of the foregoing subsection if its dimensions when assembled exceed any of the following limits, namely—*
 - (a) length (exclusive of any drawbar): 65.616 feet (20 metres);*
 - (b) width: 22.309 feet 6.8 metres);*
 - (c) overall height of living accommodation (measured internally from the floor at the lowest level to the ceiling at the highest level): 10.006 feet (3.05 metres).*
- (3) The [Secretary of State] may by order made by statutory instrument after consultation with such persons or bodies as appear to him to be concerned substitute for any figure mentioned in subsection (2) of this section such other figure as may be specified in the order.*

KPC’s position is that language and precise definition are important so caravans are not lodges and cannot be transformed into the promised **high quality leisure development** by cosmetic means. The appeal should not be granted on that basis alone.

However it also appears that the appellant has fundamentally moved too far outside the Outline Approval on other matters for the appeal on this Reserved Matter to be granted. In the Design and Access Statement quoted above can be seen:

All of the accommodation is to be solely for holiday use and approximately 60% will be Hire Fleet and 40% Sales, albeit the final mix will be determined by market requirements. Please refer to Chapter 6 of the Supporting Planning Statement which addresses this in great detail.

This is a significant deviation from the 20% for sale indicated in the Outline Applications, it invalidates the traffic studies and the potential staffing levels indicated by the applicant. These and other relevant matters were all covered in the speeches made to the PAC on the 26th October 2023. The essence of the speeches of the six speakers against the application are:

Councillor Mike Worthington – County Councillor

Councillors

Let's deal first with the freedom you have to refuse this application despite the fact that it is the reserved matters for a previously granted outline proposal. There are many precedents in English Planning including High Court judgements where reserved matters have been refused. The Planning Officer is at great pains to convince you that everything to do with access has been dealt with at outline. This is not true, there are too many material changes between the outline and these reserved matters.

We must start by looking at the history of this proposal. It first saw public light of day with the publication of the Churnet Valley Masterplan and the Core Strategy back in 2014. The thinking and indeed Laver Leisure's involvement in this go back to 2010. The world has changed since then...it's encouraging to see the current Administration of SMDC talking about updating the Local Plan. In a fast moving world we should not be basing our actions on long outdated ideas.

When the first Moneystone application SMD/2014/0682 came to this Committee it was quite correctly refused for several reasons summarised by this quote from the decision notice:
Overall, the benefits of this leisure scheme when considered together would not be sufficient in this case to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm identified above contrary to Policies DC2, DC3, SS7 and T1 of the Adopted Core Strategy; the Adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is considered that the proposals are unsustainable and do not conform with the provisions of the NPPF.

Strangely when the application reappeared as SMD/2016/0378 the major issue of unacceptable traffic impact T1 was no longer considered as a reason for refusal and with only minor tweaks to other matters this was given outline approval by the PAC on the 26th October 2019.

Meanwhile the residents of Whiston had commissioned an independent traffic report by Paul Mews Associates which pointed to heavier traffic flows and greater danger on the highway network than the applicant's assertions.

I ask you to consider these arguments again because the applicant has made significant changes in the functioning of the development as now presented compared to the outline:

-the 190 "lodges" are being placed at higher density in only two Quarry zones instead of 250 units well spaced out in three zones.

-there is no development in Quarry 2.

-the extra lodges in Quarry 3 are to be placed on ground of uncertain stability.

-the "lodges" turn out to be caravans.

-the number of units to be sold has increased from 20% up to probably 60% and possibly more which invalidates all the assumptions about the hub facilities, the traffic flows and the potential employment used to justify the outline.

You will hear more detail on these arguments and reasons for refusal inherent in the application before you. Please vote resoundingly to refuse this monstrous intrusion into the beautiful Churnet Valley.

Mr David Walters – On behalf of the Churnet Valley Conservation Society

Mr Chairman and councillors.

I want to talk about change as today you have the unenviable task of changing the lower Churnet valley for ever.

So many things have changed since this scheme's inception 15 years ago that even now you can change your mind for the right reasons....and save the Churnet Valley from a drastic change... for the worse.

Some things however, have not changed at all ; the same outright public opposition; over 1, 200 objections have been lodged on file, based on cogent and rational arguments compared with a mere half dozen or so in favour.

The same problematic road network ... same sole reliance on cars to access the site.

But one very important thing that this council did change was its decision over the access to the site itself, for in 2016 having passed the outline plans on condition of no right turn restriction at the exit from the site.....

it then changed its mind and refused the full application for that very same plan.

This means that condition 23 of the outline permission cannot be discharged and in effect there is no permitted access to the site.

As all three applications depend upon that access, that changes everything you will hear today.

And what else has changed? well lots, this plan before you differs in so many ways from the original luxury, center parks type scheme that was promised.

Too many lodges squeezed into too small an area, less hub facilities, the visibility issues of the hub building and its impact nearby listed buildings; insufficient screening and protecting the ancient woodlands; too much tarmac for internal roads and parking; light pollution and noise, all of which amounts to an intensive urbanising of what was supposed to be a greenfield restoration ,with quote 'sensitively spaced lodges in an idyllic woodland setting.'

There is now no longer a need for all those lodges . the Churnet valley has plentiful of supply of sites especially at Alton Towers 2 miles away where hundreds of them have been installed over the past ten years

Councillors, you must also remember Moneystone was always intended to be a dry floor, sand quarry but now Quarry 3 is now flooded to a depth of 30 metres and quarry 2 leaks contamination into it; ground water rebound and quicksands testify to an overall instability within it..

Government guidance states that safety and stability are planning matters that have to concern you.

These plans show a 60 plus lodge settlement located at water level, in a steep sided, soft sandstone quarry pit full of deep cold water that can kill even the best swimmers within minutes. Is that a risk this authority is prepared to allow?

Finally above all else please don't forget the biggest change looming large, is climate change.

So yes, we will all have to change our plans if we want a better futureand for this valley and its AONB status let's start now by refusing this application as it stands....or if you know your Bible parable , sinks.

Thank you.

Councillor Linda Malyon – Ward Councillor (on behalf of Councillor Fallows)

Thank you Mr Chairman and fellow councillors.

My concerns are about safety issues arising from the design and layout of this site.

With more lodges squeezed into only two areas within the site, unlike the original plan granted by the outline permission, and more for sale rather than to let, this scheme will rapidly become a huge residential settlement with an almost permanent population larger than the combined population of nearby villages, but with no doctors or additional medical facilities on site, thus stretching local resources.

But it is the nature of the site itself that is most alarming me . it is a quarry a massive silica sand quarry with lots of steep sides and an uncharted reservoir over 20 metres deep.

Silica sand particles are the second most killer after asbestos world wide .

Great concerns should be raised about the dangers of that quarry lake and the family lodges with balconies standing just inches above the water.

We have all heard of numerous accidental drownings in the cold waters of quarries lakes. Nationally we are continually told of the dangers of such places where cold water shock can kill in minutes even the best swimmers, and urged to avoid them.

Yet here there will be instant access, literally on the doorstep.

Also too areas of the quarry are clearly marked with signs warning of quicksand. Scrambling to get out of the water with steep drops below the surface would be a nightmare.

This quarry has never been inspected or approved by the Health and Safety Executive, the national body that oversees quarry safety, since it closed 12 years ago.

It is riddled with contamination from industrial tips and tailings are still seeping into quarry 3 from quarry 2 which the owners have not cleaned up.

Is it the sort of place you'd want your children to roam and be naturally inquisitive?

Imagine the fire risk in such a deep quarry heavily surrounded by woodland in a valley which has already suffered two major forest fires, the most recent of which took a week to control. Even a small fire amid hundreds of wooden lodges squeezed together in such a confined area, could quickly spread out of control with tragic results.

This site is remote and accessible only via narrow lanes.

When, and not if, there is an emergency, how easy will it be for emergency services to respond given the topography?

This site's only access route is fraught with natural hazards such as the dangers of Whiston bank on the A52, with its unsafe junction with Whiston Eaves Lane, and the 1 in 5 single track road that winds up Carr Bank from Oakamoor.

Road traffic accidents regularly occur in this area because of Alton Towers. These accidents cause issues of congestion and access that inevitably delay emergency services' arrival.

The tragic example of the Smiler Ride crash at Alton Towers when attending emergencies services took an extra half an hour to arrive because of the roads and traffic congestion, should be remembered.

And when the emergency services are called in ... Ipstones and Cheadle ambulance etc etc

Cllr Tony Loynes – On behalf of Oakamoor Parish Council

Members of the Planning Committee,
OPC would like to begin by challenging the concept of this being a "high quality leisure scheme" as per the Outline application.

- Media releases at that time made comparisons with Centre Parcs and the Bluestone Resort in Pembrokeshire.
- Both of these do have high quality lodges and extremely restricted vehicular access.
- What we have in this reserved matters application is caravans disguised as lodges, crammed together to achieve maximum density, with Quarry 1 now having over 50% more lodges than in the Outline application and parking at every lodge
- OPC would argue that, based on the lodge structures proposed, and their layout, a "high quality leisure scheme" is never going to happen.

Another area of concern is the development around Q3, which the Masterplan identified as an area for limited sensitive development.

- 68 lodges in this area, with the majority located at the water's edge, is neither limited nor sensitive.
- It certainly does not correspond with the DAS vision of "pockets of lodges nestled into the landscape" and because all lodges now have parking spaces, there is a road running around the entire area.
- Additionally, In order to accommodate this road, a bridge is proposed which the Planning Officer describes as "an unfortunate addition to the layout" that "owing to its very size, span and purpose will be a substantial engineered structure".
- As a result, we really cannot see how the design for Q3 can be considered limited or sensitive.

Finally, we're sure you will agree that, as a prerequisite, a development of this enormity, requires a competent and trustworthy developer. In the 7 years since Outline approval, OPC feel the applicant has demonstrated neither! I'll share a few examples of their approach:

- With the exception of a hastily prepared recent leaflet, dialogue with Parish Councils and local residents has been entirely absent.
- Site safety has been ignored with collapsed perimeter dry stone walls and fencing not repaired and danger warning signage allowed to disintegrate.
- Despite agreeing to provide annual reports on the restoration of the Quarry, the applicant has not provided one since 2016.
- No licence fees or safety checks have been paid for by the applicant as owners of the reservoir in quarry 3, instead, in a bid to avoid culpability, its engineering agents, destroyed the existing safety overflow system by an unauthorised excavation of the bund contrary to the wishes or permission of the Environment Agency's reservoir enforcement team.
- In 2016 SCC had to issue a stopping order to prevent illicit dumping of waste in Q2 by the applicants' agents.
- The applicant has permitted the illegal use of the quarry buildings as premises for an unauthorised scrap metal business despite continuous threats of enforcement by SCC.

I would ask you all please bear these examples and the points previously raised, in mind when considering this application.

Thank you

Cllr James Aberley – Ward Councillor

Colleagues, every one of you here will know that representing people in your ward means that you take up and get involved in the biggest issues that affect the area. Since I was elected in 2019, the issue of Moneystone Quarry has filled my inbox every single week with the volume of concern from residents through the adjacent Churnet villages of Whiston, Oakamoor, Kingsley, Caudon Low and of course Moneystone itself.

The fact that this is one of the longest running, most complicated and expensive planning applications that this council has ever determined will already give you an idea about why the decision that you make today will affect generations of people who live in the Churnet Valley.

The case officer has of course told you that everything has been determined in the outline application and this is just going over the detail but it is not the case. Other speakers have been clear about where people who are far more expert than myself, have gone through these files with a fine tooth comb, and have long campaigned to stop this development blighting the churnet valley landscape , have identified discrepancies between the original application and the detail that is being put forwards to you today.

The fact that the planning officers recommendation cites no less than 25 conditions covering issues around safety, and construction, mitigation of environmental issues and many other things suggests that even determining the application is very much pass the buck to someone else to make sure everything works out fine.

Every Cllr who has had anything to do with SMDC for any amount of time will know very well that planning enforcement is a total joke and ineffectual at best, so I would ask you with all conscience would you trust that these planning conditions will be appropriately supervised, and monitored. Some of them are long term actions and the resourcing at SMDC is not capable of effective monitoring, or are we expecting to allow the developer to mark it's own homework and just tell the council things are all good.

This site has exception circumstances in geological, environmental, safety and sustainability concerns and I am very concerned that simply throwing a load of conditions at this hoping it'll be ok is passing blame and more about getting the application off the system than having real care for what is being passed here.

In my time as district councillor I am yet to meet a resident of my ward that when the development is explained to them, supports this. The impact on the residents of a potentially fully owned park home development on our doorstep that has the potential to be larger than either of the adjacent villages is huge. If this was a planning application for permanent homes of this quantity, layout and size at the same location it wouldn't even get near a committee as it would be thrown out as being inappropriate development in green belt, yet this is exactly what the case officers are asking you today to approve.

Please respect the Churnet Valley, it's unique position in the Staffordshire Moorlands, it's residents, and the fact that this application is wholly inappropriate in size, scale, layout, safety and appropriateness for where it is.

Thank you

Cllr John Steele – On behalf of Kingsley Parish Council

Councillors

If this application had been any good it would not have taken 4years to get from validation to determination. A Senior Planning Officer has laboured even longer than that with the applicant to assemble a possible planning balance recommending approval, but with a myriad of conditions, some of which are most unlikely to be respected and even less likely to be enforced.

Now I will add the voice of Kingsley Parish Council and its Whiston parishioners. This development will dwarf the Whiston Ward in its size and frequentation. It is out of scale and out of place in this rural location. The Planning Officer is at great pains to try to limit your deliberations to reserved matters only. She claims that the question of access has been decided. It has not been, because the applicant, as you have heard, has stepped outside the matters approved in the outline. This allows you to achieve a different planning balance and reject the application because:

-the increase of the lodges for sale demolishes the alleged employment numbers and creates new and different traffic flows. The applicant has not updated the traffic survey. In the case files you will find a more up to date expert report by Paul Mews Associates commissioned by Whiston residents. It states that the proposed junctions do not meet the regulatory safety requirements and that the traffic impact in the outline proposal was significantly understated.

This application does not actually set out the detail as required in reserved matters:

-this is allegedly a "high quality" leisure development but we find that the lodges are not the tasteful and varied solid structures implied in the outline, and previous publicity. They are, in fact, pretty much identical caravans, on wheels, variously bolted together. The caravans are more densely packed than previously shown with a negative impact on ecology.

-the hub facility appears quite inadequate part new and part squeezed into the old laboratory buildings.

-the use of substantial quantities of imported materials may yet be alleged necessary to stabilise large areas. Remember the unlawful dumping that immediately followed the approval of the outline application in 2016.

-unresolved safety issues are a material planning matter.

Finally consider that:

-this application depends upon the Churnet Valley Masterplan. A document which was approved in March 2014 but the plans within it for Moneystone Quarry were being evolved a decade ago. A lot has changed in 10 years. Not the least our appreciation of the threat of climate change and the need for action. Councillors, quite simply, this proposal is out of date and out of touch with the reality of today and the future. It is contrary to the Adopted Local Plan Spatial Objectives 2, 8, 9 and 11 together with its Policies SS1, SS11, DC1, DC3 and T1.

The applicant has expended time and money to get this far, but it is time to scale back this monster and consider more ecologically and nature friendly alternatives.

Say no; but let us ask Laver Leisure to rethink their plans and come back with something that will attract smaller numbers of true countryside admirers, or indeed come up with other less intensive uses for the quarry and then to implement the majority of the agreed restoration plan.

Other elements of great concern are:

1. Neither the appellant nor SMDC have fully taken into account the Wardle Armstrong report on Quarry 3 safety and stability where it refers to the creation of roadways, lodge emplacements and bridge construction on the made up part of the quarry bund, and on the lack of proper investigation of stability in Quarry 1.

4.2 Key Considerations not within the scope of the Peer Review

4.2.1 The site visit has identified a number of key considerations outside the scope of this report which are relevant to the proposed development, and which are recommended for further investigation and consideration. These are summarised below:

- *Regulations*

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From an initial review, the proposed development would not be subject to the requirements of the Quarry Regulations 1999, however while the construction and earthworks plan is being designed the relevant health and safety and environmental regulations for the site need to be adhered to.

The applicability of the Mining Waste Directive and associated permitting to the proposed materials movement should also be considered.

- *Infrastructure*

o There is insufficient geotechnical data to design a bridge to cross between the southern and western lower benches.

o There is limited available information on the proposed foundation design for the lodges that extend over the lake water, where pile foundations are considered the interaction with the slope would need to be considered.

- *Access:*

o The constructability of the proposed access roads, including the delivery of construction materials to build the new roads.

o The design of proposed road structure including edge protection bunds, requires sufficient road width, passing places and turning circles.

- *Q1:*

o Prior to development on tailings and infilled lagoons, sufficient

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geotechnical investigation and risk assessments should be carried out.

o Settlement calculations should be carried out for the proposed structures and utilities and demonstrate minimal and tolerable settlement performance.

o Considerable earthworks are required for the proposed development of Q1. From the three documents reviewed there is insufficient evidence of settlement assessments and the associated conclusions in respect of ground movement.

<http://publicaccess.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/AttachmentShowServlet?ImageName=303427>

2.KPC also take issue with elements of the appellant's documentation

Appendix 11: Assessment Against Third Party Comments

Public Responses

11.1 The table below summarises public reasons for objection to the Planning Application and the Appellant's response:

KPC. Recycled Materials Concerns over the nature and quantity of the recycled building materials which will be brought to site. Specifically, concerns are that the site may become a waste disposal operation that is detrimental to the environment.

Appellant. The lodges will be constructed off site and transported to site on a low loader. This method of construction has sustainability benefits when compared to on site construction.

This answer first of all makes an unquantified assertion on sustainability, but far more importantly ignores KPC's concerns about waste importation.

These concerns arise from the fact that the day after gaining approval for the outline approval SMD/2016/0378 on 15.09.2016 the appellant began an unlawful dumping operation in Quarries 1&2. This continued over a number of days with materials of diverse and unidentified nature coming from a number sources until stopped by Staffordshire County Council and the Environment Agency. Some materials were delivered in tipper wagons but others in closed roller bed wagons.

In this respect if the appeal were to be allowed then KPC would ask for a condition specifically forbidding importation of materials to the site. The applicant has indicated that sufficient materials should be found on site for landscaping and general groundworks.

Conclusion

The appeal should be dismissed.