

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019

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Ref: Great Lakes UK Ltd – Application Ref: 19/02550/F

*The attempted rape of the British Countryside.* An objection to this application.

A) Having followed the development of the Local Plan over the past 15 years or so, it is disturbing to note the large number of opportunist applications that are being submitted for projects in and around Bicester that fall well outside the current Local Plan. Many of these proposals seek to take advantage of perceived easy access to facilities via the M40 motorway, the A34, the A41, the A43 the A421 and the A4095. This application is the worst of all.

The land for this proposal is served by the A 4095 road that is no more than a widened country lane linking a string of villages between Bicester and Witney. At the time Vendee Drive was constructed the A4095 was recommended for downgrading, to the extent that a new sign was erected at the junction with Bignell View with that road labelled as B4095.

All the other local roads are unclassified, most essentially 'one track with passing places' or no passing places other than a muddy roadside verge. These roads are totally unsuitable for any increase of traffic for the Bicester Sports Association let alone for a 'development' of the size proposed by Great Lakes (Great Wolf).

In the Bicester Advertiser of 6<sup>th</sup> December (2019) there were reports of four accidents on the A34, the A41 and M40 over a three-day period. One on the A34 had a fatality. In addition to the distress caused to the people and relatives concerned, all these accidents gave rise to long delays for other traffic. Accidents on these roads are more common now than a few years ago, reflecting the dangerous increase in the traffic in this area. This frequency of accidents on the main cross-country feeder roads negates, entirely, the assertion that visitors will find access to the waterpark easy.

People living in Little Chesterton are aware of the vast increase in traffic at holiday times, especially in the week between Christmas and New Year. Despite the Park and Ride for Bicester Village, tail back on the A41 means that traffic is diverted by satellite navigation along the Little Chesterton lane. One hundred cars in twenty minutes have been counted. This is unsustainable, destroying the wellbeing of the people living in the hamlet.

B) There is a comment in the non-technical section that 'The Site is located within an area that is able to easily transmit pollution to groundwater.' This is a damning statement. It is not clear how the applicants propose to prevent this type of pollution. We manage a small conservation area downstream from the site. There are numerous springs feeding a pond with fish in it and so we are very concerned.

The system of land drains and drainage ditches run out from the golf club, passing through the Bicester Sports Association land and join to pass under an arable field in a drainage pipe. This pipe opens at the upper end of land we own in Little Chesterton. Now a stream, the water flows through Little Chesterton to join, at right-angles, a stream from Simms Farm that goes on to flow through Wendlebury. Eventually it joins the Langford Brook (downstream of where the Gagle Brook joins the Langford Brook).

The comment 'There is no flood risk from the Gagle Brook watercourse reported in Environment Agency's flood maps or local authority flood maps to the Site' is correct for the simple reason that the site is not in the same catchment area as the Gagle Brook. Furthermore, the use of the name Gagle Brook in several parts of the application is very misleading for the same reason.

There can be little doubt that the 'hard' surfaces of the hotel, carpark and other facilities would increase the volume of storm water flowing down the stream through Little Chesterton and so cause flash floods there and, more importantly, more intense flooding in Wendlebury.

C) In the summary of the comments from Natural England is the statement: No Objection. This refers only to the fact that there is no SSSI or other statutory protected site nearby and to nothing else. It is normal practice to include the final section on Environmental Enhancement. Removing several ponds and creating one new one is scarcely an enhancement!

D) In an appendix, dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019, to the 'Gov.UK Guidance Light Pollution 6 March 2014,' following on from the 'Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's 2009 report, Artificial light in the environment' there is the question:.

***'Is a proposal likely to have a significant impact on a protected site or species? This could be a particular concern where forms of artificial light with a potentially high impact on wildlife and ecosystems (e.g. white or ultraviolet light) are being proposed close to protected sites, sensitive wildlife receptors or areas, including where the light is likely to shine on water where bats feed.'***

There are two fundamental reasons why this question is relevant to the application being proposed.

1) Golf courses are unusual habitats for plants and animals because of the high standard of management. This maintenance is cyclical, following the seasons, so that the different areas experience a continuum of treatments from year to year. As a result, there are undisturbed habitats in some parts of the course and what is effectively a stable maintenance in other parts. The plants and animals quickly become adapted to the change or stasis of habitat. As a result, a golf course is a *de facto* conservation area with its own biodiversity. The 'rough' areas of golf courses are the foraging areas for small mammals and so good hunting areas for owls.

The golf course under consideration has received a good quality of maintenance. This is a sensitive area because implementation of this proposal would destroy an important refuge for animals and plants.

2) Golf is a game that is not normally played in the dark. Today, the amount of stray light in the immediate area is so trivial that it is easy to study the heavens on cloudless nights. This shows that the area has effectively no light pollution. It is well known that the positioning, duration, type of light source and level of lighting are all factors that can affect the impact of light on wildlife. All animals and plants have evolved in a world of regular alternation of daylight and dark nights. It is no wonder that disruption of this cycle affects both animals and plants detrimentally.

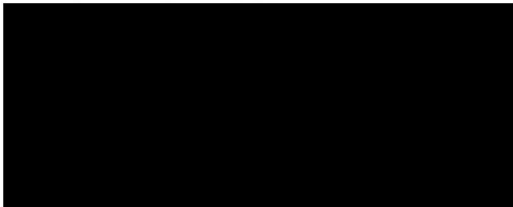
For security reasons, the water park and the associated car parks would be illuminated all night. This change in the diurnal fluctuation of light and dark will affect large numbers of animals and plants, including known protected species in the land between the A4095 and Little Chesterton.

From the surveys for this application, the from one for the Bicester Sports Association and direct observation by people owning land in Little Chesterton we can list the protected species known in the area: barn owls and other owls, badgers, pole cats, seven bat species, at least eight bird species on the Red List, grass snakes, great crested newts and several hairstreak butterflies.

See also the article: 'The dark side of light: how artificial lighting is harming the natural world. Nature 553, 268-270 16 January 2018'.

For the above reasons, I strongly urge that planning permission NOT be granted for this application.

Yours faithfully,



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(print)

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