

Dear Ms Daniels,

We are writing with reference to the Fishing Lakes planning application, your reference 24/00375/F. This is now closed for further comments, but new information has been found which may well influence your decision.

At our parish council meeting on Wednesday 21 March, we were advised by George Reynolds that we could only object to the application on the meritorious basis of the application alone and not on the probity and reputation of the applicants themselves. More of this later but we believe the following drastically alters the planning application we were asked to consider. The additional information that has been discovered relates to the slide show presentation that accompanied the application. Attached are screenshots taken from the annexed master plan to the Site Access Appraisal document. When the presentation is in slide show mode, there is an extra shot which shows extended holdings and what looks like a large house/ hotel/ restaurant. When the presentation is static, it reverts back to the original proposal as follows:

15 lodges
8 huts
60 space car park and
1 management complex.

When the presentation is moving through the slide show, it shows:

Circa 48 lodges
23 huts
Circa 120 space car park
1 management complex and
1 large building with no obviously assigned purpose but of a size that could be a hotel/ house/ restaurant.

Had we known this was the intended extent of the plan, Sherington with Alkerton Parish Council should have strongly urged you to reject this plan within the time allocated for responses to the application. We believe if you give consent to develop, the company will seek to increase the building on the site to the detriment of the ecology to the area.

Commented [RO1]: Would?

We also believe that you should also consider the purposes of such an application. We are not aware that this is an ecology group or environmental improvement organisation; this is a married couple pursuing a business opportunity, presumably in the same way they have pursued other business opportunities which the police are now investigating.

While we accept it is not for us to judge the merits of a business plan, but rather the effects of that plan on the local area, it is difficult to see how the original proposal would make the business profitable. This is important should the plan get consent because the business needs to survive. The original numbers are small. The secondary numbers make more sense in terms of profitability. We would not wish for the uproar of development for it then to be abandoned at a later date due to further development disputes.

This business needs fishermen (and women of course) through the doors to make the business a success. However, there is no information in the application about the likelihood of this venue being of any value to the fishing community.

The council should consider the numbers of people that such a development would involve, the implications on local resources (recently explored in depth during the Elan Homes planning application in Sherington and Alkerton,) and of course, the implications for the environment. In addition, this rural area will be subjected to noise pollution during an extensive build and the local residents of Horton will have to contend with light pollution after the build – intrusive light pollution if the secondary build numbers are instituted. We also have concerns regarding access to and from the A422.

The application is accompanied by an Environmental report which provides a list of species that may or may not be affected. The desk studies highlighted little in the way of the presence of species but then, given how often this land has been environmentally assessed, it was unlikely to. The field surveys highlighted the land, as is, provides suitable habitats for all common reptiles, and some less common including Great Crested Newts. There are otters in nearby Broughton, and it is hoped these will extend down the Sor subject to the cessation of the allowed, continued pollution of the Sor Brook. The site has suitable foraging habitat and shelter for hedgehog, foxes, common toads and brown hares. Given this is not an environmental project but a fishing business, we are concerned that the biodiversity of the area should be left undisturbed. There are no water courses on the site although plenty close by and we still have an ecosystem that thrives there. Drowning out huge parcels of land for fishing will limit the natural habitats of important native animals. Coupled with huts, lodges and visitors, this application has the potential to reduce the biodiversity and damage the current ecosystem for ever.

In addition, the application does not meet sustainability criteria as set out in Cherwell's own Sustainable Development proposals. For example, this application specifically contradicts Policy ECD 13 as it chooses to

radically alter the landscape with the addition of lakes instead of preserving the existing flora and fauna. We would also point out that this site is very close to an area of outstanding natural beauty and is adjacent to features listed in the council's Landscape Evidence Base which identifies specifically Hanwell, Wroxton, Broughton and the Sor Brook Valley as places with features of value. Some of these places would be impacted by traffic, noise and light pollution from this development.

We therefore ask you to reject this proposal on the grounds of the unknown damage this proposal would have on local biodiversity and also that it fails to meet many of your own requirements in your Sustainability Criteria.

You will no doubt be aware that the applicants also owned the legendary Crooked House which was burned down and are currently awaiting a decision on criminal prosecution. The applicants are also attached to the landfill site in Oxfordshire that went up in flames in Finmere. In addition, they recently gutted a pub against the wishes of the local residents. These are applicants who hit the headlines regularly, accused of ignoring authority, rules and regulations. We realise that no prosecutions have been made yet and that reputation should not be the only reason to reject an application. However, it speaks much of a council who chooses to let people with such awful reputations into their local communities when those communities and constituents have such grave concerns.

Should the council be minded to consider this application, we believe the least you should do is delay your decision until the CPS has decided on whether to prosecute the applicants. In any case, the application should not be considered at all until the comments of CDC's Ecology officer in terms of [biodiversity](#), Oxfordshire County Council's Transport department and the Thames Valley Police are fully addressed. This is a Full application and it is inappropriate that Preliminary Ecology Appraisals and incomplete planning proposals should be even submitted for the Committee's consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Barrett

Chairman, Shenington with Alkerton Parish Council