

Comment for planning application 21/00517/F

Application Number	21/00517/F
Location	Land Used For Motorcross Stratford Road A422 Wroxton OX15 6HX
Proposal	Creation of a motocross track and soft landscaping scheme and the change of use of agricultural land to hold moto-cross events including set-up, take down and private practice sessions, with associated camping site, for up to 65 days per year and agricultural grazing (retrospective)
Case Officer	George Smith
Organisation	
Name	Lynn Graham
Address	The Cottage, Church Lane, Hornton, Banbury, OX15 6BY
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour

Comments

If the councillors on Cherwell's planning committee were to approve this application in any way, they would be causing irreparable damage twice over. First - damage to the way of life the village of Hornton has enjoyed in the 31 years I have lived here and for many years before that. These plans would mean that the people of Hornton would never again be able to look forward confidently to quiet and peaceful leisure time because our environment would be spoiled by extraordinary levels of noise on almost every summer weekend. Second - damage to the democratic and accountable planning system that the members and officials of Cherwell District Council have a legal, political and moral duty to uphold. Since 2016, the promoter and owner of this track have brazenly defied that system - and the law - to build and operate a large sporting facility without a shred of planning permission. We have said it before - we are not NIMBYS in Hornton. Until the last few years, a track has existed on the site perfectly happily alongside this community. For a few weeks a year we would hear the sound of motocross bikes going round the track that was there but their high-pitched sound was not unbearable. We called them the "buzzy bees" because that's what they sounded like. Then, around 2016, things started to change. The "buzzy bees" were replaced by something more like "Brands Hatch". The noise from the track on days when the wind is blowing in the wrong direction - towards us - is so loud that, on one occasion last summer, when we had invited old friends over for lunch in the garden, we had to retreat inside our house, close the windows and put the stereo on at high volume in an attempt to drown out the cacophony of engine noise. It is difficult to overestimate how intrusive it was. What has changed? The track and the events taking place have changed - and out of all recognition. The unobtrusive track across a grass field, used a few times a year quite legally, has been replaced by another track. This one has been landscaped by stealth - unlawfully and without any planning permission - into one of the biggest, steepest and noisiest MotoX tracks in Britain. It now attracts hundreds of riders and spectators - not just from this country but from all over Europe. And the bikes they ride have changed too. The extraordinary noise comes from the fact, as I understand it, that they now ride mainly four-stroke machines, which sound much louder farther away. With many more bikes and louder engines, it's hardly surprising that it's become "hell on wheels" for us. So, in effect, the motocross equivalent of a corner shop has been replaced by a giant supermarket - completely unlawfully. I, along with the other residents of Hornton, are surprised and dismayed that Cherwell District Council have seen fit not to stop this transformation from small local track to major national/international sporting facility taking place. After all, that's what the planning system is there for. But now is the time for the council and their officials to step up to the plate and enforce the law: this track is legally entitled to race for 14 days a year and spend another 14 days reinstating the land so that it can be used for agriculture between meetings. We want the track to be returned to the condition it should be in between meetings - and the track owner and promoter be compelled to reinstate the site as it used to be. And while they are about it, they should also be compelled to stop unlawfully taking water from the water course, reinstate the stream so that it flows properly and take away all the rubbish that it has piled up on the site in skips. If they do all of that, we can go back to being good neighbours once again. The one thing we do not want is some sort of compromise in which they get more than the 14 days' racing/14 days' clear-up they are allowed under permitted development rules. No one who has flown in the face of the law should be rewarded for such behaviour. In addition, as they have spent the last four or five years completely ignoring the rules, so what makes anyone think they'll stick to them if the council attaches conditions to any retrospective planning permission? No: the people who

have made money over the past few years operating a major sporting facility unlawfully should not be rewarded in that way. They should be required to operate Wroxton Motocross Track in the way they have done so for a decade or so before the last four or five years - for 14+14 days a year - and Cherwell District Council should immediately take enforcement action against them the moment they break the law in future and operate outside those strict parameters. The people of Hornton and everyone else in earshot have had enough. Please reject this application. Yours faithfully, Lynn Graham

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Attachments