

HORNTON PARISH COUNCIL

28 April 2021

Ref 21/00517/F – Wroxton Motocross Track

'Land Used For Motorcross Stratford Road A422 Wroxton OX15 6HX '

John Offord, chair of Hornton Parish Council:

*“This is the biggest planning issue we have faced:
it threatens to blight our homes and our countryside for decades.”*

Now that the consultation is closing, Hornton Parish Council wish to highlight some key aspects of the portal submissions made in reaction to landowner Mrs Kerwood's retrospective application to retain and further expand her unlawful Wroxton Motocross track.

This vast commercial circuit has scaled up since 2017 – transforming from a small, local facility into a top-rated UK motocross venue, often hired out to both distant large clubs and major events. It is on agricultural land, fed by the Sor Brook, in rolling countryside, adjoining an AONB and next to a Conservation Area village, and **protected** by Cherwell District Council (CDC) in the Local Plan to 2040.

Around **200 local objections** to the application are live on the portal. Here are the key points:

- The objections represent hundreds of residents in villages including Hornton, Horley, Wroxton, Balscote, Upton, Shenington, Alkerton, Ratley and Bloxham. Some writers used the track years ago when it was a local family venue. Many have lived locally for decades – or even generations.
- **Three** nearby Parish Councils have objected – Wroxton & Balscote, Hornton (at length and in detail) and Shenington with Alkerton.
- The individual objections – many drawing on relevant professional expertise – highlight crucial **Planning principles** as well as fundamental factual omissions, inaccuracies and contradictions in the application. They cite issues including:
 - recent **major expansion and intensification**, without planning permission or other permits;
 - intolerable **noise nuisance**;
 - **harm** to local businesses and homeowners
 - **environmental and wildlife damage in a protected rural area**;
 - major **traffic and highway hazards** on narrow approach lanes;
 - air, water and litter **pollution**;
 - land contamination.

- The local branch of the Countryside Charity, CPRE, and Upton Estate have fully backed these concerns. CPRE deplore the potential for CDC to undermine its own stated need to protect this area of the tranquil Ironstone Downs. They say: “We have seldom seen a planning application that so **blatantly disregards local interests and local opinion.**”

- There is a handful of letters supporting the application. These writers say they are 'neighbours' but, with one exception, live far away: for example, Stow-on-the-Wold (22 miles), Birmingham (37 miles), Buckingham (24 miles), Hereford (66 miles) and Henley (54 miles). They cite limiting of illegal road and footpath riding and outdoor sport for youngsters as prime benefits of retaining this permanent track in this form. Some dismiss local concerns and harms already inflicted. Many of these distant supporters' short submissions bear a remarkable resemblance to each other, in wording and length.

- Furthermore, Leisure and Land Drainage are among CDC department consultees to raise serious objections, including **environmental damage** and **the lack of demonstrable local need**.

In summary, there is an overwhelming case for refusing this application, to endorse vital Planning principles and defend the local population and countryside. We regard this as a landmark case in upholding the meaningful efficacy of our Cherwell Local Plan, with its strong and clear focus on protecting identified precious rural landscapes.