

4 June 2021

21/00517/F: Wroxton Motocross - Re. Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities Comments on behalf of Hornton Parish Council

Of all the applicant's attempts to apply a logical, justifiable argument to Wroxton Motocross track - and its bid to legitimise and further scale up its unlawful commercial expansion – this one is, possibly, the most incredible. In customary Wroxton MX fashion, the applicant's agent, Mr Plant, has bulldozed his way through constructive policies (ie. Cherwell Green Spaces and NPPF Healthy and Safe Communities) and twisted them to bolster the landowner's argument.

It is not valid to cite national and district policy and then argue that motocross riders have the right to get their 'health' kicks – regardless of the safety, health and well-being harms inflicted on the community they invade.

Site area

- The site has NOT been a motocross site for over 40 years – it started off as a small field scramble track for local families. We all tolerated it on that basis. Now it's transformed out of all recognition.
- '60' days is mentioned: other submissions quote 65 days. Another inconsistency.
- As we have often pointed out, and the aerial picture used shows, there is no way this dirt track can be used for grazing – and it is not, even though this is legally-designated agricultural land. NB. Much of the grazing land in the photo does not even belong to the applicant.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

Yes, it's great fun for the riders – with hundreds of van-loads of their kit and followers – who travel from all over and pay to brave the giant contours of this re-engineered circuit. But these are, predominantly, not Banburyshire people. The circuit is mainly hired out to outside clubs and event-holders. They are 'meetings between people who might otherwise not come into contact with each other' because they are people from all over the country, even during the Covid period. These riders travel the UK, and beyond, to compete in the top events and test their skills. Since 2016/17 the scaled-up Wroxton track is very much part of their regular circuit map. Even additional local Banbury MX Club meetings attract riders from miles away and then are opened up to paying participants from all over the country.

Re Paragraphs 92 and 96 of the NPPF: the provision of recreational and sports places is for LOCAL authorities for LOCAL communities. And there is absolutely no policy that says you can do this at the same time as desecrating the countryside, causing an intolerable noise nuisance, causing very unsafe highway hazards and congestion and destroying residential amenity. This is why Cherwell District Council's own Recreation & Leisure officer says: "We would like to see further evidence which demonstrates that the provision meets local needs." Also: "There is a lack of supporting evidence as to whether the proposed increased usage of the site addresses existing deficiencies in provision."

And consider too the health and safety of community small businesses within a mile or two of the track. They have written in to say none of them have benefited (contrary to the track's vacuous claims) and that some of them are actually harmed by the track – notably the Indian Queen restaurant where there has been repeated violent and rude behaviour by track users, scaring off local loyal customers who feel unsafe as a result. They also suffer a dreadful noise nuisance.

Also in terms of 'safety', we have detailed elsewhere the many hazards and blockages created on the A422 and the narrow, winding approach lanes for drivers, walkers, horse riders and cyclists. And the dangers to the public footpath next to the track.

The open space we enjoy in our Ironstone Downs community is the wonderful countryside in which we have chosen to live and spend our leisure time, many of us for decades and generations. We care about the health and safety of the wildlife, of the land and its watercourse. We care about fossil fuel fumes and noise created by 600 vans travelling here and by the bikes as they race round the circuit.

That's why there are going on for 300 objection letters on the portal. That's why four parish councils have objected, representing their communities. That's why the Cherwell branch of CPRE, the Countryside Charity, has objected so strongly, several times, on our behalf.

Our local community values its healthy and safety in enjoying this protected rural area – and we value the policies put in place to sustain this freedom.

Hornton Parish Council