



Committee and date
South Planning Committee
10 January 2017

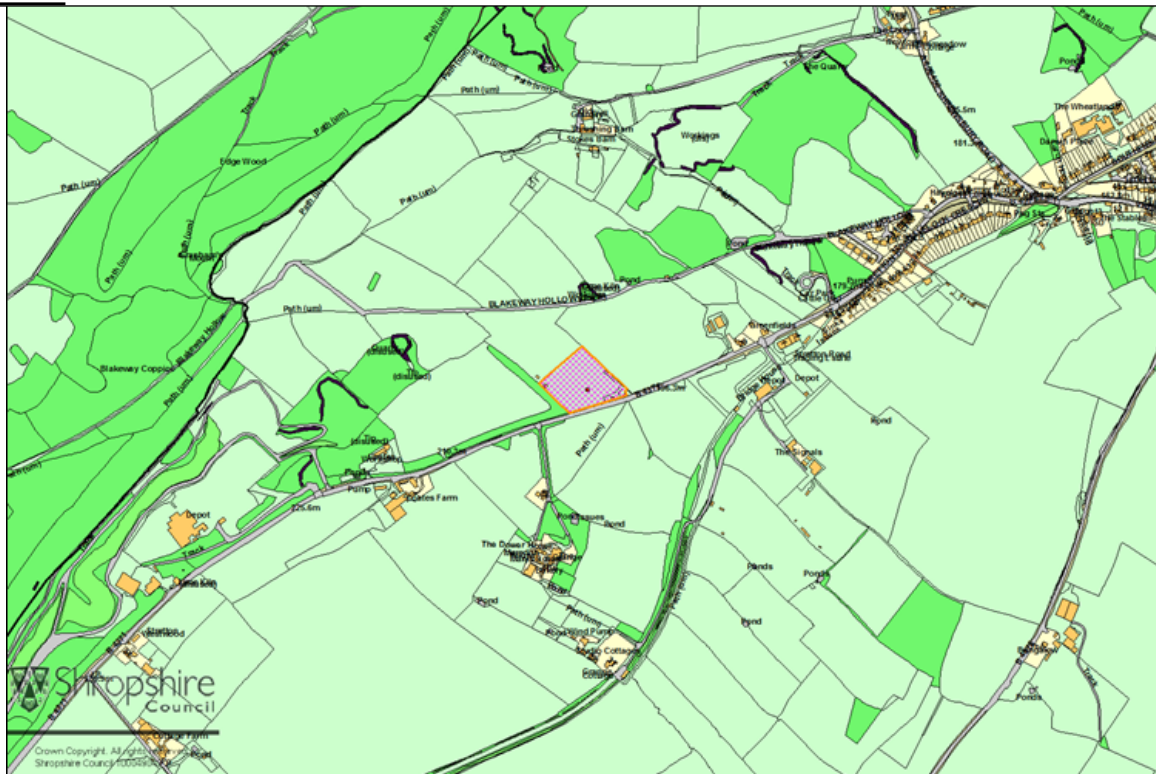
Development Management Report

Responsible Officer: Tim Rogers
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Summary of Application

Application Number: 16/03878/FUL	Parish:	Much Wenlock
Proposal: Change of use of land to campsite to include improved access, erection of multi purpose building and siting of 4no Shepherds Huts		
Site Address: Withies Campsite Stretton Road Much Wenlock Shropshire		
Applicant: Ms Carol Burrage		
Case Officer: Elizabeth Attwood	email: planningdmse@shropshire.gov.uk	

Grid Ref: 360915 - 299459



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Contact: Tim Rogers (01743) 258773

Recommendation:- Grant Planning Permission, subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.

REPORT

1.0 THE PROPOSAL

1.1 The proposal comprises a change of use from a Certified caravanning and camping site to a campsite (for 5 touring caravans and 20 tents) to be limited to 20 pitches including 4 shepherd huts and no more than 5 vans at any one time.

- the creation of an improved access and closure of existing access
- the siting of four shepherd huts and retention of small raised decking area

the siting of a multipurpose facilities and storage building to accommodate, three toilets, two solar showers, undercover wash-up area, campsite and agricultural stores.

1.1.2 The site operates as a ‘back to basics’ experience and there is no electric hook-up or hard standing pitches or marked out areas. The applicant has advised that there is no intention to steer away from the ‘natural’ pitches, and would be happy to accept conditions limiting both the number of vans to five, as per their existing certification and the use of the site for tents and campervans only or a restriction on the size or weight of vehicles utilising the site in order to give the local planning authority control of the physical scale and visual impact of the proposals.

1.1.3 The proposal also limits the total number of pitches to 20 including the four shepherd huts in order to alleviate objector concerns of over intensification. After taking the facilities building and access areas into consideration, the agent has advised that this equates to a density of less than 9 pitches per acre or 450m² per pitch.

1.1.4 The existing vehicular access will be closed off and the ground made up and a new native hedge will be planted to match the existing boundary treatment.

1.1.5 A new vehicular access is proposed which would be located in a central position along the southern boundary facing Stretton Road. The existing hedge will be trimmed or set back to provide an unobstructed view between the visibility splay line and the edge of the carriageway. The visibility splay down the road towards Much Wenlock will be 2.4m x 105.0m and up the road towards Church Stretton will be 2.4m x 143.6m.

1.1.6 The shepherd huts are a traditional design on steel wheels and would be sited against the existing tree lined western boundary. They would be 5.5m x 2.4m and comprises a living area with double bed and a covered porch area with wooden guard rails. The materials are Juniper Green tin sheet cladding with a domed tin sheet roof and wooden windows and door. Entry is via set of wooden steps. Each unit would have a parking area to the side and there will be privacy panels between

each hut. The western most hut (which is already on site) has a wooden decking area.

1.1.7 The multi purpose building would be 5.2m (w) x 16.4m (l) and 3m to the ridge. It would provide 65m² of floor space and comprises a timber frame on a concrete base. The walls would be natural timber shiplap cladding and the roof would be Juniper Green box profile sheeting with clear box profile roof lights above the toilets and showers. There will be 2 x100w black coloured roofed mounted solar panels on the rear (roadside) roof elevation. Internally the building will comprise left to right (east to west);

- 3 toilet cubicles and 2 hand wash basins
- Campsite store room
- Agricultural store to provide secure storage for site equipment, implements and machinery utilised in the management and maintenance of the site and
- 2 shower cubicles

Off the western gable there will be a covered washing up area.

1.1.8 This is a resubmission of 16/00521/FUL which was for the erection of multipurpose building; siting of 4no Shepherds Huts and a composting toilet cabin. The application was withdrawn due to highway safety issues as it sought to utilise the existing access.

2.0 SITE LOCATION/DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site lies at the eastern end of the Wenlock Edge, and is located on the northern side of the B4371 Stretton Road approximately 260m from the built up area of Much Wenlock and approximately 0.7mile from the High Street.

2.1.2 The site comprises a 2.31 acre field which currently benefits from an Exemption Licence from the Freedom Camping Club which permits the land to be used for caravanning (5 units) and camping for up to 20 tents. The site slopes up from Stretton Road. The site is separated from a larger 3.45 acre field (also owned by the applicant) which rises away more steeply to the north west by a post and wire fence. There is a timber field shelter in the bottom left hand corner of this field.

2.1.3 The boundaries comprises mature hedging and trees, and is surrounded by agricultural land. The site is open countryside but falls outside the Shropshire Hills AONB, Much Wenlock conservation area and Wenlock Edge SSSI.

2.1.4 There is a significant area of National Trust woodland lying approximately 400 metres to the north-west with an area of small, historic limestone quarries to the north-east and larger, more recently abandoned quarries to the south-west. A small number of residential and commercial properties lie within approximately 300m of the site to the south and east.

3.0 REASON FOR COMMITTEE DETERMINATION OF APPLICATION

- 3.1 The Local Member has requested that the application is decided by Planning Committee. The Parish Council objects to the proposal. There are numerous representations both in support and objecting to the proposal. The Principal Planning Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee, has agreed that the application should be decided by Committee.

4.0 Community Representations

-Consultee Comments

- 4.1 Much Wenlock Town Council – Object:
Do not agree with the change of use to a campsite because the site is unsuitable. They consider that the proposals do not accord with Objective 2, Policy EJ7 in conserving the quality of the parish's built and natural environment as outlined in the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Wenlock. Neither do the proposals conform with the Neighbourhood Plan's Objective 4, Traffic Management, because the current site access is already dangerous and the proposed access will be even more dangerous.

Furthermore, the proposals require the applicant to remove a large stretch of hedgerow which is against Objective 8, Policy LL2 in the Neighbourhood Plan. The applicants are dependent on footway access through Blakeway Hollow which is not practical because it is an ancient track with a very uneven rocky surface made worse in wet weather and, therefore, tourists would use the roadway into town as an alternative route where there is no footpath for the first 200 yards, and is on the opposite side of the road, which would necessitate a dangerous crossing for pedestrians.

The multi-purpose building is out of scale. There should be no buildings on the site and immediate enforcement action should be taken to restore the site to its original use as grazing land.

Approval of this application will set an unacceptable precedent in a beautiful and natural environment at Wenlock Edge.

- 4.2 SC Highways Development Control – No Objection – subject to the development being carried out in accordance with the approved details and the following conditions and informatives.

Observations/Comments:

The site is the field nearest the road at the Withies Campsite which is diagonally opposite the Grange to the west of Much Wenlock on the Stretton Road (B4371). Stretton Road is a two lane rural road governed by a 60mph speed limit and the speed of the traffic is commensurate with this limit.

It is already a certified site for the Camping and Caravanning Club and the proposal is to change this to a permanent campsite with shepherds huts (four) and a

purpose built office and facilities building with the possibility of upping the number of touring vans from 5 to 20.

The current access is to be removed and a new access is proposed toward the western end of the field which, when the visibility splay has been introduced will offer a better view than the one available at the existing access. The visibility splay must be commensurate with the 60mph speed limit of the road. Any gates used to secure the site must be set 15m back from the highway to allow for any vehicle to turn in and be completely off the road.

The field is on a gradient which slopes downward toward the road. The new access will need to include a gradient which is no more than 1:24 for the first 10m and no more than 1:10 thereafter with sealed hard standing for the first 10m.

The plan, Drawing No. 287-002 August 2016 shows a centre line on the driveway of the access which would indicate that the width of the access will be wide enough to allow for vehicles to enter and emerge at the same time, which, due to the 60mph speed limit of the road is required.

Conditions:

Gradient

The gradient of the access(s) from the highway carriageway shall not exceed 1 in 24 for a distance of 10m and thereafter the gradient of the drive shall not exceed 1 in 10.

Reason: To provide a safe access to the development in the interests of highway safety.

Gates

Any gates provided to close the proposed access shall be set a minimum distance of 15 metres from the carriageway edge and shall be made to open inwards only.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of access is provided in the interests of highway safety.

Informatives:

Mud on highway

The applicant is responsible for keeping the highway free from any mud or other material emanating from the application site or any works pertaining thereto.

No drainage to discharge to highway

Drainage arrangements shall be provided to ensure that surface water from the driveway and/or vehicular turning area does not discharge onto the public highway.

No drainage or effluent from the proposed development shall be allowed to discharge into any highway drain or over any part of the public highway.

Works on, within or abutting the public highway

This planning permission does not authorise the applicant to:

- construct any means of access over the publicly maintained highway (footway or verge) or
- carry out any works within the publicly maintained highway, or
- authorise the laying of private apparatus within the confines of the public highway including any a new utility connection, or
- undertaking the disturbance of ground or structures supporting or

abutting the publicly maintained highway

The applicant should in the first instance contact Shropshire Councils Street works team. This link provides further details

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/street-works/street-works-application-forms/>

Please note: Shropshire Council require at least 3 months' notice of the applicant's intention to commence any such works affecting the public highway so that the applicant can be provided with an appropriate licence, permit and/or approved specification for the works together and a list of approved contractors, as required.

- 4.3 SC Drainage request has no objections and suggests a condition in respect of surface water discharge and informatives in respect of sustainable drainage.
- 4.4 SC Ecology has no objections and recommends a condition in respect of any lighting on the site and informatives in respect of nesting wild birds.
- 4.5 Much Wenlock Civic Society – objects: Considers that the proposal causes disruption to the tranquillity of the area and is detrimental to the visual environment and highway safety. They consider that the proposal is contrary to Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan, the SC Core Strategy and the NPPF. They also wrongly consider that the camp site is operating without the necessary permission or professional accreditation.
- 4.6 National Trust – Object: the Trust owns, protects and provides public access to extensive areas of Wenlock Edge. They also own and operate a car park on the fringe of Much Wenlock. While the application site is not visible from land in the Trust's protective ownership it can be seen both from the B-road providing access to our car park and from Blakeway Hollow, the public bridleway that is a main access for walkers from Much Wenlock (and our car park) onto Wenlock Edge. We are concerned at the effect that the proposals to retain and add to permanent installations on the site, and alter its access, would have on the landscape and character of the area.

They welcome the proposals to retain and manage the top part of the site as a wild flower meadow. This would be in accordance with policy LL3. They recognise that shepherd's huts are, in general, less visually intrusive than touring caravans. However, the proposal is for the shepherd's huts to be additional to use of the site by up to 5 touring caravans/campervans at a time. They would also be stationed on the site all year round. This would mean that they would cause an increase and not a decrease in the landscape and visual impact of the site. The multi-purpose building and access would also be permanent, year-round features adding to the general change in the character of the site. The access improvements would entail removing 18m of hedge and creating a cutting through the verge and part of the field.

On balance they consider that the development does not conserve the quality of the parish's natural environment, the proposed structures and installations do not amount to high design quality and do not reflect local distinctiveness. The proposals would create a suburban character that is wholly inappropriate in this location. Given the conflict with the policies in the adopted neighbourhood plan,

they suggest that the application should be refused.

- 4.7 Bridgnorth Campaign for the protection of Rural England (CPRE) are neutral but would object if the highway Authority considered the access to be dangerous.

Public Comments

- 4.8 A site notice and 50 direct neighbour letters have publicised the application; 32 letters of support have been received. The issues raised are:

- What we love about this site is that the owners encourage a more natural approach to camping and therefore do everything they can to respect the environment - a message they send out and promote to all their visitors too. Regardless of the fact there are other campsites in the area, 'The Withies' provides a completely different experience whilst looking after and promoting the natural environment. It is an absolute asset to the community of Much Wenlock and we only wish there were more campsites like this in the country.
- Fantastic site decent pubs, shops, market, deli, butchers in Much Wenlock.
- We found the location ideal with children as the site was safe, clean and friendly. It was in easy reach to the footpaths which offered great walks to enjoy the local landscape and a safe route to walk with the children to Much Wenlock to enjoy the food and local shops. We had a lovely welcome at the Church and enjoyed tea and cakes with the parishioners.
- I have really enjoyed the eco-friendly ways of the Withies and am so impressed with how they manage their land with regards to the SSSI. The low carbon footprint associated with log fires and camping is something we must encourage more of during these challenging times of climate change and over use of natural resources and fossil fuels. The site is a fabulous asset to Much Wenlock and we should all encourage and support this greener way of life. I hope you allow the placing of these lovely huts as it can bring more visitors to the town who can enjoy walking in the countryside and walking and using the amenities at Much Wenlock.
- A clean well kept quiet site better Toilet facilities etc. is what this charming site is crying out for. It is Ideal for exploring all that Shropshire has to offer. We spend a fortune in the town of Much Wenlock in the market and shops etc. We have used The Withies several times this year and hope to make lots of visits in the future.
- A definite plus for Much Wenlock to encourage visitors to the area and relax in the quaint surroundings, sample local pub food, enjoy stunning walks and ride along breath taking bridleways.
- Much Wenlock is a tourist town and as a local business I fully support such sympathetic developments. I pass the existing site twice daily and admire its convenient position, close to the town centre in a great environment - any small scale development is to be applauded; the Town needs visitors and tourists alike - indeed they are the life blood of all businesses in Much Wenlock.
- The site looks very well kept and is an asset to Wenlock Edge.
- It was wonderful to be able to pitch where we wanted instead of in a regimented line...and we didn't find any trouble with access or egress at all.

- It is a very pleasant walk into Much Wenlock where you can buy unusual gifts, have a coffee and cake in a quaint cafe or a drink in a local hostelry. Personally, I'm totally mystified why there would be any objection to their plans. It seems to me that this small campsite only brings added value to the Much Wenlock being major tourist destination having been mentioned as the starting point for the modern Olympics, tourism must be wanted.
- In regard to the access the I might ask how many actual accidents have happened ever upon this stretch of road and that this road seems very much safer now there are no quarry lorries that used to thunder though and down this road in the past.
- The location of this low key, discreet campsite means affordable and easy access for me to this area of outstanding natural beauty, were I can walk along Wenlock Edge or into the lovely town of Much Wenlock were I have been able to enjoy its unique and individual shops and pubs and cafes during my stays.
- The walk in to Much Wenlock is safe for the children and the quiet, nature focus of the campsite is what brings us back. We love the local walks, which are easily accessed from the campsite without further use of vehicles.
- The Presthope site (Caravan Club) closes after this season as the lease owner has declined to renew the lease. This means that Much Wenlock and the surrounding towns will lose between around 40 to 60 visiting couples and families throughout most of the year.
- This type of campsite does not attract your usual lager-drinking, ice-cream licking brigade. It's aimed at families who wish to have an enriching experience in beautiful natural surroundings.
- We love the outdoor activities like den building which bring children away from mobile phones and puts them in touch with nature.
- It is a safe place for children to be free and play.

4.9 Twelve letters of objection have been received from eight people. The issues raised are;

- This is a modified application to one made some 7 months ago and to which I and others made strong objections. Those objections still stand. The access which now seems to be moved nearer the entrance of our drive still has very poor visibility. It is a 60 mph limit and the traffic comes down pretty quickly, including large lorries and motorbikes who would stand little chance of avoiding a serious collision with a vehicle exiting the proposed access way. The road is on a bend and the visibility is poor, even more so if the access is to be moved to where the current application is envisaged. Trees were planted on some of the adjoining land and if it proposed that some or all of them were to be cut down that would have a very detrimental effect on the area.
- There is a large amount of lorry traffic on that road particularly articulated trucks. Moreover I have come to the exit of my shared driveway to meet overtaking traffic whistling by there, literally inches away, driving at speeds well in excess of 60. That does not include the weekend motorbikes who speed down that road.
- The previous owners of The Grange was killed walking down Stretton

Road. For pedestrians that part of the road where both the current and proposed access will be, is exceedingly dangerous and in one case deadly.

- Just because a tractor uses Blakeway Hollow it, does not mean that it is suitable for other pedestrians. It is rocky, uneven and slippery. In my view not suitable as a regular access to the town. Most people will try to brave the tarmac road. There is no pavement and the inevitable passage of pedestrians to and from the site to Much Wenlock will pose danger to both them and vehicles, especially during the height of the tourist season.
- There are already facilities for touring caravans and campers in the vicinity.
- Wenlock Edge is an area of outstanding natural beauty. To consider granting permission on this site which will be seen by traffic travelling along the scenic route is ridiculous. It is akin to ribbon/strip development in a very sensitive position and is likely to aid future applications for development between this site and Much Wenlock.
- The site is on a slope which would make it easily visible and stand out not only to persons passing by it but also to anyone on the other side of the valley.
- The development would necessitate the removal of many meters of an old hedge. In addition the necessary frequent cutting back of vegetation would stick out like a sore thumb in such a sensitive area.
- The revised access has been moved towards an existing access and driveway serving several properties (The Grange. Cottage and House) creating a situation not dissimilar to a cross roads. Clearly a danger to other traffic.
- The site is on a slope so any overflows and spillages will inevitably find their way into a watercourse and onto the main road.
- There is a strong weight of opinion that such sites actually deter people from coming to the 'countryside' which they associate with open fields, trees, wildlife and peace and quiet. None of these are evident in this application - the reverse is the case.
- I see straight on to the site every day, from the end of my shared drive and it is not a pretty, peaceful site at all!
- A metal encampment is not 'the countryside'!
- The site is unsuitable for any caravans/tents or shepherd's huts, merely a disguised holiday let. The area has ample such sites in very close proximity. This Withies site already has buildings, toilets, hard standing and one existing 'shepherd's hut'. These are not allowed but the owners have total disregard for the surroundings, they do not live close by.
- The site is on a steep slope and as therefore, any van/tent/wheeled hut that is on the site is clearly fully in view of the road, adjoining residences, fields and visitors. It is an intrusion into a supposedly attractive hill and part of the famous Wenlock Edge. The application includes a huge building surely the countryside is protected from this abuse.
- Since it 'opened' the owners have not adhered to 5 vans and 10 tents, often having up to sixteen or more vans on the site plus tents and cars.
- The proposed access is even more dangerous. It would be highly dangerous for children and impracticable to leave the gates open to get

around this as the application suggests and so people have to wait or gates are left open as the application suggests.

- Visibility will still be unsatisfactory and traffic is passing there at 60mph.
- This application would allow 20 caravans, tents and 'shepherd's huts, generating another 20 cars plus trailers plus awnings plus decking plus hard stands! If average usage is just three per facility, that's sixty people and potentially 30 cars/trailers. Already the site abuses any rules and is crammed full. How this can be considered a peaceful location is beyond understanding.
- Approval would create a totally unacceptable and uncontrollable precedent.
- It is an unpleasant intrusion in what is otherwise pleasant green countryside.
- We have seen more than thirty cars, caravans and tents on the land, totally crowded onto the field. There are also buildings on the site! Our families caravan but not on such a site, it really is sad to see such abuse of the countryside.
- Object due to proximity AONB, visual impact, out of character.
- There were many substantial bodies who opposed the original application and their objections still apply for this new one. The only difference is that the access is moved along the road.
- It is visually destructive and as the owners see fit to fill it with as many as twenty vans, twenty cars and additional tents it is more like a 'BOOT SALE' than a peaceful part of Wenlock Edge. It is noisy, crowded and for children massively dangerous.
- The application asks for four 'Shepherds Huts' and major buildings on the site, completely out of character with the area. These are all permanent buildings.
- Much Wenlock already has two caravan sites, one just 100 metres away! The Neighbourhood Plan, which is supposed to set out the future of the town does not suggest such a caravan site development is wanted or beneficial.
- Permanent buildings, area of outstanding natural beauty, very dangerous access and on top of this more trees and hedges cut down. Unhappy future for Much Wenlock if this goes ahead, that's for sure.
- No action has been taken by the LPA in respect of the ongoing breach of planning.
- The application should not have been accepted without an adequate layout plan and a substantial landscaping scheme.
- The existing access is wholly unsuitable and substandard in terms of geometrical layout, vertical alignment, junction visibility and surface. The submitted plans do not show how this will be stopped up.
- The traffic speed assessment cannot be relied upon and should have been for a continuous 7 day period. The design criteria referred to is wholly inappropriate for this road, location and speed.
- The full extents of the proposed visibility splays have not been shown on the plans to indicate that these are available within the applicant land or the highway boundary.

- The design of the site access is inappropriate and a flatter gradient would be expected. The written text and the drawing do not match which is confusing,
- The layout does not lend itself to accommodating simultaneous entry and exit of traffic.
- It is unlikely that one gully will have sufficient capacity for surface water runoff.
- The access construction is wholly unacceptable and should be to a full road construction.
- SC Highways objected to the previous application.

5.0 THE MAIN ISSUES

Principle of development
Visual Impact and Landscaping
Residential Amenity
Highway Safety
Drainage
Ecology

6.0 OFFICER APPRAISAL

6.1 Principle of development

6.1.1 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF supports a prosperous rural economy and advises that a positive approach to sustainable development should be taken. This includes;

- supporting the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- promoting the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- supporting sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

6.1.2 Policy CS5 advises development proposals on appropriate sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits, particularly where they relate to small scale development diversifying the rural economy; including farm diversification; and the retention and appropriate expansion of an existing established business.

6.1.3 Policy CS16 requires visitor accommodation to be in accessible locations served by a range of services and facilities. In rural areas proposals must be of an appropriate scale and character for their surroundings, be close to or within settlements, or an

established and viable tourism enterprise where accommodation is required. As noted above in order to be considered sustainable, Government guidance contained within the NPPF rural tourism is expected to respect the character and appearance of the countryside. The provision of visitor facilities should be in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

- 6.1.4 Policy MD11 states that; Tourism, leisure and recreation development proposals that require a countryside location will be permitted where the proposal complements the character and qualities of the site's immediate surroundings, and meets the requirements in Policies CS5, CS16, MD7b, MD12, MD13 and relevant local and national guidance. In addition; All proposals should to be well screened and sited to mitigate the impact on the visual quality of the area through the use of natural on-site features, site layout and design, and landscaping and planting schemes where appropriate. Proposals within and adjoining the Shropshire Hills AONB should pay particular regard to landscape impact and mitigation. Ancillary buildings should be well designed, integral to the scheme, and of a scale that is well related to the proposal and location.
- 6.1.5 Further to the requirements in Policy CS16, proposals for new and extended touring caravan and camping sites should have regard to the cumulative impact of visitor accommodation on the natural and historic assets of the area, road network, or over intensification of the site.
- 6.1.6 Policy EJ7 of the adopted Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan 2013 - 26 (MWNP) supports proposals for recreational and tourism activities and facilities providing that the siting, design and scale of the development conserves the quality of the parish's built and natural environments, including its townscape and surrounding countryside.
- 6.1.7 The applicants have been operating The Withies Campsite for four continuous seasons since May 2013 under a Camping and Caravanning Club Exemption Certificate for 5 caravans and 10 tents and since May 2016 under a Freedom Camping Exemption Certificate for 5 caravans and up to 20 tents.
- 6.1.8 Therefore, the use of the site for tourist accommodation has been established for 3.5 years and regardless of the outcome of this application i.e. whether or not it is approved or refused, the site can continue to function as a caravanning and camping site for 5 touring vans and 20 tents.
- 6.1.9 The site is in an accessible location within a short distance of Much Wenlock where there is a good range of services and facilities. The proposal will provide 0.5 fulltime job. This will include; taking site bookings, meeting and greeting visitors, briefing on the facilities, health and safety, site rules, providing local and tourism information, keeping the site tidy and clean including managing the recycling, waste, toilet, shower and washing up facilities.
- 6.1.10 Matters in respect of visual impact, highway safety, residential amenity, drainage and ecology are considered below in paragraph 6.2 onwards.

6.1.11 Accordingly, the principle of the proposal is considered compliant with the aforementioned policies.

6.2 Visual Impact and Landscaping

6.2.1 Policy CS6 seeks to ensure that development is appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design taking into account the local context and character.

6.2.2 Policy CS16 notes that the rural and tranquil nature of Shropshire's countryside is a key component of Shropshire's attractiveness as a visitor destination, it is therefore vital that all tourism proposals, particularly in rural areas, is compatible with their location so that Shropshire's unique character and tranquillity is retained.

6.2.3 Policy CS17 aims to ensure that all development contributes to the local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape.

6.2.4 Policy MD2 requires development to respond effectively to local character and distinctiveness, it should not have a detrimental impact on existing amenity value but respond appropriately to the context in which it is set. As such, new development should respect the existing pattern of development, both visually and in relation to the function of spaces, retain and enhance important views and landmarks and respond appropriately to local environmental and historic assets.

6.2.5 Policy MD11 of the SAMDev states that; Tourism, leisure and recreation development proposals that require a countryside location will be permitted where the proposal complements the character and qualities of the site's immediate surroundings, and meets the requirements in Policies CS5, CS16, MD7, MD12, MD13 and relevant local and national guidance. In addition all proposals should to be well screened and sited to mitigate the impact on the visual quality of the area through the use of natural on-site features, site layout and design, and landscaping and planting schemes where appropriate.

6.2.6 Policy MD12 is concerned with impact upon landscape character and local distinctiveness of an area.

6.2.7 Policy GQD1 of the MWNP also states, "The high quality natural landscape outside the development boundary of Much Wenlock will be protected from any development which adversely affects the town's character, setting and open views." In addition, and Policy GQD2 requires all development to be of a high design quality and to reinforce local distinctiveness stating, "Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character and quality of an area will not be acceptable."

6.2.8 Policy LL3 states, "The Plan will expect developments to retain features of high nature conservation or landscape value, including mature trees, species-rich hedgerows, ponds and existing areas of woodland. Improvement of the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces will be encouraged to enhance the green infrastructure of the Parish."

- 6.2.9 As noted above the site is an existing caravan and camping site which operates under a Licence, and the Licence permits 5 touring caravans/motorhomes and 20 tents on the site at any one time. Therefore, in terms of visual impact and landscaping the matters only really relate to the erection of a multi purpose building and the siting of the Shepherds huts.
- 6.2.10 The site comprises the lower half of the field and although the land rises up from the road the multi purpose building will be well screened from the Stretton Road by the existing roadside hedge, and additional tree planting is proposed to establish a continuous hedge along the applicants' boundary to north-eastern corner of the site. Furthermore, a native hedge is proposed along the western edge of the access track to create a visual screen, preventing views into the site and thereby mitigating any visual impact and loss of a short section of hedgerow and coniferous planting to facilitate the new entrance.
- 6.2.11 In the event that the multi purpose building is visible from other vantage points it would not look out of character given that it has been design to have the appearance resembling that of a field shelter/barn/stable complex, and is not dissimilar to the existing field shelter which is located in the upper part of the applicant's field.
- 6.2.12 The proposed Shepherds huts will be viewed against the back drop of trees and hedge. The brown and green finish of the huts will serve to assimilate them with the landscape ensuring that they do not appear overly strident in the landscape. Accordingly, there would be no significant adverse impact upon the local distinctiveness and landscape of the area.
- 6.2.13 The proposal is therefore considered compliant with Local Plan policies CS5, CS6, C16 and C17, MD2, MD11& MD12, Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan policies GQD1, GQD2 and LL3.

6.3 Impact on Residential Amenity

- 6.3.1 Given the separation distances between the proposed site and the dwellings in the area it is considered that there would be no adverse impact up residential amenity of the scattered dwellings in the wider locality. Accordingly, there is no conflict with policy CS6 which aims to safeguard residential amenity.

6.4 Impact on Highway Safety

- 6.4.1 Policy CS6 requires all development to be safe and accessible to all and have appropriate parking. The existing access was approved by SC Highways following alterations in respect of the exemption licence. The proposal involves the stopping up of the existing access and the creation of a new purpose built access which will be located in a more central position as opposed to the existing access which is located in the south east corner of the site. This change would improve visibility in comparison to the existing access.
- 6.4.2 SC Highways Development Control have assessed the access proposals and have also reviewed the comments submitted by a Development Consultant, who

specialises in highways and drainage, on behalf of an objector, and those of a Transport Consultant on behalf of the applicant. The Council's Highways Development Control Team conclude that the proposed access would not be detrimental to highway safety to serve a site of 20 tent pitches, four shepherds huts and five touring caravans.

- 6.4.3 The Developing Highways Manager South has provided the following additional comments in response to the Highway objection received from Mr Andy Gough on behalf of an objector.

When considering the submitted application, it is considered that Manual for Streets 2 applies, which seeks to provide a standard between Manual for Streets and DRMB. It is considered that in an appeal situation that guidance within Manual for Streets 2 would apply. Standards set out in Manual for Streets 2 recommends that a visibility splay of 2.4 metres by 151 Metres is provided where approach speeds are 60mph in dry conditions.

Despite the above, the proposed visibility splays are based on a site assessment, and have been considered by Mouchel to be appropriate for the surrounding conditions, specifically that westbound vehicles will be exiting the 30mph speed limit. It is also considered that the proposed access provides betterment to the existing access.

- 6.4.4 In consideration of the above, the proposed development and associated access is considered acceptable from a Highways perspective. Conditions would be attached to any permission granted to ensure that the existing access is closed and not used for any purpose, the maximum gradients for the new access, provision of the visibility splays and on the positioning of access gates.

6.5 Drainage

- 6.5.1 Core Strategy policy CS18 relates to sustainable water management. The site is naturally well drained being on limestone and also benefits from an existing soakaway. It is outside any Environment Agency designated area at risk of flooding and does not create any impermeable hard-standing from which on-site run-off would be increased. The additional run-off of storm water from the newly created roof area of the facilities and storage building will be harvested using water butts and re-used on site for welly washing and watering hanging baskets etc. Surplus water during the winter months will be directed to the existing soakaway on site, which has adequate capacity. SC Drainage has no objections subject to conditions and the proposal is therefore compliant with policy CS18.

6.6 Ecology

- 6.6.1 *Inter alia* policy CS17 seeks to protect and enhance Shropshire's environmental assets and policy MD12 seeks to avoid harm to them and chapter 11 of the NPPF aims to conserve and enhance the natural environment.
- 6.6.2 An Extended Phase One Habitat Survey was carried out on this site in November 2015 by Arbor Vitae. SC Ecology has assessed the report which advises that the majority of the site consists of improved grassland. The grassland is regularly mown and the sward is kept very short. Native species-poor hedgerows form three of the site boundaries, with a wire fence forming the north-western boundary. The

south-western and north-eastern hedgerows have been heavily grazed in the past and are therefore open and have gaps. The south-eastern roadside hedgerow is much more dense. It is noted that all of the hedgerows are going to be retained.

- 6.6.3 Furthermore, a number of young trees have been planted on the site. These are largely ornamental, non-native species. Outside of the site to the south west lies a strip of recently planted woodland comprising mainly broad-leaved species approximately 15 years old.
- 6.6.4 The opportunity exists to allow small areas of grassland to develop as species-rich grassland through appropriate management.
- 6.6.5 Wenlock Edge Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 80m to the north and 190m to the west. However, the proposed development is unlikely to have any adverse impact on the SSSI and no further consideration is required.
- 6.6.6 All trees on the site were too young to contain features which might provide roosting habitat for bats. The temporary buildings and structures on site similarly provide no potential for bats. The site boundaries are likely to be used by foraging and commuting bats. Therefore, any new lighting on the site should be sensitive to bats and follow the Bat Conservation Trust guidance.
- 6.6.7 The hedgerows and trees on the site provide nesting habitat for birds, and as such Any vegetation removal should take place between October and February to avoid harming nesting birds. If this is not possible then a pre-commencement check for active nests should be carried out and if any active nests are present then works cannot proceed until the young birds have fledged.
- 6.6.8 No evidence of any other protected or priority species was observed on, or in close proximity to, the site.
- 6.6.9 Accordingly, it has been demonstrated that there will be no adverse impact on any of Shropshire's natural assets and a suitable soft landscaping plan will provide an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity of the site. The proposal is therefore compliant with policies CS17 and MD12 and national guidance contained within the NPPF.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The site is located within easy access of Much Wenlock where there is a full range of services and facilities. The area is popular with holidaymakers, and there are numerous tourist attractions slightly further afield. The proposal would expand an established holiday accommodation enterprise (albeit one hitherto uncovered by express planning permissions) on a modest scale and with transitory structures unlikely to have any lasting visual impact, and the provision of tourist accommodation is considered to be of benefit to the surrounding area.
- 7.2 The application includes a business overview which explains the campsite business has grown quickly and the applicants are experiencing increasing demand and wish to secure the sustainable future of their business and expand the client base by offering accommodation on site in the form of the shepherds huts.

7.3 The proposed new site access arrangements would be an improvement over the existing situation and would not be detrimental to highway safety, being suitable to accommodate the scale and nature of traffic likely to be generated.

7.4 Accordingly the proposed development is compliant with Local Plan policies CS5, CS6, CS16, CS17 & CS18 of the adopted Core Strategy and policies MD2, MD11, MD12 and MD13 of the SAMDev, policies GQD1, GQD2, EJ7 and LL3 of the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan and national guidance contained within the NPPF 2012. It is therefore recommended that the application is approved with conditions.

8.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

8.1 Risk Management

There are two principal risks associated with this recommendation as follows:

- As with any planning decision the applicant has a right of appeal if they disagree with the decision and/or the imposition of conditions. Costs can be awarded irrespective of the mechanism for hearing the appeal, i.e. written representations, hearing or inquiry.
- The decision may be challenged by way of a Judicial Review by a third party. The courts become involved when there is a misinterpretation or misapplication of policy or some breach of the rules of procedure or the principles of natural justice. However their role is to review the way the authorities reach decisions, rather than to make a decision on the planning issues themselves, although they will interfere where the decision is so unreasonable as to be irrational or perverse. Therefore they are concerned with the legality of the decision, not its planning merits. A challenge by way of Judicial Review must be made a) promptly and b) in any event not later than six weeks after the grounds to make the claim first arose.

Both of these risks need to be balanced against the risk of not proceeding to determine the application. In this scenario there is also a right of appeal against non-determination for application for which costs can also be awarded.

8.2 Human Rights

Article 8 gives the right to respect for private and family life and First Protocol Article 1 allows for the peaceful enjoyment of possessions. These have to be balanced against the rights and freedoms of others and the orderly development of the County in the interests of the Community.

First Protocol Article 1 requires that the desires of landowners must be balanced against the impact on residents.

This legislation has been taken into account in arriving at the above recommendation.

8.3 Equalities

The concern of planning law is to regulate the use of land in the interests of the public at large, rather than those of any particular group. Equality will be one of a number of 'relevant considerations' that need to be weighed in Planning Committee members' minds under section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

9.0 Financial Implications

There are likely financial implications if the decision and / or imposition of conditions is challenged by a planning appeal or judicial review. The costs of defending any decision will be met by the authority and will vary dependent on the scale and nature of the proposal. Local financial considerations are capable of being taken into account when determining this planning application – insofar as they are material to the application. The weight given to this issue is a matter for the decision maker.

10. Background

Relevant Planning Policies

Central Government Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Shropshire Core Strategy:

CS5 Countryside and Green Belt
CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles
CS16 Tourism, Culture and Leisure
CS17 Environmental Networks
CS18 Sustainable Water Management

SAMDev Plan:

MD2 Sustainable Design
MD7b General Management of Development in the Countryside
MD11 Tourism facilities and visitor accommodation
MD12 The Natural Environment
MD13 The Historic Environment
S13 Much Wenlock Area

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

16/00521/FUL Erection of multi-purpose building; siting of 4no Shepherds Huts and a composting toilet cabin. WDN 14th September 2016

11. Additional Information

View details online: <https://pa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage&searchType=Application>

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Design and Access Statement

Environmental Statement

Transport Assessment

Planning Statement

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr M. Price

Local Member

Cllr David Turner

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 - Conditions

APPENDIX 1

Conditions

STANDARD CONDITION(S)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (As amended).
2. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans and drawings
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.
3. No more than 4 shepherds huts structures, 5 touring caravans and 20 tent pitches shall be provided/sited within the application site at any one time.

Reason: To define the scale of the holiday accommodation enterprise, for the avoidance of doubt.
4. The shepherds huts, touring caravans and tents stationed/installed on the land shall be occupied for holiday purposes only, and shall not be occupied as a person's sole, or main place of residence. The owners/operators of the site shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all occupiers of the individual shepherd huts and touring caravan and tent pitches, and of their main home addresses, and shall make this information available at all reasonable times to the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the approved holiday accommodation is not used for unauthorised permanent residential occupation.
5. Only touring type caravans that can be towed legally on the public highway may be stationed on the land in accordance with the number limit in condition 3 above.

Reason: To define the permission for the avoidance of any doubt and in the interests of visual amenity.
6. The shepherd huts installed on the land shall only be sited in the positions shown on the approved drawings and shall not exceed the length, width and height of the Shepherd hut structures shown on the approved drawings.

Reason: To define the permission for the avoidance of any doubt, in the interests of visual amenity.
7. The new site access shall be constructed, and use of the existing access discontinued, before occupation of the shepherd huts and use of the touring caravan and tent pitches that are the subject of this planning permission commence. The existing access shall be stopped up in accordance with details which have first been approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and visual amenity.

8. The gradient of the access(s) from the highway carriageway shall not exceed 1 in 24 for a distance of 10m and thereafter the gradient of the drive shall not exceed 1 in 10.

Reason: To provide a safe access to the development in the interests of highway safety.

9. Any gates provided to close the proposed access shall be set a minimum distance of 15 metres from the carriageway edge and shall be made to open inwards only.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of access is provided in the interests of highway safety.

10. Prior to the first use of the access the visibility splays shown on drawing number 98-16-07 -August 2016 by Sumner Consultancy Ltd, shall be formed and shall thereafter be kept clear of all growth and obstruction.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

11. No development shall take place until a scheme of foul drainage, and surface water drainage has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented before the development is occupied/brought into use (whichever is the sooner).

Reason: The condition is a pre-commencement condition to ensure satisfactory drainage of the site and to avoid flooding.

12. Prior to the erection of any external lighting on the site a lighting plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained for the lifetime of the development. The submitted scheme shall be designed to take into account the advice on lighting set out in the Bat Conservation Trusts Bats and Lighting in the U.K. guidance.

Reason: To minimise disturbance to bats, European Protected Species.

13. No above ground works shall be commenced until full details of both hard and soft landscape works (in accordance with Shropshire Council Natural Environment Development Guidance Note 7 'Trees and Development') have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, showing existing trees and hedges to be retained and all new planting proposed. The landscape works shall be carried out in full compliance with the plan, schedule and timescales approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants that, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced with others of species, size and number as originally approved, by the end of the first available planting season.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a reasonable standard of landscape in accordance with the approved designs

Informatives

1. In arriving at this decision the Council has used its best endeavours to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to secure an appropriate outcome as required in the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 187.
2. The applicant is responsible for keeping the highway free from any mud or other material emanating from the application site or any works pertaining thereto.
No drainage to discharge to highway
Drainage arrangements shall be provided to ensure that surface water from the driveway and/or vehicular turning area does not discharge onto the public highway. No drainage or effluent from the proposed development shall be allowed to discharge into any highway drain or over any part of the public highway.
Works on, within or abutting the public highway
This planning permission does not authorise the applicant to:
 - construct any means of access over the publicly maintained highway (footway or verge) or
 - carry out any works within the publicly maintained highway, or
 - authorise the laying of private apparatus within the confines of the public highway including any a new utility connection, or
 - undertaking the disturbance of ground or structures supporting or abutting the publicly maintained highwayThe applicant should in the first instance contact Shropshire Councils Street works team.
This link provides further details
<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/street-works/street-works-application-forms/>
Please note: Shropshire Council require at least 3 months' notice of the applicant's intention to commence any such works affecting the public highway so that the applicant can be provided with an appropriate licence, permit and/or approved specification for the works together and a list of approved contractors, as required.
3. Your attention is specifically drawn to the conditions above that require the Local Planning Authority's approval of materials, details, information, drawings etc. In accordance with Article 21 of the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 a fee is required to be paid to the Local Planning Authority for requests to discharge conditions. Requests are to be made on forms available from www.planningportal.gov.uk or from the Local Planning Authority. The fee required is £97 per request, and £28 for existing residential properties.

Failure to discharge pre-start conditions will result in a contravention of the terms of this permission; any commencement may be unlawful and the Local Planning Authority may consequently take enforcement action.

4. The active nests of all wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). An active nest is one that is being built, containing eggs or chicks, or on which fledged chicks are still dependent. It is a criminal offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird; to take, damage or destroy an active nest; and to take or destroy an egg. There is an unlimited fine and/or up to six months imprisonment for such offences.

All vegetation clearance, tree removal, scrub removal and/or conversion, renovation and demolition work in buildings should be carried out outside of the bird nesting season which runs from March to September inclusive.

If it is necessary for work to commence in the nesting season then a pre-commencement inspection of the vegetation and buildings for active bird nests should be carried out. If vegetation or buildings cannot be clearly seen to be clear of nests then an experienced ecologist should be called in to carry out the check. Only if there are no active nests present should work be allowed to commence.

If during construction birds gain access to any of the buildings and begin nesting, work must cease until the young birds have fledged.

5. A sustainable drainage scheme for the disposal of surface water from the development should be designed and constructed in accordance with the Council's Surface Water Management: Interim Guidance for Developers document. It is available on the Council's website at: www.shropshire.gov.uk/drainage-and-flooding/local-flood-risk-management-strategy/.

The provisions of the Planning Practice Guidance, in particular Section 21 Reducing the causes and impacts of flooding, should be followed.

Preference should be given to drainage measures which allow rainwater to soakaway naturally. Connection of new surface water drainage systems to existing drains / sewers should only be undertaken as a last resort, if it can be demonstrated that infiltration techniques are not achievable.