

Staploe Parish Council

Date: 09/07/2021

Application number: 21/01513/FUL

Proposal: Change of Use Of An Agricultural Storage Barn to a Fencing Contractors Store

(Use Class B8), and the Erection of Lean-to Canopy and External Racking

Location: Lower Honeydon Farm Honeydon Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 2LR

Response: Object

This application was considered at a meeting of Staploe Parish Council on 8th July 2021. The Parish Council had received three objections from residents regarding the proposed change of use and it was resolved to object for the following reasons:

- Traffic. This will generate extra traffic and in particular extra HGV traffic on Lower Honeydon Road between the Junction with Bushmead Road and Lower Honeydon Farm and probably also on the road through Honeydon. The road through Honeydon is designated as unsuitable for HGV's. Lower Honeydon Lane is very narrow and the edges are breaking up and the road is being undermined by the stream in places with the existing traffic. The height of the lorries may also damage the trees along the verges. There is also some concern that HGV's associated with the site may go west through the village and there is no way to stop this once permission has been granted. In the past a contractor was based at Lower Goodwick Farm in Begwary and there were frequent problems of dangerous driving and speeding on the unsuitable narrow roads in the hamlets despite attempts to ensure that drivers used other routes. We appreciate that this business no longer operates but it is an example that it is not possible to enforce the use of other routes. No matter how unsuitable a road is, access to a business is always permitted once that business use has been granted. Residents have reported many near misses with current Ratigan vans based at the farm and these also regularly come through the village. A quote from a resident today 20th July "St Neots Fencing are already operating on the site and their drivers pay no heed to other road users. [Resident] was going out of the village to Chawston this afternoon and was forced onto the verge by the St Neots Fencing vehicle who didn't move off his line to allow 2 vehicles to pass cleanly. This is the same sort of behaviour we see from the Ratigan Utilities vans who do the same." The edges of the road are poor and a number of residents have reported damaged tyres as a result of having to drive onto the verge. Our concerns about traffic therefore remain. Regarding the other HGV's moving through the village residents understand the need for agricultural vehicles and builders to operate in the village but their concern is that the change of use would be permanent and any delivery or warehousing company could use the site leading to permanent additional HGV traffic on Lower Honeydon Lane.

- Verges. We are informed by residents that the verges at the farm entrance are often in a poor state where lorries turn in and out of the farm entrance.
- Site plans. Residents have queried whether the site plans accurately reflect the buildings currently on site. In particular they seem to think that the building circled below is not shown on the site plans for this application accurately. Whilst this may not be a material consideration in determining this application it is confusing to residents assessing the planning application and it would be helpful if the site plans could be revised / extended to include this building.

