

### **1) Basis for Submission**

Church Lawford Parish Council (CLPC) called an Extraordinary Meeting of the council on 18/09/2019 at 7:30 in Church Lawford Village Hall. Approximately 70 people attended the meeting, which lasted two and a half hours. CPRE were present, represented by Mark Sullivan. Rugby Borough councillors Sally Bragg, Andrew Bearne and Derek Poole were also present, as was Heather Timms from Warwickshire County Council for the early part of the meeting.

### **2) Submission from the meeting**

2.1 On behalf of the attendees CLPC wishes to **Object to application R19/1097, and request that it is refused**, on the following grounds:

2.1.1 The development is in the Green Belt, and while agricultural development is permitted within the Belt, the proposed development would by virtue of its scale, massing, visual appearance, and lack of mitigating landscaping have a profound impact on the local area. The site will be visible by walkers on several footpaths, including 'Shakespeare's Way', by travellers on trains out of Rugby to Coventry, and most particularly by the residents of Church Road, the southern part of School Street, and the north side of the A428. This proposed unit separated from the main farm is not supported by RBC Local Plan NE3. The proposed pig unit at Grandborough, R17/0937 had similar visual and amenity impact. CLPC request that this application should be refused on the same basis.

2.1.2 The development will bring additional heavy goods traffic to Church Lawford. There is a height restriction on the A428 at the railway bridge, which is well signed and recognised by most route planning software, preventing the majority of over-height traffic from using this stretch of road. The development will bring new full size articulated truck traffic to this location, and possibly through the village. Traffic exiting the site will turn right, up a hill, with a bridge, dip and curve behind it, creating a risk of collision.

2.1.3 The development will increase the carbon footprint of the village during construction and operation. Environmentally, the proposed unit constitutes a risk to the water quality of the River Avon, as it is less than 150m from the riverbank, and very close to two small watercourses that feed into the Avon from the south.

2.1.4 The development brings risks of socially undesirable side effects affecting walkers and nearby homes: noise of animals, flies associated with the management of manure, the odour of pig manure - especially during removal and transport - and the risk of rodent infestation.

2.1.5 The proposed building is just over 400m from two Grade II Listed Buildings: St Peters Church, and The Manor House next to it, and is in a direct line of sight from both buildings.

### **3) Feedback from residents and responses by the applicants.**

The sections below provide more information on the grounds stated above, as well as indicating areas of concern to residents which may not carry any weight in terms of the planning process. It should be noted that the material contains unverified assertions.

3.1 Visual Impact. The size of the unit, in particular its length and height, and the large area of the concrete pad are major concerns. Tree planting would take too long to have a mitigating effect. The large concrete bell-mouth access and turning circle will have a visual impact on drivers on the A428; the proposed fencing between the footpath and the new access is of the purely functional ‘crash barrier’ type.

3.2 Site Lighting. The plan shows external lighting. Despite applicant’s assurances that external lighting is not required, as loading and unloading takes place inside, there were fears that approval of the plan with lighting could lead to the building being illuminated at night.

3.3 Site Facilities. There were concerns that there are no on site toilet facilities for employees or visitors to use, including hand washing facilities. Applicant explained that this was normal for this type of unit, and that the facilities at the farm could be available.

3.4 Site Security. There were concerns that given the nature of the business, and the large quantities of flammable material (straw) on an unmanned site, it would need good security. Applicant stated that electronic gates managed from the farm and proposed 6 foot fencing would address. The fencing is to be of the green painted steel mesh type, rather than galvanised rods with spiked tops. The meeting felt that the fencing contributed to the negative visual impact.

3.5 Flooding. There was concern that the unit could be flooded. Applicant stated that the unit will be above the current flood plain. There were also concerns that the concrete pad and/or access road could contribute to the existing problem of flooding under the railway bridge.

3.6 Traffic Impacts. The bell-mouth and turning circle before the railway bridge could bring benefit in reducing the incidence of over-height trucks reversing back to the village; but it could also become an informal overnight ‘truck-stop’. The new full size HGV traffic carrying feed and pigs will be directed west on the A428 by applicant signage, but there is a risk it then uses Church Lawford and Kings Newnham to avoid the lights on the A428 at Bretford. Alternatively it could use Coronation Road to get to the A45. Both of these options would see the largest trucks using our smallest roads. Applicant explained that the fattened pigs are removed one lorry load at a time over a period of three weeks, and there are therefore no queuing trucks on site or on the road. New pigs are delivered over a period of days.

Manure will be cleared by 30-40 local tractor trips, using tractor and uncovered trailer. There were concerns that manure could be dropped on the road, or that the trailers could ‘leak’ fluid waste. Applicant assured that all liquid waste is absorbed and to an extent neutralised by the use of straw. The applicant stated that any trailer spillages are quickly cleared up. Feedback from borough councillor was that spills have had to be cleared up by the council after complaints from residents.

3.7 Odour. The applicant stated that the deep litter approach has significantly less odour than the use of slatted floors & slurry tanks. One of the local footpaths runs beside the existing unit, and applicant stated that there have been very few complaints of odour related to the existing unit, and invited residents to use the footpath to see & hear for themselves. Applicant stated that the prevailing wind in the midlands is from the south west, and rarely from the south east, so odour will be dispersed before reaching human habitation. This was challenged by a resident, quoting ‘wind

roses'. A concern was expressed about the impact on asthma sufferers, who can have attacks triggered by ammonia.

3.8 Noise. The applicant agreed that pigs do make a noise, especially when disturbed. Applicant stated that the design of the unit means that this is not audible outside a limit of approximately 50m.

3.9 Sustainability. The applicant has yet to finalise the power arrangements for the site, favouring an 'off grid' approach using solar and batteries if feasible. A resident pointed out that this is a minor concern when compared with an estimated doubling of the village's carbon footprint. He asserted that recent legislation to reduce carbon emissions to zero requires any application like this to be rejected by Planning Authorities.

3.10 The application is not clear on the detail of tree planting and effluent containment & disposal. There is no description of the process that will be used to store & subsequently dispose of the carcasses of any animals that die on the site.

3.11 Business options. The applicants were asked whether alternative options for the site had been investigated. They stated that they had been looking for a year for a place to rent, and had failed, hence the application to build on their own land. The business model where pigs are reared, moved to nursery units, then to fattening units and finally to slaughter, all by truck was questioned. The applicant was quizzed on the impact on their business if the application were refused. They stated that they had no plan for that, but they wished to continue farming at Hillcrest. Applicant stated that a smaller unit not be financially viable. One resident asked what benefit there would be to the village of Church Lawford. Applicant accepted that there would be no direct benefit in terms of employment, but offered a more general benefit statement. (3.13)

3.12 Animal welfare. Applicant was asked about the use of antibiotics and records of use. Applicant stated that antibiotics are not administered routinely through food or water, if they are needed then vet treatments are recorded in paper records. The point was made that the dimensions of the building and the number of pigs means that each has approximately 1 square metre to live in. Applicant accepted this, and explained how pigs behave in social groups, and that the space available is adequate, and meets welfare standards. A question was submitted after the meeting asking about the impact of train noise on the pigs; the applicant had no opportunity to respond to this question.

3.13 Living close to a pig unit. The existing unit in Long Lawford can be heard from Chapel Lane, according to one resident of Long Lawford. A resident of Kings Newnham stated that a similar unit had operated in Kings Newnham in the past, and there had been little noise, smell, or excessive numbers of flies, with dwellings considerably closer than the proposal.

3.14 Benefit Statement. Applicant put forward the point that the demand for pork is met by both UK farmed product and imported meat. It was asserted that the UK industry has higher welfare standards and a potentially safer and better quality product than imported meat, and the proposal allows them to maintain their high quality contribution to the industry.

**4) Closure.**

Attendees were thanked for their time, input, and for allowing each other and the applicant the opportunity to have their views heard.

Jeremy James (Chair),

Sara Reilly (Cllr)

Derek Holland (Cllr)