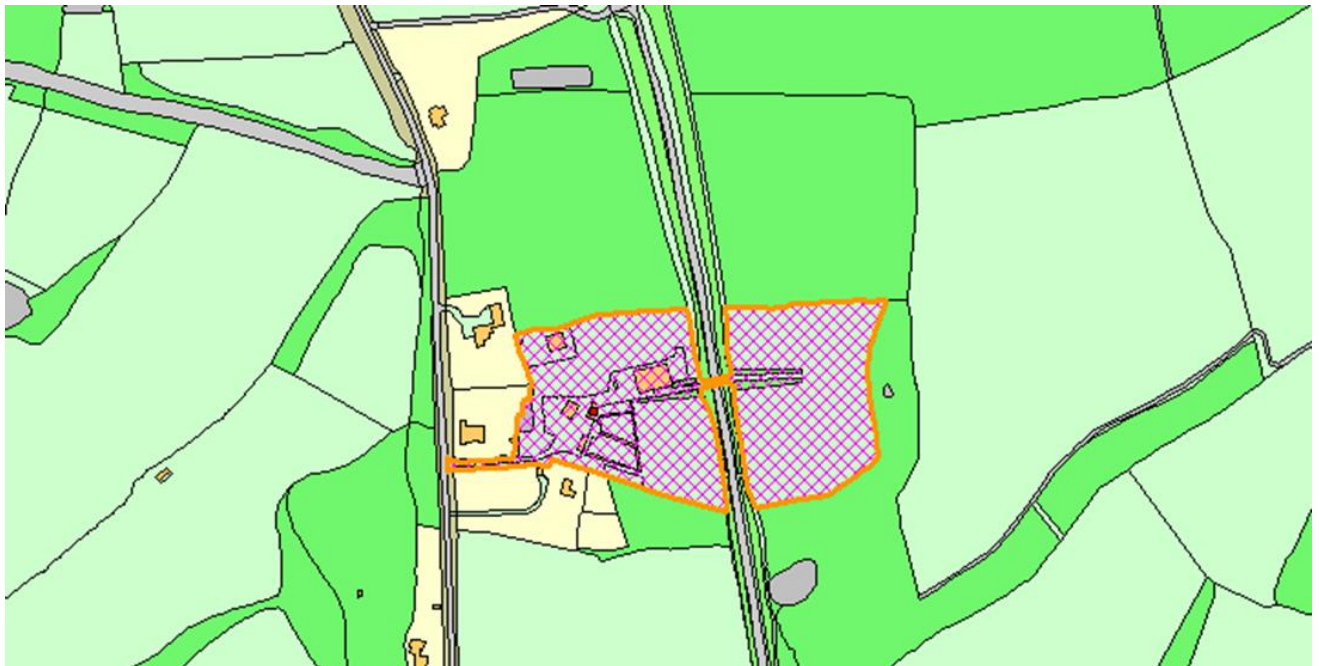


Report to: Planning Applications Committee
Date: 10 March 2021
Application No: LW/20/0417
Location: Brickyard Farm, Town Littleworth Road, Barcombe, East Sussex, BN8 4TD
Proposal: Variation of condition 1 (Landscaping), 4 (Number of Pitches), 5 (Car Parking) and 7 (Approved Plans) as attached to planning permission LW/11/1500 (incorporating subsequent amendments approved under LW/12/0917 and LW/13/0636) to allow for increase in number of pitches to 21 (including an additional 3 camping pods), additional car parking and landscaping/ecological enhancements.

Ward: Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey
Applicant: Mr T Bullen
Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions.
Contact Officer: **Name:** James Smith
E-mail: james.smith@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Map Location:



1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 It is considered that the proposed development represents a sustainable expansion of an existing rural enterprise that would improve the visitor accommodation offer, in line with development plan policies, without resulting in a detrimental impact upon environmental, residential or visual amenity, biodiversity or highway safety.
- 1.2 It is therefore recommended that the application is approved subject to the conditions listed at the end of this report.

2. **Relevant Planning Policies**

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2019

NPPF: - 2 – Achieving sustainable development;

NPPF: - 4 – Decision-making;

NPPF: - 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy;

NPPF: - 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities;

NPPF: - 12 – Achieving well-designed places;

NPPF: - 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;

NPPF: - 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;

2.2 Lewes District Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2)

LDLP: – CP4 – Economic Development and Regeneration

LDLP: – CP5 – The Visitor Economy

LDLP: – CP7 – Infrastructure

LDLP: – CP8 – Green Infrastructure

LDLP: – CP9 – Air Quality

LDLP: – CP10 – Natural Environment and Landscape

LDLP: – CP11 – Built and Historic Environment & Design

LDLP: – CP12 – Flood Risk, Coastal Erosion and Drainage

LDLP: – CP13 – Sustainable Travel

LDLP: – CP14 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

LDLP: – DM1 – Planning Boundary

LDLP: – DM10 – Employment Development in the Countryside

LDLP: – DM12: Caravan and Camping Sites

LDLP: – DM14: Green Infrastructure

LDLP: – DM17: Former Lewes/Sheffield Park Railway Line

LDLP: – DM20: Pollution Management

LDLP: – DM21: Land Contamination

LDLP: – DM23 – Noise

LDLP: – DM24 – Protection of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

LDLP: – DM25 – Design

LDLP: – DM27 – Landscape Design

LDLP: – DM33 – Heritage Assets

3. **Site Description**

3.1 Brickyard Farm occupies an area to the eastern side of Town Littleworth Road and falls outside of the planning boundary. The wider site is

approximately 0.47ha used as a campsite and for other commercial uses. The access leads to a hard surfaced parking area (approx. 30 x spaces) and a complex of 1-2 storey buildings used as:

- the campsite reception with a kitchen and storage and leased offices (occupied by a firm of ecologists at first floor level) ('the Nest');
- a toilet and shower block (32sqm);
- a designer's studio/ workshop (the 'Matchbox');
- a small wash-up station; and
- a large barn (380sqm) most recently used for storage by an auctioneer.

(The use of these buildings was altered under application LW/20/0413 approved by the Planning Applications Committee on 20 January 2021)

- 3.2 The site comprises two parcels of land that are bisected by the tree lined track bed of the former Lewes to East Grinstead railway line. Outside of the main yard area, the site is comprised of maintained grass/wildflower areas interspersed with areas of scrub and hedging. A number of small trees are distributed around the site interior. The entire northern boundary of the site is flanked by the edge of relatively dense woodland in the form of Brickyard Wood/Oldpark Wood, which is ancient woodland. The southern edge of the western field is also bordered by ancient woodland at Knowlands Wood. This woodland is also a designated Local Wildlife Site. There are no specific planning designations or constraints attached to the site itself.
- 3.3 The general character of Town Littleworth Road is that of an intimate rural land, flanked by woodland and hedgerow with filtered views towards enclosed fields. The landscape opens up towards the south with woodland being replaced by fields enclosed by lower hedgerows, allowing for wider ranging views. Buildings are sporadic and are generally in agricultural or commercial use and are sympathetically screened.
- 3.4 The settlements of South Chailey and Barcombe are approx. 2.75 km and 3.5 km driving distance from the site respectively. These settlements can also be accessed via the public footpath network, with a number of footpaths being close to the site.
- 3.5 The access is also used for the applicant's dwelling, 'The Old Brickhouse', which lies to the south and is Grade II listed; and 'Woodside' which adjoins the entrance to the site to the north. White Lodge, a B+B, is further north and has a separate access.
- 3.6 There are currently 18 camping pitches provided on site. The business limits each pitch to 4 adults and 7 people in total however the average number of guests per pitch is 3. The number of guests on average in peak season is therefore in the range of 54, up to 126 at maximum capacity. Planning permission was recently granted to convert the large barn to a facilities building serving the campsite (including reception, office, shower blocks and communal space) and the replacement of the existing toilet/shower block with a new building accommodating 2 x artist studios.

4. Proposed Development

- 4.1 The application seeks to vary a number of conditions attached to the original planning approval in order to allow for the amount of pitches provided to be increased from the current 18 to 21, inclusive of the provision of 4 x free-standing camping pods, an additional pitch for a tent, the increase of parking on site, provision of passing lay-bys at on the site access road and modifications and improvements to the existing site landscaping to incorporate ecological gain.
- 4.2 The increase to 21 pitches would also involve a partial reconfiguration of the site and the type of pitches provided. Two existing tent pitches in the western field would be occupied by two new free-standing camping pods. A further two pitches would be formed towards the southern side of the western field in order to accommodate a further 2 x camping pods. An additional tent pitch would be provided in the eastern field, on the site of an existing composting toilet. Therefore, the proposed development would result in a net gain of 3 pitches (18 to 21)
- 4.3 The camping pods are of mixed design. All are timber framed and timber clad with the exception of structure #2 which comprises a canvas tent raised over a timber deck area. The new pods would be occupied by 3 to 5 persons at any one person whilst the tent pitch, in common with existing tent pitches, would be for use by up to 7 persons.
- 4.4 An additional 3 car parking spaces would be provided, utilising the existing hard surfaced area. This would increase the total amount of marked out car parking spaces in site to 38. In addition an amended plan has also been provided to show 2 passing spaces located on the access road into the site (to address an issue raised by the Committee when the previous application was considered).
- 4.5 Additional soft and hard landscaping would be carried out in order to provide further screening towards the south-western corner of the site as well as to enhance ecological value and to reinforce the buffer area maintained around the fringes of the adjoining ancient woodland. These works involve new native hedge planting, formation of wildflower rich grassland and increasing the depth of an existing pond in the south-eastern corner of the western field.
- 4.6 Soft verging and a small amount of hedging adjacent to the existing access road would be cut back to allow for the formation of two new passing bays.

5. Relevant Planning History

The site was historically in use as a nursery (Chubbs Nursery). Planning permission was originally granted for change of use to a camp site in 2012 (ref: LW/11/1500) and the use has subsequently expanded and modified over time by way of increasing the number of pitches, the amount of parking and introducing buildings in the form of camping pods. A number of the original agricultural/horticultural buildings have also been replaced or converted, either to uses supporting the campsite operation or to provide commercial workshop/storage space.

5.1 Campsite/ camping pitches

LW/11/1500 Change of use of existing agricultural land for use as a campsite and conversion of existing building for use as a toilet block. Approved Mar 2012 subject to conditions incl. hedge to Chubbs Bungalow (now Woodside) (1); ancient woodland buffer (2); restricted check in/ out times 08:00-20:00 (3); limit of 15 separate campsite pitches (4); provision of parking on approved plans (5); cycle parking (6); approved plans (7).

LW/12/0917 Variation of conditions 2, 4 & 5 relating to planning approval LW/11/1500 to allow the installation of a 'Tree-Tent' and car parking space. Approved Jan 2013 subject to conditions incl. maintenance of ancient woodland buffer (1); max of 16 separate campsite pitches (2); additional parking space (3); approved plans (4).

LW/13/0636 Variation of conditions 2 and 3 relating to planning approval LW/11/1500 & LW/12/0917 to provide for an additional two pitches and two parking spaces. Approved Nov 2013 subject to conditions including a max of 18 separate pitches (1) parking (2) 30 spaces altogether; and approved plans (3).

5.2 Current campsite reception and offices –The Nest

LW/16/0614 Demolition of existing packing shed and replacement with office building (120sqm). Approved.

LW/17/0244 Variation of condition 1 relating to planning approval LW/16/0614 to increase natural light into the building. Use restricted to B1 only.

5.3 The Matchbox

LW/09/0546 Change of use and conversion of former shop to B1 office use. Approved July 2009.

LW/10/0041 Change of use and conversion of former shop to B1 office use (amendment to planning approval LW/09/0546) [Match Box approx. 55sqm]. Approved Mar 2010.

LW/13/0132 Non-material amendments to planning approval LW/10/0041 [to convert and re-use existing building and clad it rather than remodel it]. Approved Feb 2013.

5.4 The Barn

LW/06/1255 Change of use of barn to classes B1 light industrial and/or B8 storage (360-380sqm). Approved Feb 2007 subject to conditions.

LW/20/0413 Partial change of use of existing barn (Class B1/B8) to a flexible campsite facility building and change of use and replacement of the existing shower block into 2no. class B1 studios and associated parking. Approved Conditionally 21st January 2021.

5.5 New workshop building

LW/19/0864 Demolition of polytunnel structure, erection of one storey workshop and storage building (144sqm), also introduction of a new wildlife area (550sqm with a pond) [to the north/ north west of the reception]. Approved 13/05/2020.

6. Consultations

6.1 Barcombe Parish Council – Objection.

- Overdevelopment of the site.
- A departure from the original ethos of the site due to increase in numbers.
- Lack of comment by ESCC Highways.
- Harm to privacy of neighbours and other businesses in the area due to increase in traffic and noise.
- Significant increase in parking spaces to 40.
- Relocation of all pitches to the east of the railway line would be appreciated by neighbours.

6.2 Environmental Health – Proposal supported

No conditions necessary in the context of EH as believed no potential impacts for neighbouring residents.

6.3 Planning Policy

In the rural areas of the district, Core Policy 4 supports the conversion of existing buildings to business use, appropriate well-designed new business units, and sustainable tourism developments. Core Policy 5 expresses a presumption in favour of the retention and improvement of the existing visitor accommodation stock, including camping and caravan sites, and support the development of an all year-round visitor economy.

Core Policies 4 and 5 are given more detailed expression through Policy DM10, which permits the conversion or replacement of existing rural buildings to provide small-scale employment development, subject to certain criteria, and Policy DM12, which permits proposals for the extension of existing camping sites, subject to certain criteria. Proposals for new, static caravan sites are not permitted.

It is noted that the site boundary is immediately adjacent to ancient woodland and existing residential properties. Support for the rural and visitor economy must therefore be weighed against any potential harmful impact on an irreplaceable habitat or the residential amenities of neighbouring properties, in accordance with Core Policy 10 (Criterion 1), Policy DM24 and Policy DM25 (Criterion 7).

A further issue is the construction of the four 'camping pods' (LW/20/0417), which in my opinion, do not fall within the definition of caravans but should instead be considered buildings or structures, applying the 'Skerrits' test, i.e. size, permanence and degree of physical attachment to the land. As such, the camping pods represent development and their construction will require planning permission.

The pods would undoubtedly enhance the existing tourist accommodation offer and also contribute towards supporting an all-year round visitor economy, in accordance with the objectives of Core Policy 5 (Criteria 1-4). It is also the case that they would be smaller and less obtrusive than either touring caravans or larger static caravans.

Accordingly, if it is considered that the camping pods would form part of a well-established camping site (and hence require a countryside location), and that their introduction would not compromise the distinctive character and landscape qualities of the locality, it may be concluded that this element of the overall development is also consistent with Policy DM1.

6.4 **ESCC Highways** – No objection

Whilst the number of pods are increased and given their structure they may lead to an extended tourist season, it is noted that there is currently no restriction on times of year that the campsite can operate.

It is considered that the trip generation of approximately 6 a day from these 3 extra pitches would not be a material increase in traffic. Thus I have no objection to the 3 extra pitches subject to 3 extra parking spaces being provided.

Whilst the application refers to 3 additional parking spaces being provided the parking is only shown on the other submitted application LW/20/0413 for change of use.

Cycle parking and on-site turning facilities are not shown but could be dealt with by conditions along with the parking.

6.5 **Biodiversity Officer** – Recommend for approval subject to conditions:

No designations on the site however number of local wildlife sites in the vicinity and 20m from ancient woodland. Measures to improve ancient woodland buffer together with nature, scale and location of the proposed development means there is unlikely to be any impacts on designated sites and ancient woodland.

Proposal would largely affect poor semi-improved grassland and scattered trees which are to be translocated/ replaced. Parking area to be grasscrete/geocrete and sown with wildflowers and grass seed.

Measures to protect and enhance habitats for protected species acceptable and would result in net gain. Submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is acceptable.

7. **Neighbour Representations**

7.1 Two letters of objection have been received, the contents of which are summarised below:-

- Narrow road with poor visibility. Highway safety concerns. Increase in parking spaces and volume of traffic especially if the site is used for groups and events and the commercial facilities are expanded. HGVs and cars. Travel plan ineffective. No public transport. Highways should be consulted.
- Hardstanding could be used for additional parking beyond what's formally shown if parking is not marked out.
- Disturbance from additional traffic in close proximity to neighbours.
- Request additional screening to protect amenities at White Lodge up to first floor level.

- Overdevelopment of the site resulting in harmful impact upon residential and environmental amenity.
- Proposal contradicts original justification for restricting number of pitches (neighbouring amenity). Number of pitches is in breach of the camp site licence.
- Will result in increased light pollution.
- Noise mitigation measures should be provided.
- Air pollution from fires and additional cars. Cumulative effect with Covid-19.
- Harm to tranquillity, character and appearance of the area.
- Harm to wildlife.
- Loss of privacy and overlooking of neighbouring property including woodland. Buildings visible from neighbouring properties and ancient woodland.
- Increased noise and disturbance due to larger number of campers and year round use supported by camping pods.
- Noise and smoke (from camp fires) resulting in disturbance, air pollution and health problems.
- No complete site plan and number of pitches unclear. Clarity needed on how many people are allowed per pitch.
- Ancient woodland buffer not provided as previously required by condition and infringed by campers.
- Ecology report does not cover light or air pollution.
- Comments received in support are not from people who live in the immediate area.

7.2 Seven letters of support have been received, the contents of which are summarised below:

- Relocation of the campsite reception/ hub further east is welcomed.
- Planting, wildlife enhancement, conservation, eco-tourism, education and a quiet and spacious environment at forefront of site operation.
- Site provides an opportunity for families and others to visit and experience nature. Proposal would provide an area for learning for various groups.
- Other businesses on the site chosen due to their quiet, complementary nature. Lovely peaceful environment to work from. Have never experienced anti-social behaviour or disturbance from traffic or other factors on the site.
- Site is well run and an asset to the local economy/ community with knock on benefits for nearby farm shop, pub and café.

7.3 Officer Response to public representations:

7.3.1 The majority of issues raised are addressed in the main body of this report. It is considered that, provided the site is appropriately managed, noise, light and air emissions can be effectively controlled. Any disturbances can be investigated by Environmental Health Officers. A revised site plan showing the full extent of the site, and including the ancient woodland buffer zone, has been submitted. ESCC Highways have been consulted. The provenance of letters of support is not a material planning condition although it is noted that local businesses, including those with premises on Town Littleworth Road, are among the correspondents.

8. **Appraisal**

8.1 Key Considerations

8.1.1 The main considerations relate to the principle of the use; the impact upon the character and appearance of the area/environment; the amenities of residents and visitors; highway safety; and biodiversity.

8.1.2 Further matters such as light pollution, drainage and heritage are also discussed below.

8.2 Principle

8.2.1 The site is located outside of the planning boundary, as defined in Lewes District Local Plan part 2, and, therefore, development is subject to more stringent control as per policy DM1 of the Local Plan.

8.2.2 The sustainable expansion and enhancement of tourist accommodation facilities, including those that fall outside of the planning boundary, is supported by a number of development plan policies as well as para. 83 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework which states that planning decisions should support the 'the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings' and 'sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.'

8.2.3 This is echoed in policies CP4 and CP5 of the Lewes District Local Plan part one which promote the development of sustainable tourism, support the upgrading and enhancement of existing visitor attractions and encourage the provision of emerging and innovative accommodation offers. Policy CP5 also includes an objective to support a year-round visitor economy.

8.2.4 The site is partially enclosed by ancient woodland. Para. 175 (c) states that 'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons.' The woodland is also identified as a Local Wildlife Site. Policy DM24 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 2 states that 'development which would result in damage or loss to a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance including....Local Wildlife Sites...will only be permitted where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the damage to the

conservation interest of the site and any loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and/or geodiversity’.

- 8.2.5 It is considered that, as the proposed development represents an expansion of an existing tourist accommodation use that supports the rural economy and is an appropriate use, in principle, for a countryside location. The suitability of this expanded use in terms of the considerations and criteria set out in the paragraphs above will be assessed in the main body of this report.

8.3 Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area

- 8.3.1 The overall campsite has a self-contained quality owing to being enclosed by a mix of mature hedgerow and ancient woodland. This landscaping provides an effective screen to the campsite that is also visually sympathetic and wholly compatible with the surrounding environment, indeed its presence is a defining feature of the overall character of the area.
- 8.3.2 The proposed development involves provision of additional camping pitches and modestly sized camping pods. It is not considered that this modest increase would compromise the informal, low density layout of the existing camp site given the amount of space available, the separation maintained between built forms, the maintenance and enhancement of existing landscaping and biodiversity features and the fact that two of the proposed camping pods would be positioned on existing pitches. Furthermore, the additional 3 x car parking spaces would be accommodated within the existing hard surfaced area to the west of the large barn and, as such, would not require additional hard surfacing to be provided.
- 8.3.3 Given the modest increase in intensity of the use its compatibility with the rural environment, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in activity of an intensity or nature that would be unacceptably disruptive or erode the rural tranquillity of the surrounding environment, subject to appropriate management measures that can be put in place and secured by planning condition.
- 8.3.4 The proposed camping pods are timber structures that could be positioned on site without the need for excessive digging or concreting. They could also be easily removed in the event that the camp site use ceased. It is therefore considered that they are compatible with the rural environment. Furthermore, the pods are considered to demonstrate innovative design which is consistent with the stated objective within policy CP5 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 1 to encourage innovative accommodation offers that diversify the forms of visitor accommodation available and, therefore, cater for wider visitor preferences. The provision of additional covered and weathertight structures that would support the development of a year-round visitor economy.
- 8.3.5 The additional camping pitch proposed in the eastern field would replace a compost toilet facility which is adjacent to other pitches, is accessible via the existing mown path network and is in an area

surfaced by regularly maintained semi-improved grassland. As such, the pith would not appear isolated or secluded nor would it require the formation of any additional tracks.

- 8.3.6 It is considered the low density/low scale nature of the development and the natural screening available means that there would be no adverse impact upon the setting of the Grade II Listed property 'The Old Brickhouse'.
- 8.3.7 Given the rural location, the surrounding environment is particularly sensitive to light pollution. Provision of excessive external lighting would undoubtedly detract from the overall tranquillity of the area as well as have an impact on nocturnal wildlife such as bats. A planning condition will therefore be used to prohibit the installation of external lighting other than that for which the specifications have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The proposed camping pods do not incorporate any large openings and it is considered spillage from any internal lighting would be minimal and not to a degree that would compromise night time tranquillity.
- 8.3.8 It is therefore considered that the proposed development would preserve the local landscape, with a level of enhancement also provided through the planting of new hedgerow towards the south-eastern corner of the site. As such, the proposed development is considered to comply with policy CP10 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 1 and policies DM12, DM25 and DM33 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 2.

8.4 Neighbour Amenity:

- 8.4.1 Although the site is in a rural location, there is a cluster of residential properties on adjoining plots of land, these being at 'White Lodge', 'Woodside' and 'The Old Brickhouse' all of which are to the west of the site, flanking the highway.
- 8.4.2 The site has been operated as a campsite for a number of years and no objections have been raised against the proposed works by the Council's Environmental Health Department. The proposed works involve a modest increase in the amount of pitches provided on site. For context, the original permission allowed for 15 x pitches. A restrictive condition was used to prevent expansion as a means to enable control of future expansion of the site but not to prevent it in the event it could be demonstrated it would not result in a harmful impact.
- 8.4.3 It is considered that the proposed development, which will increase the total amount of pitches available to 21, does not represent a significant intensification of use nor support any form of use not currently present on the site. The pitches are sited well away from boundaries shared with neighbouring properties and do not extend outside of the areas that form the existing camp site. The overall operation includes management and facility buildings ensuring there is sufficient site security and that the site can be managed to control noise, light and air emissions. It is noted that amplified music is prohibited as is the use of external lighting.

- 8.4.4 Town Littleworth Road is a quiet and narrow rural lane. It is not considered the marginal increase in the capacity of the camp site would result in a significant and disruptive increase in vehicular movements. It is noted that the new camping pods are of modest size and could not accommodate large groups. The existing condition that prohibits any check in/check out from taking place outside of the hours between 08:00 and 20:00 will be carried over to ensure neighbouring residents are not disturbed by these operations and associated vehicle movements during the night.
- 8.4.5 It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not detract from the amenities of neighbouring residents in an unacceptable way and that the overall site can be well managed through use of the range of management and maintenance facilities provided on site.

8.5 Highways and Transport

- 8.5.1 The proposed development would result in a net increase of 3 camping pitches on the site. The amount of pitches for tents would decrease by 1 (with 2 existing pitches being removed and 1 new pitch being provided) meaning the increase would be in the form of the proposed camping pods, which are relatively small and would not support occupation by large groups.
- 8.5.2 It is therefore considered that any increase in vehicular traffic would be minimal and, as such, there would be no unacceptable disruption on the surrounding highway network. The existing access is considered suitable for continued use without modification and an additional 3 car parking spaces would be provided to ensure there is ample space on site for vehicles to park as well as space for turning and passing. As such, vehicles will be able to enter and leave the site in forward gear and would not come into conflict when manoeuvring, thereby preventing potential for vehicles needing to back onto Town Littleworth Road and presenting a highway and pedestrian hazard. In addition, two new passing bays would be formed on the access road in order to minimise conflict between vehicles entering and leaving the site and mitigating risk of vehicles entering the site reversing back onto the highway to allow vehicles leaving the site to pass.
- 8.5.3 The effective management of check in and check out times would help control of traffic both on site and on the surrounding highway network. A Travel Plan has been provided. This includes details of how customers would be made area of train services available at Cooksbridge Station (approx. 2.9 km to the south of the site). It is also draws attention to the surrounding footpath network which provides leisure opportunities for customers as well as connectivity with nearby settlements which may reduce demand on the use of motor vehicles.
- 8.5.4 ESCC Highways have confirmed that they have no concerns relating to increase in traffic or in relation to highway safety.

8.5.5 The track bed of the former Lewes to East Grinstead railway line bisects the site. Unlike to former Lewes to Uckfield line, there is no long term plan in place to protect the route in anticipation of a restoration of rail services. However, policy DM17 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 2 does seek to maintain the route to support informal recreational uses, such as walking, cycling and horse-riding. The proposed development would not compromise this objective and would, in fact, support it as customers may wish to walk or cycle along the route.

8.6 Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

- 8.6.1 The proposed works do not involve any extensive digging or concreting and, given the modest size of the camping pods, a minimal amount of grassland would be impacted. The areas of the site where works would be carried out comprise semi-improved and amenity grass areas that are regularly mown and maintained and, therefore, do not have a notable value in terms of biodiversity.
- 8.6.2 The site is flanked by ancient woodland to the north and south. This woodland is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site (a non-statutory designation for sites that contain features of substantive nature conservation value). A condition attached to the original approval for use as a camp site (LW/11/1500) stipulates that a 15 metre wide buffer zone shall be maintained around the fringes of the woodland and that no camping pitch should encroach into this area. The proposed scheme would not compromise this buffer zone and the condition will be carried over to any approval given to ensure the zone is maintained in order to minimise impact upon the woodland/local wildlife sites.
- 8.6.3 The applicant has submitted an Ecological Assessment which includes a comprehensive habitat survey, identifying the presence of any protective species and setting out mitigation and enhancement measures to ensure that the overall biodiversity value of the site is protected and improved.
- 8.6.4 The presence of Great Crested Newts in nearby ponds has been identified. Grass snakes, slow worms and common lizard are also known to be present on site. The Ecological Assessment sets out measures to protect reptiles during construction, noting that only a small area of semi-improved/amenity grassland will be affected. If grass cutting required to support the development is carried out between March and October (when Great Crested Newts and other reptiles are active) then it would be carried out under the supervision of an ecologist.
- 8.6.5 Ecological enhancements incorporated include the planting of a new native hedging in the south-western corner of the site. This would connect with the existing hedgerow running along the southern site boundary. In addition, an area of land currently used for growing vegetables and for ornamental planting and amenity grass would be replanted with a meadow mixture and managed as a mosaic of habitats, with both long grass including tussock forming species and a greater diversity of flowering species.

- 8.6.6 With specific regard to Great Crested Newts, the pond in the south-eastern corner of the western field would Pond 2 would be increased in depth in its eastern extent in order to extend the period it holds water and increase the depth to give suitability for breeding Great Crested Newts.
- 8.6.7 A management programme is also provided. This includes details of how pond and grassland habitats will be maintained and how the trimming of trees and hedgerow, for example to maintain site accessibility, will be performed outside of the bird nesting season as far as practicable and, if required during the bird nesting season, works would be supervised by an ecologist.
- 8.6.8 The proposed development does not include any external lighting. As such, the night time tranquillity of the wider surrounding area would be maintained and there would be no harmful impact upon nocturnal wildlife.
- 8.6.9 The ESCC Ecologist has stated that 'provided the recommended mitigation measures are implemented, there are unlikely to be any significant ecological impacts. The proposed enhancements will result in a net gain for biodiversity. It is therefore recommended that the proposals can be supported from an ecological perspective.'

9. **Human Rights Implications**

- 9.1 The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

10. **Recommendation**

- 10.1 It is recommended that the application is approved subject to the conditions listed below. These included the conditions attached to the original planning approval (LW/11/1500), which will be modified as necessary, and additional conditions relating to control of external lighting and management of the site.

10.2 Conditions

1. The additional landscaping shown approved plan SCC-LUM002 Rev 02 and specified within the Ecological Assessment produced by Bakerwell and dated June 2020 shall be fully implemented in the first planting season, following the formation of the additional pitches hereby approved and completed strictly in accordance with the approved details. This includes evergreen planting to screen Woodside which shall be maintained to a minimum height of 1.8 metres to screen the proposed car parking area as approved under application LW/12/0593/CD.

Reason: In the interest of visual and environmental amenity and providing an ecological gain in accordance with policy CP10 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 1, policies DM12, DM14, DM17, DM25 and DM27 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 2

2. The buffer zone with the adjacent semi-natural ancient woodland, as indicated on approved plan SCC-LUM002 Rev 02 shall be maintained for the perpetuity of the development and shall not be encroached by campsite pitches unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of protecting surrounding habitat in accordance with policy CP10 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 1, policy DM24 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 2 and section 15 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Check-in and check-out times for the campsite shall be restricted from 08:00 hours to 20:00 only, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to manage activity and noise in accordance with policy CP11 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 1 and policies DM20 and DM23 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 2.

4. The development hereby permitted shall be limited to a maximum of 21 separate campsite pitches, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To limit the amount of development on site with regards to neighbouring amenities and the character and appearance of the countryside, in accordance with policies CP10 and CP11 of the Lewes District Local Plan part one and policies DM12, DM25 and DM27 of the Lewes District Local Plan part two.

5. The additional pitches hereby approved shall not be occupied until the parking spaces shown on approved plan SCC-LUM002 Rev 02 have been provided in accordance with the approved plan and the areas shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be used other than for the parking of motor vehicles. Each parking space must measure a minimum of 2.5 metres in width by 5 metres in length (with an additional 0.5 metres added if abutting a wall). The remaining hard surfaced area shall be kept free from obstructions in order to allow for the turning and passing of vehicles.

Reason: In the interest of preserving the character of the surrounding area, the movement of traffic and highway safety in accordance with policies CP10 and CP11 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 1, policy DM25 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 2 and paras. 102, 108 and 109 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

6. The additional camping pitches hereby approved shall not be occupied until secure and covered cycle parking has been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with policy CP13 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 1 and para.108 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

7. The ecological enhancement and mitigation measures set out in the Ecological Appraisal produced by Bakerwell and dated June 2020 shall be

carried out prior to the occupation of any of the additional pitches hereby approved (with the exception of planting which shall be carried out during the first planting season following first occupation) and shall be maintained in place and managed in accordance with the details provided throughout the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interest of preserving and enhancing biodiversity in accordance with policy CP10 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 1, policy DM24 of the Lewes District Local Plan part 2 and para. 170 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

8. No external lighting shall be installed on any buildings or within any part of the site unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to maintain the night time tranquillity of the surrounding rural environment in accordance with policy CP10 of the Lewes District Local Plan Part 1, policies DM20 and DM25 of the Lewes District Local Plan Part 2, and paras. 170 and 180 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

9. The additional camping pitches hereby approved shall not be occupied until the passing places indicated on plan number SCB-LUM012 Rev01 have been provided in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: In order to safeguard the safety and amenity of neighbours and other road user in accordance with policy DM25 of the Lewes District Local and the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1. All waste material arising from any site clearance, demolition, preparation and construction activities should be stored, remove from the site and disposed of in an appropriate manner. It is offence to burn trade waste.
2. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by engaging with stakeholders, visiting the site and neighbouring properties to get a better understanding of the operation and issues, seeking further information to address concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

PLAN TYPE	DATE RECEIVED	REFERENCE
Site Location Plan	3 July 2020	1:2500
Site Plan Proposals	25 August 2020	SCC-LUM002 Rev 02
Proposed Elevations	3 July 2020	SCB-LUM003 Rev 01

PLAN TYPE	DATE RECEIVED	REFERENCE
Structure #1 - Okra		
Proposed Elevations Structure #2 - Cru	3 July 2020	SCB-LUM003 Rev 01
Proposed Elevations Structure #3 - Fuselage	3 July 2020	SCB-LUM003 Rev 01
Proposed Elevations Structure #4 - Ina	3 July 2020	SCB-LUM003 Rev 01
Proposed Access Road Improvements	11 February 2021	SCB-LUM012 Rev01
Ecological Assessment	3 July 2020	Produced by Bakerwell. Dated June 2020

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

11. Background Papers

11.1 None.