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Design and Access Statement

On the 18th of March 2014 we received permission (SMD/2014/0017) to carry out works to set up facilities for our certified site with the Camping and Caravanning Club. A significant part of the works was to install a 200m land drain with stone backfill to improve drainage on the site. Since opening the site we have received good reviews on the site, its location and facilities.

Over the Easter weekend we had a full site with visitors from various parts of the country. Unfortunately, due to the wet weather over the previous weeks and despite the 200m land drain the field was very boggy. Moving vehicles/caravans on and off site was very difficult, with cars/caravans sinking and getting stuck etc (pictures below). As a result the field was damaged and needed time to repair, so we had to turn away other booked visitors until the field dried out sufficiently and recovered to a point where vehicles could drive onto the site again.



Proposed Access Track/Pitches

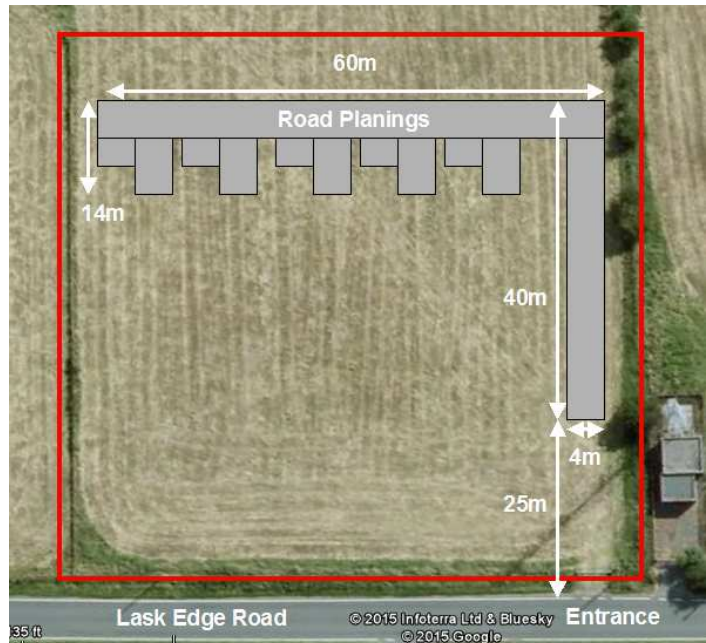
Due to the issues stated above I'm submitting an application for an access track and five pitches for the caravans. The access track would start after the grasscrete entrance and 25m from Lask Edge Road. This would bring the proposal inline with the requirements of access tracks on agricultural land which are approved under permitted development law.

Proposed Dimensions

As stated the access track would start 25m from the closest classified road (Lask Edge Road). The width would be 4m with a 40m run followed by a bend and then another 60m run. The caravan pitches would also be 4m wide with a length of 10m. Bays (2.5m x 4m) for cars to keep the access track clear.

Proposed Material

Road planings are the proposed material. The Environment Agency states "*We want to encourage the use of road planings on tracks and roads*" and it's the most financially viable material that will blend best into the appearance of the field.



Alternative Materials/Solutions Which Were Considered

As per my discussions with the planning department for my original application to set up the caravan site and install a grasscrete entrance I have considered other materials/methods to address the issue. From the experience installing the grasscrete entrance costing £1500 for 14m it's not financially viable for such a small caravan site to justify the investment in a grasscrete track of 100m. Plastic grass mesh cannot address the issue as it specifically states it will not work on wet grounds where 'pumping' will occur.

Impact On The Green Belt

I understand the planning departments position on the protection of the Green Belt. The original plan was to improve field drainage which would hopefully provide a dry/durable surface without the need for an access track. While there is clearly some impact on the green belt with this proposal it's fairly insignificant compared to the roughly 730m of access tracks in the neighbouring fields which were approved within recent years (SMD/2013/0538). Also 1200 willow trees which are now over a year old and established will provide screening to the site.

Impact On The Greenbelt (continued)

While there is some impact on the openness of the Green Belt I believe the benefits to local tourism provide very special circumstances which outweigh the potential impact.

I'm aware that (SMD/2013/0538) was approved under Agricultural Permitted Development rights and that this application requires full planning permission. Agricultural Permitted Development rights are used to support the local dairy industry, however, as the council encourages tourism and states that tourism is a significant and growing factor of our local economy the proposal would be in line with its core strategy.

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy – March 26th 2014

The Core Strategy states that the Staffordshire Moorlands has been moving away from traditional industries such as agriculture to service industries such as tourism:

- *"Tourism also plays an important role in supporting the local economy through both its job creation (providing diverse employment opportunities that support about 3000 jobs in the District) and direct/indirect visitor spend."*
- *"Economic development needs to recognise the contribution which the rural area can make to the District's economy with a major role for tourism in terms of providing opportunities for jobs, attracting investment and bringing in wealth."*
- *"Whilst continuing to protect, manage and enhance the quality of the District's physical, natural and historic environment including its biodiversity is crucial, there is also opportunity to capitalise on the built and natural assets of the District and its heritage to maximise the quality of life for local residents, attract new investment and achieve economic benefits through tourism."*
- *"Tourism will be a key element in the diversification of the District's economy and will also contribute significantly to raising the environmental quality and the regeneration of the District."*
- *"The Council has undertaken a Tourism Study which highlights that the District has the potential and capacity to attract more visitors and to create more jobs in this sector."*

Impact On Tourism And Other Local Businesses

Visitors to our caravan site frequently use the local shops in Biddulph Moor and the local pub The Rose and Crown. Our caravan site is the closest touring caravan site to the village. Visitors to the caravan site will also be encouraged to use our neighbours tearoom currently under construction (SMD/2014/0215) which is only a 200m walk from our caravan site.

Summary

Currently the caravan site is open from March 1st to October 31st, however our recent experience over Easter is indicating that the number of months the site can remain open will be reduced with potential closures even during the summer months due to the unpredictable British weather.

The access track and pitches would enable the caravan site to accept visitors 12 months of the year and could potentially make a significant contribution to tourism spend in the local area.

Your Sincerely
Christopher Scott