
From: planningcomments@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories:

Application Reference No. : SMD/2025/0312 Site Address: The Foxlowe Market Place Leek Staffordshire ST13 6AD
Leek Comments by: David Barnes

From:

Cobbs House
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Submission: Objection

Comments: I have been a volunteer at The Foxlowe ever since it started in 2011 and have (I hope) contributed to its continuing success over the past 14 years. It is a thriving part of the Leek community and I have been proud to support it. While I feel that an increased capacity for the events will attract new and possibly more well known artists, I do wonder how much thought has gone into this and how frequently the new 350 seater venue will be filled to capacity. How many times a year will that number be reached and how many times will that figure need to be reached to ensure it breaks even on an annual basis. I do not know if any costings have been made; inevitably this means ticket prices will increase substantially and could this put off people attending the venue. What additional costs be required to bring the new venue up to a standard required of it. Will the new venue be used for the film theatre as well - what will it be like with say only 70 people in a 350 seater venue - rather like going to the Odeon on a wet Thursday afternoon, with little or no atmosphere?

The construction of the new venue will inevitably mean the closure of the car park and this may put people off coming to the Foxlowe, whether it be for the cafe, the gallery, other morning/afternoon events and weekend events. Will provision be made for volunteers who regularly come to help at the Foxlowe? What about those who work in the hub - will they be guaranteed parking spaces? The argument that there is plenty of under used car parking close to the Foxlowe is fallacious, people do not like to pay for parking in Leek or anywhere else. I would estimate that during the construction period, there may be a substantial drop in income, which could mean the difference between profit and loss for however long it takes to complete the construction. There is also the potential loss of all or part of the garden which volunteers have put in hundreds of hours to make a wonderful green space. It is one of the major attractions to the Foxlowe.

I do not know how the project is to be funded, but it concerns me that it has not been costed - at least I have seen no figures recently - but I do wonder if the Foxlowe is overstretching itself financially. How is it to be financed?

What I do support is the improved access for the upper floor for disabled people, this has been a sore point for many visitors to the Foxlowe over the years.

Overall, I do not support the application, although I would certainly like to see projected cost/income figures for the project over a 10 year timeframe.

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