

Application Number:	P/FUL/2022/02660
Webpage:	https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/
Site address:	Fishing Lake Charity Farm Litton Cheney DT2 9AP
Proposal:	Continued use of agricultural land as a camping site, Retention of static caravan, log cabin for use as farm/site shop and café, WC shed, storage building, laying of hard standing and tracks for internal access and parking - Erect shower/toilet block
Applicant name:	Dean and Romans
Case Officer:	Thomas Whild
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Roberts

1.0 The application has been brought to committee at the request of the Service Manager for Development Management and Enforcement as the case officer's recommendation is contrary to the views of the parish council.

2.0 Summary of recommendation: Refuse planning permission for the reasons set out at the end of this report.

3.0 Reason for the recommendation:

- The principle of development is only supported insofar as there would not be a harmful impact upon the landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Notwithstanding the landscape assessment and proposed planting it is considered that the proposed development has a harmful impact upon the landscape and special character of the Dorset AONB.
- The economic benefits associated with the development are relatively modest and are not considered sufficient to outweigh the harmful landscape impacts in this instance.

4.0 Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	The establishment and expansion of camping and caravan sites is only supported insofar as the development would not harm the landscape. In light of identified landscape harm the proposals are not considered acceptable.
Design, character, landscape and visual impacts	The site is highly visible in the landscape and would result in a harmful impact upon the landscape and visual beauty of the Dorset

	AONB which would not be adequately mitigated by the proposed mitigation.
Economic benefits	There would be economic benefits through job creation and the contribution to the local economy. However, taking into consideration the size of the site and the number of jobs created the benefits would be relatively modest.
Highways	The site provides an appropriate and safe access arrangement and there is no objection from the Highways officer.
Amenity	Owing to the site's location and the scale of the development it is not considered that the development will have an unacceptable impact upon amenity.
Biodiversity	Notwithstanding the conclusion of the biodiversity survey, the proposal falls within the scope of the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol. No biodiversity plan has been provided.

5.0 Description of Site

- 5.1 The application site comprises an undeveloped, flat, agricultural field which is located on the south side of a rural road (Litton Lane) which leads through Litton Cheney valley to the south west of Litton Cheney Village. A large fishing lake lies to the south of the application site and on land within the applicant's ownership. This was granted planning permission along with a new vehicular access track along the western boundary leading from Litton Lane to a hardstanding area for the parking of 12no. vehicles and a fisherman's hut immediately to the east of this area. The fisherman's hut and the vehicular access are all situated within the confines of the current application site although the former has since been removed from the site.
- 5.2 The site is set in an isolated location within the open countryside at approximately 700m from Litton Cheney village. The application site is partially bounded by hedgerows. There is some tree planting and a hedgerow along the northern boundary of the site fronting the rural lane. Although it is partly enclosed by trees along the southern and western boundaries, there is no boundary treatment along the eastern boundary.
- 5.3 The site lies within the AONB and outside any defined development boundary (DDB). The site occupies a central position within Bride Valley which sits between the coast and the A35 and is therefore within uninterrupted panoramic views of the valley from higher ground. The LCA describes the Bride Valley as "clay valley floor has an intimate and tranquil character with small regular pastures, dense hedgerows, and ribbons of wet woodland. A network of rural winding lanes connects a series of small nucleated villages of limestone and thatch with locally

prominent churches along the valley sides and isolated manor houses along the valley floor. The open valley sides are more arable in character with larger fields and blocks of occasional broadleaved woodland". One of the defining characteristics of Bride Valley is its "continuous patchwork of regular neutral pastures along valley floor with larger fields of arable on open valley sides with patches of scrub and calcareous/limestone grassland on steeper slopes". There are a number of public rights of way within the vicinity of the site. Notably, Footpath W12/8 which lies some 270m to the south east in the adjacent field and bridleway W12/11, located to the north west of the site.

- 5.4 The development that this application is seeking planning permission for currently exists on the site. The retrospective nature of the application is however in itself not a factor which can influence the determination of this application.

6.0 Description of Development

- 6.1 The proposal comprises the use of the site for camping, which comprises a total of 29 camping and touring caravan pitches, together with internal access tracks and parking areas, the construction of a log cabin for use as a site shop and café, new buildings to provide a shower / wc block and a storage building and the siting of a static caravan to be used as manager's accommodation.
- 6.2 The application is partially retrospective. The use of the land as a campsite has been ongoing for 2 years and the associated access tracks and car parking have already been created. The static caravan is on site, although it is understood that this is not currently in use, and the shop/café has been constructed and is in use.
- 6.3 The proposed shower and WC block has not yet been constructed. During a visit to the site, it was also evident that there are some additional unauthorised activities on the site including a touring caravan which is occupied by the site manager. The applicant has advised that this is to be removed if planning permission is granted. There is also an area of the site that is in use for the sale of pots and plants. The applicant has provided an updated site plan which sets out the extent of this activity.
- 6.4 The application follows a previously refused retrospective application to regularise the camping use of the site. That application was more limited in its scope however and did not include the café/shop, or the unauthorised sales use which have been carried out without planning consent since that application was refused.

7.0 Relevant Planning History

WD/D/20/001114 Decision: REF Decision Date: 14/04/2021

Change of use of agricultural land to caravan and camping site. Siting of a mobile home for permanent residential occupation by site manager. Construction of hardcore access track for caravans and parking. Construction of small fish "stocking lake" (retrospective)

1/W/06/000310 Decision: GRA Decision Date: 05/05/2006

Create fishing lake with fisherman's hut and 12No parking spaces. Construct new vehicular access

8.0 List of Constraints

- Landscape Character; Clay Valley; Bride Valley
- Land Outside DDBs
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: (statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of their landscapes - National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 & Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000)
- Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 30
- Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 100
- Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 1000
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (5km buffer): Chesil & The Fleet (UK0017076); - Distance: 3502.87
- Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Area
- Minerals and Waste - Sand and Gravel

9.0 Consultations

9.1 All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

Consultation Responses	No Objection	Object	Brief Summary of Comments
Town or Parish Council			<p>Litton Cheney Parish Council met to consider this application on 12 July. The meeting was well attended by 50 members of the public.</p> <p>At the meeting it was clear that many locals visit the lakeside for leisure/recreational use and enjoy its environment. The site therefore provides an important community resource within walking distance of Litton Cheney. The café is also used by passing walkers and cyclists and has been visited by a care home and the local school. The facilities are free for the local community use but the</p>

			<p>lake is subsidised by camping and the café.</p> <p>The development provides employment and supports farm diversification. The local PH and nursery also benefit from the business, especially since the Youth Hostel closed.</p> <p>It is essential to conserve the quality of the AONB landscape for future generations and the PC shares local objectors', AONB and Landscape Consultee concerns about the visual impact of the campsite and notes their comments. However, the PC feels these need to be balanced against local benefits and can be mitigated by appropriate landscaping and the fact the camp site will not be used for camping during winter when the site is more visible within the landscape.</p> <p>The Parish Council concluded that, in this case, landscape concerns are outweighed by the advantages set out above. Litton Cheney therefore SUPPORTS this application subject to conditions/legal agreement set out below. The agent/applicants have confirmed to the Parish Council that these would be acceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operation of the campsite shall be restricted to 1 April to 30 September.• There shall be no more than 30 caravans and tents in total on the site at any one time.• There shall be no overwinter storage of caravans.• The landscape mitigation strategy as shown in plan 678/01 shall be implemented
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			<p>in full during the first available planting season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The static caravan shall only be occupied by the manager of the site during the period 1 April to 30 September. • The static caravan shall be removed from the site should the campsite cease to operate. • In accordance with Local Plan Policy ECON8 (camping and caravan sites), the diversified business (in this case the campsite) is tied to the parent farm (Charity Farm). <p>The Parish Council considers the above restrictions to be essential and, should the LPA be unable to achieve them via use of conditions/legal undertakings attached to any grant of planning permission, the PC would wish to review its position of support.</p>
Ward Member(s)			No comments received.
Highways Officer	x		
Natural Environment Team			<p>The application is within the scope of the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol (DBAP) criteria which includes all development sites of 0.1 ha and over. If they have not done so already, we recommend that the applicant engage with a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist to conduct an Ecological Impact Assessment and submit a Biodiversity Plan (BP) to DC NET. We would then review the BP to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation, NPPF (2021) and that</p>

			biodiversity enhancements/ net gain are secured.
Landscape officer		X	<p>The development site is located in the Bride River Valley in open farmland within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).</p> <p>I consider that, as currently proposed, the development is likely to have an adverse landscape and visual impact and that it has not been properly evidenced that this adverse landscape and visual impact can be adequately mitigated through the proposed layout and the implementation and maturation of mitigatory planting.</p> <p>As a consequence I consider that the proposed development fails to comply with the requirements of national and local planning policy relevant to landscape and visual considerations and that it is not in accordance with the planning guidelines and objectives of the AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>I am therefore unable to support the planning application.</p>
Building Control			<p>There are no Building Regulations applications associated with this location. Should the planning permission be granted, retrospective submissions will be required for regularisation of any controllable buildings.</p>
Dorset AONB Team		X	<p>The AONB Team notes that the proposal follows application WD/D/20/001114, which was refused. The application now provides a landscape appraisal and planted mitigation. Furthermore, the following differences are noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The previous application showed a central grassed area for camping and parking,

			<p>whereas the latest plans indicate regularly spaced pitches running around the edge of the field. N.B. It is stated that there are 20 grass pitches and 10 'winter pitches', which utilise a reinforced mesh. However, the number of pitches shown on the plans totals 29.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A toilet/shower block is now included, to the west of the stocking lake, close to Litton Lane.• A relatively substantial new area of car parking, with storage shed, is included to the north of the site manager's caravan.• A café/shop is included in the southern portion of the site, close to the lake.• It is now stated that the static caravan would be occupied on a seasonal basis, from 1 April – 30 September, whereas year-round occupation had been previously proposed. <p>Overall, the above amendments do not tend to suggest that the impacts of the development would be substantively reduced, as compared to the refused application. Rather, the introduction of further areas of parking, alongside structures such as the storage shed and café/shop, have added to the landscape and visual effects of the unpermitted development within the site since our review of the refused application.</p>
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Economic growth and regeneration	X		<p>We support the diversification of farm businesses and redundant farm buildings which incorporate benefits to local employment and enhances former agricultural business opportunity within rural Dorset</p> <p>The current employment references two full time posts and part time posts. The expansion of the business with increased facilities would create further job opportunity.</p> <p>The current business supports tourism as a key sector of Dorset's Economy, and also the Food & Drink sector in supplying locally sourced food and drink to the farm shop and the opportunity to increase business at other farm shops within the local community.</p>
Environmental protection			No comment from environmental protection.
Wessex Water	X		<p>Wessex Water has no objections to this application and can advise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an existing 225mm public foul sewer crossing the site which must be accurately plotted. Wessex Water require unrestricted access at all times for repair and maintenance activities. • The planning authority will need to be satisfied that soakaways will work and arrangements are clear for any shared obligations. There must be no surface water connections to the foul sewer network.

Natural England	X		
Housing Improvement Team			<p>I would recommend the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The static caravan for seasonal managers occupation has a specific condition restricting use for residential occupation. • A condition restricting the use of the campsite to the period 1st April to 30th September. • A condition restricting the maximum number of units to 29. • If planning permission is granted, an application for a tent site licence will need to be made and the relevant site licence conditions complied with.

Representations received

Total - Objections	Total - No Objections	Total - Comments
4	59	1

Petitions Objecting	Petitions Supporting
0	1
0 Signatures	0 Signatures

9.2 In addition to the comments set out above, a total of 64 third party comments have been received – 4 in objection, 59 in support and 1 making comments.

9.3 Points raised in support of the application are:

- Contribution the site makes to the local economy and jobs.
- Site is well managed and looked after with a clear investment made by the owners.

- Site owners are respectful of the quiet nature of the village.
- The site is an oasis of peace and tranquillity.
- The site is a valuable facility for the community given the village does not have a shop or bus services.
- Low environmental impact of the recreational activities.
- Refusal of planning permission may lead to further issues for the village if the pub could not survive.
- While the site can be seen it doesn't harm the valley.
- Vehicle movements are inconsequential.
- The employment the site brings should outweigh the AONBs concerns.
- The campsite helps to support the pub.

9.4 Points raised in objection are:

- Landscape impacts and visibility of the site.
- Potential for the development to establish a precedent.
- The camping ground is a scar on the landscape.
- The mitigation proposals will take several years to establish.
- Concern that the creeping development of the site has been allowed to occur without planning permission and action is needed to prevent further damage.
- The visual impact of the site is significant with the site standing out in the landscape.
- Enhancements will lead to more visitors and traffic through Long Bredy where the roads are already collapsing at the edges and where the roads form part of the national cycle way network.

10.0 Relevant Policies

Adopted West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan:

10.1 The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

- INT1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- ENV1 - Landscape, seascape & sites of other geological interest
- ENV2 - Wildlife and habitats
- ENV5 - Flood risk

- ENV10 - The landscape and townscape setting
- ENV 12 - The design and positioning of buildings
- ENV 16 - Amenity
- SUS2 - Distribution of development
- ECON7 - Caravan and camping sites
- ECON8 - Diversification of land-based rural businesses
- COM7 - Creating a safe & efficient transport network
- COM9 - Parking provision
- HOUS6 - Other residential development outside defined development boundaries.

Other Material Considerations

Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance

Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment

Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

WDDC Design & Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines (2009)

Weymouth & Portland Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (2002)

Landscape Character Assessment February 2009 (West Dorset)

National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4. Decision taking: Para 38 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Section 5 'Delivering a sufficient supply of homes' outlines the government's objective in respect of land supply with subsection 'Rural housing' at paragraphs 79-80 reflecting the requirement for development in rural areas.

- Section 6 'Building a strong, competitive economy', paragraphs 84 and 85 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy' promotes the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, through conversion of existing buildings, the erection of well-designed new buildings, and supports sustainable tourism and leisure developments where identified needs are not met by existing rural service centres.
- Section 11 'Making effective use of land'
- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 126 – 136 advise that:
 - The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
 - It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.
 - Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.
- Section 14 'Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change'
- Section 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'- In Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty (para 176). Decisions in Heritage Coast areas should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation (para 178). Paragraphs 179-182 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.
- Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'- When considering designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance (para 199). The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account (para 203).

11.0 Human rights

- Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

- Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.
- The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

11. This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

12.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty

12.1 As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

12.2 Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The proposals incorporate measures to provide for persons with a disability through a dedicated disabled WC and shower.

13.0 Financial benefits

What	Amount / value
Material Considerations	
Job Creation	2 FTE jobs created (existing), rising to 3 FTE with proposed works
Non Material Considerations - None	

14.0 Climate Implications

14.1 There will be additional CO2 emissions as a result of travel to and from the site and from the operation of the café on the site.

15.0 Planning Assessment

Principle of development

15.1 The application is made for retrospective planning permission to regularise the unauthorised change of use of the land to a permanent campsite, which has involved the laying of an internal access road and a static caravan to serve as a site manager’s accommodation and the construction of a log cabin which is used as a café/shop. In addition to regularisation of the unauthorised development the

application proposes the construction of a new shower block to be provided in the north western corner of the site.

- 15.2 The site is located in the open countryside outside of any defined development boundary and is therefore in a location where policy SUS2 indicates that development will be strictly controlled, having particular regard to the need for the protection of the countryside and environmental constraints. The policy does list a number of potentially acceptable forms of development in rural areas which include farm diversification, tourism and recreational and leisure related development. However, proposals for these are to be considered in the context of the environmental constraints of the site and other policies of the plan.
- 15.3 Policy ECON7 specifically relates to the provision of new camping and caravan sites and states that these will be supported but only insofar as they do not individually or cumulatively have a significant adverse impact on the distinctive characteristics of the areas landscape, heritage or built environment. In view of the concerns expressed by both the Dorset AONB team and the Council's Senior Landscape Architect which are considered further below this requirement cannot be said to have been met and the principle of development is not therefore accepted.
- 15.4 The application also includes a café/farm shop (which has already been constructed) and a static caravan to be used as manager's accommodation. The static caravan is already present on site but is not currently occupied. The caravan is stated to be required for the management of the campsite as well as for overseeing the lake and providing for security and emergencies. However, it is noted that the use of the lake is year-round while the managers accommodation would only be during the period of camping, and it is stated in the Design and Access Statement that wild-swimming, which forms a significant portion of the use is a predominantly winter activity. Based upon the limited justification that has been provided it is not considered that an essential need for the manager's accommodation has been demonstrated, particularly given that the main camping use is considered to be contrary to policy.
- 15.5 The cafe may be considered as a tourist facility given the close relationship with the other activities on the site. Policy ECON 5 encourages new tourist facilities, particularly where they would provide wider community benefits such as through the provision of a new recreational facility which would be used by the local community. It also states that development should, where possible be located within or close to established settlements or make use of existing or replacement buildings. In this case there are a significant number of comments which indicate that the café element of the scheme does provide some wider community benefits. The café does not however utilise an existing or replacement building, instead being located in a new, purpose built building which has been constructed with neither planning or building regulations approval.

15.6 In respect of the manager's accommodation, the location of the property is such that additional residential accommodation would not normally be supported in accordance with policy SUS2. Policy HOUS6 does allow for new housing for rural workers where it can be demonstrated that there is an essential need for a worker to live at or near their place of work. Given the relatively limited scale of the campsite use and the supplementary presence of the site shop in addition to the manager's accommodation and the restrictions on overnight vehicle movements referred to in the design and access statement it is not considered that the essential need for a residential presence on the site has been demonstrated or that these functions could not be provided through the use of alternative accommodation.

Design, character and Landscape and visual impacts

- 5.7 The site is located within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is within the Bride Valley landscape character area. The Landscape Character assessment notes important features of the area as including the intimate and tranquil character of the clay valley floor, with a continuous patchwork of small regular neutral pastures, and the road network of rural winding lanes with an intimate character. The intrusive impact of car parks and visitor based development is noted as a negative feature within the landscape character area.
- 15.8 The Dorset AONB management plan identifies recreation and traffic from residents and visitors as well as high visitor numbers as being key pressures on the AONB, with consequential impacts upon the landscape and rural character, with pressure for additional camping uses being specifically identified as a pressure. In this context the objectives for the AONB as set out in the management plan identify that development which supports and enhances the AONB will be supported, but that where development does not support or enhance the AONB it will only be supported if the development can be demonstrated to be necessary and in the public interest (objective C1). Objective C4g of the management plan specifically seeks to protect the AONB from overprovision of visitor accommodation, including camping, caravanning and glamping where existing development weakens the character and appearance of the countryside.
- 15.9 Comments have been received from both the Dorset AONB team and the Council's senior landscape architect. The AONB team notes that in comparison to the recently refused application for the site, there are a number of changes with the current application which include the provision of a landscape appraisal and planted mitigation but also additional physical works (both proposed and retrospective) including a toilet block, car parking and café/shop. The AONB Team comments that, notwithstanding the additional landscape planting shown, there are additional landscape impacts from the new development.

- 15.10 The AONB Team also notes that the assessment carried out in the landscape appraisal underlines the impact that the development has had – comparing the ‘excellent’ value of the wider landscape with the ‘fair’ quality of the site, and therefore considers that the baseline position should not be the current development on the ground, given that significant proportions have been carried out without planning consent. These comments also raise concerns as to the fundamental suitability of the site for an enterprise of the scale and nature that has been implemented on the site. In particular, these concerns are held with regard to the camping and touring caravan element, and, to a lesser extent the expansion of recreational activities at the lake.
- 15.11 In considering the proposed landscape mitigation measures the AONB team is concerned that the mitigation would not overcome the visual impact of the development, in particular from the elevated view points to the north of the site. They also comment that the approach of relying on as yet unrealised screening in order to achieve consent for unpermitted development which would otherwise be regarded as unacceptable, would not optimally manage the AONB for its conservation and enhancement.
- 15.12 The Senior Landscape Architect has commented that they are unable to support the application as they consider that as currently proposed the development is likely to have an adverse landscape and visual impact and that it has not been properly evidenced that this adverse landscape and visual impact can be adequately mitigated through the proposed layout and the implementation and maturation of mitigatory planting. The landscape officer has provided a comparison of the scheme to the previously refused proposals for the site (ref: WD/D/20/00114) which sought retrospective planning consent for the camping/caravan use, hard standing and manager’s accommodation and which was refused on the basis of its landscape impact.
- 15.13 In their assessment the Senior Landscape Architect notes that the submitted landscape and visual appraisal does not contain accurate visual representations or verifiable visual montages to support the assertions that the landscaping proposals would be successful in reducing the landscape and visual impacts to the level of ‘slight adverse’ or neutral within a 10 year period. The Landscape Architect ultimately concludes that in order to achieve a suitable level of mitigation the planting would need to be of a greater depth than the 5m currently proposed and would need to be supported by the augmentation of field boundary hedgerows to the north of the site and additional tree planting.
- 15.14 In concluding, the Senior Landscape Architect states that they consider that the proposals would not contribute to enhancing the natural and local environment and would detract from local landscape character, while the mitigation measures proposed would be insufficient. They also comment that the siting, alignment, design, scale, mass and materials of the buildings do not complement or respect

the character of the surrounding area and that the activities at the site would detract from the tranquillity and sense of remoteness. It is therefore concluded by the Senior Landscape Officer that the development would be likely to have a significant adverse impact on the distinctive characteristics of the area's landscape in a form which would not be in keeping with the rural character of the area.

- 15.15 At the time that the site was visited the camping area was not fully occupied with only a relatively small number of tents and touring caravans being present. However, those elements were clearly visible within the landscape, in particular from the elevated viewpoints to the north of the site. This is also confirmed in the viewpoints which have been provided by the applicant in the landscape appraisal.
- 15.16 In light of the concerns expressed by both the AONB team and the council's Senior Landscape officer it is considered that in their current form the proposals do have a harmful impact upon the landscape and that this will continue if the proposal were to be allowed. In view of this, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to policy ENV1 of the local plan as it would harm the character, special qualities and natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (criterion i). The proposal is also considered to fail against criterion ii of policy ENV1 which requires that development should be located and designed so that it does not detract from local landscape character, and states that where development would significantly adversely affect the character or visual quality of the local landscape, it will not be permitted. In respect of Criterion (iii), given the detailed assessment carried out by the Senior Landscape Architect, it cannot be concluded that the mitigation proposed would be sufficient to moderate the adverse effects of the development.
- 15.17 In addition it is considered that the proposals are contrary to the objectives of the Dorset AONB management plan in that they would undermine landscape character without being in the public interest. The proposals are also considered contrary to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of the protection of important landscapes. In particular it is considered that the proposal is contrary to paragraph 174(d) of the framework, which requires that planning decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes in a manner commensurate with their statutory status. The proposal is also contrary therefore to paragraph 176 which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (which are confirmed as having the highest status of protection in relation to these issues).
- 15.18 The buildings which form part of this application are largely utilitarian in their appearance, all being single storey. The structures are all relatively modest in scale and appearance, although the siting of the existing café and proposed shower block puts both in relatively prominent positions which both contribute to the landscape impacts of the site. The layout of the site also gives it a manicured

parkland appearance which stands in contrast to the open and rural setting in the Bride Valley.

Economic benefits

- 16.19 The scheme is proposed as a diversification project of Charity Farm, which the applicant runs as a dairy farm. The lake to the south of the site is already run as a fishing lake with wild swimming and paddleboarding and the current application is promoted as a natural extension of those uses. The applicant's supporting statement also refers to the economic benefits of the scheme to the local economy, in particular the local pub, The White Horse Inn, which is sited between the site and Litton Cheney. Several of the letters received in support of the application, including from the landlord of The White Horse have referred to the contribution made by the site.
- 15.20 Comments have also been received from the Council's Economic Growth and Regeneration Team which notes the support that the business gives to the tourism sector as well as the food and drink sector in supplying locally sourced food and drink to the farm shop. Reference is also made in comments to the potential for job creation.
- 15.21 However the application is not supported by any detailed figures or analysis of the economic benefits or impacts of the scheme, beyond the employment figures quoted on the application form, that the site currently employs 1 person full time, with 4 part time employees (total of 2 Full time equivalent jobs), whereas the proposed level of employment would raise this to 2 full time employees and 4 part time (total of 3 full time equivalent jobs).
- 15.22 It is therefore considered that although the site does and would continue to make a contribution to the local economy, the contribution is a relatively modest one.

Highways

- 15.23 The site is served by an existing access route from Litton Lane which provides adequate visibility and an ability for cars to pass. The Highways authority does not object to the scheme, subject to the imposition of conditions requiring that the indicated turning and parking areas are provided and remain available.
- 15.24 Objections have noted the traffic impacts of the proposal. However, the scale of the development is relatively small, and it is considered that in light of there being no objection from the Highway Authority, that a refusal on the grounds of the additional traffic created by the development could not be sustained.

Amenity

- 15.25 The site is geographically separate from potentially sensitive receptors, being approximately 500m from Litton Cheney, over 2km from Long Bredy and over 1km

from Puncknowle. While there are some scattered dwellings closer, these are still relatively separate from the site. Taking into consideration the distances involved and the nature of the site's use it is not considered that it will give rise to unacceptably harmful impacts on residential amenity.

Biodiversity

15.26 The application has been accompanied by a biodiversity report and statement which advises that there are no biodiversity interests that would be impacted by the scheme. Nonetheless the application is within the scope of the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol due to the site area and nature of the proposal and a biodiversity plan should have been provided to the Natural Environment Team in order to secure biodiversity enhancement measures. However, in light of the submitted report it is not considered that a refusal of planning permission on this basis would be justified.

Flood Risk and Drainage

15.27 Part of the site is affected by areas identified as being at risk of surface water flooding, in the south western corner of the site, and a smaller area in the north eastern part of the site. The applicant has provided a site specific flood risk assessment considering all sources of flooding.

15.28 The flood risk assessment confirms that the site is at low or no risk of flooding from rivers, the sea, sewers and groundwater. The assessment identifies that surface water flooding is concentrated on the parking area within the site and, in more significant events the access track, while a small area in the north eastern part of the site follows the track formed for the camping use. The Flood Risk Assessment identifies that all surface water flow depths are expected to be below 300mm in depth with a velocity exceeding 0.24 m/s. However the flow rate is not expected to exceed 2.0 m/s which is the threshold at which flood water of the depth predicted would be considered dangerous.

15.29 Following the receipt of a proposed drainage strategy and amended flood risk assessment the Lead Local Flood Authority has confirmed that it does not have an objection to the proposals and has commented that flood risk and drainage will be managed appropriately.

15.30 The use of the site for camping is considered to be a 'more vulnerable' use as defined in annex 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore the flood risk assessment indicates that as the site is identified as being within flood zone 1, the sequential test is passed in this instance. The flood zone categorisation only takes into consideration risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. Paragraph 162 of the National Planning Policy Framework clearly requires that the sequential approach to the siting of development should be used in areas known to be at risk from any form of flooding.

15.31 Therefore it is necessary to consider the sequential test in this instance due to the surface water flood risk which has been identified and which affects not only the car parking areas, but areas within the camping field itself. The applicant has not provided any analysis of the availability of alternative sites for the camping element of the proposal, which falls within the 'more vulnerable' category and the sequential test has not therefore been passed. As the proposal is for a form of farm diversification it would be considered appropriate to restrict the sequential test to the farm holding in this instance. However, in order for the sequential test to be passed further information in respect of the extent of the applicant's holding and the suitability of the land within it would be required.

15.32 Therefore, notwithstanding the Lead Local Flood Authority's view in respect of the flood risk and drainage of the site, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that there are no more sustainable locations for the proposed development. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy ENV5 of the local plan and paragraph 162 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

16.0 Conclusion

16.1 The application seeks planning consent (in part retrospectively) for the creation of a campsite, with car parking and access tracks, manager's accommodation and new buildings to provide WC/shower facilities, a café and shop and storage. The scheme is proposed as a farm diversification scheme.

16.2 This application follows a previous refusal of retrospective planning consent for the camping use of the site, which was refused on the basis of landscape impacts and the lack of justification for permanent manager's accommodation. While the current application is now accompanied by additional landscape mitigation proposals which are also informed by a landscape appraisal, comments from both the Dorset AONB team and the Council's Senior Landscape Architect have raised concerns in respect of the impact of the proposals on the landscape of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with the additional landscape planting being assessed as insufficient to successfully integrate the development with the character of the site and the surrounding area. The current application also has a wider scope than the previously refused scheme, comprising additional unauthorised structures and uses.

16.3 The landscape impacts of the scheme must be weighed against the benefits to be derived from the proposals, which in this instance are principally economic benefits. As noted above these benefits are modest, with limited job creation and unquantified wider economic benefits. It is not considered that these modest benefits are sufficient to outweigh the harm that has been identified to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

16.4 Additionally the site is subject to surface water flood risk. Although a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy has been submitted to the satisfaction of the Lead Local Flood Authority, the applicant has not adequately demonstrated that the sequential test can be passed. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy ENV5 of the Local Plan and paragraph 162 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

16.5 It is noted that several of the letters received in support of the scheme have referred to the value of the site as a recreational resource. However, these comments are

focussed mainly upon the use of the lake for recreational purposes. The lake is beyond the scope of this application, which is concerned with the camping uses and associated facilities and works.

- 16.5 Taking the above into consideration, the benefits of the scheme in terms of the economic contributions are not considered to be sufficient to overcome the harm that are caused to the landscape and scenic beauty of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

17.0 Recommendation: Refuse for the following reasons:

1. The proposed use of this land for the camping and caravanning in conjunction with the associated hard standing, car parking and ancillary buildings and café/shop results in a detrimental landscape impact on the open character of the Bride Valley landscape within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the character of which should be respected, protected or enhanced for its intrinsic value. It is considered the harm would outweigh any benefit the proposed development would have for the rural economy. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies ENV1, ENV10, ECON7 and ECON8 of the West Dorset and Weymouth Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 172; as well as the Objectives C1a, C2d, C2e, C2f, C4a, C4c, C4d of the Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-24 and the West Dorset Landscape Character Appraisal 2009: Bride Valley Character Area.

2. This proposed mobile home amounts to a new dwelling in an isolated and unsustainable location in the open countryside with any future occupiers being reliant on a car to access services and facilities. The applicant has not demonstrated an essential functional and financial need to live on the site in support of the existing fishing lakes or proposed camping and caravanning site. In the absence of adequate justification there would be insufficient benefit arising of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm which would result from the mobile home and the associated domestic paraphernalia, in this rural and unsustainable location in the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies INT1, SUS2, HOUS6 and ENV1 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 80.

3. Parts of the application site, including the proposed camping areas are affected by surface water flood risk with a 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 annual event probability. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it cannot be concluded that there are no more sustainable sites available at a lower risk of flooding which could accommodate the development. Therefore, the sequential test has not been passed and the proposal is contrary to Policy ENV5 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 162.

Informative Notes:

1. The development is hereby refused in accordance with the plans listed below:

Location Plan received on 23/06/2020

Proposed Site Plan received on 23/06/2020

Section Plan for Small Stocking Lake Drawing Number WW/ZB/002 received on 23/06/2020

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

2. National Planning Policy Framework

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development. The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and –
- as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant/ agent did not take the opportunity to enter into pre-application discussions.
- The applicant was advised that the proposal did not accord with the development plan and that there were no material planning considerations to outweigh these concerns.