

**PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**LAXFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**22 June 2023 at 4 30 pm in the Parish Room**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:** S Innes (Chair), D Alchin, D Martindale, R Sutton

One member of the public attended the meeting.

**1. Apologies and approval of absences**

None

**2. Declarations of interest**

None

**3. Planning**

**a. The following application as requested by MSDC were discussed:**

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/02672**

Proposal: Full Planning Application - Erection of agricultural machinery plant and store with LED lighting and solar panels including construction of concrete pad and creation of new vehicular access from Bickers Hill to Hill Farm.

Location: Access Road From Bickers Hill Road To Hill Farm, Laxfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 8HA

*It was agreed to object to the planning application. The detailed comments as submitted to MSDC are attached to these minutes and available on the MSDC website.*

*Proposed S Innes, seconded R Sutton, AIF.*

**Meeting closed at 5 00 pm**

Karen Gregory (Parish Clerk)  
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## **LAXFIELD PARISH COUNCIL CONSULTEE COMMENTS**

### **APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/02672**

Proposal: Full Planning Application - Erection of agricultural machinery plant and store with LED lighting and solar panels including construction of concrete pad and creation of new vehicular access from Bickers Hill to Hill Farm.

Location: Access Road From Bickers Hill Road To Hill Farm, Laxfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 8HA

Case Officer: Helen Noble

#### **Consultee Details:**

Name: Mrs Karen Gregory

Address: Hill Farm Barn, Framlingham Road, Badingham IP13 8JL

Email: [laxfieldparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:laxfieldparishclerk@gmail.com)

On Behalf Of: Laxfield Parish Council

Laxfield Parish Council OBJECTS to the application on the following grounds:

1. Access and highways safety

We have substantial concerns regarding the junction of the access track with Bickers Hill Road, particularly as there are no comments to date from Highways regarding this proposal. The radius of the splay should, presumably, be at least equal to the splay shown as necessary for the proposed new access for the machinery store but, despite the fact that the splay is within the red line area, there are no drawings presented with this application. Bickers Hill Road at this point is single track, and there is already no safe access to the village to the south of the farm track: see photos 1 and 2 below.



Photo 1: Bickers Hill Road from the village, looking North. Arrow shows existing farm track junction with Bickers Hill Road.



Photo 2: Bickers Hill Road from the village, looking north, showing road width around the existing farm track.

Visibility is extremely poor at the junction – see photos 3 and 4 below. Although the applicant states that there will be no additional traffic movements, it is difficult to believe that this will in fact be the case, as the size of machinery for which the store has evidently been designed could not be used to farm this particular holding: it is much too small. The machinery must therefore be intended to work elsewhere on the company holdings. Whilst this is in itself of course perfectly reasonable, it does mean that the machinery will have to travel onto and along Bickers Hill Road and this poses additional hazards to both vehicles and pedestrians. We would suggest that perhaps a restriction could be placed on the size/weight of machinery using the access onto Bickers Hill Road, to provide some mitigation.

Photo 3: existing junction of Hill Farm track with Bickers Hill Road (south side), standing 2m back from the junction



Photo 4: existing junction of Hill Farm track with Bickers Hill Road (north side), standing 2m back from the junction



## 2. Impact on the neighbourhood

The applicant asserts that the proposed store will have no impact on its setting, but this is entirely unsubstantiated and we believe that a visual impact assessment should be required. The building will undoubtedly be visible from many points around the area: from as far as the B1117 as well as from the existing houses situated to the north of the site. Concern is therefore expressed not about the views from existing houses but about the impact on its setting of a building of this size and scale in this particular location. Please see attached illustrations 1 and 2 which give an indication of the size and scale of the building in its context.

Illustration 1



Illustration 2



The applicant states that “the proposed building is integrated within the existing landscaping surrounding the site” but again, this is an unsubstantiated assertion: in what way is it integrated? It is a simple machinery store on a concrete pad in an open area.

Although the applicant states that downward-pointing floodlights will mitigate any light pollution, we do not believe that this is sufficient without an impact study. The potential building is within a dark area and is sited at a lower level than existing housing to the north of the site: any additional lighting will therefore have some impact on neighbours as well as on wildlife. As a minimum, we believe that the lighting should be PIR controlled (with low sensitivity) and not permitted to remain on all night.

### 3. Other observations

- There is no indication of where surface water will drain to: there is a risk of potential pollution from oil spills, etc.
- It should be noted from the photographs that there are mature hedges and verges along the length of Bickers Hill Road and these will also suffer from the size of the machinery for which the store has been designed: there is likely to be significant damage.
- *A site visit is strongly recommended to fully understand the points made above.*