
From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
Sent: 24 July 2023 13:40
To: Planning Comments (HPBC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories:

Application Reference No. : HPK/2022/0484 Site Address: Land off Long Lane South of Chapel-en-le-Frith High School Chapel-En-Le-Frith Derbyshire SK23 0TQ Comments by: Peter Soden

From:

Downlee Lodge
Bankhall Drive
High Peak
Chapel-en-le-Frith
Derbyshire
SK23 9UB

Submission: Objection

Comments: Comments on further ecology reports for HPK/2022/0484

All levels of government, international, national and local have expressed concern for loss off biodiversity and near threatened species such as curlew. The planning committee has a legal responsibility to consider biodiversity and should not just note that reports have been received without evaluating the content of the reports in detail

The Habitat Surveys should include a desk top study presenting up-to-date information on all priority species in the surrounding area, including all Red Amber and BAP listed bird species of conservation concern.

The Derbyshire Biological Records Centre have done a lot of work recently in adopting a new recording and retrieval system that covers all priority species including birds.

None of the ecological reports submitted with the planning application contain any of that now readily available data to indicate the wealth of species present in the surrounding area (apart from reference to wading birds on the nearby Local Wildlife site).

The additional Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey posted on 5/7/2023 is an earlier report of a survey carried out in December 2020, which did not recognise the existence of the nearby wildlife site or address any of the issues raised by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) in response to the current planning application.

As owners of the Local Wildlife Site, we share concern expressed by DWT that increased foot-fall on footpaths across the wildlife site, may disturb wading birds, particularly ground nesting lapwing and curlew that gather there.

The additional Ecological Information posted on 5/7/2023 does attempt to respond to some of DWT comments on that risk to ground nesting birds and brown hare, but some details in the assessment are confusing.

Birds can get used to sounds that are regular and confined e.g. the noise of trains on a set route that does not vary and they learn is not threatening. They are more sensitive to random noises and to physical disturbance.

The suggestion that birds can become habituated to noise and human activity of the type referred to in the ecologist's report does not apply to curlew, a species that is highly sensitive to disturbance (Ref.1) and, like other ground nesting wading birds, are particularly sensitive to the presence of people and dogs (Ref.2).

The popular footpath referred to by the ecologist in the quotation from the website www.DownleeWildlifeSite.com is Chapel Footpath FP56, which lies to the south of the wildlife site. We are pleased to see so many local people and visitors using footpath FP56 and enjoying the beauty of the far-reaching views from there. They are also able to see some of the wildflowers and wildlife on the wildlife site without interfering with it.

A different footpath FP61 runs through the northern section of the wildlife site. That footpath, FP61, is the one that gives rise to genuine concern that increased footfall by people and dogs will disturb wading birds and brown hare. Even the current low levels of use of footpath FP61 are worrying, given the delicate balance of survival of wading birds in the local area, and the declining numbers in the Peak District and country as a whole.

In assessing unacceptable noise disturbance levels, the ecologist makes reference to the nearby Buxton to Manchester railway line. It should be noted that the section of railway line immediately adjacent to the wildlife site is in a cutting that will moderate noise levels on the part of the Local Wildlife site used by wading birds, which is 250-800m from the Railway Line and Footpath FP 56. In contrast, a photo (dated 18/3/2018) and a video (dated 6/3/2020) are available on the website, www.DownleeWildlifeSite.com showing curlew gathering and feeding on a field within 150m of the proposed glamping site.

The Additional Ecological Information report concludes 'The potential impacts on the LWS have been assessed in detail and the mitigation strategy has been shown to be proportionate' but the assessment is flawed (see above) and no effective mitigation has been proposed for disturbance of the wading birds due to increased footfall on FP 61. Additional notices are unlikely to make any significant difference. A more reasonable conclusion would be that the developer has not been able to find any effective mitigation in this case.

Also, it appears from the glamping site plan, that the southern end of the proposed new footpath running alongside Bankhall Drive is directed towards footpath FP62 which would increase footfall there and onto the footpath FP61 that is of particular concern.

It is difficult to see how the Development Control committee can discharge their legal duty to consider biodiversity without complete and proper information. Failure to consider these issues seriously may leave HPBC open to legal challenge.

1 Goodship, N.M. and Furness, R.W. (MacArthur Green): Disturbance Distances Review: An updated literature review of disturbances of selected bird species. NatureScot Research Report 1283 2022

2 Taylor, K., Anderson, P., Taylor, R., Longden K, and Fisher, P.: Dogs, access and nature conservation. English Nature

