

09 November 2020

Uttlesford District Council
Planning Department
Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden
CB11 4ER

Dear Sirs,

Planning Application Reference: UTT/20/1798/FUL
Proposal: Erection of 1 no. Agricultural Barn
Location: Langley Park Farm, Langley Lower Green, Langley CB11 4SB

I have been made aware of the proposal to erect a new barn at Langley Park Farm and whilst I have every respect for the necessity of farmers to manage their business, it has been suggested locally that this barn is primarily a storage hub and is grossly disproportionate in size to the land actually owned.

There is no information on the application in respect of traffic movements, traffic management or designated routes for vehicles visiting or leaving the location. It is also my understanding that an additional large barn, with planning permission, is already under construction on land adjoining the proposed barn at Langley Park Farm, which will also have high volumes of HGV traffic, particularly during harvest time.

The application makes no suggestion of constructing a new access at the junction with Park Lane to accommodate the turning area of large articulated vehicles, by experience, some with trailers. Clearly, the highway at this junction has restricted turning capacity and is not currently constructed in a way to support the aggressive friction between the vehicle tyres and the road.

No vehicle tracking has been shown for vehicles entering or exiting the farm.



Should the vehicles visiting or leaving Langley Park Farm choose to turn north towards Little Chishill in Cambridgeshire they will need to navigate through very narrow lanes not designed to accommodate such sized vehicles. For the entire route from Langley Park Farm to either Barkway in Hertfordshire or Great Chishill in Cambridgeshire, the road is not capable of allowing the passing of a car and a HGV without one having to reverse to one of the few unofficial small pull-ins. Whilst this highly dangerous manoeuvre may be possible for a car, there is no provision for an articulated vehicle to reverse into a suitable space.



Road verge damage between Langley Park Farm and Kilhams Green.



In wintertime the entire road between Barkway, Great Chishill and the Essex boundary is not gritted, despite the steep gradients on these narrow lanes, and is particularly dangerous when ice covers the road. Regular representations have been made to South Cambridgeshire District Council highways, to no avail.

Constantly blocked gulleys from lack of maintenance and earlier straw deposits contribute to road flooding and potential ice during the winter.



The very narrow lanes between Barkway, Great Chishill, Little Chishill and on to Essex are constantly used by cycling groups, horse riders, and pedestrians/children who, for the majority of the route are faced with high banks and no escape from the traffic. To greatly increase the volume of HGV traffic using these narrow lanes will pose a very significant risk to their lives. When an HGV driver was recently challenged about their speed they responded with "I have a job to do". With regular obstructions, frustration, leading to aggression, is very likely to be experienced by the HGV drivers.

Bogmoor Road between Great Chishill and Shaftenhoe End is particularly narrow in places, with blind bends, high banks and no escape from large HGV's.



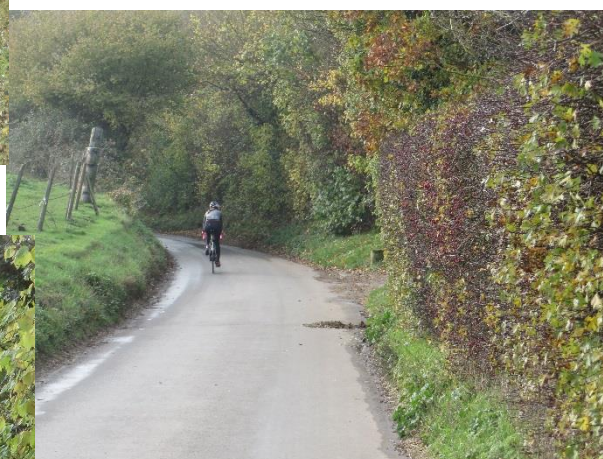
Drivers are taking to the banks when passing.



No escape for other road users on Bogmoor Road with the High banks.

Bogmoor Road from Little Chishill Road towards Smith's End Lane Barley, the road can be equally treacherous for those not driving.

Passing of two cars is impossible without one reversing. Two HGV's would create chaos.



The lane between Shaftenhoe End and Little Chishill is equally as narrow with limited opportunities for two cars passing.



And no escape for families walking.



From Little Chishill towards Kilhams Green the road becomes narrower, is overgrown and a steep incline that is dangerous when ice forms. Recently, a cyclist was seriously injured on this stretch of road and another accident occurred yesterday.



The road between Langley and Langley Park Farm, whilst slightly wider than the road from Great Chishill, is still too narrow to sustain prolonged and regular use by heavy goods vehicles.



In addition to the traffic, straw being carried from Essex via Little Chishill and through May Street, Great Chishill causes a constant mess and additional danger to cyclists and pedestrians on a yearly basis. If the volume of straw being carried is to increase, the roads will become dangerous in the extreme.



May Street, Great Chishill turned into a one carriageway road September 2020. No escape for pedestrians or cyclists from vehicles due to steep banks. Straw becomes a slip area impeding pedestrian escape from vehicles and forcing cyclists into centre of road. The lane is also a footpath for residents of May Street/Maltings Lane and pedestrians are forced to the centre of road on a bend.

Straw extends to centre of Great Chishill



In 2019 after the straw came the mud.

Very little room for cars to pass pedestrians in single file.

Impossible when an HGV passing or for wheelchair users.

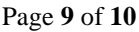


It is very surprising to learn that the Strategic Development Officer for Essex Highways has not considered the impact on other road users, or their safety, on lanes that are so narrow and totally unsuitable for a high volume of heavy goods vehicles that it suggests a proper strategic study has not been carried out.

To put into context the amount of likely vehicle movements, along these unsuitable roads, the current size of the straw stack at Langley on the 8th November 2020 has to be considered.



The movements to remove the straw along the surrounding unsuitable roads will be considerable and that does not take into account the vehicle movements to bring the straw to this location. To add to these vehicle movements by the applicant, along these narrow lanes, there are at least five other local farms contributing to the HGV traffic on seven miles of unsuitable road.



I trust that before considering approval of the application to erect a new barn at Langley Park Farm, Uttlesford District Council will:

1. Have carried out a detailed risk assessment to determine the traffic safety implications for other road users between Langley, Great Chishill, Heydon and Barkway.
2. Satisfied themselves that all the land identified on the site plan is owned by the applicant.
3. Satisfied themselves that the barn size is appropriate for the actual land in ownership and there is an agricultural need.
4. Ensure that there is an appropriate entrance from the farm road onto Park Lane.
5. Carry out a traffic flow assessment on all roads leading from the site to a suitable A class road, taking into account current and projected traffic flows from all the adjoining landowners to ensure the roads are not overloaded with heavy goods vehicles.
6. Be satisfied the safety of other road users is not compromised.
7. Ensure that sufficient and appropriate passing places are provided for all road users.
8. Be satisfied a sufficient and robust traffic management plan is in place by the farm owner to ensure that there is no clashing of vehicle routes and parking is not required to be carried out on the highway.
9. Ensure consideration has been given to emergency vehicles that may be using the roads.
10. Ensure a full winter gritting and snow clearance programme is in place between Langley, Great Chishill and Barkway.
11. Ensure a regular highways maintenance plan is in place to repair damage to the verges and road construction.
12. Ensure that the airfield is not compromised with stacked straw bales or other commodities.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



Malcolm Knobel-Forbes

CC:

South Cambridgeshire District Council - Highways
North Herts District Council – Highways.
Langley Parish Council
Great Chishill Parish Council
Heydon Paris Council
Barley Parish Council
Barkway Parish Council