

A/19/86710/RET: Toddington Farm Planning Application

A group of residents attended the meeting to raise concerns about the impact of the activities of this wood chipping business (Premier Logs) on their quality of life.

The planning application that had been submitted was for a retrospective Change of Use from agricultural to commercial for the area of land at Toddington Farm that was occupied by Premier Logs. This was not a new business. It had been started in 2013 in the Bolton area and had been re-located to the farm. The application was retrospective because the business was currently active on the site, which was within the green belt. The applicant did not live in the Parish or in the area.

The residents' principal objections related to:

A. Access and Egress

The only access and egress to the site was through Toddington Lane - a residential area without a footpath for pedestrian use. The lane is frequently used by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and residents of neighbouring properties. There was concern about the Health & Safety of the public that used Toddington Lane because of the high volume of log deliveries by very large HGVs and double log trailers throughout the day. Deliveries took place from dawn to dusk – sometimes even in the dark – along a narrow residential lane. These deliveries were made on 7 days a week, including bank holidays and created a large carbon footprint.

The vehicles were causing damage to grass verges and to the lane itself. During the Winter time the main road and the lane were frequently covered in mud as a result of the activities of the vehicles. Only Toddington Farm could be accessed via Toddington Lane: a 'No Through Road' sign at the entrance to the lane advised the public of this.

B. Noise Pollution

The noise from the chipping machine when in use was very loud and, depending on wind direction, could be extremely loud. The chipping machine was brought onto the site when it was due to be used. A sound survey carried out recently at the request of the owner of the farm had not detected anything that exceeded the legal limit, but it had been suggested that bales of hay had been used to deaden the sound.

C. Air Pollution, Waste Disposal and Littering

The amount of dust caused by the chipping of logs and the high frequency of large HGV traffic in a residential area were both a health concern. The waste from the process was being disposed of in a field adjacent to residential homes. Residents had observed that containers carrying the product were over-filled and were not netted. This meant that some of the product was flying off the trucks and littering Meadow Pit Lane.

D. Safety Issues with Regard to the Storage of Logs

The logs were stacked very high when being stored. Nothing was used to contain them and they were visible. A popular public footpath ran through the property. The uncontained logs could pose an H&S issue to people using the footpath. If they were to roll off, they could kill someone.

The logs were also a fire risk, as there was an oil tank nearby on the same site containing oil for the farm's central heating. The site was not secure and logs had already been removed

Appendix A

from the site by young vandals, who had accessed it by breaking through the hedge and had set them on fire on the adjacent public footpath.

The residents present asserted that there were many anomalies throughout the application. The application gave the impression that the business was simply something the farmer was undertaking in a small way in addition to his agricultural activities. This was not the case.

Many of the points raised by the delegation refuted things mentioned in the application:

- According to the application, on average logs were brought in once a month and deliveries were during normal working hours;
- The site layout on the Planning Application website showed very little detail.
- According to the application, the site was not visible from either short or long distances;
- No detail was provided about what was being chipped.
- According to the application, access to the site is via Toddington Lane which also serves three other farms.