



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Highfield Park Office
Highfield Park Visitor Centre
Hill End Lane
St Albans AL4 0RA

Village Office
83 High Street
Colney Heath
Hertfordshire AL4 0NS

Tel: 01727 825314 Email: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Response from Colney Heath Parish Council

Land Adjacent The Mill House Coursers Road Colney Heath Hertfordshire AL4 0PB
Planning Application Reference 5/2020/1124

The application is stated as:

'Permission is sort for change of use of land to residential for Gypsy Travellers families. The site will contain static and touring caravans, parking and water treatment plant with associated hardstanding, parking and related infrastructural development.'

Colney Heath Parish Council objections to this application

- A. Very Special circumstances have not been demonstrated for development in the Green Belt.
- B. The site is not sustainable due to the lack of infrastructure.
- C. Excessive number of Gypsy and Traveller site within the Parish
- D. Adjoins grade 2 listed building.
- E. Damage caused to the Local Nature reserve.
- F. Other factors

Introduction

Since the first consultation in June/July 2020 additional documents has been added to St Alban DC planning website.

The application contains a considerable number of new supporting documents, these are generic statements relating to the Gypsy and Traveller communities

The additional documents provide no supporting evidence to this application.

They fail to provide any evidence that special circumstances exist such to grant planning approval for development within the Green Belt.

These in include-

Gypsy Council
Sustainability Statement (other points raised below)
Education & Health Statement
Supporting Gypsy Traveller Communities living on sites or at roadside during COVID-19 pandemic. Not relevant was published by Welsh Government rather than in England.

A – Very Special circumstances have not been demonstrated for development in the Green Belt.

Green Belt Policy

The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and outside the Colney Heath Green Belt community envelopes.

Green Belt polices protect the Green Belt from encroachment and protect its openness, this application fails in both respects.

The documents relating to the Gypsy and Traveller communities are generic statements and provide no supporting evidence to this application.



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They fail to provide any evidence that special circumstances exist such to grant planning approval for development within the Green Belt.

B - The site is not sustainable due to the lack of infrastructure.

The site is 690m from the nearest shops and bus stop.

Much of the route has no pavement which requires walking in Coursers Road.
The route is dangerous to pedestrians and other road users.

The nearest part to the site is outside the village 30mph limit, pedestrians must walk in the road through a highspeed bend which is dangerous.

The bus service is very limited so the site does not have sustainable transport.

Route	Departs from	Destination	Arrive/Dept in Colney Heath
305	Potters Bar	St Albans New Greens	7.33 School days
305	Potters Bar	St Albans St Peters Street	7.40 School holidays
305	Hall Gardens	St Albans St Peters Street	10.12
305	Hall Gardens	Sandridge	13.12
305	Brookmans Park	St Albans St Peter Street	16.44
305	Sandridge	Hall Gardens	10.12
305	St Albans St Peters Street	Hall Gardens	13.12
305	St Albans New Greens	Brookmans Park	16.17 school days
305	St Albans St Peters Street	Brookmans Park	16.17 school holidays
305	St Albans St Peters Street	Potters Bar	1717
200	Essenden Hill	London Colney	10.23 Monday only
200	London Colney	Essenden Mill	12.40 Monday only

Sustainable access to services			
	Actual Distance	Desirable distance (1)	Excess Distance
Bus stop - The Cock	690m	400m	72.5%
Shop – Colney Heath Post Office	690m	400m	72.5%
Primary School – Colney Heath	1600m	1000m	60.0%
Healthcare - Village Surgery London Colney	4400m	1300m	238.5%

(1) How far do people walk? Presented at the PTRC Transport Practitioners meeting London July 2015

Accessing Facilities

Education and Health Statement

Colney Heath Parish Council supports the need for good education and Healthcare for all, **but** the Education and Health statement fails to provide any evidence why this site is suitable and that special circumstances should apply to this application.

The local primary school is grossly over-subscribed as are many of the local secondary school resulting students having to travel considerable distance to school.



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There is no doctors practice in the village.

Another practice in South Hatfield is about to be or has closed.

Access to Mains electricity

The site appears not to be connected to mains electricity as it currently relies on generator.

Two unauthorised attempts have been made, one to service not known as it was stopped before connection was made.

The second attempt was connecting the overhead power lines (see photo).



The unauthorised attempts were made across Warren field which is a local nature reserve.

Due to its acidic soil is regionally rare and contains many unusual flora and fauna.

The landowner Colney Heath Parish Council was not consulted prior to the attempts to access the facilities.

During these failed attempts considerable damage was caused to the Local Nature Reserve

The applicant has demonstrated a total disregard for other property and safety when installing services.



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Drainage Proposals

Foul water

It is stated that the nearest foul sewer connection is 90m away at Nuckies Farm and would require third party consent to connect into it.

No request has been made to Colney Heath Parish Council to cross its land.

Surface water

The recent wet weather has highlighted a problem with the increase of surface water draining onto Warren Field, a local nature reserve.

This has not been noticed before by residents who have lived in Colney Heath Village all their lives.

The flooding has been caused by the reduction of permeable land on the application site and the significant increase of non-permeable hard surfaced areas already imported to the application site.

Reinstating the site to its original state would solve this problem.

Left unresolved it will cause damage to the Nature Reserve.

The District Council should consult DEFRA to clarify the impact.

Flooding like this will reduce access to the Nature reserve, a well-used local amenity.





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C - Excessive number of Gypsy and Traveller sites within the Parish

The distribution of Gypsy and Traveller site is not uniform across Hertfordshire with St Albans District having approximately 42% of the county's sites, within St Albans District currently most of these sites are in the southern end of the district within the parishes of Colney Heath and St Stephens.

The Parish of Colney Heath has a disproportionate number of sites of the District provision for traveller pitches with 26% of the provision within the Parish.

The Parish Council is disappointed to note the inability of successive administrations to produce a Local Plan. In the most recent version the District Council approach to meeting the need of Gypsies and Travellers does not distribute Gypsy and Traveller pitches around the District.

The Parish Council believes the new Local Plan should have a more even distribution of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation around the District including in the new Broad Locations at Harpenden and East Hemel.

The Parish Council is extremely disappointed that the current administration continues to adopt the previous administrations' approach to District Wide G&T provision in its answer to our question to SADC's Planning Policy Committee of 7 July 2020

"Does the Portfolio Holder agree with Colney Heath Parish Council that the new Local Plan should have a more even distribution of G&T sites around the District and that the two planned for the SRFI site should be at new Broad Locations in the north of the District."

Answer

No.

The draft Plan currently in Examination sets out provision of 60 Gypsy & Traveller pitches in four 15 pitch sites, with one at East Hemel Central: one at East Hemel South and two within Park Street Garden Village.

The issue of Gypsy & Traveller pitch provision will be looked at again as part of the technical work committed to in the letter to the Inspectors of 2 July 2020.

As has been addressed previously at PPC, provision of homes for both the settled community and homes for Gypsy & Traveller communities needs to be based on the evidence.

There is no evidential basis for an approach, as set out in the question, of "a more even distribution of Gypsy & Traveller sites around the District and that the two planned for the SRFI site should be at new Broad Locations in the north of the District".

As set out in the draft Local Plan at Policy L7 the approach to looking at pitch provision includes:

Because of a variety of factors including proximity to the road network most used by Gypsies and Travellers; development site scale; area topography and landscaping opportunities; and the wide range of uses to be provided in the Broad Locations for Development...



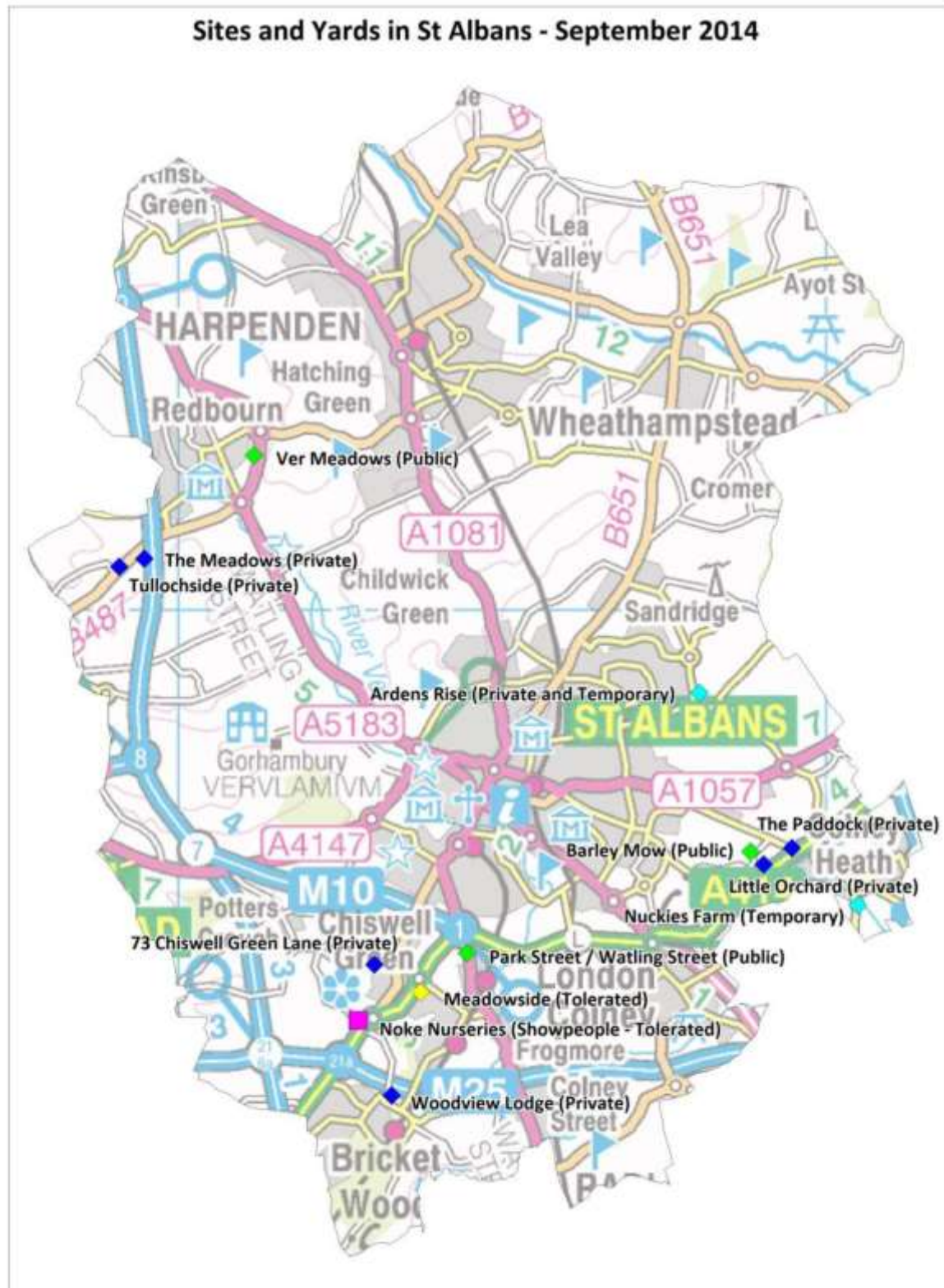
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Location of Gypsy and Traveller sites with St Albans District





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Gypsy & Traveller Sites within St Albans District by Parish

Site name	Parish	Planning status	Ownership	No. Pitches
Barley Mow	Colney Heath	Approved	Public	15
Little Orchard	Colney Heath	Approved	Private	1
Nuckies Farm	Colney Heath	Approved	Private	3
The Paddock	Colney Heath	Approved	Private	7
The Meadows	Redbourn	Approved	Private	1
Tullochside	Redbourn	Approved	Private	10
Ver Meadows	Redbourn	Approved	Public	10
Ardens Rise House Lane	Sandridge	Approved	Private	1
Ardens Rise House Lane	Sandridge	Temporary	Private	3
Chiswell Green	St Stephens	Approved	Private	1
Meadowside Orchards Drive	St Stephens	Tolerated	Private	3
Meadowview Lodge	St Stephens	Approved	Private	8
Noke Nurseries	St Stephens	Tolerated	Show people	
Park Street/Watling Street	St Stephens	Approved	Public	10

Neighbouring District Gypsy and Traveller site to Colney Heath

Site name	Parish	Planning status	Ownership	No. Pitches
Fairfield Welham Green	North Mimms	Approved for travelling show people	Private	N/K
Foxes Lane Welham Green	North Mimms	Approved	Private	3
Foxes Lane Welham Green	North Mimms	Not approved	Private	3
Thunderbridge Yard Welham Green	North Mimms	Temporary	Private	2
Thunderbridge Yard Welham Green	North Mimms	Not approved	Private	1



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D - Adjoins grade 2 listed building.

The site adjoins the Mill at the Mill House Colney Heath which is a grade 2 listed building no. 163547 listed on 27th September 1984.

The proposed development will have a significant impact on the setting of the listed building.

Listed buildings

NPPF: -

194. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional.

E – Damage caused to the Local Nature reserve

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): -

Colney Heath Common is a 22.5-hectare Local Nature Reserve and Hertfordshire Heritage site is immediately adjacent to the south and west of the site.

Damage has already been caused to the nature reserve by unauthorised attempts to install facilities,

Installing the proposed facilities will not be possible without additional damage to the nature reserve and Colney Heath common.

15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Para 170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

F – Other factors

5/2019/2726

08/11/2019

Certificate of lawfulness for vehicular access onto Coursers Road – refused

Access form Coursers Road

3.0 The access into the site would be from the existing access off Coursers Road (See block plan) which has been in use for a number of years.'



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There is considerable doubt about the length of time access has been available from Coursers Road.

NOTE: Application 5/2019/2726 refused by SADC

Colney Heath Common, owned by the Parish Council, includes narrow strips on both sides of this part of Coursers Road as part of the Common.

The Parish Council is progressing Voluntary Registration of the Common at the Land Registry. Access will be required across CHPC land similar to that granted to the owner of Fredericks Wood.

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Objection submitted 21st January 2021.

Approved Planning Committee 19th January 2021.