

Coberley Parish Council

Planning Application 19/01714/FUL: Change of use from woodland to Forestry with Forest School (D1) and the erection of outdoor classroom/store and compost toilet at Badger Wood Ullenwood Coberley Gloucestershire

Coberley Parish Council (CPC) has met on Thursday, 27 June and considered this application.

CPC is generally supportive of such ventures and recognises the benefit to children by introducing them to a natural environment, echoing the many letters and comments submitted in support of this application.

However, CPC is most concerned that the natural environment and eco-system must be protected and, therefore, believes that the present location is the wrong place to introduce a Forest School, in that it a) is endangering an ancient, semi-natural woodland and its flora and fauna, b) is harmful to the AONB, c) is too close to residential dwellings such that noise levels from activities are unacceptable d) has hazardous access from the A436, whether via the direct access route or that being recommended via the Barber Wood car park.

We do not believe that activities such as are being promoted on the business' web site and indeed, reported by local residents, can have anything other than a negative impact on the natural environment and the ecology of the area.

There are significant detailed objections from local residents and from the Woodland Trust and the Badger Trust.

The applicant's web site refers to 'the disused badger setts'. However, reports from local residents are that the badger sett is still active and that access tracks have been created in close proximity.

With regard to the proposed buildings, the 'shed' is 6.5 x 5m, which is actually a good sized room (a shed would be 6.5 x 5 feet). Alongside this is the covered decking area, itself an extension to the building, which takes the length to 16 metres. This is totally inappropriate for the location.

The proposal and activity reported to date are contrary to The National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraphs 172, 174a and 175 c), the Cotswold District Local Plan (Policies EN7 and EN8) and the Countryside and Rights of way Act 2000 (Part IV, paragraphs 84 & 85)

The development plan with the proposal refers frequently to 'minimising impact' thus accepting that the development will have impact.

Although there is reference to access not being recommended from the A436, but rather via the Barber Wood car park, it is reported that there is much use of the A436 access. Indeed, access via the Barber Wood car park requires use of the hazardous Cowley/Ullenwood crossroads on the A436.

Coberley Parish Council therefore urges that this application is refused and that the Forest School is required to relocate to a more suitable area