

# FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday 27 July 2016

PRESENT: Councillors: S Tomkinson (Chair), D Toon (Vice Chair), P Hammond,  
D Carver (RFO), J Perks, S Spencer

Clerk: Carol Little

Minutes proper will follow but below is a report from SBC Environmental Health regarding the Rabbit Farm planning application and the letter from the Parish Council, informed by the members of the public present at the meeting, sent to SBC planning committee.

**STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Head of Environmental and Health Services

**My Ref:** 251480

**To:** Planning Services

**Your Ref:** 16/23992/FUL

**F.A.O:** Mark Alford

**Contact:** A Allman

**Date:** 26 July 2016

**Planning Application number 16/23992/FUL**  
**Proposed rabbit farm on land off Radmore Lane, Gnosall**

Consultation: Environmental and Health Services

1) Background

Across the Britain and the EU the farming of rabbits for meat, currently has a relatively small proportion of the British food market compared to other meats (around 1% across the EU). The presence of EU nationals in the UK, such from French, Romanian or Polish communities means that there is a growth in the market for rabbit consumption in line with demand for other typical cultural foodstuffs.

From a food safety and animal welfare background, as well as some of the wide issues, a excellent summary of the issues encountered in rabbit farms is given in a European Food Safety Authority article, titled "The Impact of the current housing and husbandry systems on the health and welfare of farmed domestic rabbits" (*The EFSA Journal* (2005) 267, 1-31), and was prepared as a Scientific Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare. The article is available for free - <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2005.267/pdf>

This application first came to the attention of Environmental and Health Services as part of a pre-application consultation earlier in 2016. Further information was requested and has been received in respect of these matters and this application has been submitted for consideration.

2) Report

The application shows that this application at plot 14 may be part a number of other unknown units or potential businesses as shown on submitted plans. The effect on the future occupiers of these developments is at this moment in time unknown. Further, the application refers to the slaughter of rabbits at abattoir. **Currently, there are no approved abattoirs in the region for rabbit slaughter and it likely that a new slaughtering facility either as part of an existing premises or as a new development. This however has not been disclosed as part of this application. Notwithstanding, concerns were raised at an early stage with the applicant with regards to noise, odour, insect and drainage matters. The applicant has submitted some information but still falls significantly short of what would normally be required for an application of this nature and type. Matters of particular concern include:**



### *Animal Welfare*

This application has potential to raise a high profile with animal welfare charities and activists. The open design nature of the proposed site will be highly visible and will not be conspicuous. Further, the open design of the cages appears to be inadequate and would require careful planning to avoid a variety of animal welfare issues such as disease prevention and behavioural problems.

### *Biosecurity*

The open nature of the site, in a predominantly rural setting, gives no consideration for biosecurity and the prevention of disease spread and transfer. An enclosed building which is properly designed to meet the minimum legal requirements is essential.

### *Water*

The applicant has given no information as to where potable water would be obtained for the welfare of both animals and persons on the proposed development. Full details of the availability and connections for water would be required.

### *Waste, odour and insects*

The application appears to have given little thought to waste disposal, odour management and the potential for insect nuisance. The applicant has submitted a 'waste water and odour assessment' (dated 4-7-16) with the application. This assessment is not suitable or sufficient and has not been completed by a competent person. A significant number of breeding rabbits, like all animals, will produce a quantity of rabbit faeces which would need to be collected, stored, and disposed of in a hygienic manner. A high standard of cleanliness and hygiene would also be essential to prevent odour from any faeces and urine collected and stored at the site. Along with appropriate and safe use of insecticides and similar, it will be necessary to control insects such as flies that may breed in any detritus. A detailed plan to show how waste, odour and insects would be managed is essential.

### *Waste water disposal*

The applicant has submitted a 'waste water and odour assessment' (dated 4-7-16) with the application. This assessment is not suitable or sufficient and has not been completed by a competent person. The application is for a septic tank to be used for the disposal of waste water. This is unsuitable given the quantity of waste water that would be generated from cleaning, without including any waste water from toilets and sinks. For a commercial development of this size and type, I would normally expect to see a connection to a main sewerage system in order to prevent significant environmental waste water pollution. With a correct assessment, it may be possible to put in a packaged treatment plant which meets the environmental standards laid down by the Environment Agency via a permit to discharge to water.

### *Noise*

Once constructed, the main source of noise from the development would be vehicles accessing and egressing the property. However, the applicant has submitted a 'noise report' as part of the application. The 'noise report' is not suitable or sufficient and has not been completed by a competent person. No hours of opening were put in the application form (point 7) however, the 'noise report' recommends with hours given for the delivery and operation of the site.

### 3) Recommendations and reasons

Considering the above report, **it is recommended that this application is refused.**

Reason: Under paragraph 109 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the development does not contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and creates an unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air and water pollution.

The development also does not take into consideration the planning practice guidance in respect of water, waste water and noise, which is available for free at <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/water-supply-wastewater-and-water-quality/>

Contact officer:

Adrian Allman, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Regulatory Services

[aallman@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:aallman@staffordbc.gov.uk)

# FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk's Office:  
Owl's Oak  
Forton  
Shropshire  
TF10 8BY

27<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Dear Mr Alford  
Re: Planning Application 16/23992/FUL

The Parish Council met this evening to discuss the above Planning Application. There were six councillors and twelve members of the public in attendance. The Chairman outlined the details of the application, referred to comments already registered on the Council's website and invited comments from the floor. It was noted that no member of the public supported the application. Councillors discussed the issues arising at length, whilst it was accepted that some points raised were beyond the scope of the Parish Councils remit, they were mindful of the strength of feeling of the parishioners when considering the following:

- Environmental Health have recommended refusal.
- This is a proposed agricultural development in a residential area.
- The plot is in close proximity to residential property.
- Highway considerations- unable to turn in access area, potentially reversing into a narrow lane.
- No details of parking facilities- concern with parking in the narrow lane.
- The site is divided into multiple plots- have other plot holders, as immediate neighbours, been consulted?
- Potential setting of a precedent- this plot is surrounded by approximately 30 others.
- The application states a 30% mortality rate- there is no explanation of how carcasses will be disposed of.
- The issue of slaughtering is not detailed- no abattoir proposed.
- No indication of effluent disposal or drainage arrangements- potentially affecting the Mere.
- Security- generally but also regarding the possibility of Animal Rights Activists. No details of night occupancy or policing of the site, a secure fence would change the profile of the area adding to residents' concerns.

In conclusion, Councillor Perks proposed that the Parish Council raise an objection to the application. Councillor Toon seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

I would be grateful therefore if you could submit the objection to the Planning Committee on our behalf.

Yours sincerely

Carol Little  
Forton Clerk