

# Offord Cluny & Offord Darcy Parish Council

Chairman: Cllr Liam Small

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**Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held in the Village Hall, Offord Cluny on Thursday October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs Gimblett, Small, Ridley, Gatward, Young, Clerk & 9 members of the public.

Before the meeting started Cllr Gimblett asked if any members of the public wished to speak. Janet Bedingfield asked to speak against Agenda item 2008/21. As a resident living very close to the proposed site she felt it was entirely inappropriate development and expressed concerns that the area immediately around the site would, if permission were granted, also be given over to extend the site. Cllr Gimblett thanked her for attending.

**2008/18 Apologies for Absence - None**

**2008/19 Approval of Minutes of Meeting dated August 14th, 2008.**  
The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed

**2008/20 Planning Application 0802296**  
**Erection of Wind Farm Comprising Eight Wind Turbines, Substation, Anemometry Mast, Access Tracks & Ancillary infrastructure. Cotton Farm, Graveley Road**

**Update on Parish Council response & Report on Joint Council's meeting.**

As the decision to recommend refusal had already been taken at a previous council meeting Cllr Gimblett updated the committee on the finalised written response which had been circulated to all. It was agreed to recommend this response be accepted by Full Council at the meeting that followed.

**2008/21 Planning Application 0802744**  
**Retention of use of land as a Caravan Site for Gypsy and Traveller residential purposes, Pumping Station, Paxton Road, Offord Darcy.**

Recommend Refusal. The following response to be hand delivered to Huntingdonshire District Council.

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Mr S Ingram  
Head of Planning Services  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon  
PE29 3TN

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Dear Mr Ingram,

**PLANNING APPLICATION 0802744FUL - RETENTION OF USE OF LAND AS A  
CARAVAN SITE FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.**

I am responding to the Planning Application submitted by Mr Bob Lamb for the site of the old AWA Pumping Station, Paxton Road, Offord Darcy, Cambridgeshire, PE19 5RF, in which he seeks retention of use of land as a caravan site for Gypsy and traveller residential purposes.

**Offord Cluny and Offord Darcy Parish Council met on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2008 to  
consider Planning Application 0802744FUL and recommended the  
application be rejected.**

As far as the Parish Council is concerned with regard to development of the land, the position is very clear; Mr Lamb has no planning permission and is in breach of current regulations by placing a dwelling outside of the building line of the village. No consultation has occurred at either District or Parish levels and, in the past, planning permission to build on that site has been rejected on two occasions:

**00/00603OUT Outline Planning Permission 00/00603OUT - Erection of  
Dwelling  
Refusal**

1. **Reason.** The proposed development lies in open countryside outside the defined village environmental limits for Offord D'Arcy, wherein new development is only permitted for the efficient management of agriculture, forestry or horticulture. The proposal is therefore contrary to the implementation of policy SP12/1 of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995, and policy H23 and En17 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995.
2. **Reason.** The site lies within a predominantly rural area, designated as an Area of Best Landscape, outside the village environmental limits of Offord D'Arcy. The proposed dwelling would represent an undesirable extension of the built-up area of Offord D'Arcy beyond its' present limits, to the detriment of the rural character and appearance of the locality by virtue of the appearance of the dwelling in the landscape and its obstruction of the long distance views out of the village. The proposal is therefore contrary to SP12/2, SP12/6 and SP12/10 of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995 and Policy En 21 and En 25 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995

**0600258FUL Extension to building and change of use to builder's store**  
**Refusal**

1. **Reason.** The application site is outside of the defined village envelope and built framework of the village. As such, the proposal represents commercial development in the open countryside contrary to policies P1/2, P1/3, P2/2 and P2/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003); E1, E7, E11, E13 and En25 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995); P1 of the Draft Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006) and Central Government guidance in the forms of PPS1, PPG4 and PPS7.
2. **Reason.** The proposed extension and change of use of the land, by virtue of the introduction of a discordant addition to the existing low-key building and commercial activity in the open countryside would harm the visual appearance of the site and the wider locality. As such, the proposal would be contrary to policies P1/3 and P7/4 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003); E7, E11, E13 and En25 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995); B1, B2 and B3 of the Draft Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006) and Central Government guidance in the forms of PPS1, PPG4 and PPS7.
3. **Reason.** The proposal, by reason of its siting, design and layout would fail to provide appropriate acceptable junction spacing, geometry and vehicular parking and turning facilities. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003); E7, E11, E13 and En25 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995); B3 of the Draft Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006) and Central Government guidance in the forms of PPS1, PPG4 and PPS7. PPG13.

The date of the second rejection is 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006 and nothing has changed in the vicinity of the site to make either of these objections less valid.

With regard to the "retention of use of land as a caravan site for gypsy and traveller residential purposes", neither the Council nor residents have been consulted or even approached regarding such a use for this land. We accept that the term "retention" is used to imply that this is a retrospective application. However in our view, the use of the word is grossly misleading as it implies that some form of permission has been granted in the first place; this is not the case. The site occupies a very prominent position in the village and previous rejections have cited spoiling the countryside as a key objection. We support both positions and, as a consequence, we do not support the development of this site for these purposes. Indeed, the Council regards this application as an audacious attempt to circumvent planning regulations and development safeguards and an affront to accepted local government practices.

Mr Lamb claims Gypsy status as defined by the Race Relations Act and that past Needs Assessments have indicated that there is no available provision of Traveller site pitches within Cambridgeshire or Huntingdonshire. We believe that Mr Lamb's lifestyle is of his own choosing and that mixing his social needs with planning matters clouds the issue in the extreme. We applaud his desire to provide a secure and formal continuous education for his children, but find that this directly conflicts with his claim to Gypsy or Traveller status. Furthermore, Mr Lamb must surely qualify for housing under the Government sponsored Affordable Housing Scheme, or for rented accommodation and, therefore, his problem becomes a social issue rather than a planning one. Interestingly, I have learnt that advertisements for occupants for the recently constructed affordable homes in Offord Cluny are being placed in the Hunts Post; Mr Lamb must surely qualify for one of these dwellings, which were constructed on the premise of there being a local need. Of particular concern is Mr Lamb's longer-term ambition. If planning permission is granted and Mr Lamb decides to revert to his travelling lifestyle, he will be in possession of a brown field site on which permanent structures may be built; in essence, thereby circumventing any restrictive legislation that would be applied to any non-traveller/Gypsy.

Mr Lamb has matched the qualifications required for exemptions for travellers under Huntingdon District Council policies (which seem to be in direct contradiction to the very reasons planning has been refused on previous occasions) and, as we have previously acknowledged, he has improved the site; although his dwelling is most conspicuous from the south. Nevertheless, should this application be approved, we believe that this will discriminate against all those who have followed the planning regulations and had their aspirations rejected; it will show how morally bankrupt the planning process has become.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Liam Small  
Chairman

**2008/22 Planning Application 0802788FUL**  
**61 Graveley Road – Extension to Roof**  
Recommend Approval

**2008/22 Mi Man’s Meadow – Update**  
It was confirmed that the proposed rare goats had yet to materialise.  
The Clerk was asked to contact planning enforcement again.