

<b>Planning Reference No:</b>	10/1776N
<b>Application Address:</b>	Wrenbury Fishery, Hollyhurst Road, Marbury, Cheshire
<b>Proposal:</b>	Use of land for the siting of 34 Timber Clad Twin Unit Caravans, access works, car parking, administration building, cycle store and landscaping.
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr Spencer, Marcus Brook Ltd.
<b>Application Type:</b>	Full Planning Application
<b>Grid Reference:</b>	358810 345845
<b>Ward:</b>	Chomondeley
<b>Earliest Determination Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2010
<b>Expiry Dated:</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> August 2010
<b>Date of Officer's Site Visit:</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2010
<b>Date Report Prepared:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2010
<b>Constraints:</b>	Wind Turbine Development consultation area

#### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE** subject to conditions.

#### **ISSUES:**

**Principle of development**

**Impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside**

**Existing trees and hedges**

**Ecology**

**Highway matters and parking**

**Drainage**

**Sustainability**

**Residential amenity**

## **1. REASON FOR REFERRAL**

This application is to be determined by the Strategic Planning Board because the site area is 7.2 ha.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application area is an irregular shaped piece of gently undulating land in which fishing pools have been constructed under a previous planning permission. A single island is present in each pool which is joined to the bank by an isthmus of land. The site is approached on an unmade access track located to the west of the application area with an access point on Hollyhurst Road. The track serves a poultry unit and other activities. Adjacent land was subject to an application for a water bottling facility which was withdrawn.

The site is enclosed by established hedges, trees and fences. An unmade track with a mature hedgerow on one side passes through the middle of the application area.

The site is located within open countryside in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan.

### **3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This is a full planning application for the use of 7.2 ha of land for the siting of 34 twin caravans measuring 6.8m x 20m in total. The units would be timber clad with pitched tile roof. Access is from Hollyhurst Road. Amended plans have been submitted which reduce the car parking provision on site to one space per unit plus a car parking of 93 spaces, of which 80 are already approved for the fishery. These 93 spaces would be provided adjacent to the office/ shop and close to the entrance to the site. Cycle parking would also be provided. The amended plans also show the toilet block (5m x 8m) located at the northern end of the car park to overcome the objection in relation to the potential contamination of water from the spring on adjacent land. The two passing places which are shown on the access road plans approved as part of the fishery application have been added to the amended plans. In addition a warden's office and shop measuring 18m x 9m would be provided with operational compound including recycling facilities adjacent to the office. No details of the appearance of the office/ shop or toilet block have been submitted with the application. The layout includes internal access roads.

Three fishing lakes were created under application P06/0771 with an island located centrally within each lake. The land bridge which has been used to form the islands, but was not included in the original application for the fishing lakes, would be retained. Ten of the units would be sited on the three islands which have been formed within the fishing pools.

The remaining units would be sited around the pools. Existing peripheral hedgerows on the road frontage to Hollyhurst Road, those along one side of the access track located centrally through the site and those on the southern and eastern site boundaries would be retained. An extensive landscaping scheme has been submitted with the application and includes areas of woodland mix and hedgerows with woodland mix, around the periphery of the site. In addition an area of planting would define and separate the individual lodges.

### **4. RELEVANT HISTORY**

P06/0771 Fishing lakes. Approved 25<sup>th</sup> August 2006.

### **5. POLICIES**

The development plan for this area is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (LP).

## **Local Plan Policies**

NE.2 Open Countryside  
NE.5 Nature Conservation and Habitats  
NE.9 Protected Species  
NE.20 Flood Prevention  
BE.1 Amenity  
BE.2 Design  
BE.3 Access and Parking  
BE.4 Drainage Utilities and Resources  
TRAN.3 Pedestrians  
TRAN.5 Provision for Cyclists  
TRAN.9 Car Parking Standards

## **Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan**

Policy11A Development and Waste Recycling.

### **Other Material Considerations**

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development  
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth  
PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas  
PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation  
PPG13: Transport  
PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.  
Good Practice Guide on Tourism

## **6. CONSULTATIONS**

**Strategic Highways Manager:** No highways objections. The highways authority has looked at all of the traffic information provided and come to the conclusion that there would be no significant impact on the highways network, as the vast majority of vehicular movements generated from this site would be outside of peak traffic times. The access from Hollyhurst Road is in a poor state of repair and should be constructed to CEC specification. The highways authority notes that the visibility splays could be improved and asks that the hedge line is trimmed back to increase the visibility splays.

**Ecology:** The submitted updated Ecological Surveys are acceptable.

- The development is unlikely to affect Great Crested newts and no further action is required in relation to this species.
- High visibility fencing should be required to protect the badger sett nearby.
- A number of trees were identified as suitable for bat roost and one tree was recorded as supporting a roost. No works to deadwood this tree should be carried out.
- The method statement in respect of works to trees is acceptable.
- No trees on site have potential barn owl roosts. A barn owl was recorded on site however the development is unlikely to result in any direct adverse impact on barn owls.
- Rough grassland should be retained to ensure that the site supports small mammals as prey for barn owls.

- A condition should be imposed to ensure that the bat and bird nest boxes and the restoration of pond 3 are achieved.
- Pond 3 shall not be stocked with fish but retained for wildlife value.

**Landscape Officer:** No specific concerns. If any permission is issued conditions should be attached to ensure that appropriate tree and hedgerow protection is provided and landscaping implemented in accordance with the submitted documents. The Landscape Visual Assessment is a fair representation of the impact of the proposed development. The mitigation aims to minimise impact of the development on the main receptors notably people using footpath number 6 by the barns and views from the train.

**Environment Agency:** Following the receipt of additional information, it is understood that the discharge from the development would be directed to a surface water feature that is down gradient of the water supply and therefore remove the previous objection subject to the inclusion of conditions to secure the submission and implementation of a scheme for foul and surface water drainage, the submission of a landscape management plan including details of new planting and formation of wildlife habitats. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) explains that surface water from the proposed development may discharge to the existing ponds on the site. The ponds should therefore have suitable overflow arrangements, to ensure that water levels in the ponds can be managed.

A revised Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted which takes into account the increase in impermeable hardstanding due to the need to protect ground water sources at a nearby spring. The Agency raise no objections to the modified FRA subject to the inclusion of a condition for a surface water drainage scheme, based on sustainable drainage principles to be submitted, approved and implemented.

#### **Cheshire East Visitor Economy:**

- Visitor numbers to the Cheshire East area for 2008 was 16.7m. Day visitors are the biggest market to Cheshire East, accounting for 15.3m of the overall visits. When comparing this to the overnight market, this is significantly lower; in 2008 there were 1.5m nights spent. This highlights the potential of expanding that market with an improved destination offer.
- Total value of east Cheshire's visitor economy is worth £653m, however the accommodation sector only accounts for £69m, highlighting the potential for growth.
- Wrenbury falls within the South Cheshire area being promoted as part of Nantwich & South Cheshire. It is promoted as an area with historic houses, gardens, cultural attractions, world-class events and market towns. With regard to accommodation it seeks to highlight a range of accommodation types on offer, their quality and their style.
- Cheshire East Council Visitor Economy will strongly argue that the chalets are quality graded to 3\* or above. Having the grading will also mean that VCC are able to promote the facility, as without grading this cannot happen
- Self catering holidays account for approx 15% of domestic holidays, 22% of nights spent away and 17% of the holiday expenditure. Self catering holidays are becoming less frequent than staying at a friends or relatives house, or using a serviced accommodation. However, self catering holidays tend to be longer and above the average for holiday expenditure.
- Self catering accommodation is of a much higher importance in rural areas. The expenditure in rural areas is over double for self catering than for serviced

accommodation. This trend is even more noticeable when looking at longer holidays where self catering accommodation equates to almost 64% of expenditure. In the year 2000, over 70% of holiday camps and parks and 57% of all self catering accommodation was located in rural areas.

- Seasonality is a problem for holiday chalet owners as most rentals take place between Easter and the end of October, however Christmas family breaks are becoming increasingly popular.

- There is also a shift happening in holiday habits. The Sunday Times recently showed that 54% of Britons plan to take their main holiday at home in 2010. The continuing tight economic situation, coupled with the fact that families who chose to stay at home this year have been surprised about the quality, variety and value that a UK holiday now offers means that consumers are planning to repeat the experience in future years.

- There are not many real competitors with the South Cheshire area in relation to holiday chalets. However, it is worth noting that similar self-catering accommodation is readily available at 12 locations in the area. There is also a section in the Destination Management Plan for Visit Chester & Cheshire that states that one of their actions between now and 2012 will be to 'Assess the potential to develop the self-catering offer in Cheshire & Warrington, the most rapidly expanding form of visitor accommodation across the UK'.

**Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service:** Offer comments in relation to access for the fire service, water supply, means of escape and ask the applicant to consider the inclusion of an automatic water suppression system.

**Public Rights of Way Unit:** The development has the potential to affect public right of way number 6 and the developer should be advised of their obligations in this respect. If the development will permanently affect the right of way then a diversion order must be sought. If the development will temporarily affect the right of way then a temporary closure order may be necessary.

**Mid Cheshire Footpath Society:** If the application is approved request the applicant install kissing gates instead of stiles and to keep the open aspect of the footpath. In addition the footpath should be kept walkable at all times.

**Cheshire Wildlife Trust:**

- There are known to be breeding barn owls within 100m of the site
- No information about the Cheshire Biodiversity Action Plan species or habitats on or near the site.
- The application fails to address impacts on the Combermere SSSI and SBI less than 1 km away.
- Lack of consideration of impacts on water quality in the new lakes and the water course flowing through the site.
- No details provided about the islands to be formed.
- If the application is approved recommend conditions to ensure that the landscape proposals are implemented. It appears that the various wildlife component parts of the application to form the lakes were never implemented.

**CPRE:** Object

- The development will lead to the loss of a tranquil area and damage the character of the area with a significant loss in landscape value;
- The fishing ponds are of poor quality work and still unfinished

- The development could have a long term adverse effect on the countryside.
- Doubts about the commercial viability of the business bearing in mind its remote location, and other caravan sites in the Wrenbury area. Presumably Yew Tree Barns had to show that there was not demand for tourist accommodation when they were converted to dwellings.
- Narrow access lanes which cannot accommodate the number of visitors envisaged. Only a small minority would cycle to the site.
- There is no reference to loss of agricultural land as required by policy NE12. The country cannot afford to lose agricultural land.

## **7. VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **WRENBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

Object on the following grounds:-

- Policy NE.2 allows for essential development in the open countryside. Policy RT6 allows for recreational uses in the open countryside and policy NE.13 allows for diversification but the application does not meet the requirements of policies RT.6 or NE.13 and cannot be regarded as “essential”. The development will cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the open countryside by visual intrusion. In addition it is not sited close to a farm complex and will not re-use existing buildings.
  - Policy RT.6 requires that development in rural areas has suitable access roads to accommodate the traffic generated. Policy BE.1 requires that development should not prejudice the safe movement of traffic on surrounding roads. The local highway network has narrow lanes often single track and is not adequate for the traffic which will be generated.
  - The applicant has stated that units may be sold or sublet. The occupancy of these units will be difficult to control and long periods of occupancy or permanent residential use is not compatible with policies for the rural area.
  - The Parish Council consider the site is one planning unit and to develop the site under two separate permissions one for the fishery and one for the chalets may present difficulties enforcing the planning conditions. The description of the development should be changed to include reference to both the fishery and the holiday accommodation to allow future control by the Local Planning Authority.
  - It is not clear whether the applicant knows if the proposal is commercially viable and there is an intention to sell to another developer. The viability should be tested in the same way that agricultural workers’ dwellings are tested and that there is demand/ need for the accommodation.
  - Representations indicate that the adjacent landowner who owns the track is not willing to give permission for the track to be used to access the development.
  - Drainage arrangements are not clear and there could be a detrimental effect on the local watercourse.
- The site is not served by public transport and can only be accessed by car, coaches and HGVs over an inadequate highway network.

## MARBURY PARISH COUNCIL

- Express concerns about the suitability of local roads for the additional traffic which would be generated particularly bearing in mind the use by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- Potential negative impacts on wildlife.
- Concern that to deliver the “twin units” to site would require local road closures.

### 8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

A petition with 301 signatures, letters of objection and comments have been received from:-

Yew Tree Farm, Wrenbury  
1, 2, 4 Yew Tree Barns, Hollyhurst Road, Wrenbury  
Hawksbill Hall, Hollyhurst Road,  
The Orchards, Marbury Road, Pinsley Green,  
6 Oak Cottages, 40, Churchside Cottage, The Nook, The Woodlands, 1  
Holland House, Nantwich Road, Wrenbury  
Springfield, New Road, Wrenbury  
1, 2 Lime Tree Barns, Rose Cottage, Frith Lodge, Frith Lane, Wrenbury  
Birchwood House, Oak House, The Green, Wrenbury  
10 Church Farm, Church Farm, Wrenbury  
4 Pinsley Green Road, Wrenbury  
1, 6, Pinsley View, Wrenbury  
34 Oakfield Avenue, Wrenbury  
The Cottage, Pinsley Green, Wrenbury  
Smeaton Wood Farm, Wrenbury  
West End Cottage, Wrenbury  
Wrenbury Hall Drive, Wrenbury  
3 Hollyhurst Cottages, Marbury  
Hollyhurst Farm, Marbury  
2 Pooles Cottages, Hollyhurst, Marbury  
Bottle Lodge, Hollyhurst  
Marley Hall Farm, Marbury  
1 Hollins Lane Cottages, Marbury  
Pheasant's Cross, Rowan House, School Lane, Marbury  
The Cottage, The Bungalow, 3, 5, Gautons Bank, Norbury  
Pear Tree Farm, Norbury  
Brook Bank, Wrenbury Road, Aston  
Sandford Farm, Aston  
19, 20, 32 Sheppenhall Grove, Aston  
The Brambles, Sheppenhall Lane, Aston  
Ashbourne, Heatley Lane, Broomhall  
48 Welsh Row, Nantwich  
64 Moorlands Road, Malvern

The comments and grounds of objection can be summarised as follows:-

- The development is not appropriate for the area
- The development will spoil the character of the area
- The area is peaceful countryside with considerable natural beauty
- The development will have a long term adverse effect on the countryside

- The landscape has been spoilt by other developments with no planting taking place
- The site is 1.6km from Wrenbury Conservation Area and 2.3km from Marbury Conservation Area.
- The area is one of scattered farms and low density population and the proposal is of an inappropriate scale for such an area.
- No policy to allow permanent caravans/ chalets for holiday use in the Local Plan
- 34 units is too many
- The development should be located closer to urban areas
- There has been enough development in the area recently
- The local roads are narrow winding country lanes, in a poor condition, with limited visibility to see approaching traffic and are not suitable for the additional traffic
- The access track is not of suitable construction being formed from gravel hardcore and stone and of single width. It is unsuitable for the amount of traffic which will be generated.
- The access track is unsuitable for heavy service vehicles such as refuse lorries which will damage it.
- There is a history of accidents on the narrow road and hundreds of near misses
- Roads are used by tractors and trailers, milk tankers, animal feed lorries, large vehicles etc
- The development will make dangerous roads more dangerous, major road widening would be required.
- Public transport is not readily available at the site
- Increase the risk of accidents
- The bridge over the canal has been broken leading to a detour via Marbury. Extra traffic is not needed to deal with these conditions.
- The roads are used for horse riding and cycling and the development will have an adverse effect on these users as well as people who walk the lanes
- Wrenbury has the canal, two public houses one of which has a caravan park and a shop further tourist accommodation is are not required
- Another shop is not needed.
- Local residents have provided barn owl boxes which are in use and if left as open land the ground could form suitable land for barn owls.
- There is a variety of wildlife including barn owls, badgers, newts, water voles, kestrels and butterflies in the locality which will suffer as a result of the proposed development
- The case is not proven that there will be no adverse impact on nature conservation and protected species.
- The development will have an adverse impact on the declining number of farmland birds
- No facilities for holiday makers who will have to travel for food, entertainment etc
- The site is not close to the station and visitors would not use the public footpath between the station and the site which passes through fields if carrying suitcases.
- Will result in pollution and litter
- Will create noise and disturbance for local residents
- The development will lead to people hanging around the area



- Security and safety for children playing and walking to school
- The area is one where it is still possible to see the night sky and has low levels of street lighting. This development will result in significant lighting which will be detrimental to the night sky, local people and wildlife.
- Land has flooded in the past
- Object to the fishery. The site is not running as a fishery and has not been set up as such.
- Loss of agricultural land when more food production is needed
- Creation of the fishery has resulted in flooding of adjoining farm land
- Will affect the value and desirability of nearby property.
- Caravans could be sold off for permanent dwellings
- Clarification is required on whether the units are for use as holiday homes or short term residential use.
- Waste pollution and sewage could get into the spring at the bottom of the valley.
- Effect on Quoisley Mere SSSI and Combermere SSSI.
- The flood risk assessment does not include adequate information in relation to the presence of the Barnett Brook. It fails to provide a site specific fluvial flood risk assessment in accordance with PPS25. It fails to assess the risk posed by the lakes themselves and to quantify how large the water bodies are and whether they are compliant with the Reservoir Act. It fails to detail surface water and foul water drainage for the site. It is not possible to determine from the information available whether there will be any resultant overland flows from the site to adjoining land, and to provide details of drainage design for the site. There is no determination of critical storm and no quantification of how the drainage will react in heavy rainfall. Fully designed drainage details should be provided. No explanation is offered as to how the "bound gravel" will react. There are no flood risk reduction measures within the residual risk section. No infiltration tests have been completed. There is no information about how the ponds connect to the hydrological cycle.
- There are doubts about the commercial viability of the enterprise especially since the barn conversion at Yew Tree Farm presumably had to demonstrate that there was no need for the accommodation for tourist accommodation.
- Other such chalet sites are available in Cheshire, three of which offer fishing.
- The chalets are unlikely to be used by people who are fishing at the site but for visitors to places such as North Wales, Chester and the Peak District.
- The development will not provide housing for local families in need.
- Lack of information in relation to owner occupiers, the number of people using the site for short term letting, subletting, the maximum annual residency and the number of day people fishing at the site.
- If this is part of a rolling strategy to develop the site over a period of time the full development proposals should be provided and the development should then be capped for a specified period eg 25 years.
- No details of the administrative building.

### **Comments from adjacent landowner and owner of Woodlands Brewery**

An earlier objection lodged in relation to the potential damage to ground water and concerns about the use of the access route has now been withdrawn following negotiations to ensure measures to protect the water supply from the adjacent spring.

## **9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

### **Planning, Design and Access Statement** (Prepared by Goodwin Planning Services and dated May 2010)

- The site is laid out with 34 twin units. The number of units has been determined by the need to retain a spacious setting and minimise visual impact of the development as well as the position of the lakes and need for internal roads.
- The main car park reception and office are located to the south of the site and the office, reception and car park will be shared with the fishery.
- A cycle store, operation compound and recycling area will also be provided.
- Caravans will be single storey with a pitch roof and measure 6.8m wide, 20m in length and have an internal ceiling height of 3.05m
- Separation distances between units will be in excess of the minimum requirement of 5m
- Units will be timber clad to be sympathetic to the rural location
- The scheme is submitted with substantial boundary planting
- Internal roads and car parking will be surfaced with porous self binding gravel.
- Support for holiday touring caravans and chalet parks is found in :-
  - o The Good Practice guide on Planning for Tourism
  - o PPS4 especially policy EC7
  - o Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan
  - o Developing the Visitor Economy: The Strategy for Tourism in England's North West 2003-2010
  - o North West Regional Economic Strategy
  - o Growing the visitor Economy: A Refreshed Framework for Cheshire and Warrington to 2015A visitor Economy Strategic Framework for Cheshire East (currently under development)
- The development will assist in improving the quality and stock of accommodation for visitors in Cheshire East and the drive to grow the visitor economy
- The development complies with policies in the Development Plan.

### **Market Need Assessment** (Prepared by Humberts Leisure dated April 2010)

The submission includes an assessment of the strategic policy setting of the site for tourist development, an evaluation of demand using numbers of visitors to the area and a drive time catchment analysis of the local population and a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the local holiday lodge market.

Support for the application is found in:-

- Developing the Visitor Economy: the Strategy for Tourism in England's North West 2003-2010
- Northwest Regional Economic Strategy
- Growing our Visitor Economy : A Refreshed Framework for Cheshire and Warrington to 2015

- An emerging visitor economy strategy for Cheshire East which will be formulated by the end 2010.

#### Location factors

The site is approximately 30 mins drive from M6 and is within reasonable reach of a number of regional airports

Trains to Wrenbury from Shrewsbury and Crewe are infrequent and this suggests visitors are less likely to rely on the train.

Discussions with lodge operators confirm that there is a growing demand for self catering accommodation for short breaks

In addition rental lodge holiday makers are generally willing to travel around 90 mins to reach their destination.

Within a travel time of 90 mins there is a resident population of 8,269,437 people.

This covers North and Mid Wales, Preston, Derby and Birmingham.

Within this population there is a slightly higher proportion of the 35-54 age group and this is a key group of holiday makers for lodge accommodation.

#### Tourism factors

Visit Britain suggest that due to the down turn in the economy people regard holidays as an essential rather than a luxury item of expenditure.

The down turn in the economy has also resulted in an increase in the interest of holiday park rental accommodation

Park Holidays UK Ltd report an increase in demand for holidays, with advanced bookings up two thirds on its 2009 figure.

Hoseasons have similarly announced that short break bookings were up 25% on 2009.

The appeal of the UK for holidays has increased as a result of the downturn in the economy.

Whilst visitor trips to Cheshire tend to be shorter breaks than regionally the spend per visitor per night is higher.

Visitor trips to Cheshire tend to be day trips but this may in part be due to the lack of suitable accommodation and the provision of accommodation may encourage people to stay for longer.

There are a wide variety of visitor attractions within the area particularly heritage attractions which fits well with the demographics of people attracted to holiday lodges.

The more rural parts of Cheshire attract the older holiday maker and the typical holiday maker in Cheshire is more likely to be staying in self catering accommodation or camping attracted by the "great outdoors" or heritage. There is clearly potential for visitor accommodation in rural Cheshire.

The age profile of the typical staying visitor in Cheshire fits well with the age profile of the lodge holiday makers and with the catchment demographics.

It is envisaged that the accommodation would initially be aimed at the holiday rental market with the possibility of selling homes coming later.

Nationally the holiday parks and lodges sector of regional and national tourism is growing and lodges are generally used by persons who appreciate freedom. Holiday lodge accommodation has therefore grown over the last decade.

The use of the caravan has to some extent been replaced by demand for lodge type accommodation more recently and local statistics show that Cheshire has the smallest number of caravan and camping sites of the region which may suggest that the potential for holiday lodges is in its infancy and that there is opportunity for new growth.

There are just 6 lodge parks in Cheshire offering 35 lodges and planning permission for a further 106 lodges at these 6 sites. This is considerably lower than in adjoining areas. The majority of these lodges are owner occupied showing that there is potential for further rental development.

The closest of these sites is approximately 18 miles away /35 mins drive time.

By comparison with Denbighshire (15 sites / 194 lodges), Shropshire (17 sites/ 135 lodges) and Staffordshire (5 sites 58 lodges), Cheshire is under provided with holiday lodge accommodation.

Field research suggests that occupancy levels range from 75%-93% across the season which is considered to be very high. Normally 60% occupancy would be considered robust.

Whilst there is an abundance of angling facilities across the county few offer overnight accommodation and given the demographics of the population within 90 mins drive time and the profile of anglers it is considered that there is a strong synergy between anglers and holiday lodge accommodation.

There is clear evidence to indicate that there will be a good level of demand for the timber clad lodges at Yew Tree Farm.

### **Transport Statement (prepared by Singleton Clamp and dated April 2010)**

- The site is 1.8km from the village of Wrenbury
- The site is accessed from the unmade track which serves farmland and the poultry unit to the south. This track will be provided with three passing bays as a requirement of the planning permission for the fishing lakes
- Hollyhurst Road meets Wrenbury Road some 230m north of the access point to the site and a public footpath is located to the north of the application site.
- Lanes in the area are lightly trafficked and whilst there are no dedicated cycle facilities there are a number of signed cycle routes
- A speed survey at the access point on Hollyhurst Road showed that a total of 34 vehicles passed the point in 2.5 hours and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of eastbound traffic was travelling at 29.1 mph and 29.85 mph for west bound traffic.
- The proposal includes one access point from a route which leaves the access track 125m from Hollyhurst Road and a second access point which follows the access route approved for use by the fishery.
- Visibility at the access point on Hollyhurst Road is 2.4m x 70m in both directions although road side vegetation will need to be trimmed to retain this visibility. Given that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is below 30mph it is considered that this level of visibility is acceptable.
- The site is 1.8km from the centre of Wrenbury, the railway station is marginally outside the 2km walking distance recognised in PPG13 using either local roads or the Public right of Way. The village store and post office, and some pubs also fall within this 2km distance.
- The site is well located for walking using the local public rights of way
- The villages of Aston, Marbury, Norbury and parts of Sound are within 5km the recognised distance for cycling in PPG13
- The nearest bus stop is in Wrenbury village approximately 2km from the site, and bus service 72 between Nantwich and Whitchurch stops up to 5 times per day in each direction
- The Wrenbury railway station can be reached by walking or using the 72 bus. Trains run approximately every 2 hours to Crewe and Shrewsbury with 8 to 10 trains in each direction on Monday and Saturday

- A local taxi service based in Nantwich could also be used to link to the railway station
- The site operator could also provide a mini bus.
- Survey information based on surveys in September 2007 at Ribblesdale Park, Gisburn and Bassenthwaite Park, Keswick showed that for each occupied unit 2 trips were generated per day per unit at Ribblesdale Park and 1.69 trips for each unit at Bassenthwaite.
- TRICS data base shows that similar trip rates are generated by larger caravan sites
- Based on survey information from Ribblesdale Park it is estimated that the site for 34 units would generate 68 trips per day at full occupancy or 31 trips per day assuming 45% occupancy with 10 trips in the busiest hour at 100% occupation or 5 trips per hour at 45% occupation.
- With a Travel Plan for the site these trip rates can be reduced further.
- The lodges will be marketed for fishing breaks and there is therefore potential for these trips to be reduced further.

## INTERIM TRAVEL PLAN

Development improvements include the use of a minibus to transport visitors to the village or the railway station and also to collect and drop of staff depending on their origin/ destination.

A welcome pack including bread milk and basic foods could be provided to reduce the need for guests to travel with a comprehensive pre-order serve available for visitors on arrival.

Information would be made available to visitors within the lodges about public transport links, PROW, cycle routes, details of cycle hire and cycle repair shops.

The Travel Plan will be monitored by the Travel Plan Coordinator who will be the site manager.

## HIGHWAY TECHNICAL NOTE

In order to allay concerns over vehicle numbers site surveys were conducted on 9th and 10<sup>th</sup> July, a weekday and a Saturday.

The results show the access road is lightly trafficked with 12 vehicles "in" on the weekday (0700-1900) and 13 "in" on the Saturday. There were 13 vehicles out on the weekday and 11 "out" on the Saturday over the same time periods in each case.

Peak times for journeys were between 10am and 11 am on the weekday and 9am and 10am on Saturday.

The peak time for journeys for holiday lodge accommodation is between 12pm and 1.00pm on Saturdays. Based on 100% occupancy for 34 lodges this would generate 10 vehicles in total during that hour.

Whilst the fishery would add traffic to that it is clear that the existing levels of traffic on the access road are insignificant. There is little likelihood of vehicles approaching in opposite directions but if they did 2 passing bays are proposed on the access track.

## **Great Crested Newt Assessment mitigation and ecological update** (Prepared by UES and dated 15.07.10)

- The 2006 Great Crested Newt Survey for the fishery inspected 7 ponds within the locality and found small sized populations in three of the 7 ponds.
- The development is unlikely to affect any protected species or habitats

- Three new ponds have been created two of which are stocked with fish, the other is dry.
- It is recommended that a new pond is formed on the site of an offsite scrape and 3 bat and 3 bird nest boxes are provided to offset any ecological impacts.
- The aquatic habitats provide good habitats for invertebrates birds and foraging bats.
- If development commences in the bird nesting season then a breeding bird survey should be undertaken to ascertain the presence of nesting birds.

### **Bat and Barn Owl Survey** (Prepared by UES and dated 19<sup>th</sup> August 2010)

- Five species of bats were found to use the site, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelles, Daubentons Bat, Noctule and Brown Long Eared Bat.
- Six trees were identified as having suitable features for bat roosts. One of these was found to be used by a Soprano Pipistrelle, (T9 on the tree survey).
- It is recommended that T9 is retained with its deadwood to avoid disturbing bats and their roosts. (Tree survey recommended minor deadwooding only)
- The management of trees T5, T13, T19, T22, and T23 which have suitable features for bat roosts can go ahead without the need for further survey or licence provided the advice in relation to mitigation, compensation and management is followed. No bats were seen to emerge from these trees.
- Mitigation includes tree works to take place in the presence of and following advice from a licensed bat ecologist. Any branches removed with cavities suitable for use by bats should be carefully lowered to the ground and left for 48 hours to allow bats to escape if present.
- Compensation includes the provision of 10 bat boxes.
- Management includes planting proposed in the landscaping scheme which will improve the site for use by bats, barn owl, hirundines and other wildlife. Areas of grassland and rough habitat at the edge of the site should also be retained.
- No signs of the presence for cavity roosting or nesting were found the survey on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> August.
- During the dawn survey on 16<sup>th</sup> August one Barn Owl was found perching on tree T13 which then moved to T22.
- A Little Owl as noted perching on the farm barn gable next to Yew Tree Cottage.
- Barn Owl boxes were noted in the adjacent field.
- Records from the South Cheshire Barn Owl group do not record any breeding attempts or roosting records from these boxes.
- Provided the advice on evaluation and recommendations is followed there should be no negative effect on the local bat population and the correct management of the trees and hedges with the provision of bat boxes could improve the quality of the habitat for bats.

### **Flood Risk Assessment** (Prepared by Betts Associates, dated June 2010, amended 23 August 2010)

- The site is located outside of any area at risk from flooding (within Flood Zone 1).
- A tributary located approximately 100m to the south of the site but due to the levels of land the tributary would pose a minimal risk to flooding at the site.
- The development would result in 20% of the land (4.406ha) of impermeable surfaces.

- Surface water run off from the impermeable surfaces will be drained to the man made ponds already present within the site which will have the capacity to store water from 1 in 100 year flood events.
- The development generates a maximum volume of run off for a 1 in 100 year event of 834 cubic metres.
- Emergency access and egress would not be affected in times of flooding since the level of the land is above that level at risk from flooding.

**Tree Survey and Assessment** (prepared by FFC Landscape Architects and dated January 2010)

Identifies 52 trees on or close to the site. Some of which are in need of work to remove ivy and dead wood for their long term health. Some have potential bat roost cavities. Root Protection Areas are shown. The majority of trees are in good to fair condition, only 4 trees are identified as poor and of these only one is identified as potentially requiring felling if remedial tree works fail.

**Landscape Visual Impact Study and Mitigation Proposals** (prepared by FFC Landscape Architects dated April 2010)

The site is identified in the EWM1 (Estate Wood and Mere) category of The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment. This is typically rolling countryside.

Within the site land slopes from north to south with levels ranging from 74m AOD to 67 m AOD.

The site has been modified by the formation of 3 fishing lakes and hedgerows interspersed with Oak and other mature trees in a variety of conditions around the site. A north-south hedgerow divides the site into two areas.

The study identifies 3 character areas (1) Rolling countryside and small wetlands such as meres, heaths and mosses (2) Ornamental landscape features such as parkland and lakes) and (3) Meres mosses and ponds some meres adapted for ornamental purposes.

Rolling countryside and small wetland area such as meres, heaths and mosses is typically a distinctive landscape with a strong sense of place and has features worthy of conservation. Some areas have large scale agricultural development and other ad-hoc features which form significant distraction to the setting reducing the overall landscape quality. The area is sensitive to inappropriate change

Ornamental Landscape features such as parkland and lakes – This characteristic is a distinctive and desirable landscape with a strong sense of place and generates landscape of ecological, amenity and conservation interest. It should be protected from intrusion as a result of need for farming diversification and should be protected from large scale agricultural features. The landscape quality is highly desirable and can be enjoyed by visitors and users. It is sensitive to inappropriate change.

Meres Mosses and ponds – This area has a distinguishable landscape characteristic though there is no particular sense of place. The fishery is in a state of development. Interest and demand for the sport will enable this to mature to an attractive feature for human use as well as for wildlife. Overall the current landscape value is low as it is being developed but there is scope for positive change.

24 view points (receptors) were initially identified. These were then reassessed taking account of landform and vegetation to 7 viewpoints as follows:-

Approach from the west on Hollyhurst Lane (site entrance)

Approach from north east from Wrenbury

View from A536 Marley Hall Covert  
From Combermere monument  
View from Pooles Riding Wood  
View from Barn conversion  
View from footpath along railway line  
View from footpath by barns  
View from railway

For views from the site entrance, and the approach from Wrenbury and users of the railway, the number of people affected by the development could be a significant number. For the other viewpoints there will be few occasions to view the development because these are rural tracks or properties or rural footpaths which are only used occasionally.

No trees or hedges will be removed from the site. Landscaping will enhance the setting of the individual lodges. New buffer planting along the drive, to the north and along the existing hedgerows will strengthen existing planting. The new woodland cover will reflect the species present.

The edges of the site are visible from certain vantage points and these will be improved by buffer zone planting. This planting will reduce the impact of the development on the visual envelope except for a small number of elevated viewpoints which will still gain views over hedges and trees (3 view points)

Mitigation includes:-

Buffer strip on average 8m wide to the north end of the site – this will mitigate views from footpaths, the railway and the barn conversion.

Planting strips alongside the entrance 3-10m wide - this will mitigate for the view from Hollyhurst Lane, the approach from Wrenbury, from Marley Hall Covert and more distantly Combermere monument.

Planting blocks on southern boundary including planting on the bank and around the new site entrance and car park – this will mitigate impacts from the south and Pooles Riding Wood.

**Climate Change Statement** (Prepared by Stephen Goodwin and received on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010)

-The location of the accommodation and development in association with the fishery will reduce potential vehicle movements

- The site is located on a public footpath, within 1.8km of the centre of Wrenbury Village, which has a shop and post office and a number of local pubs.

- The local road network is suitable for cycling and Aston, Marbury, Norbury and parts of Sandbach are within cycling distance (5km in accordance with PPG13) of the site, as is Wrenbury railway station.

-The development includes a secure cycle store.

-The number 72 bus route passes through Wrenbury village and passes the railway station.

- A travel plan will be produced.

- Timber for the lodges will be from sustainable sources.

- All lodges will have double glazing, heating and sound insulation, and low energy light fittings.

- The landscaping scheme provides details of native planting.



- Facilities will be put in place for waste recycling for glass, aluminium cans and paper.
- Surface water run off from the site will drain to the lakes to control run off from the site.

## **10. OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of Development**

This application is for the provision of 34 chalets (twin unit caravans) and not the fishery which was the subject of an earlier planning permission. Comments in relation to the suitability and condition of the fishery are not therefore relevant to the consideration of this application.

Policy NE.2 (Open Countryside) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan allows for “essential” development for agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, essential works undertaken by a public service authority or statutory undertaker, or for other uses appropriate to the rural area. Policy RT.10 (Touring Camping and Camping Sites) allows for touring caravan and camping sites where a number of criteria are met. However this application is for timber clad holiday lodges not touring accommodation. Policy RT.7 (Visitor Accommodation) in relation to visitor accommodation allows hotel or guest house accommodation within settlement boundaries or for the change of use of existing residential accommodation in the open countryside to guest houses.

Policy RT.6 (Recreational Uses in the Open countryside) allows for recreational uses in the open countryside. It is considered that the provision of the lodges is not specifically a recreational use but is recreational accommodation. The justification to the policy refers to Stapeley Water Gardens and Bridgemere Garden World hence the fact that this policy is aimed at attractions rather than visitor accommodation. Policy NE.15 (Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings) also allows the conversion of existing buildings to visitor accommodation where specified criteria are met.

There is therefore no specific policy which permits development for holiday lodges in the open countryside although policy NE.2 allows for development which is appropriate in the rural area, where this can be regarded as “essential”. Under such circumstances the application has been advertised as a departure to the adopted Local Plan.

It is therefore necessary to look at Government guidance to ascertain whether there may be grounds for allowing the development based on such advice.

Policy EC7 of PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth states that Local Planning Authorities should support sustainable rural tourism which benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors and which utilise rather than harm the character of the countryside. It notes the need to support the provision and expansion of tourist facilities in appropriate locations where identified need is not met by existing facilities in service centres, carefully weighing the objective of providing adequate facilities or enhancing visitors’ enjoyment or improving the financial viability of the facility with the need to

protect landscapes. Whilst the policy encourages the re-use of rural buildings, it notes that where new buildings are required these should be in sustainable locations where possible and also recognises that facilities may be required in other locations where they are provided in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction. The policy notes that new or expanded holiday accommodation, including chalet sites, should not be prominent in the landscape and any visual intrusion should be minimised by effective high quality screening. The policy therefore supports development away from a village or settlement where this is related to an existing tourist facility.

Policy EC12 of PPS4 notes that when determining planning applications for economic development in rural areas, sites which are remote from local service centres may be an acceptable location for development, even if not readily accessible by public transport.

Further support for the provision of rural tourist accommodation is found in The Good Practice Guide on Tourism. The Guide notes that holiday parks are the largest providers of rural bed space and that the provision of tourist accommodation can help to support the local economy and provide for rural diversification. It advises of the need to balance concerns to protect the landscape and minimise environmental impacts with the need to provide adequate facilities.

The site is no longer in agricultural use but has the benefit of an extant permission for the use of the land as a fishery therefore concerns about the loss of agricultural land do not fall to be considered.

Representations make reference to the fact that prior to the conversion of Yew Tree Barns for residential development the application submitted would have needed to demonstrate that there was no requirement for the buildings for tourist accommodation. However the economics of provision mean that unless a relatively high rate of occupation can be achieved, the cost of converting barns to tourist accommodation is often prohibitive.

Whilst PPS 4 notes the need to carefully weigh the objectives of providing adequate facilities or enhancing visitors' enjoyment or improving the financial viability with the need to protect the landscape, it does not require the authority to test the viability of the proposal. The provision of the chalet accommodation with the fishing lakes will allow visitors to use the fishing lakes or the chalet accommodation or both and in that sense therefore provides a wider economic base for the proposed business.

The accommodation offered at the existing caravan park at Wrenbury offers a different type of accommodation and whilst some people may be attracted to both the chalet accommodation and the caravan park others may prefer the more spacious accommodation of a chalet.

In summary the policy in PPS4 also notes that new chalet developments may be acceptable where they are not prominent in the landscape and high quality screening is provided to minimise the visual impact. For reasons explained in detail later in this report it is considered that the proposed development meets these requirements and that the development complies with this policy. It is

therefore considered that the more recent policy in PPS4 presents a reason to allow the application contrary to the development policies in place at this point in time. PPS4 states at paragraph 3, in the introduction to the PPS, that “The development management policies in the PPS can be applied directly by the decision maker when determining planning applications.”

### **Impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside**

The application is for 34 chalets on land varying in height from 67mAOD at the southern edge of the site to 74m at the northern end. The chalets would be timber clad and stand between 3.5m and 4.5m high depending on the manufacturer supplying the units.

The Landscape Visual Assessment has been completed in accordance with the “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” produced by the Landscape Institute and the “Landscape Character Assessment Guidance” produced by the Countryside Agency.

From an initial 24 potential receptors following site survey only 7 were identified as being of high or medium sensitivity. These were:-

Site entrance from the west

Site entrance from the north east

Marley Hall covert

Poole’s Riding Wood

Footpath Number 5 alongside the railway line

Footpath Number 6 alongside the barn conversion

Railway line.

The Assessment recognises that for the first two and last of the above receptors the number of people affected could be significant as a result of passenger numbers / traffic in the area.

The remaining receptors are considered to offer low sensitivity due to the fact that they are rural properties, tracks or footpaths which are not heavily used.

The Assessment notes that the hedgerows with trees would be retained on the eastern site boundary, the eastern part of the southern site boundary and the hedgerow with trees located centrally within the site would also be retained.

Landscape mitigation is proposed in the form of new areas of hedgerow with woodland mix in the following locations:-

-along side the existing retained hedges around the site

-along the northern boundary

-along side the access track from the entrance at its junction with Hollyhurst Road

-along the southern site boundary.

This in effect would provide an inner buffer of planting within the site boundaries.

Areas of woodland mix would be provided in the site itself on the three retained islands, which would all include chalets, and around the car park, office, shop and toilet block. In addition individual trees and shrubs would be used to create bays to separate and enhance the individual sites of each chalet.

The planting would be native species, based on those growing in the area. The planting would therefore provide an enhanced setting to the area to mitigate the effects on the development on the receptors. The site may be developed on a phased basis and if it is then the landscaping would need to be phased to ensure that those areas of planting required to screen the site from nearby dwellings at Yew Tree Barns, the access route and from the adjacent public right of way should be provided early on in the development of the site. However there may be some areas close to the sites of chalets where planting would be more practically completed after the chalets are in position.

Whilst it would take time for the planting to grow and become fully effective it is considered that the proposed planting would provide a good screen to mitigate the effects of the development. Views of the development would continue to be present for some time while the planting takes effect from the site access, a gate on Hollyhurst Road, the public footpaths in the area and the railway line. However it is not considered that views from these public points are sufficient to justify refusal of the application.

Turning to the dwellings which are close to the site, the existing hedgerow through the centre of the site would to some extent soften the appearance of chalets around the two eastern lakes from dwellings at Yew Tree Barns. There is however no screening between the dwellings and the western lake at present, until such time as the new planting begins to grow. It is noted that the rear elevation of the dwellings face more towards the access track rather than the lake, however views of the western lake can be clearly seen. Five units would be provided in this area, two on the north side of the lake and three on the island. With the two closest units being over 110m from the converted dwellings and the three on the island being over 150m from the dwellings it is not considered that these five units are positioned so as to justify refusal of the application.

The remaining 29 units would be positioned around the two eastern lakes with 2 units being close to the northern site boundary. However, a mature hedgerow which separates the barn conversions from the application site provides some initial softening until such time as the new planting is established. The two closest units would be almost 60m from the closest dwelling in the barn conversion and slightly under 50m from the farm house itself. However the farm house is in part screened from the development by a two storey outbuilding. Three units would be located on the island in the northern lake at a distance in excess of 100m from the farm house and converted dwellings. The remaining 24 units would be positioned between the two eastern lakes and around the eastern lakes at greater distances from the existing dwellings.

With the exception of the public footpaths in the area and the railway line there are no large open expanses of land where the public have access and from which the site is clearly visible. There are locations along Hollyhurst Road from which the site would be seen but these are gateways and entrances rather than long areas of open views. In view of the existing landscape infrastructure, the fall of the land and the proposed mitigation it is considered that the development would not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside.

Whilst no details of the appearance of the shop/ office and toilet block have been submitted these would be relatively small single storey structures

measuring approximately 9m x 18m and 5m x 8m respectively. They would be located on the car park with planting to the rear of each. They would not therefore have any significant impact on the landscape overall and it is considered that the details of the appearance can be submitted by condition.

Representations suggest that the development would have a detrimental impact on the Wrenbury and Marbury Conservation Areas. However the site is too remote from these locations to justify refusal of the application on the grounds of adverse impact on the character, appearance or the setting of the conservation areas and is not visible from them.

### **Existing Trees and Hedges**

The development would retain all the trees and hedges around the site with the exception of one tree (T19 in the south eastern corner of the site) which may have to be removed if tree works are unsuccessful. The development would not therefore have any detrimental impact on existing trees and hedgerows. Tree works including the removal of ivy, deadwooding, selective thinning/ branch removal and in one case major tree surgery (to T19) are proposed to some of the trees on the site. This work should be required to be completed by condition. Tree protection measures are also proposed and should be subject to a condition. No chalets would be positioned within Root Protection Areas although three chalets would abut the Root Protection Areas. In addition now that the proposed toilet block has been repositioned to protect the fresh water spring the toilet block and a small area of the main car park would also fall within a Root Protection Area but this is towards the edge of the area and provided construction includes no-dig methods it is not considered that this would adversely impact on the tree. Conditions should be included for no dig construction and for tree protection measures to be put in place and retained for the period of construction.

No details of hedgerow protection have been provided for the construction period and these should also be required by condition. Since the applicant is considering developing the site on a phased basis any condition for tree and hedgerow protection should be on a phased basis.

### **Ecology**

Whilst the application was not originally submitted with any ecological information an update to the 2006 Great Crested Newt Survey and Ecological Assessment and Bat and Barn Owl Survey have been submitted more recently.

The submitted Ecological Assessment notes that meta-populations of Great Crested Newts are likely to be decreasing and recommends the creation of a new pond at the site recorded as pond 3 in the survey. This is a damp area or scrape rather than a pond at present. The proposal is to form a pond of about 2m depth and surface area of about 300 square metres (ie approx 15m x 20m) to provided optimal conditions for Great Crested Newts. A condition should be attached to any permission for a scheme to be submitted and the implementation of these works. A further condition should be attached to prevent it being stocked with fish which might be detrimental to Great Crested Newts. The proposed site planting would enhance shelter and foraging areas for Great Crested Newts.

In addition protective fencing should be provided to the off site badger sett to ensure no damage to it. A further condition should also ensure no tree or hedgerow works take place in the nesting season. Another condition should ensure that if development commences in the bird nesting season the site is inspected and no works take place within 4m of any nesting bird.

Trees have been subject to survey and one, T9 (close to the northern pond on the eastern side of the site) was found to be used as a bat roost. As a result, deadwooding originally proposed to this tree, will not now take place. Following the more detailed bat and barn owl survey the number of bat boxes proposed has been increased from 3 to 10. It is therefore considered that subject to these provisions with tree works following the practice outlined in the survey, there would be no adverse impact on bats.

The submissions propose 10 Schwegler bat boxes and 3 Schwegler bird nest boxes to be provided but no details of the location are given. A condition should be attached to any permission for details of the locations to be submitted, approved and then the nest boxes to be provided before the chalets are first occupied.

The presence of barn owls on the site and the provision of barn owl boxes on adjacent land are noted but it is not considered that the development would be likely to have any adverse impact on this species. Further with appropriate management of the landscaping, the retention of rough grassland within the site and along the edges of the site could improve the habitat for small mammals and promote use of the site by barn owls. A condition for a maintenance scheme is recommended and this can include the requirement to retain rough grassland.

It is not considered that the development would adversely impact on the water quality in the Barnet Brook or adversely affect Quoisley Mere SSSI or Combermere SSSI, since the application site is some distance away from these sites and the Brook.

The Environment Agency requests a number of conditions including the submission of details of landscaping using native species and to provide wildlife habitats on the site. It would appear that the Agency have not fully studied all the documents submitted with the planning application. Whilst it is accepted that there is no management and maintenance regime submitted, the actual details of planting and additional habitat provision on site is acceptable to the Council's ecologist.

With these measures in place it is considered that the development would not have any adverse impact on protected species and that it includes appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity at the site. The use of native species and additional tree and hedgerow planting with woodland blocks would in any event provide a new habitat on this land to enhance biodiversity.

### **Highway Matters and Parking**

A Transport Statement and Interim Travel Plan were originally submitted with the application and more recently an additional Technical Note has been submitted. This reports the results of a traffic survey. Following the receipt of this the Strategic Highway Manager raised no objections to the proposals. The survey demonstrated that the levels of traffic on Hollyhurst Road were low and that the speed of traffic was about 29 mph in both directions.

The site would be accessed down the track which is to be used by the fishery. This also serves two other holdings and is used by Woodlands Brewery to collect water. However the development would have two access routes one of which would leave the access track some 120m from its entrance on Hollyhurst Lane. The main entrance would use the access track for a distance of 300m before turning east.

A traffic survey on Hollyhurst Road found that over a 2.5 hour period a total of only 34 vehicles used Hollyhurst Road. Traffic is also light on the access road which would serve the development. In the event that the chalets were all occupied by comparison with traffic at other similar developments, 34 chalets would generate 10 vehicle movements during the busiest hour which is 12 midday to 1.00pm. If this is combined with the traffic using the access road (3 vehicles for the same hour) this would give a total of 13 vehicles on the access road for this hour, which is the busiest time for traffic serving the chalet park. At other times of the day the traffic would be far less as it would if there was less than 100% occupation. There would in reality be very few occasions when the site is 100% occupied.

Average occupancy rates of around 45% would give 5 vehicles per hour which added to the existing traffic would generate 8 vehicles per hour on the access track.

Therefore the traffic that would be generated by the development is not considered to be sufficient to justify refusal of the application on highway grounds. A widening of the access track, immediately adjacent to the junction with Hollyhurst Lane, at the site entrance, allows vehicles to pass already. The application includes the formation of the two passing bays along the access track as shown on the plans submitted with the fishery. Therefore passing places are included to serve the development.

Representations express concern about the impact of the development on local roads which are narrow and winding country lanes. However the level of traffic generated by the development would not be sufficient to justify refusal of the application due to impact on the highway network in the area.

A visibility splay of 2m x 70m is proposed which is considered acceptable for the speed of traffic recorded on Hollyhurst Road.

The application has been amended by the reduction of parking spaces at the units to one space per chalet. There is in addition a parking area proposed with the fishery which would hold 93 vehicles. A further small parking/ picnic area is proposed adjacent to the northern access route which leads to the western lake and this could hold about 10 more vehicles depending on how it is laid out.

The proposals with the application for the fishery included 80 parking spaces on the site of the main car park. The increase in parking proposed by this application is therefore a maximum of 57 additional spaces spread around the site, which is considered reasonable.

Whilst representations object to the application on the grounds of the number of people who walk, cycle and horse ride on local roads bearing in mind the level of traffic which will be generated this would not present a reason to refuse the application.

The submission includes an Interim Travel Plan which makes suggestions for improving the sustainability of the development. Measures proposed include the use of a mini bus to ferry visitors around, information about public transport, cycle hire etc, and the use of a groceries made available for visitors on arrival. A condition should be attached to any permission to require a Travel Plan to be submitted approved and implemented prior to the occupation of the units and monitored and updated annually.

There is a public right of way through the northern section of the site for a distance of about 40m. The Mid Cheshire Footpath Society request that the two stiles which are on the site boundaries where the footpath enters and leaves the site be replaced by kissing gates to improve openness. However the styles are in good condition and in the absence of a policy to achieve this it is not considered necessary to require such works. The development is located to the south of the path which passes close to a pair of parking bays at the northern group of two chalets.

## **Drainage**

A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted. The Environment Agency initially raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development specifically with regard to the spring on adjacent land. It was considered that the run off from the car park and overflow from the toilet block could potentially damage the quality of water taken from the spring. However the application has been amended to relocate the toilet block to the northern end of the car park. The overflow from the toilet block would be drained through adjoining land away from the spring and the application area to the Barnett Brook which lies some distance to the south of the site. In addition the car park would be surfaced in tarmac and provided with oil interceptors to ensure that run off does not pollute the water supply.

The owner of the spring, having initially objected to the application and the Environment Agency, have both now withdrawn their earlier objections raised. A condition can be attached as requested by the Environment Agency for a drainage scheme to be submitted. A revised Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted to the Environment Agency which takes account of the need to hard surface the car park and hence increases the area of non-permeable surfacing within the site. The Environment Agency raise no objections to this due to the need to protect the quality of the ground water and request that a scheme for the disposal of surface water drainage scheme, based on sustainable drainage principles be submitted.

Whilst the Authority would not normally look for a tarmac surface to a car park for 93 vehicles in the open countryside in this particular case it is required to protect the water quality. There are no public rights of way through this part of the site and although the car park would be clearly visible to those persons using it, it is not in any public area or accessed along public rights of way. Therefore in this particular instance there are no objections. The area around the car park would be planted with native species as part of the site landscaping.

A representation objects to the submitted Flood Risk Assessment due to lack of information but no such objection has been sustained by the Environment Agency. At paragraph 10 PPS25 states that Flood Risk Assessments should be carried out to the appropriate degree at all levels of development. It is considered that the Assessment



submitted is proportionate to the application proposed. It would be difficult to justify refusal of the application for such a reason when there are no objections from the Environment Agency.

## **Sustainability**

The Transport Statement, submitted with the application, notes that the site is located 1.8km from the centre of Wrenbury and that the station is just over 2km from the site. Measurements on the Council's GIS show the distance from the site access on Hollyhurst Road to the post office in Wrenbury is slightly over 2km (2.07km). Whilst this is just over the distance of 2km which PPG13 recognises as the distance most people are prepared to walk it is not significantly over that distance. The GIS measurements show that the station falls within 2km of the site access, walking by road. Walking through the fields would reduce this distance slightly. The distance to the public houses at the Cotton Arms and Dusty Miller would be 2.4km from the site access. It is therefore considered that these facilities would be within walking distance of the site for people who were prepared to walk although there is no footway for most of the journey.

In terms of public transport the village and railway station are on the number 72 bus route which runs between Nantwich and Whitchurch. There are 6 or 7 buses per day Mondays to Saturdays which serve the village and station during the working day, although the Wednesday service is slightly different. The railway station has links to Nantwich and Whitchurch with about 12 trains running on week days from 06:00 hours to just after midnight. In reality very few visitors to the site would use public transport and the submitted application and supporting information acknowledge this. However the Travel Plan offers to provide a mini bus to help support visitors who want to use public transport.

Policy EC12 of PPS4 recognises that a site may be acceptable for economic development in the rural area where it is not readily accessible by public transport and in view of the fact that the site could be visited using public transport it is not considered that the limited links to public transport would justify refusal of the application.

The development would be constructed with measures to minimise energy usage both during construction through the use of sustainable timber and insulation and subsequently through the inclusion of double glazing, insulation and low energy light bulbs. Measures would be provided for recycling where possible. Whilst the site is located away from any settlement and not on a bus route the provision of cycle parking would encourage the use of cycling as an alternative means of transport. In addition the presence of a shop stocking supplies for holiday makers would help to minimise the need to travel. An interim Travel Plan has been produced and would be developed to a full Travel Plan to promote sustainable means of transport wherever possible together with the use of a mini bus.

The development therefore complies with policies which seek to ensure that measures for sustainable living are incorporated into new development. A condition should be provided to ensure that details of recycling facilities to be provided are submitted approved and implemented.

## **Residential Amenity**

The section assessing impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area explains the distances between the closest dwelling and the chalets. The main rear elevation of the majority of the dwellings face over the access drive rather than the

proposed chalets although they would clearly see the closest chalets. The end unit and farmhouse have windows facing the site. The distances between the proposed chalets and the dwellings are explained in the section of this report which discusses impact on the landscape. It is not considered that the chalets would be so close to dwellings as to justify refusal of the application due to the presence of the chalets themselves. Whilst the mature hedgerow which leads from the dwellings to the site helps to screen the chalets at ground level they would still be visible from first floor windows. However it is not considered that the closest would adversely impact on the amenities of residents.

No details of external lighting have been submitted with the application but in reality some degree of lighting would be required to ensure the safety of people staying in the accommodation at night time. Therefore a condition should be attached to any permission for a scheme of lighting to be submitted, approved and implemented. Lighting should be predominately low level lighting, angled down, shielded and controlled by sensors so as to reduce light pollution. With these controls the lighting should not adversely impact on residential amenities at nearby dwellings. The fact that lighting would be required and no details have been submitted is not a reason to refuse the application.

The proposed chalets are to be developed in conjunction with a fishery and no social club, bar or café is proposed at the site. In addition the majority of the chalets would be well away from the existing dwellings at Yew Tree Barns. It is not therefore considered that the development would result in noise and disturbance for residents at the existing dwellings, particularly since visitors staying at the site are likely to respect the need to be relatively quiet to ensure no adverse impact on the fishing.

## **Conditions**

In order to ensure that the development is only used for holiday accommodation and not for permanent residential development conditions should be attached as recommended in the Good Practice Guide for Tourism and the Conditions Circular to limit the occupation of the chalets to holiday purposes only, not to be occupied as the persons sole or main place of residence, and for the operator to maintain an up to date register of names of all owner(s) and occupier(s) of each chalet and their main address. Further, the operators should be required to make this record available to the local authority at all reasonable times, upon request.

Shopping policies seek to ensure that retail development is located in town and village centres. However the recent development of marinas has allowed a shop/chandlery and or café at such sites to serve the users of the marina. Provided the shop element at the proposed chalet site only sells day to day needs and small items which the fishermen may require, so that it functions as an ancillary element of the other development at the site, there are no objections. The provision of an on-site shop could help to reduce the travel needs of visitors to the site. A condition should be attached to any permission to ensure that the shop only sells food and items required for the day to day needs of visitors staying at the accommodation and small scale items required by the fishermen visiting the site. In addition it should not include any café element selling food and drinks for consumption on the premises.

## **Other Matters**

The comments of the Public Rights of Way Unit, Fire and Rescue Service and informative on the Environment Agency's response should be forwarded as an

informative to the applicant. The applicant should also be advised of the Strategic Highway Manager's wish to see the hedgerow on Hollyhurst Lane trimmed to improve visibility at the access.

## **11. CONCLUSIONS**

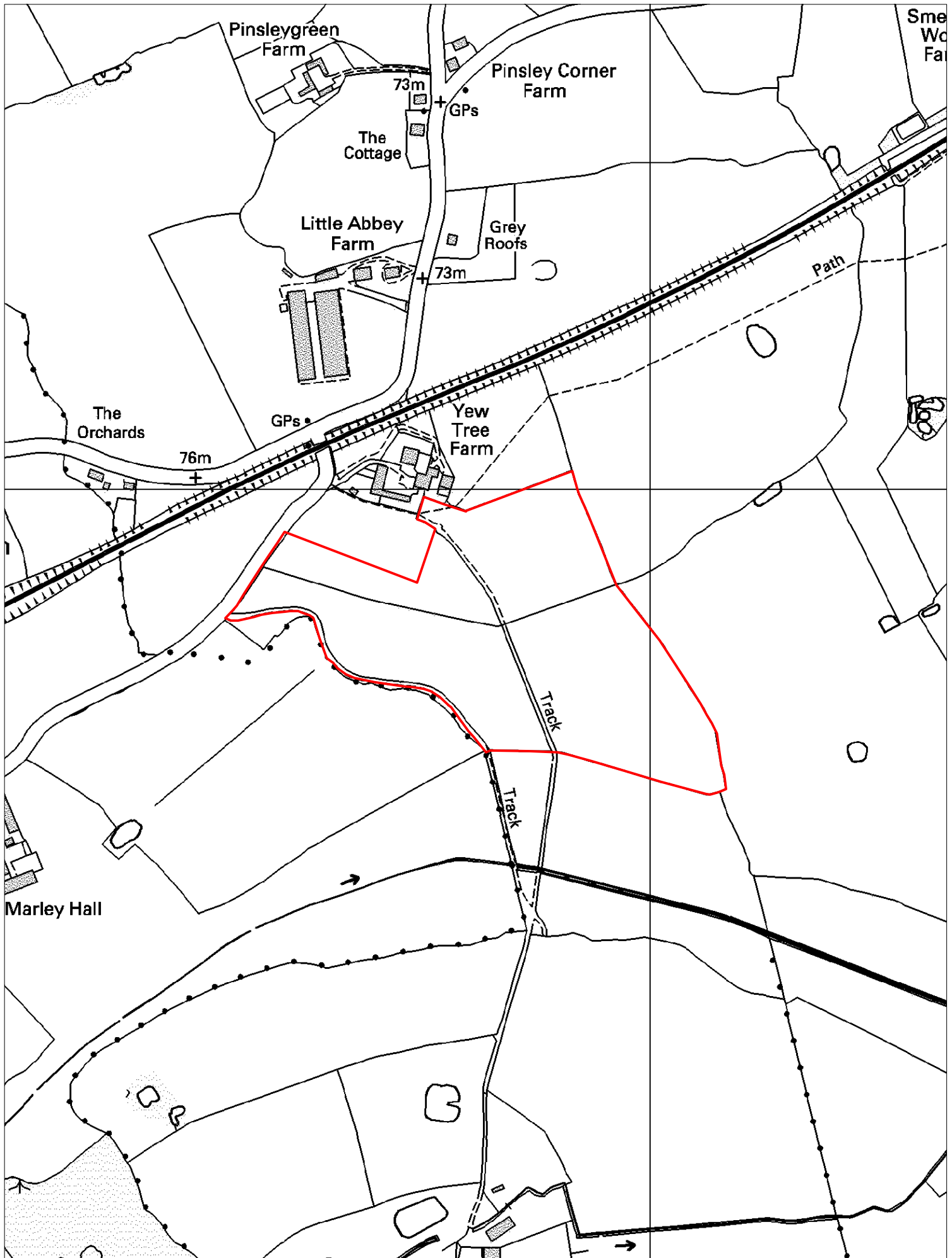
There are no policies in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan to allow the provision of holiday chalets within the rural area. The application has therefore been advertised as a departure to the Development Plan. However PPS4 is supportive of new or expanded chalet development sites which are not prominent in the landscape and where any visual intrusion is effectively minimised by high quality screening. The Landscape Visual Impact Study demonstrates that the site is not prominent and the landscaping scheme shows that the site would be effectively screened by high quality planting. The retention of the existing planting around the site together with the proposed landscaping would ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the locality.

Whilst the site is accessed via narrow winding roads the transport submission has demonstrated that the roads can accommodate the traffic which would be generated by the development and the proposal would not adversely impact on highway safety. Adequate parking would be provided within the site to accommodate the needs of the fishery enterprise and the parking requirements for the chalet development.

The submitted Ecological surveys indicate that there would be no detrimental effect on protected species and that the measures proposed would ensure that biodiversity is enhanced by the formation of a new pond for wildlife purposes, the provision of bird and bat boxes and the proposed landscaping. Measures would be adopted to protect nesting birds.

Whilst the site would be seen from nearby dwellings until such time as the planting is established it is not considered that the proposed units would be so close to the dwellings as to justify refusal of the application.

Whilst the site is not located particularly close to the village, nevertheless PPS4 acknowledges that facilities involving new development may be acceptable where they are related to another countryside attraction therefore the location of the chalets at the site of the fishery is considered acceptable.



**WRENBURY FISHERY, HOLLYHURST, MARBURY, CW5 8HE**

**NGR - 358,750 : 345,868.1**

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## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**APPROVE with the following conditions:-**

- 1. Commence development within 3 years.**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Details of external appearance of chalets together with coloured samples of external materials to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 4. Details of external appearance and materials, including colours and finishes, for toilet block to be submitted approved and implemented.**
- 5. Details of external appearance and materials, including colours and finishes, for office/ shop block to be submitted approved and implemented**
- 6. Phasing plan for tree protection measures which should be in accordance with submitted details.**
- 7. Details of phased hedgerow protection measures to be submitted approved and implemented**
- 8. No trees, except T19, to be removed from the site until the development has been fully implemented and then trees only to be removed in accordance with management and maintenance scheme for the site.**
- 9. No dig construction within root protection areas.**
- 10. No deadwooding or other works to T9, otherwise completion of tree works to trees on site as per Tree Survey and Assessment prior to the occupation of any chalets.**
- 11. No tree or hedgerow works to take place in the bird nesting season.**
- 12. Submission of phasing plan for the implementation of proposed landscaping. Implementation of landscaping in accordance with agreed phasing.**
- 13. Management and maintenance scheme to be submitted prior to the commencement of development, approved and implemented for landscaping. Scheme to include the provision of rough grassland on the site including the edges of the site close to hedges to promote small mammal habitats.**
- 14. Scheme for formation of off-site pond to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 15. New pond formed under the above condition not to be stocked with fish at any time.**
- 16. Badger protective fencing to be provided before development commences and retained throughout development of the area around the southern lake.**
- 17. No site works/ development to commence in nesting season unless the site has first been surveyed and no works within 4m of any nesting bird.**
- 18. Details of location of 3 bird nest boxes to be submitted, approved and boxes provided.**
- 19. Details of location of 10 bat boxes to be submitted, approved and boxes provided.**
- 20. Provision of main car park and small overflow car park by western lake before occupation of the first unit and thereafter retained.**
- 21. Provision of one parking space for each chalet and no more before that chalet is first occupied. Parking to be retained as originally laid out.**
- 22. Submission of full Travel Plan, approval and implementation and annual monitoring and updating according to the needs of the development.**

- 23. Formation of passing places before first chalet occupied.**
- 24. Foul drainage scheme to be submitted approved and implemented.**
- 25. Surface water drainage scheme, based on sustainable drainage principles, to be submitted approved and implemented. Submission to include details to control level of water in the lakes or other means of storing surface water run off and their controls.**
- 26. Chalets to be occupied as holiday accommodation only.**
- 27. No chalet shall be occupied as the persons' main or sole residence.**
- 28. The site operator shall maintain an up to date register of the names and postal addresses of all owners and all occupiers and shall make this record available to the local authority at all reasonable times, upon request.**
- 29. Scheme for external lighting to be submitted approved and implemented. All external lighting to be controlled by sensors, and be predominately low level lighting, shielded, angled and controlled by sensors so as to minimise light pollution and impacts on wildlife.**
- 30. Details of secure covered cycle parking to be submitted approved and implemented.**
- 31. Details of recycling facilities/ waste storage to be submitted approved and implemented.**
- 32. Development to be provided in accordance with the measures to reduce energy consumption in accordance with the principles of sustainable development as detailed in the submitted Climate Change statement.**
- 33. Shop to be for A1 purposes only and ancillary to the use of the site for fishing and visitor accommodation. It shall sell only items to meet the day to day requirements of visitors staying at the accommodation and small scale items to meet the needs of the fishermen. The shop shall not sell any hot or cold food and drink for consumption on the premises.**
- 34. Access to be constructed to CEC specification.**
- 35. Details of surface materials to be submitted approved and implemented.**