



1ST CAMELSDALE SCOUT GROUP
Scout Hut, Marley Lane, Haslemere, GU27 3RF
Registered charity no: 268462
Email: 1stcamelsdalechair@gmail.com



To: Mr and Mrs Robinson (Vermont); Mr C Benson (Rushmere); Mr McPherson (Oakdene); Mrs Oliver (Brisbane); Lynchmere Parish Council.

13 January 2019

To: Lynchmere Parish Council; Mr and Mrs Robinson (Vermont); Mr C Benson (Rushmere); Mr McPherson (Oakdene); Mrs Oliver (Brisbane)

Dear Sirs and Madam,

We are writing to you in light of the objections you formally raised through Chichester District Council to the proposed wooden building and fire pit shelter in the grounds of the Scout site. We are keen to advise you personally that the plans we submitted have been approved by the Council this last week.

We appreciate you are likely to feel disappointed with this decision so are writing to you to hopefully allay some of your fears and to correct some of the misinformation that appears to have contributed to these.

"The site nor the buildings may be hired out to anyone for the purpose of overnight or evening camping or evening/overnight parties" / "The site is not suitable for use as a camping site as it due to its location in a residential area"

We are a Scout Group, and camping is part of Scouting. The site has always been used for camping by our Scout Group. We do not hire it to 'anyone'. We hire it for use by other scout or Duke of Edinburgh Award groups and will continue to do so. We operate a no evening party policy, as stated on our website. The recent party was a booking error and will not be repeated. On the night and afterwards we apologised to those living immediately opposite through face to face conversations as well as emails and texts where people weren't in when we called round. The hirer has also apologised to the Scout group for the damage done to community relations.

"Plans are not in accordance with the current usage of the land for scouting purposes"

The site is predominantly used for scouting. Any non-scouting usage by external hirers (such as for children's birthday parties or local activity groups) is to fund the activities of scouting.

"The scout hut seems fit for the purpose for which it was intended"

The hut has reached the end of its useful life, as advised by a surveyor and builder. For example, the wall at the road end is becoming unstable and the building is suffering from rot. The hut does not meet the needs of those with disabilities or the growing number of girls who nowadays use the hut as Guides or Scouts, and is no longer fit for purpose.

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"Why we need a cabin in the grounds"

While we rebuild the hut we will need storage facilities and other temporary accommodation, hence the wooden building on the campground and a shelter by the camp-fire circle. Once the rebuilding is complete we will be able to use the wooden building for scouting activities and camping equipment storage.

"The Scout group proposes to rebuild the existing scout hut as a larger modern two storey community venue that through hiring out to non-scouting groups will generate revenue for the scout group and offset some of the building and development costs"

The proposed new building will occupy a smaller footprint than the current building. The proposed new hall has a mezzanine level that will provide a separate meeting room for activities as well as additional storage and a fire exit to the path. The proposed design is a wooden construction, in keeping with the wooded nature of the site. As is currently the case and has been for many years, we hire the building to fund the activities of scouting.

"Proposal to extend and develop the existing car park into a larger car park" / "The car park would be elevated above the level of the lane and will require... removal of mature trees. The car park would be clearly visible from several houses" / "We will continue to object to any extension of the car park southwards along Marley Lane"

The proposed car parking area will be larger. This will be partly achieved by a reduction in the footprint of the new building when compared with the existing building, and partly by a suggested second entrance, allowing a one-way flow through each gate. Over recent years there has been consultation with the local authority regarding safety concerns with the present arrangement. We have been unable to get any traffic calming measures put in place and it was the local council that originally suggested the second access. The idea was also raised independently and additionally at the engagement events last summer as there are widespread safety concerns among those who use the hall. There is insufficient room when the car park is in use to turn a vehicle around and watching large 4 x 4s reversing down the ramp while Beavers and Cubs are trying to enter the site is no longer acceptable to an organisation that has a duty of care to the children and young people we cater for. We now request that parents park on the lane and walk their children to and from meetings, and while this is mostly respected, the risk has not been sufficiently mitigated. A one-way flow system through the car-park would significantly reduce the danger the current arrangement poses for site users. During the consultation events last summer, several people suggested we could hire out parking places as a way to reduce the increased and now regular on-street parking (not connected with the scout group), which concerns them and makes it hard to access and egress driveways on the lower end of Marley Lane. The plans include provision for hedging along the lane boundary.

The existing car park is already above the level of the lane. There are no plans to further elevate the car park.

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"There has not been adequate consultation with the neighbours of properties located directly along Marley Lane and the boundaries of the scout land, and plans have not been widely shared"

There is no mandatory consultation required by the planning process, but as a responsible organisation that supports many families in the local community, we wish to engage with all interested stakeholders over our plans for the ongoing management of the Scout site.

We undertook some initial engagement in 2018 and received feedback on the first stage plans from more than 80 people comprising local residents and scouting families. We did this through a series of engagement events during the summer months, including attending the Jo Cox Community Street Party event in June (which was attended by around 30 people), and holding 'show and tell' evenings for all three scouting sections in July.

We advertised our attendance at the community street party via local door drops, on a poster at the scout hut and also asked the organisers to include the information in their own publicity for the event. There has been information on our website about the plans and how we intend to engage the community since summer 2018.

We shared the various ideas and comments (which are also available on our website in the Our Future section) to the architect in November, who is now working up more detailed second stage proposals.

Once these are ready (hopefully during February or March) we intend to hold a further series of engagement events prior to finalising the plans. We will publicise these via a poster at the Scout Hut and on our website. If you would also like to be alerted by email, please advise us via email (1stcamelsdalechair@gmail.com).

"The website advertises the hut as being available for day and weekend use and night camping, parties, family get-togethers, weekend camps and summer camps"

The website information under the Our HQ page was out of date, for which we apologise. It is now up to date and reflects recent (the last few years) and current site use. This has included use by a furniture upholstery class, adult keep-fit classes and children's Lego activity sessions on a Saturday morning. Irregular use includes hire by other Scout groups and Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and one-off events such as the Jo Cox Community Street Party. We do not expect to expand this usage as weekday nights are used by Beavers, Rainbows, Cubs, Brownies, Scouts and Guides during term times, however we think that use of the hall for young children's parties is reasonable and in line with our policy.

"There will be a rapid increase in the use of the Site, at all times of the day and night, and especially over weekends and during the long holidays, for non-scouting purposes, by a large number of people, clubs, and organisations" / "It is assumed that paying customers will be able to lease the site day and night, for whole weekends and for extended periods of time" / "The site will be used for commercial activity"

We will continue to use the site as we do now. The majority of external hires, as explained above, are day time weekday and weekend hires for local groups running activities and for young children's parties.

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We do not expect to expand evening usage during the week as it is already used by Beavers, Rainbows, Cubs, Brownies, Scouts and Guides during term times. There will be no rapid increase in the use of the site, if any at all.

"Use of the Site and its facilities and behaviour of hirers would be beyond the Applicant's control" / "The Applicant's scout leaders have often seemed to have forgotten about the detrimental effects which their scouting use of the Site, and the use of third parties who hire the Site and its facilities, have upon the amenity and rights of local residents" / "...the disturbance experienced from the resulting noise i.e. children incessantly screaming and shouting, often from 6am all the way through to late evening"

It is a condition of hire in our hirer's agreement that people abide by certain rules, such as being mindful of noise levels and no smoking on the site. Where we are alerted to behaviour that is considered unacceptable, we take measures to address this. Scout leaders are mindful at all times of the impact that Scouting has on both local residents and the young people engaged in the activities. Children at play are not silent and we wouldn't wish them to be so.

"The erection of a camping hut and fire pit shelter will set aside a purpose made area so that fires can be burnt on a frequent basis for leisure activities" / Concerns over smoke

The Group already has a purpose made area for camp fires, which is already used, so this will not be a change from how the area is currently used.

We hope this information serves to allay some of your concerns and fears. Please do keep a look out on our website and at the scout hut for information about the engagement events that we will be organising later this year.

Finally, we thought the following information would be helpful: the benefits of scouting ('Skills for Life') on the personal, emotional and physical development of children and young people are well documented: they grow in confidence, learn to take responsibility, build team working and leadership skills, learn a wide range of other life, social and practical skills that ease them into adulthood, make lifelong friends, experience adventure and get a chance to do things they might not have the chance to do otherwise. A 2010 independent study into the impact of scouting found it goes far beyond the individual, offering social, environmental and economic benefits to its members and communities across the UK, including better physical and mental health among adults who did scouting as young people. 1st Camelsdale Scouts is able to operate thanks to more than 40 local volunteers who generously give their time for free to achieve our aim of "Developing young people's potential and roles as citizens."

Yours sincerely,

Mark Russell, Group Scout Leader
Rebecca Jones, Chair

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