

Response to Planning Application Ref Y/103/18/PL

Proposed Single Chapel Crematorium with car parking, landscape works, surface water drainage features & associated highway improvements. This application is a Departure from the Development Plan.

**10 Acre Field North of Grevatts Lane
Yapton**

Applicant: Landlink Estates Limited

1. Introduction

Yapton Parish Council (YPC) has given much consideration to the above planning application and most recently at a meeting of the Parish Council's Planning Committee on the 11th March 2019. The Planning Committee had been able to fully review the plans and were given an update presentation by representatives and agents from Landlink Estates Limited prior to making their decision at the Committee on the 11th March.

2. Arun District Council Local Plan

Approval of this application will be a departure from the Arun District Council (ADC's) own recently Adopted Arun Local Plan (ALP 2011-2031). There was no mention of provision being made for a new crematorium during the Local Plan consultation. Emphasis was placed on retaining and protecting the rural nature of the location. During the Inspection of the new local plan the Planning Inspector made no mention that provision be made in the District for a crematorium.

Objection: *The need for an additional crematorium has not been identified in the ADC Local Plan.*

3. Made and Emerging Yapton Neighbourhood Plan

The "made" Yapton Neighbourhood Plan was agreed by Arun District Council late in 2014. The Plan is currently being updated, particularly in light of the newly agreed ALP 2011 – 2031 and the impact on additional housing numbers to be accommodated in the District and in the Parish of Yapton.

The "emerging" Yapton Neighbourhood Plan does not currently contain any proposal to site a Crematorium in the Yapton area.

Objection: *The crematorium is not included in the original or emerging updated Yapton Neighbourhood Plan.*

4. Location

The site is agricultural land and would be a green field development. This greenfield site has not been designated for development – it is high agricultural yield land. The site is located in the local gap designed to help prevent the merging of settlements. The site is on agricultural and undeveloped land which is part of open country side and which should be protected. This application would be in conflict with ALP 2011 – 2031 Planning policy SD SP3.

Objection: *The land that would be used is good quality agricultural land.*

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5. Traffic

Road Safety and Road Congestion generated by a new Crematorium would probably be the number 1 concern voiced by all those commenting on the application.

The Parish Council's main concerns relate to traffic generation, means of access and the impact of the development on Comet Corner, which already has a bad road safety record over the years. The Parish Council is concerned that the planning application, taken along with the comments of the Highway Authority, as regards to the proposed access and egress arrangements, do not address or alleviate highway safety and congestion issues at Comet Corner or along the stretch of the A259 where the new junction would be created with Gravetts Lane West.

The impact of additional vehicles created by the new housing development for Policy Site 6 at Bersted and Felpham and the opening of the Bognor Regis Relief Road has further significantly increased pressure on the A259. This has given relief to the residents of Felpham village, but not to those from Yapton and Middleton who are now having to negotiate an increased volume of traffic on the A259 road at Comet Corner. To add to this, further volumes of potentially slow moving traffic from funeral corteges travelling along this stretch of the A259 will only add to the issues of poor road safety and congestion in this area.

It is also anticipated that additional traffic will travel from the north-west and from Yapton Village down Bilsham Road (B2132) to the A259 to turn left to gain access to the site at the Gravetts Lane West junction. This will further increase pressure on the Comet Corner junction and along the stretch of the A259 to the new junction.

The application refers to a right turn lane being created for traffic approaching from the east. The right-turn by slow moving traffic across a 60 mph single carriageway will create further hazards at this new junction, particularly when car users may be distracted and upset when approaching the crematorium facility. The junction is being created between two long bends where the length of sight-lines for approaching traffic are particularly short. A survey carried out over 5 days in September 2018 indicated that the average speed of westbound traffic was 52mph and 54mph for those travelling east.

The Parish Council suggests that there are good grounds for refusal under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) because the means of access to the proposed crematorium would create an unacceptable impact on highway safety and the effect on the already stretched road network would be severe.

Objection: *Access arrangements to Gravett's Lane West, to and from the A259 in close proximity to Comet Corner are not considered to be safe unless major improvements are made at Comet Corner. This junction is already dangerous and congested and an additional junction will exacerbate safety issues.*

6. Impact on "new" Cycle Route

The creation of a new junction on the north side of the A259, which bisects the newly constructed cycleway, will potentially give rise to pedestrian / cyclist / vehicle conflicts contrary to the main aims of creating this new cycle route as a safe place for cyclists to use between Felpham and Littlehampton, avoiding the use of the main A259 carriageway.

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The local group of Cycling UK has raised concerns about the increased danger to cyclists created by the large number of cars using the new junction.

Objection: *Safety on the recently opened Bognor to Littlehampton cycle route at the new access junction and the proposed cycle route connecting Bilsham Road to the A259 which makes use of Grevatt's Lane.*

7. Public Transport arrangements

It is anticipated that mourners travelling to the Crematorium by public transport will alight at the western end of Gravetts Lane West. This will potentially include disabled persons. There is mention that the roadway from the site to the Bilsham Road will be narrowed to 3m to discourage its use as a "rat-run", but does not mention provision for pedestrians or cyclists, and this is a potential safety issue.

Mourners walking from the Yapton area along Bilsham Road will find that the provision of a footpath ceases from the village boundary, and reliance has to be placed on the verges around the sharp bends in the Hobbs Court area.

Objection: *Public transport arrangements for access to the crematorium by visitors are not considered to be adequate or safe.*

8. Need for a Crematorium at this location

The Parish Council is of the view that there is no demonstrable evidence of need, demand or support locally for a crematorium in Yapton.

Objection: *An overriding need for a crematorium at this location has not been demonstrated.*

9. Other Considerations

Operating Times: The review of the documentation picked up a discrepancy in the application regarding the operating times of the facility. These were quoted as 9am to 6pm in the documentation, 10am to 3.30pm on the website, and 9am to 5pm in the Transport Statement, with the possibility of weekend working. These are the stated hours as shown on the website from launch until at least Monday 11 March 2019, when the query was raised with the developers.

Wildlife: The Parish Council would be keen to ensure that the Developer pays due regard to the response from the Ecology Officer indicating that special provision needs to be made to protect Bats, Reptiles, Water Voles, Dormice and Nesting Birds who may be present on the site.

Service Times: Irrespective of the Parish Council's objection to this application, the Parish Council considered the operating times in response to a resident's question. The Parish Council would like to see that a planning condition is added to a successful application which would confirm the operating hours and service intervals which the developers (during the meeting) specifically mentioned 50-minute service times with a one-hour interval, allowing for a 10-minute break between services.

The Parish Council feels this is worth emphasising and asking for a condition to be included on the following basis:

1. This is what the developers told the public during the meeting on the 11th March 2019; and
2. While describing this the developers said that it would help alleviate any impact on traffic. As safety on the A259 is one of the Council's main grounds for objection it may be worth acknowledging that the developers tacitly acknowledged (and attempted to mitigate for) a potential impact here during the public meeting (even if the paperwork makes no such acknowledgement).

10. Conclusion and decision

The Yapton Parish Council's Planning Committee met on the on the 11th March 2019 to consider its response to the application. The Committee meeting and consideration of the proposal were held in public, and as stated earlier representatives and agents of Landlink Estates attended to make a presentation on their proposal and to answer any questions from Members of the Committee and the public present.

Following their consideration **the Committee decided to raise an objection to the application** and the following reasons were set out and agreed as the basis of the Committee's objection:

- *The need for an additional crematorium has not been identified in the ADC Local Plan.*
- *The crematorium is not included in the original or emerging updated Yapton Neighbourhood Plan.*
- *The land that would be used is good quality agricultural land.*
- *Access arrangements to Gravett's Lane West, to and from the A259 in close proximity to Comet Corner are not considered to be safe unless major improvements are made at Comet Corner. This junction is already dangerous and congested and an additional junction will exacerbate safety issues.*
- *Safety on the recently opened Bognor to Littlehampton cycle route at the new access junction and the proposed cycle route connecting Bilsham Road to the A259 which makes use of Grevatt's Lane.*
- *Public transport arrangements for access to the crematorium by visitors are not considered to be adequate or safe.*
- *An overriding need for a crematorium at this location has not been demonstrated.*

Andrew Gardiner

Clerk to Yapton Parish Council

20th March 2019

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