Homestead Fields, 5 Touring Caravans + 10 tents

**Application ID:** 565

**Flood Risk:** Zone 1

**SSSI impact:** Low

- **SSSI:** Withcall & South willingham tunnels .67km, Benniworth Haven Cuttings 1.5km
- **Potential Protected species:** Grey Partridge, Tree Sparrow, Yellow Wagtail, Willow Tit (Buffer zone)
- **National character area:** Lincolnshire Wolds
- **AONB:** Lincolnshire Wolds
- **WFD:** Good ecological status – Rivers (Witham Catchment) [ No Faecal indicators ]

**Ecology:** The site is relatively open grazing/rough pasture land with established hedgerows to the north. The south and south west boundary opens onto the applicants property and farm outbuildings. The northern boundary runs parallel to the road, to the east is open to rough pasture land and further farm land beyond, to the west is the access track and other outbuildings. The proposed site is currently split over a grazing paddock for llamas and rough pasture land, we would not expect there to be any significant impact onto protected species over the grazing land but the pasture to the east may provide suitable habitat for ground nesting birds. The hedgerows bounding the site do not appear to be ideal habitat for tree sparrow. The proposal does not require removal or lopping of hedgerows, however the applicant should be made aware that should the trimming of hedgerows be undertaken for aesthetic purposes there is a potential to disturb nesting birds and commit an offence under the CoHSR 2017. The site does not appear to be of significant benefit to other protected bird species in either food source, habitat or connectivity.

In the eastern quarter of the proposed site there is a log pile which may provide suitable habitat for protected small mammals, invertebrates or reptiles. This pile should be dismantled manually outside of hibernation season.

It was not deemed necessary for a phase 1 habitat survey to be carried out, although mitigation advice should be given and reasonable avoidance measures implemented.

**Visual amenity:** The site is screened on the northern boundary by well established hedgerows which are slightly elevated above the roadway. The southern and western boundaries open onto properties, building and trees which offer substantial screening from wider areas. The eastern boundary is open and overlooked by elevated ground, Any offer of exemption must include a condition for implementation of a hedgerow of native plants in keeping with existing character of the area along this boundary.
**Access:** Access to the site is along the C505 single track country lane with limited passing places. Access is afforded by 2 routes, 1 from the east which adjoins the B1225 ~ 700m travel distance. Route 2 from the west adjoins Main Road & Station Road at ~ 280m. Access to the west immediately enters into a built up area with a low number of residential properties affronting the road. There is no street lighting or speed restriction on this route.

Due to the nature of the road to the west we would no expect speeds to exceed 30mph from this direction. The increased visibility to the east would allow greater speeds from this direction but would not expect this to exceed 40mph. Factoring a low number of residential properties along these routes and using the standard FCC capacity calculation allow for upto 90 pitches when accessed from the east and 48 pitches when access from the west. The routes are likely to be used by large farming vehicle which although most of the year the frequency of use would be expected to be low, at peak harvest times this use would be expected to increase. This increased use by farming vehicle is likely to coincide with peak use of the site and therefore a max capacity for the site is not considered acceptable, an adjustment of 50% reduction of max capacity should be considered for the site on the grounds of access.

The application does not exceed these access capacity estimate therefore no adjustment to proposed capacities is required.

There is a wide entrance to the site on the northwest boundary. The entrance dimension are considered likely to be of DMRB type 1 access with sufficient pull off area to allow towing vehicles to leave the road completely. The current dimension do provide adequate outracking for towing vehicles. The applicant is preparing a retrospective application for past improvements made to this access.

The country lane would fall into the definition considered appropriate for MfS2 guidelines visibility splays. The estimated average speed falling between 30-40mph requires visibility of 43-79m from a relaxed position of 2m back on the centerline of the entrance. Visibility estimates for visibility splays are ~ 120m west and ~200m east. It is considered that visibility splays are achieved, however suitable trimming of hedges is recommended.

**Visual imposition:** Low: The site is well screened from the closest neighbour to the west by conifer trees and outbuildings. There is line of sight to a property to the east during winter months however on review of Google street view, hedge and tree foliage provides significant screening during summer months. The distance of ~ 110m from central point and ~57m at the closest point, main windows of the property are at an oblique angle and a public road crossing the line of sights.
**Noise: Med**: The proposed central area position for the site stands ~90m from the closest neighbouring to the west and ~110m from the property to the east with closest points of ~65m and ~57m respectively. The central and closest points being outside the high risk zone but within the medium risk zone would present a moderate risk of nuisance without screening obstacles and low risk with screening (estimated at 52db outside and 32db inside with reduced levels due to screening of 44db and 26db respectively using 100db value at source). The property to the west is screened by coniferous evergreen trees and building all year and the building to the east is shielded by deciduous trees therefore offering better screening in summer months. As the neighbouring property to the west is screened all year we considered this property to be at low/negligible risk. The property to the east having line of sight during winter months may put this property at medium risk at reduced screening seasons.

**Light**: as noise

**Site Boundary**: The site is bound by established hedgerows on the north side with open views to the east and the owners property to the southwest. The eastern boundary is open and visible from a medium distance and currently has no hedgerow. This presents a small privacy issue for visitors from road users. The western boundary is the access route.

**Local amenities: poor**: There is no public house or village store in Benniworth, amenities are ~1.5 miles away. Public transport is available within walking distance of the proposed site.

**Local authority response**: No objection, No objections from AONB partnership.

**Local residents response: 8**

**Issues raised by residents:**

Access enforcement: Although Google street view shows an existing entrance prior to 2009, improvements made by the applicant may be considered by the LPA as minor operations requiring planning approval. We understand that the applicant has made a retrospective planning application for the improvements undertaken.

Visibility of 100m min: Under MfS2 visibility splays are specified above.

Towing vehicle outracking: As above.

Agricultural Vehicles: Estimated road capacities far exceed the proposed site capacity. Probabilities for impediment to farm traffic are considered to be low.

**Local amenities: As above.**
Competition: Freedom of choice is a key principal of the club, which follows national policy on markets and competitions. Other clubs require membership fees and restricting access to non fee paying members. Freedom Camping Clubs provides accessibility for all, providing unlimited access to the AONB.

Commercial enterprise: Prevention of commercial enterprise is contrary to Article 16 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Water Seepage: The proposed use of the site is not considered to have any material effect onto water seepage. The use of the road is not restricted for use of HGV, caravans or any other vehicle, it is not reasonable to restrict the legal rights of a property owner on the grounds of water seepage.

Site expansion: Certified sites are limited to 5 caravans, in order to increase this capacity an application to ELDC will be required. The determination of an application of the expansion of the site is entirely the responsibility of the LPA.

Property values: There is no indication that rural property values will be affected by the site. The Royal Town Planning Institute do not recommend factoring property values into a planning decision therefore we do not feel it necessary to assess this factor in an application for exemption.

AONB: AONB's are designated areas for the benefit of all. Recreation, tourism and interpretive activities are a key aims of the AONB management plan. AONB theme 3 (6.1) 'Developing an appropriate access, recreation and tourism infrastructure, including suitable facilities for specialist interests.'

Consultation: The Club is required to assess risk of nuisance and undue disturbance to local residents. Where the club assesses that local residents are not at risk of nuisance/disturbance there is no requirement to consult. In this case the site assessment identified 1 property at potential risk of nuisance/disturbance.

Equestrian activities: Public highways primary purpose is for the use of motor vehicles. Although we accept that a secondary use for recreational horse riding, cycling or running etc are equally valid uses, we do not consider these secondary uses are a justification for restriction of use by motor vehicles, this would make the lane a bridleway not a highway.

Litter & animal fouling: The club supports the country side code and thus any visitor would be encouraged to follow these principals. The applicant is required under the club TnC's to ensure the site is kept in a good sanitary condition.
Loss of view: We do not considered there to be any significant loss of view by any neighbour. Lime House to the east may be able to see the site from an upstairs window and at an oblique angle but the distance and frequency of viewing the site from an upstairs windows is not considered to be significant. We also note that loss of view is not a material consideration recommended by the Royal Town Planning Institute therefore do not give any weight to this aspect.

Chemical spraying: We would not expect farmers to be permitted to spay dangerous chemicals onto crops and more so in the proximity of residential properties. We also note that there is a WFD objective for the Witham catchment area, chemical used on land are understood to be controlled by Natural England.

**Review recommendation:**

Accept application as prescribed with conditions outlined below:

Provide screening on eastern boundaries.
Allow hedgerows on the northern boundary to increase in height. Winter trimming should follow an A profile to encourage greater biodiversity.
Improve access surface.
Maintain visibility splays (Ecology mitigation required).