

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 29th April 2025

Item 6 - 24/01546/FUL – Unit 2 & Unit 3, 37 Beehive Lane, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 9TQ

Question from Mrs S

Being a Hindu we go to Temple regularly, specially with our kids so they can gain knowledge about our culture, heritage and traditions.

We miss Mandir (a place of worship and a community centre) the most on many festivals and many other important occasions. I am listing a few below

* "First Rice" - A ceremony performed when a baby is six months old, marking the start of eating solids.

* "Sacred Thread Ceremony" - A ceremony for Brahmins, marking their initiation into religious studies.

* "Marriage Ceremony:: A multi-day celebration involving various rituals and ceremonies, often performed at the temple.

* "Burning Ghat and Shradh Ceremony" - Rituals performed after the death of a loved one.

and many more. It really saddens us when we feel that we have no where to go to perform these important rituals.

Hindus are peace loving people and would like to live together and in peace and love along with all neighbours and other communities.

Chelmsford Hindu Society successfully sorted the parking issues and has taken care of all the feedback from the neighbourhood. The Society and all it's members will continue to work with everyone to exists in a mutually beneficial relationship in the future as well.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all your support and understanding.

Question from Mrs L

Why We Need a Hindu Temple?

I am a Hindu and proud to be one, but where can I go to practice my faith? There are no temples in Chelmsford and so the nearest place would be in Ilford or further afield in London.

Seeing a need for the growing Hindu community in Chelmsford, the Chelmsford Hindu Society was able to use the Quakers Hall close to town as a temporary religious space, but we were met with several obstacles, namely the limited access to the building throughout the year.

I speak on behalf of myself and the Chelmsford Hindu community when I say that the Beehive Lane property is truly a life line. Its location allows people access without the inconvenience of driving to London and back, avoiding the miles of travel, traffic and stress.

We, as a community need a place which will allow us to pray in our own way. Important festivals in the Hindu calendar, such as Diwali and Navratri are paramount to believers and this temple makes coming together as a community far easier, and a priest will instruct on all matters relating to the holy books, their interpretation and relevance to our daily lives.

Hinduism has a rich culture and we perform rituals at all stages of life. This is very important to us; to celebrate the birth of a child, naming ceremony, head shaving ceremony on the way to student hood, engagement, marriage, and rituals for the departed soul. However, currently we are resigned to searching for a location far from home, or are constrained to limited spaces at home. Having the temple will alleviate this problem.

It will also allow us to share local news and help those in need. The community is made up of many professionals and our expertise allows problems of health, education and legal issues to be discussed and resolved, particularly for those who have difficulty with English language.

As a social meeting place, it will tackle loneliness in a gentle and informal way, with the comfort of knowing people who have the same beliefs.

Language and heritage classes are important for our children and their future. The mandir will allow a mixing of age groups and passing of knowledge and stories to the next generation. It will allow all generations to share thoughts and ideas which will engender family values.

The value that this temple will add to the Chelmsford Hindu community, and in turn, to the wider community, is immeasurable. I appreciate the time and consideration you have given to this matter, which I am sure you'd agree, is a worthwhile endeavor.

Item 7 - 24/01773/FUL – Shop, Horseshoe Farm, Main Road, Bicknacre, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 4EX

Question from Mr W

Thank you Councillors for your time this evening. My name is xx. I am a planning consultant at Strutt & Parker and I am pleased to be here this evening representing the land owner.

The site before you is partially located within the settlement boundary, and at the heart of the village of Bicknacre. Planning permissions have previously been secured to develop the site and most recently, consent was given for a mixed retail and office building.

This application now seeks consent for a sole retail, convenience store use. A good level of interest has been received from the market and an operator has now been selected, with the store being designed to their specification.

For a store of this size, the operator has indicated that it will generate up to 15 full time equivalent jobs, most of which are expected to be taken by those living in Bicknacre and the surrounding villages.

The store is intended to serve those living in Bicknacre, in villages beyond and those passing by. Facilities are currently limited in Bicknacre and in recognition of its status as a Key Service Settlement, it is important that it provides local employment opportunities and convenience shopping facilities, in line with the aspirations of the Council's Local Plan.

Providing more choice in the village will reduce the number of car journeys to larger supermarkets located in South Woodham Ferrers, Maldon or Chelmsford.

The proposals have been subject to pre-application engagement with your Officers and revisions to the design and layout of the scheme have been made in response to feedback given.

We have worked closely with the Case Officer during the lifetime of the application to ensure that any issues raised have been resolved. The applicant has responded positively to the comments of statutory consultees, including by providing a pedestrian crossing over the Main Road, which was requested by the Highway Authority. This was supported by a Road Safety Audit.

We have also reviewed planning conditions with the Case Officer, including those relating to store opening and delivery times, which generally align with those of similar stores in nearby villages, to ensure that an appropriate development can come forward.

I am of the opinion that this will be a high quality development that will integrate well into the village of Bicknacre. I therefore respectfully ask Councillors to agree with your Officer's comprehensive analysis and recommendation to grant this planning application. Thank you for your time.

Question from Mr H

As long term (50+ years) residents of Bicknacre, my wife and I object strongly to this proposal as it is an unwanted project, with no demand from village residents as we already have a village shop, a post office and a local farm shop. It also represents a major traffic hazard on an already busy section of road.

The applicants have submitted a traffic safety survey that was carried out between 10:15 am and 10:35 am – this is totally inadequate . From our regular walks around the village this time is by far the quietest time for traffic. The traffic to be attracted to the proposed store will be additional to existing traffic levels – which are growing annually. The new crossing proposal for a pedestrian refuge will be inadequate to accommodate the number of children and Jester's staff who cross morning and afternoon.

Overall, this proposal will be adding volume and risk to an already busy road layout and will be an accident waiting to happen.

Please reject this proposal, as your predecessors did in the 1980s when there was a proposal to build a doctors' surgery on this site (Ref. No: 86/0926 refused due to increased traffic dangers)

Question from Mrs C

We respectfully object to the proposed development on the grounds set out below. The application, if approved, would adversely affect the character, amenity, safety, and sustainability of Bicknacre and does not deliver sufficient community benefit to justify these impacts.

1. Excessive and Unsocial Hours of Operation

- The proposed store will operate from 06:00 to 23:00 daily, equating to 119 hours per week.
- This represents a 76.5-hour increase over the current use (Priory Pet Stores), introduces unsocial hours inappropriate for a rural village, and is out of step with other local businesses.

2. Questionable Economic and Employment Benefits

- The applicant's assertions of local job creation are unsupported. There is no evidence that positions will be offered to local residents.
- If employment is sourced externally, commuting into the village will lead to increased vehicle movements, noise, and pollution.

3. Design and Character Impact

- The proposed building design claims to reflect a traditional barn; however, the inclusion of corporate signage and operational features will detract from this aesthetic.
- The development does not respect the rural character of the area and contributes to a gradual erosion of the countryside's intrinsic beauty.

4. Inappropriate Settlement Comparisons

- The applicant compares Bicknacre to larger and better-connected villages such as Danbury, Boreham, and Broomfield. Bicknacre is significantly smaller.
- These are not valid or relevant comparators due to their significantly larger populations, infrastructure, and accessibility.

5. Noise and Disturbance

- Noise assessments underestimate the impact of HGV deliveries (including early morning access), trolley movements, and reversing alarms. Construction noise is also under-analysed.
- The proposed 2m noise barriers will not adequately mitigate noise from taller delivery vehicles.

6. Environmental Impact and Sustainability Concerns

- The distance and location of the distribution centre servicing the store are not disclosed.
- As such, the carbon footprint of delivery vehicles is unknown and potentially high.
- No detail is provided on the sustainability credentials of the vehicle fleet to be used for deliveries.

7. Transport, Traffic, and Road Safety Risks

- The application is reliant on outdated and non-localised traffic / TRICS data and assumptions about peak usage.
- Site access is on the B1418, a heavily used route, with no controlled pedestrian crossings, posing risks for all pedestrians, particularly children crossing from and to the nursery (Jesters) nearby.
- Local accident history and congestion levels are not sufficiently analysed.
- A reduction in parking provision for Jesters may lead to illegal or unsafe parking during drop-off and pick-up times.

8. Unrealistic Sustainability and Travel Assumptions

- The assumption that local residents will cycle or walk to the store is unrealistic due to:
 - o Lack of cycling infrastructure;
 - o Narrow and busy roads used by HGVs and buses;
 - o Inadequate public transport options.
- The claim that the development will reduce car use and increase public transport use is unsubstantiated.

9. Lack of Net Community Benefit

- Residents already travel to larger nearby towns (South Woodham Ferrers, Maldon, Chelmsford) for greater product choice.
- The proposed store offers limited advantage over existing options and is unlikely to meet the stated goal of serving unmet local demand.

Conclusion:

The proposed development introduces significant environmental, social, and infrastructural challenges without demonstrable local benefit. It would alter the village's character, increase traffic and noise, and impose risks without meaningful improvement to services or community well-being.

For these reasons, we urge that the application be refused.

Question from Mrs M

My property is the one mentioned directly next to the proposed development. The new 2m. acoustic fence will not be sufficiently high enough to protect my privacy and vehicle fumes , It should be at least 3m high otherwise the lorry delivery drivers would be able to see into my garden when turning. What is there to stop members of the public from walking into the 3m grassed 'buffer zone' next to the fence? No footpath from my property to the store as the entrance has changed. Objections on the opening and delivery hours especially on a Sunday as this should be a day of rest and relaxation without noise and pollution for my family and young grandchildren.

The proposed refuge island is not sufficient protection for the public as it doesn't stop the traffic allowing you to cross. There are very large vehicles that use this road so could be very frightening to children and elderly people if they are stranded in the middle of the road when nobody stops and drive at speeds. Very very dangerous as the existing bollards further up the road are often knocked over. This type of crossing is very dangerous for elderly people in mobility scooters and parents with buggies and young children anxious to cross the road. Totally unsuitable.

With the increase in house building locally this road will get even busier and more noisy.

As my house is over 400 years old with hardly any foundations I am worried about the impact of the reverberations whilst the development is being built. Has this been investigated?