

PLANNING REF : 250959
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 5 Northbury Lane
: Ruscombe, Reading, Berkshire
: RG10 9LQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Richard Miles
DATE SUBMITTED : 29/05/2025

COMMENTS:

I am writing to you as an angler who fishes both the Canberra and Orrel Lakes within the Charvil Country Park, a dog walker who regularly uses The Park, and as a resident of Ruscombe Parish (~3-miles from The Park), to Object to the subject Planning cation No. 250959, for the old Prince Brothers site (here-in referred to as 'The Site') to be used as a fuel storage and distribution centre.

I cannot understand how it has (already) been permitted to install very large and heavy fuel storage tanks on The Site, which will also see (has seen) heavy lorries full of fuel both entering and exiting, when it is understood there was a planning application to build houses on the same Site, which was refused due to unstable ground. As evidenced by the Geo Environmental Risk Assessment commissioned in 2022, it details the make-up of The Site below the concrete surface, which is raised above the surrounding area, and reports that it is largely 'made ground' i.e. backfill. The site investigation survey further details the depth and instability of the ground, evidenced by subsidence and cracking in areas. The survey also details how quickly the boreholes made during the site investigation works filled with ground water, and concluded that piling would be necessary to stabilise The Site. Furthermore, the backfill is not retained or supported around The Site, especially along the southern perimeter bordering the footpath between The Site and the north end of Canberra Lake. On further inspection of the proposed plans, it is along this unsupported and unstable ground where it is proposed to include parking bays for some 15 No. tankers, which shall (likely) be loaded and awaiting dispatch. So how does a (high risk) fuel depot located on 'unstable ground' become an acceptable development?

There appears to be no evidence of any bunding, berms or sumps on The Site to control rainwater run-off or any spillages. It was noted in the Application that there were plans for a vehicle wash-down area, with all the surface run-off water and foul water to be fed via attenuation/treatment tanks and then an outflow pipe across the entrance of the anglers car park on the Old Bath Road directly into the Old River Loddon. Notwithstanding the question that a 'way leave' may be required for this pipe, if a spillage was to occur it could be catastrophic to the local waterways and the local wildlife of all kinds. And as the ground is porous and unstable any spillage, whilst creating an immediate threat would also soak into the ground and thus over months/years would continue to leak out and create a long-standing pollution issue.

I am deeply concerned that there is an environmental catastrophe waiting to happen. Whilst The Site is several hundred yards from any housing it is surrounded by nature reserves. To the North is Charvil

Meadows (maintained as an open meadow/wetland area) and to the East, South and West is Charvil Country Park. Charvil Country Park has several old gravel pits which have either become fishing lakes for residents of Charvil or, via an angling syndicate, for anglers outside of the area. The carp fishery is very well regarded and carefully maintained, with two other lakes reserved for nature: one of them housing a long-standing heronry. All this is bordered on the Eastern side by the River Loddon, which then flows directly into the River Thames. The Flood Risk Assessment Document details quite clearly in the schematics the very high risk of flooding, and the consequences of the floodwater, and I personally believe that alone would be grounds for rejection of the Application.

On matters wildlife there are also the resident Muntjac deer, various bat species, otters, foxes, rabbits, moles, snakes, and rodents, all of which depend upon the Country Park areas for their home and food source and with the increased noise and countless 8m tall lighting poles, i.e. light pollution from The Site, then this will do nothing to encourage the local wildlife to stay around and/or breed.

Adjoining the Southern edge of The Site is the northern shore of Canberra lake (the primary fishing lake) containing carp to over 40lb. This North shore consists of a reed bed which was installed to increase the sites biodiversity and funded via an EU grant, and presently Wokingham Countryside Service are in the process of expanding this reed bed with the removal of trees to create an open reed friendly area where the reed bed can expand to further enhance the biodiversity within and around the lake.

In addition to the increased noise and light pollution, is the ever-pervading 'diesel smell' that comes from the fuel depot across the anglers car park and the lakes in general, which cannot be healthy for any of the country park users.

Finally, there is the issue of the volume of truck movements this Depot will create with significant safety issues to the users of the Old Bath Road. The entrance/exit from the anglers' car park shares the same service road to the main road as the proposed centre and the fuel trucks entering/exiting the centre, which is also close to a dangerous bend, will create additional danger to our Society members, road users and pedestrians alike. It was understood that the Traffic

Commissioner has decided to authorise 18 No. vehicles and 3 No. trailers too/from The Site however, whilst it is not clear if the Site will be running 24/7 or, what its operating hours will be, the vehicle movements will have a significant impact on the Charvil Community, in both disturbance and increased risk of road traffic accidents.

Thus, I implore you as our representatives within the government system to put a stop to this Planning Application before something avoidable happens to either a park user or to our very precious environment and wildlife.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Miles