

PLANNING REF : 252782  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 5 Northbury Lane  
: Ruscombe, Reading, Berkshire  
: RG10 9LQ  
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Fiona Miles  
DATE SUBMITTED : 30/12/2025

COMMENTS:

Ref: Planning Application Number: 252782  
iLAP Number: PP/14482836  
Site Address: Former Prince Bros / Grove Service Station  
Old Bath Road, Charvil, RG10 9QJ

I am writing to you as a dog walker who regularly uses the Charvil Country Park ('The Park'), as a resident of Ruscombe Parish (~3-miles from The Park), and the Wife of an angler who fishes both the Canberra and Orrell lakes within The Park, to Object to Planning Application 252782, for the former Prince Brothers / Grove Service Station Site (here-in referred to as 'The Site') to be used as a fuel storage and distribution centre.

I do not understand how it has already been permitted to install very large and heavy fuel storage tanks, weighing several hundred tonnes, on The Site, which also sees heavy lorries full of fuel both entering and exiting, when it was understood, there was a planning application to build houses on the same Site, which was refused due to unstable ground. So how does a fuel depot located on 'unstable ground' now become acceptable?

Whilst there was no evidence of any bunding, berms or sumps on the first Planning Application it was noted that a bund wall is now detailed on the Proposed Site Plan. However, the adequacy of the (350mm) bund wall is questionable when there shall be more than 800,000 litres of hydrocarbons stored on The Site.

It was also noted that it was proposed to discharge surface water / rainwater run-off, which shall also likely contain hydrocarbons from inadvertent spillages, together with treated sewage, into The River Loddon (which feeds into The River Thames) via an outfall pipe that would cross The Country Park and the angler's car park access. From an environmental viewpoint this has the appearance of being unacceptable. If a spillage were to occur, a tank ruptured or indeed sabotaged then the escaping hydrocarbons would be catastrophic for the river system(s) and the local wildlife of all kinds. In addition, as the ground at The Site 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.

Furthermore, with regards to access to The Park via the yellow gate to the East of The Site, I am concerned that the Proposed Site Plan, Drawing No. 60, shows the Site Boundary (now) extending out across the access road to The Park which is used by WBC Park Rangers, contractors such as arborists, anglers, and walkers. It was understood that The Prince Brothers Site Boundary ended at the wire fence to the East of The Site, and that it did not encompass The Park access road. Will the previously mentioned park users still be

permitted to enter The Park via the 'yellow gated barrier'?

I am deeply concerned that there is an environmental catastrophe waiting to happen. The proposed operating centre will be a significant risk to the local environment, nature, and use of the adjacent land. Fuel spillages, fuel storage tank failures, valve failures, rainwater run-off carrying hydrocarbons, will all make for an adverse environmental impact on the surrounding land and waterways.

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.

In this respect:

- Has The Application (by M/s Speedy Fuels) or indeed Wokingham Borough Council considered the requirements and potential liabilities under The Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations that aim to mitigate major accidents involving dangerous substances, ensuring for the safety of people and the environment?

The COMAH Regulations are designed to protect the public and the environment from the risks associated with major accidents involving dangerous substances, such as chemicals, fuels, and explosives. They require operators of establishments that handle significant quantities of substances to take necessary measures to prevent accidents and limit their consequences.

Considering further on the surrounding environment, adjoining the Southern edge of The Site is the northern shore of Canberra lake that contains carp to over 40lb. I understand from my Husband that the Charvil Fishing Society (Tenant), have an incredibly significant investment in the lakes in terms of fish stock worth many thousands of pounds. The North shore consists of a reed bed which was installed to increase the sites biodiversity, and funded via an EU grant, and during this year (2025) Wokingham Countryside Service expanded this reed bed with the removal of trees to create an open reed friendly area where the reed bed can expand into and further enhance the biodiversity within and around the lake.

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 (security) light pollution from The Site then this will do nothing to encourage them to stay around or breed.

In addition to the increased noise and light pollution, is the ever-pervading smell that now comes from the fuel depot across the car park, and this cannot be healthy for any of the country park users.

Considering the road usage to / from The Site some safety risk points which give me concern are as follows:

- The A 3032 Old Bath Road is not suitable for HGV's let alone articulated tankers. When the drone photograph that was taken in January 2025 and showing an articulated tanker leaving The Site, the vehicle had to make the exit turn entering the far side of the road and facing the oncoming (east bound) traffic. Given the number of fuel truck movements contemplated then this is a dangerous accident waiting to happen.
- The entrance/exit from the anglers' car park shares the same service road to the main road as the pre-existing tyre distribution depot and the proposed fuel distribution centre. Often when there are deliveries to the tyre depot, the 40ft-artuculated truck trailers cause significant congestion to the Old Bath Road ('OBR'), when waiting to reverse into the tyre depot. Given that the tyre depot and the proposed fuel depot will same entrance and exit to the OBR, which is also close to a dangerous bend, together with the proposed number of tanker movements, this will create additional hazard, risk, and danger to the public at large.
- The A3032 is now essentially a residential road, which is nowhere near the calibre of the A4. What if there was a fire on The Site; the Fire Service would find it extremely difficult getting the level of resources needed into the area to control a situation, with more than 800,000 litres of hydrocarbons on the premises.
- This simply is not a suitable well considered Site for a fuel storage and distribution operation.

The fuel storage and distribution depot is fundamentally incompatible with the natural, recreational and ecological character of the area. The introduction of heavy vehicles, increased risk to pedestrians and road users, noise, and the accompanying industrial infrastructure would sharply contrast with an environment currently used for leisure, angling, and wildlife appreciation.

Accordingly, for all the foregoing reasons, I ask that The Council put a stop to this Planning Application before something avoidable happens to either a member of the public, a park user or to our very precious environment and the wildlife.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Fiona Miles  
Dear Sirs,