

The Area Planning Officer explained that this was a revised application for four stables, a tack and mess room and change of use of the land for the keeping of horses. The location had been marked out and the position was now nearer to the copse of trees. He considered that the design had improved; the stable would have a tiled roof and be weather boarded. The area for grazing had been extended to more than the one horse per acre that is normally required by the Council. He explained that the site was within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Area.

Norton Parish Council considered the application to be unsustainable, not suitable for the area and that the stable building was too large. Newnham Parish Council also opposed the application because the stable block is too large and the site not big enough to sustain four horses. The Environment Agency had raised concern with regard to the nearby pumping station, which was used for public drinking water. They requested that sealed drainage be used to prevent any contamination; this had been amended on revised plans.

Kent Highway Services had raised no objection to the application.

The Area Planning Officer reported that he had received letters of objection which raised concerns, in particular to the possibility that the land adjacent to the site had a linked use to the proposed use of the application land; there were too many stables; facilities were not adequate, concerns that the field would be sub-divided and that a precedent would be set. Newnham Parish Council had reported that local residents had considered the scheme was not financially viable and were concerned about change of use in the future.

The Agent explained that the site was difficult to see, that the existing access to the site would be retained and there would be car park spaces for four vehicles. He explained that the building would be locked at night time. He considered the application to be of a good design.

A representative from Norton Parish Council explained what she considered were necessary requirements for horses and queried where the horses would be ridden; that the design of the stable was not adequate for horses; they should not be locked up over night; that the land would need to be sub-divided; that a large muck heap would be needed; about trailers from four sets of owners; and she suggested that floodlights and a sand school would be required. A representative from Newnham Parish Council raised concerns with regard to where people would park when they attended the adjacent scrambling site; the application site was used as an overflow car park. She emphasised that the roads could not cope with cars parked on both sides.

Local residents raised objections to the proposal and emphasised the following points: its detrimental visual impact and large footprint; the height and size of the stable; impact on listed buildings; precedent; that this is a vulnerable isolated site, not fit for purpose; fire risk; too close to the motor cycle scrambling site; horses needs had not been catered for; insufficient grazing land; need to subdivide the site; ragwort and ground ivy problem; poor access and lack of parking; questioned whether the scheme was viable; and prospects for a sand school in light of limited local riding opportunities.

The Area Planning Officer explained that there were no inconsistencies between the current Local Plan and the emerging one; confusion had arisen because at the previous meeting a local resident had queried the relevance of policies from the Local Plan, but he had mixed up the numbering from the Draft Local Plan with policies in the adopted Plan.

Members then toured the site and asked the Area Planning Officer questions which he answered.

