RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

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13th November 2023

Dear Ms Howson

Application Ref. ZC23/02517/FULMAJ
Retrospective change of use of land to form camping site and wellness retreat to include erection of 12 no. accommodation units, reception/managers lodge, ancillary structures to accommodate wellness facility and parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure.
Yurtshire Site Eavestone Lake Eavestone Ripon

I am writing on behalf of Ripon Civic Society to object to the above application on the following grounds.

The Society objected to the original application Ref. 19/02600/FULMAJ for change of use to form camping site because we were of the view that it was inappropriate development in a particularly sensitive and tranquil part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We also objected to the subsequent application Ref. 22/00186/DVCMAJ to extend the operational season of the campsite and to allow for the structures to remain on-site all year round, because we considered this would exacerbate the unacceptable impact of the development. Both these applications have been approved and the site is operational, although the development which has commenced is not in conformity with these consents, hence the need for the current application. However, the foundation of our objections remains unchanged in relation to the new application.

The original consent is for a camping site, described as a sustainable eco-development for yurts in a woodland setting. The yurts were originally to be seasonal, screened by existing tree cover and to be removed in winter when there would be less vegetation cover. There was a fine balance underlying the decision to approve the application in the light of the exceptional sensitivity of the location in a landscape of national importance, hence the many conditions attached to the consent, and we would not wish to see any intensification of the use. In this context we were already concerned that consent had been given to allow the structures to remain on site all year round.

We are very disappointed that the development that has already taken place is very different from the original plans with most of the yurts in completely different locations to those shown on the approved plans. Whilst we accept that the yurts are well screened and do not at present impact on public views from across the lake or

significantly in longer views, the outcome of this re-siting is that the part of the site closest to the lake is proposed to accommodate much higher timber A-frame units instead of yurts. We note that there is no Viewpoint included in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal on the Ripon Rowell walk along the northern edge of the lake looking towards this area, which is the closest point to the site with public access. The applicant should be asked to provide this. The A-frame units are considerably larger and higher at 8.5 metres than the yurts at 3.1 metres and we are therefore concerned that these units would be clearly visible from the public footpath across the lake through and above the tree cover in what is currently uninterrupted natural woodland. This is unacceptable, and we urge that only yurts, as approved, should be located here.

We are also concerned that the development is gradually becoming more intensive and that the sequence of changes proposed will fundamentally change what was originally promoted as a low key eco campsite, thus reducing the tranquillity of this sensitive area and do not consider that further intensification should be supported if this application is approved. The description of development reflects this intensification in that it now refers to a wellness centre as well as a camping/glamping site and more ancillary structures related to this use are now proposed. We note that the applicant states these facilities will be for the use of the site's guests only and would ask for a condition to this effect if the application is recommended for approval.

In this context, we are particularly concerned about the promotion on the Yurtshire website of Eavestone Lake as a pop-up wedding venue with 42-foot and 22-foot yurts which are not part of this planning application. Such a use will result in many more people using the site and its facilities and in increased traffic, noise and lighting nuisance in this sensitive location. We appreciate that the applicant may be seeking to take advantage of permitted development rights for such an activity, however, we do not consider that intensification of this nature is acceptable at what is promoted as a low key eco campsite and urge the Council to use the necessary powers to restrict this and other activities beyond the consented use.

We would request that the Council takes these concerns into consideration when deciding the application.

Yours sincerely
Rachel Wigginton
Planning Lead
Ripon Civic Society