

Item 6 **09/00703/CB3** **Referred to Full Council for Decision**

Case Officer **Mr David Stirzaker**

Ward **Wheelton And Withnell**

Proposal **Erection of 8m high flagpole to display Green Flag Award**

Location **Nature Reserve Bounded By Bury Lane And Bolton Road
Withnell Lancashire**

Applicant **Chorley Borough Council**

Proposal: This application for advertisement consent proposes the erection of an 8m high flagpole displaying the Green Flag award logo.

Background: The Council's Parks and Open Spaces Officer states that the flagpole is proposed to display the proud achievement of the Withnell Nature Reserve being awarded a Green Flag which also meets the Corporate Target 12 months ahead of schedule.

The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. The award scheme began in 1996 as a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country. It was also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas.

Summary: The main issues with this application are the impact of the flag on the visual amenities of the locality and the trees.

Planning Policy: **National Planning Policy**
Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2)
Chorley Borough Local Plan Review:
DC1 - Development in the Green Belt
GN5 - Building Design & Retaining Existing Landscape Features
EP2 - County Heritage Sites & Local Nature Reserves
EP9 - Trees and Woodland
LT14 - Public, Private, Educational & Institutional Playing Fields, Parks and Other Recreational Open Space

Planning History: There is no recent planning history on this site.

Consultations: Parish Council

To date, no comments have been received. Any comments received will be reported in the Addendum.

LCC Strategic Planning

No objections to the proposed flagpole.

Arboricultural Officer

The Arboricultural Officer advises that the flagpole will not harm the health of the trees adjacent to it.

Representations: To date, letters of objection have been received from two local residents, the contents of which can be summarized as follows: -

- The flagpole will be intrusive and will be taller than the trees adjacent to it
- I hope the flag will not advertise sponsors?
- The flagpole will not be in keeping with its surroundings and there is already clear signage on Bolton Road and the gates
- Surely the erection of a steel flagpole with (presumably) a nylon flag on top is not the best way to environmentally celebrate the area
- A more fitting way would be to install a bench or a stone or wooden sign at the beginning of the footpath indicating that the area has been awarded Green Flag status or in fact any other useful method of informing the public
- The siting of a steel pole is totally inappropriate and will certainly spoil the area
- Incidentally, will any trees be removed to make room for this pole?

Assessment: Principle of the Development

The site is in the Green Belt and the only reason why advertisement consent is needed for the flagpole is because it is not displaying a national flag, otherwise advertisement consent would not have been needed. On this basis, there are no objections to the principle of the flagpole in the position proposed given the stated fallback situation.

Layout and Design and Appearance

The flagpole is proposed to be 8m high and will display the Green Flag Award relating to the status of the site. The outward impact of the flagpole will be limited by the surrounding tree coverage and whilst there may be vistas of the site that encompass the flagpole above the tree canopy, the visual impact will be minimal and would certainly not justify refusing the application.

It is not therefore considered that the flagpole will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the locality and the nature reserve.

Neighbour Amenity

The nearest residential property to the flagpole is approx. 45m away behind an existing tree belt so on this basis, it is considered that the flagpole will not have any impact on the amenities of the nearest residential properties to the site.

Trees

The Council's Parks and Open Spaces Officer advises that no trees will need to be removed to facilitate the erection of the flagpole. There are some trees adjacent to the flagpole but the Council's Arboricultural Officer advises that the proposed flagpole will not harm the health of any of the trees adjacent to its proposed location. There are no objections to the flagpole on this basis.

Other Matters

The objection letters are noted but as stated, the visual impact of the flagpole is not considered to be such that it will have a detrimental impact on the locality.

However, the comments made by a local resident regarding the provision of a new bench have been forwarded to the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Officer as they raise a separate issue not directly related to the flagpole application.

Conclusion: On the basis of the above, it is considered that the flagpole is acceptable and that advertisement consent be granted.

Recommendation: Referred to Full Council for Decision
