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13th^d May 2025

Dear Jamie,

DC/25/1530/FUL

Proposal: Relocation of existing vehicular access to improve highway safety.

Site address: Field Adjacent To, Easton Road, Kettleburgh, Suffolk, IP13 7JT

Consultation letter

Expiry date: 15 May 2025

I write for and on behalf of Kettleburgh Parish Council.

Council met on 07/05/2025 and resolved to object to the application. Council believes the new gateway is unnecessary for the applicant's limited expressed needs, which could be met by current accesses and a banksman. It would be just as dangerously situated as current or previously proposed accesses. It strongly supports the material issues raised in the submission by Mr WJ Clark of Windyridge, Kettleburgh IP137JR. 4. The history of previous applications cannot be ignored. This proposal can only be a 'Trojan Horse', providing a new access to allow revival of previous applications. Council again asks you to require the reinstatement of cleared hedgerows.

1. Loss of hedgerow

The Refusal document AP/24/0030/REFUSE | Construction of one x 2 bedroom and two x 3 bedroom bungalows with garages and associated boundary treatments, landscaping and EV charging points for the occupation of people aged 55 and over, noted:

"The proposed access, inclusive of visibility splays, would result in the loss of sections of the hedgerow lining Easton Road. This roadside hedgerow forms a distinctive landscape element, and it provides a marker that a countryside setting has been entered beyond the village."

This application, including a large turning space, would require further removal of hedges, beyond the pre-emptive clear-felling of a significant length of old hedgerow the applicant had made in July 2024 in anticipation of the previous application. The inevitable loss of biodiversity was noted in the REFUSE appeal document.

2. Highway safety

The applicant's submitted data from a speed survey is not admissible. It was conducted by a third party, not by Suffolk County Council Highways Department, the legitimate authority to permit such measurements. It was also taken during a largely quiet period on the road.



You should refer please to the legitimate survey taken in March 2024 and sponsored by Kettleburgh Parish Council. This recording took place over a period of seven days 14/03/2024-20/03/2024 and was professionally set up by Suffolk County Council to be a representative sample in the Easton Road location. Council has been working with Suffolk Highways for several years in response to residents' concerns about speeding and feeling unsafe. The results describe a busy working road travelled by over 1000 vehicles a day at speeds of between 25mph and 55mph, with variation in speeds and volumes depending on time of day and day of the week. It has been noted in the past that traffic seems to slow on the stretch in question – but it is self-evidently because drivers can see how dangerous it is.

It is available on the Kettleburgh Parish Council website and shows much higher median speeds. No gateways along the fast, curving, climbing and shady stretch of road in question would be safe. That is why historically a banksman was always used to enable maintenance.

Figure 1 below shows the contours, therefore the slope of the hill, and the curve of the road. It shows that the proposed entrance cannot be seen from Easton Road when approaching from the South until too late, demonstrating that the new entrance is no safer than the current ones.

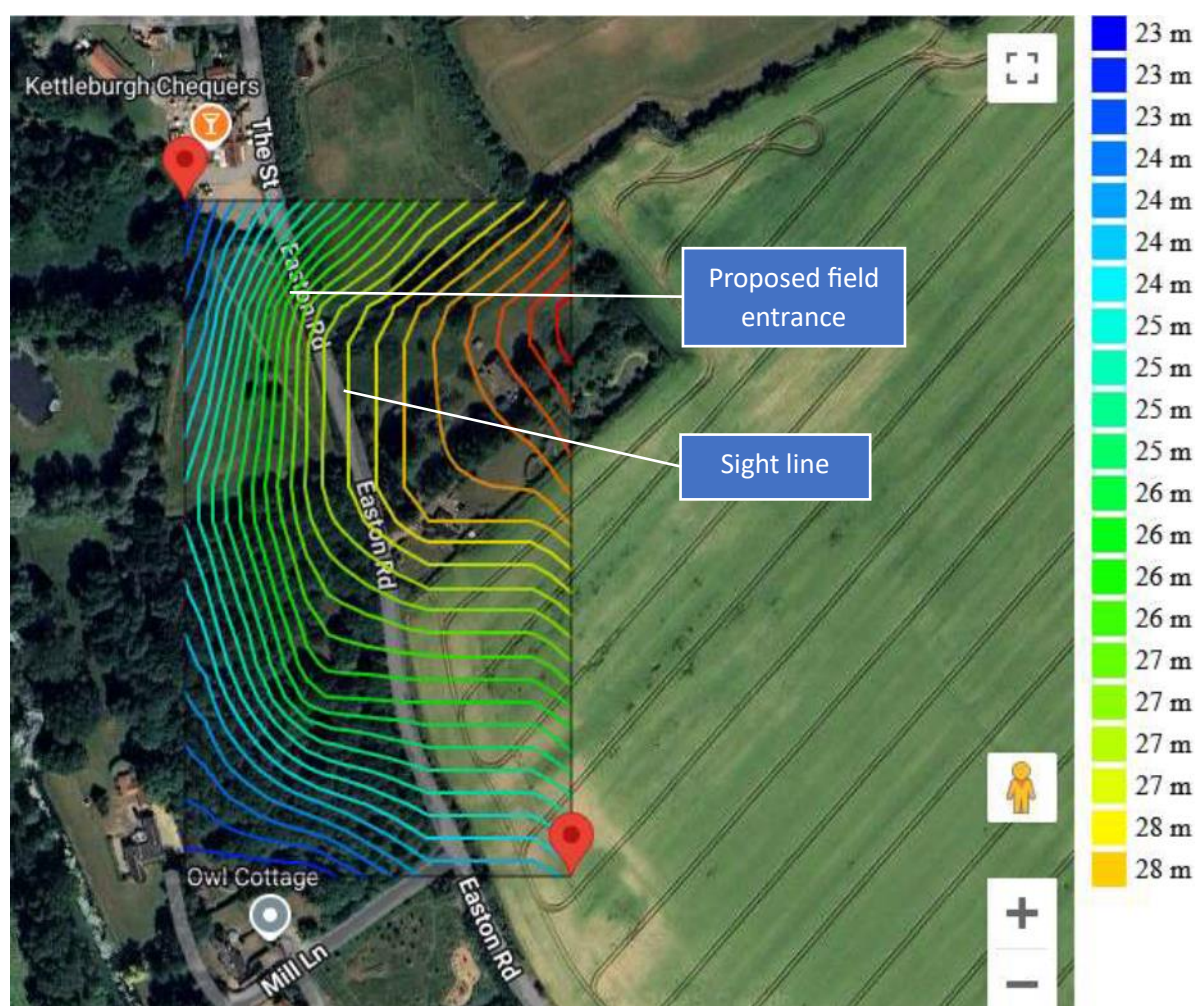


Figure 1 – Contours and sight line



The current entrances are not used. If the new access was, unsupervised, there would be a material increase in the number of vehicles having reason to enter and leave the classified road in a situation where visibility both along the road and at the access point is substandard and would thus be detrimental to the interests of road safety. Earlier development on the affected section of road including application DC/23/3265/FUL by the same applicant was refused for this reason.

The percentile speed calculations provided are invalid because they do not consider the hill and curve in terms of stopping distances and are based on invalid survey results. The approach to the entrance of the proposed site is subject to the 60mph National limit, on a steep gradient, with the road both narrowing and curving near to the crest of a hill. The Highway is a Class III Road being a narrow lane having near vertical hedges and no footway. Many large agricultural and haulage vehicles use it, and these often fill the carriageway. The road is not a quiet country lane, it looks and is used like the B-roads locally, connecting at one end Wickham Market to at the other end Ipswich and is used by motorists and commercial and agricultural vehicles travelling between a series of villages, schools, farms and other facilities in between.

We have provided detailed analysis of the dangers for traffic descending the hill. The pull-in would not help materially. Traffic emerging over the blind summit above the site and negotiating the bend below, would come unexpectedly on any vehicle exiting or entering the new access and would have to brake hard and rapidly to avoid an accident. Any hesitation or slow reaction would be catastrophic. The road can be strewn with flint gravel and might be iced in winter as it is usually shaded.

Even with a substantial safety splay, as we have shown, visibility exiting would not be enough. Vehicles entering would still need to slow substantially, with other vehicles coming round the bend having little to no time to slow sufficiently.

From its in-depth on the spot knowledge, Council considers the highway risks serious and insurmountable.

3. Alternative access availability

As can be seen from the photographs included in an earlier submission by Mr WJ Clark, the current rustic field gate has had little use for many years'. He tells us that earlier, when occasionally used by tractors and mowers, it was necessary to use a banksman to see the vehicle on and off site due to the poor visibility. Since then, traffic has increased, and the entrance has fallen into disuse. Fig 2, following, shows access to the field in question being via a different gate next to the public footpath (Fig 3). In July 2024 the hedging to the road access was as we have said clear-felled but there has still been no apparent vehicular use.



Figure 2: Road entrance Sept. 2023 (all photos © WJ Clark)



Figure 3 Field access in Sept 2023



Yours sincerely,

[Signed electronically]

Sonia Frost
Clerk to Kettleburgh Parish Council
Encl. (none)