

Enstone Parish Council

Residents' comments following a meeting held Monday 17th December 2018

A meeting was held in Enstone Parish Hall on 17th December 2018 to obtain the views of residents of Enstone to the proposed Mullin Project. 43 parishioners from Enstone attended (not including counsellors) and several spoke. Comments were made both in favour of the proposed development and in opposition.

Although the proposed Mullin development is situated outside Enstone, both the museum and the 'lodges' are directly adjacent to the parish, with the access to the site being along the boundary between Enstone and Great Tew parishes. The traffic generated by the museum coming from most directions will arrive through Enstone along the A44, the B4030 and the B4022. For these reasons we believe that the views of Enstone Parish Council and Enstone residents should be taken into account.

We include below the comments made by residents in support and in opposition to the development.

At the end of the meeting a show of hands was requested from the residents of Enstone present at the meeting. The show of hands revealed 6 in favour and 23 in opposition.

Comments made in favour raised these points:

1. Employment: The employment opportunities which may be offered by the museum
2. Economic benefit: The local economic benefit of substantial investment in the museum and of visitors to the museum
3. Education opportunities: Training links with other organisations and possible apprenticeships in conjunction with Bicester Heritage Centre
4. Prestige: The prestige resulting from locating such a significant museum in the area
5. Environmental benefits: Improvement of a neglected part of the airfield by the construction of the museum

Comments made in opposition raised these points:

1. Location inaccessible by public transport: The proposed site of the museum is situated two miles from any public transport and is not accessible on foot. To reach the site requires that motorists must pass through small communities, adding to the already substantial traffic burden and safety hazards on B roads through Enstone, Gagingwell and the Bartons.
2. Traffic volume: many residents believe that the vehicle movements included in the specialist transport reports and in the proposal are underestimates of the likely eventual numbers. Visitor numbers at similar museums, experience of other local developments such as Soho Farmhouse (with traffic movements now demonstrably much greater than those in the original plans), the expected additional traffic which will be generated by other events at the museum and by support activities, and future expansion of the site and its operations, all contribute to this view.
3. Speeding Traffic: Traffic travelling too fast through our communities is a constant concern among residents. The recommendations from Highways for improvements to the junction of the B4022 and the A44, and traffic calming measures through Enstone, Gagingwell and the Bartons are to be welcomed. These measures as currently described will be inadequate to compensate for the incremental volume of traffic created by the museum.

4. Visual Impact: The development on the skyline adjacent to Enstone parish of the museum and the exclusive lodges will be visible from the B4030 and from parts of the parish of Enstone.
5. Light and Noise impact: Potential light and noise pollution are of concern and appropriate counter-measures and controls will need to be put in place if the proposal is approved.
6. Danger to and from aircraft: Positioning of the museum at the end of the airfield runway appears to be risky. There was recently an aircraft accident on the airfield when a plane crashed into a chicken shed on the edge of the airfield.
7. Possible risk of contamination: Concerns have been expressed by neighbouring landowners about possible contamination from the site's use as a WW2 airfield as highlighted in the report by David Rudland Senior Contaminated Land Officer.
8. Need for affordable housing: The proposed 28 lodges are not expected to contribute anything to the social fabric of the area and will not address the need for affordable housing in Enstone.
9. Biodiversity: The environmental survey was undertaken in October when the biodiversity of the area could not be effectively assessed. The presence in the area to be developed of extensive areas of bluebells, orchids, cowslips and other grassland flowers is overlooked.
10. Future infill: The threat of potential infill on the agricultural land between the proposed development and the B4030 at Gagingwell is a concern. Should the district council approve the development, parishioners fear that the infilling of this area would be a next step for developers, resulting in the further degradation of a rural landscape adjacent to local villages.

If the Development Control Committee decides to approve the proposal, residents ask that adequate and proportionate controls to limit the environmental effect and compensating traffic calming measures to mitigate the adverse impact on the local community are put in place