



COLLEGE FARM,
GRANGE ROAD, DUXFORD,
CAMBRIDGE,
CB22 4QF

RUSSELL SMITH FARMS

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Dear Local Resident

Please find attached a document detailing a proposal for the South Cambridge Waterpark. As a valued member of the local community, we welcome your thoughts and comments.

As a result of the Coronavirus limiting people's movement far from their homes, and with many more people now working from home, there has been a huge surge in the popularity of the site, often resulting in many hundreds of visitors each day. Russell Smith Farms as the landowners embrace this use and want to see the public continuing to enjoy the space, but we are now regularly receiving calls to increase policing of the site, monitoring of the site, and cleaning of the site. We have done our best to address these calls, but it has reached a point where it is becoming a costly site to manage both in terms of time and money, as well as a site that could potentially present health and safety issues.

As such, there is a need to formalise the operation of the site. Russell Smith Farms are extremely keen to see the local community continue to enjoy recreational activities at Dernford, and it is our belief that with restrictions on travel likely to remain in place for some time, and the desire for people to holiday in the UK rather than abroad, that the popularity of the site will only increase. By providing open space combining sporting and recreational activities for all generations, we believe will also hugely benefit both mental and physical health.

It is therefore our intention to apply for planning permission for a caravan park in conjunction with the Caravan and Motorhome Club. As part of the caravan park, there would be further amenities that would benefit the local community. This would allow the site to become a safe, secure and well managed, offering the local community even more in the way of activities.

We have received an overwhelming amount of support from local sporting and recreational bodies, including paddle boarding, tennis, open water swimming, and the Scouts, to name a few. A letter from the Scouts is also enclosed as an example of the desire from the local community to really bring this site to life. Our vision is to create a community where biodiversity lies at the heart, offering the younger generation the opportunity to be better educated about the natural environment surrounding them.

We welcome thoughts of the local community and we are inviting people to visit a website that we have set up where further CGI images can be viewed to get an understanding and feeling of what this site would look like, and also where people can leave their comments. <https://southcambridgewaterpark.co.uk>

This initial consultation will run from Monday 24th May for a six week period until 5th July.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Robert Giles Russell Smith

Michael James Russell Smith

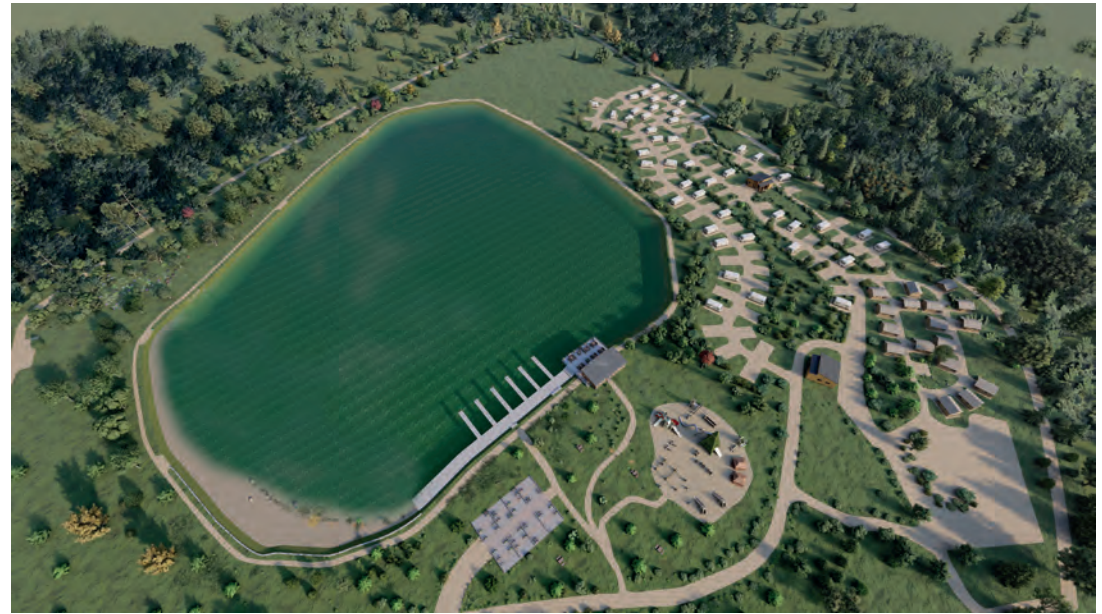


SOUTH
CAMBRIDGE
Waterpark

INTRODUCTION

Russell Smith Farms are assessing the potential development of Dernford Reservoir to provide a community country park with camping and caravanning facilities in conjunction with the Caravan and Motorhome Club (CAMC).

The ongoing work of Matt Clark and his vision for a Country Park combined with educational and leisure facilities has been a key inspiration for Russell Smith Farms. The long-term vision for the site is to create a new location for outdoor leisure and recreational activities, supported by a holiday accommodation scheme, all of which is to be sensitively landscaped and provide new and enhanced habitat for local flora and fauna. Other groups including the Cambridge University Swimming and Water Polo Club and Cambridge Scouts have also expressed interest in the potential that this site could offer their members and the wider community.



The proposed scheme is based upon data collated through previous planning applications for the site, including the 2014 application for a holiday lodge park development with significant sport and recreational facilities. Feedback from a number of informal discussions with local groups and organisations has also contributed to this document.

Russell Smith Farms invites your comments to build upon this vision to create a new space for the local community to enjoy their local environment, create new local employment opportunities and contribute positively to the visitor economy.



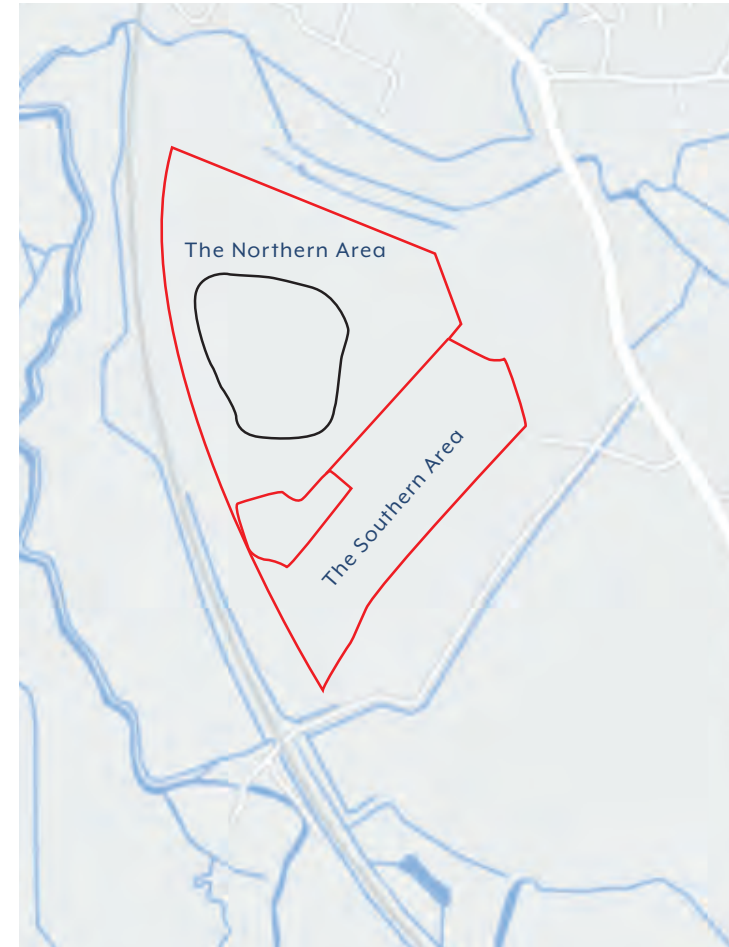
THE SITE

The site is located between the villages of Great Shelford and Stapleford to the north and Sawston to the south. The site is split into two distinct but relatively flat areas that can be accessed directly off the A1301/Cambridge Road with the Northern Area extending to 70 acres and the Southern Area extending to 48 acres.

The Northern Area consists of grassland and a reservoir (in the process of being restored in accordance with conditions attached to planning permission S/1669/14/CM (condition 33)), and the Southern Area comprises of arable land.

The Northern Area and its boundary to the north and east are screened by existing and established hedgerows, while the Southern Area's boundary is formed by the estate road leading to Dernford Farm and to the west by the Cambridge to London (Greater Anglia) train line.








The Southern Area is bound to the north by the estate road to Dernford Farm, to the east by the A1301/Cambridge Road, to the south by the established hedgerow and the west by the train line. The extent of the two areas is illustrated here.



The south-west corner of the Southern Area lies adjacent to the Dernford Fen SSSI which incorporates an area of open pools with ditches and chalk stream. The variety of vegetation types and the open water provides valuable habitat for fauna, in particular amphibians and reptiles.

The nearest train station is in Shelford (approximately a 0.8 mile drive) which provides Greater Anglia services to London Liverpool Street and Cambridge North. The wider accessibility of the site is shown on the accessibility plan on the following page.

Dernford Quarry
Accessibility Map

-  Cycle Path
-  Public Bridleway
-  Public Footpath
-  Lake
-  Road
-  Railway
-  Boundary



PLANNING HISTORY

Planning permission was granted on the Northern Area for the extraction and processing of sand and gravel which included the laying out of a reservoir (S/1669/02/CM).

Planning permission was refused in 2015 for 50 holiday lodges, an indoor tennis complex, 4 outdoor tennis courts, a fitness centre, bowling green, brasserie, public open space with footpath and cycleway and associated works (S/1952/14/OL).

The main reason for the refusal was due to the site's location within the Green Belt and, at the time, the inability to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances (VSC).



BACKGROUND OF THE SITE

The site has evolved considerably since the previous application in 2014/15. The extraction of sand and gravel has now been completed, and the quarry is now filled with water for the purposes of irrigation. The land around the quarry has now been grassed, and the site itself has become a public amenity.

As a result of the Coronavirus limiting people's movement far from their homes, and with many more people now working from home, there has been a huge surge in the popularity of the site, often resulting in many hundreds of visitors each day. This has increased to such a degree that Russell Smith Farms, as the landowners, are now regularly receiving calls to increase policing, monitoring and cleaning of the site.

A fence has been erected around the water and safety floatation devices have been installed, but these have at times been scaled and stolen respectively. It has reached a point at which it is now becoming a costly site to manage both in terms of time and money, as well as a site that could potentially present health and safety issues.

As such, there is a need to formalise the operation of the site. Russell Smith Farms are extremely keen to see the local community continue to enjoy recreational activities at Dernford, and it is our belief that with restrictions on travel likely to remain in place for some time, along with the desire for staycations, the popularity of the site will only increase.



SITE WIDE VISION

As such, The Caravan and Motorhome Club, who operate the site at Cherry Hinton have expressed a strong interest in operating an additional site at the reservoir.

The Club currently operates from 2,700 sites and locations in the UK, as well as through third-party sites and relationships across Europe and beyond. It is an inclusive Club, representing the interests of nearly 1 million caravanners, motorhome owners and campers around the UK. Many of the sites are also available to non-members.

It is our hope to develop a proposal for a caravan park in conjunction with The Caravan and Motorhome Club. As indicated on the plan on the next page, it would be located to the north of the lake and would comprise of a high-quality leisure and recreational scheme accommodating mobile caravans, motorhomes and camping.



This would provide the ability for South Cambridgeshire Waterpark to be a safe, secure and well-managed location, offering the local community even more in the way of activities, whilst also making it commercially viable, which is ultimately required to have the site run appropriately.

SITE WIDE VISION (CONTINUED)

Whilst the caravan park would form a key part of the proposal, there are other significant elements which need to be considered.

The indicative zoning plan here sets out the general vision for the site, which would predominately comprise publicly accessible space providing:

- A. Structural landscaping and woodland belts around the boundaries of both the Northern and Southern Areas comprising of:
 - Accessible multi-user pathways suitable for wheelchair users; and
 - Native trees and shrubs (such as hawthorn, blackthorn, crack willow, guelder rose, dog wood, oak and field maple)
- B. Camping & caravanning area with toilet block, office/ reception incorporating renewables and recreational space extending to circa 6.5 hectares (16 acres)
- C. General facilities area comprising of a reception/office to manage on-site activities, changing rooms and storage for water based activities, farm shop/ café incorporating renewables with children's play area extending to circa 1.2 hectares (3 acres)



SITE WIDE VISION (CONTINUED)

- D. A new designated wetland habitat area that would enhance existing suitable land to extend the habitat country wildlife site (Area G) and Dernford Fen SSSI, extending to circa 0.7 hectares (1.8 acres)
- E. A new managed area of reptile habitat landscaped and planted with appropriate scrub and wildflower grassland species, extending to circa 1.85 hectares (4.5 acres)



SITE WIDE VISION (CONTINUED)

F. Outdoor event space, extending to circa 11.8 hectares (29.15 acres) based around the 28 day permitted developments rule with scope for various options:

- Competitor camping for sporting events like triathlons and duathlons;
- Ancillary sport and recreation facilities, which could include a bowling green, gym, sauna, tennis courts, all-weather courts (for football), farm shop and associated parking; and
- Food festivals with indoor growing facilities to serve the farm shop and local food retailers by utilising ground source heat from reservoir water and solar panels.

G. Country Wildlife Site



SITE WIDE VISION (CONTINUED)

Over and above the key elements listed previously, additional features would be likely to include:

- A designated footpath around the lake;
- A public car park; and
- Public toilets;

All of these uses are shown on the plan. These facilities are not fixed, albeit of known demand by residents, and interest grows in the locale. Russell Smith Farms in conjunction with CAMC would like to secure an outline planning consent for leisure use over this area. The exact mix of leisure uses would be brought forward by way of a detailed planning application following public consultation as to what leisure uses the area should be used for (subject to viability).

- Farm shop; and
- Other outdoor sport facilities such as tennis, bowls, subject to further consultation to identify local need.



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning consideration is the compliance with Green Belt policy, namely:

- Whether the proposal is considered to be an inappropriate development for the purposes of the Framework and the role of the Green Belt in this location; and if the proposal is an inappropriate development, whether the harm to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

We have outlined our response to the above points here:

Inappropriate development and the role of the Green Belt at this point

There are many examples of caravan/camping sites in the Green Belt. One such example nearby is at Cherry Hinton operated by the CAMC, which provides 56 touring pitches, 6 camping pitches and ancillary facilities within a landscaped setting. It is therefore considered that the proposed use is an appropriate use of land within the Green Belt.

However, any proposal should consider the impact on the “openness” of the Green Belt. Where appropriate development would have an impact on the “openness” of the Green Belt, it should only be permitted under Very Special Circumstances.



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)

Demonstration of Very Special Circumstances

The site is well located and has a range of characteristics that make it unique, enabling the proposed development to provide many benefits for the local community. When the individual benefits are considered cumulatively, we feel they meet with vision and objectives for South Cambridgeshire as set out in policies S1 and S2 of the local plan and the proposed development can be considered under Very Special Circumstances.

Accessibility and Connectivity

The site can be reached by way of a number of existing public footpaths, bridleways and cycleways. The proposed development will enhance the existing network with new access routes that are wheelchair and pram friendly, providing increased opportunity for walking and cycling etc in the countryside.

Through making the site publicly accessible and being able to connect to the network of existing footpaths, cycle ways and green corridors in the local area, it will accord with Paragraph 91(c) of the Framework by providing healthy, inclusive and safe places which “enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and sports facilities” [our emphasis].

Natural Environment

The site lies adjacent to the Dernford Fen SSSI and accommodates a number of habitats of varying quality within its boundaries. The new structural and woodland planting that forms part of the proposal would make a significant contribution to the natural character of the site and enhance its green setting.

The proposal incorporates the enhancement of existing habitat as well as the provision of new habitat, all of which would be subject to long-term management.

Caravan Parks have the opportunity of engaging in the nationwide David Bellamy Conservation Award Scheme enabling this element of the proposal to also make a positive contribution to local biodiversity.



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)

Outdoor Sport & Recreation and Health and Well Being

The site is well located and served to provide significant outdoor sport and recreation opportunities as per the objectives of the Local Plan set out in Policy S2 criterion E.

- The reservoir is a key focal point of the site, and it already attracts many people for various reasons. The proposal seeks to make the reservoir part of the local community infrastructure, providing some on-site management to make the reservoir safe for local residents to use for outdoor activities such as open water swimming, paddle boarding, sailing and canoeing.
- The boundary paths can be utilised as recreational running routes, providing a safe option for runners of all ages away from the local road network.
- The location of the site and the proposed uses will provide the opportunity for hosting local sporting events, such as triathlons, duathlons and open swim competitions.
- There is ample capacity within the site to provide additional outdoor sporting and recreational opportunities, that might be difficult to accommodate elsewhere in the locality due to pressures from other forms of development.
- The ethos of the proposals is to maximise the health and social benefits that the site can bring to the local community and as such, will be of an inclusive design, providing appropriate facilities for young families with prams and those who use mobility aids.



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)

Local Community Space

The proposal incorporates the provision of outdoor space to engage with and host a range of community events which can range from combined village fete's and celebrations, sporting and fundraising events. There is also scope for more ambitious events such as an outdoor cinema and food festivals.

Enhancing the Visitor Accommodation Offer

The proposal assists in the continued provision of a diverse mix of holiday accommodation, activities and facilities across the District to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

It seeks to provide a range of affordable low cost holiday accommodation and leisure/recreational facilities which will support tourism throughout the year, reducing the impact of seasonality and providing additional stability and job security for those employed within the industry.

This will directly respond to the increasing public demand in such types of accommodation and associated facilities due to the rise in the number of people preferring staycation holidays rather than going abroad.

Economic Impact

Alongside meeting an identified need, which is needed for greenfield sites in this part of Cambridgeshire, it also requires the development to take place on land that is designated as Green Belt and there are many positive economic benefits arising from the caravan park element of the proposal alone.



POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT

The proposal will help retain spend in the local economy and provide additional accommodation that can help support the wider tourism attractions of Duxford Imperial War Museum, Anglesey Abbey and Gardens, Wimpole Hall and the Wicken Fen.

The UK Caravan & Camping Alliance, Pitching the Value 2019 Economic Benefit Report, has identified the following economic benefits:

- Visitors who stayed in rented and touring accommodation spent, on average, £100 per day, including £55 on-site and £45 off-site. Visitors who owned their holiday home spent, on average, £92 per day, including £54 on-site and £38 off-site. **This is higher than the average daily spend by visitors to England at £63.**
- Expenditure – almost half (48%) of respondent parks cumulatively spent £302.8m per year on capital expenditure operating expenditure, wages and salaries.
- The cumulative economic impact of on-site and off-site visitor expenditure, in addition to the indirect and induced multiplier impacts of each camping and caravanning pitch, would generate £22,072.21 per annum. Likewise, glamping pitches would generate £21,875.00 per annum.
- Approximately every 6 pitches would support one FTE (Full Time Employment) job based on on-site visitor expenditure
- Approximately every 8 pitches would support one FTE job based on off-site visitor expenditure
- Approximately every 8 pitches would support one FTE job based on the indirect and induced multiplier impact of visitor expenditure.

The economic impact of the caravan park could therefore be significant. For example, based on the findings of this report, a site of 100 mobile caravan and tent pitches could be expected to generate in the region of £2.2 million per annum in visitor expenditure which in turn could support up to 41 FTE jobs on site and in the wider locality.

For all of the reasons outlined in this document, we believe this is a wonderful opportunity for South Cambridge and surrounding communities. Please visit southcambridgewaterpark.co.uk for further information.





SOUTH CAMBRIDGE WATERPARK

southcambridgewaterpark.co.uk



cambridgecreative.co

INNOVATIVE CREATIVE DARING

Russel Smith Farms
College Farm,
Grange Rd,
Duxford
CB22 4QF

03/04/2021

Dernford Fen Scout Campsite

Dear Robert

I thought I would put into writing some of our potential dreams for Dernford Fen, were we able to arrange a long term lease or purchase of the site.

We would intend to put in place a hut to provide toilets, showers, a kitchen and a warden's office with a modest multi-purpose hall attached. A second much smaller building would house some more toilets at the far end of the site; I believe these would need to be on cesspits.

Although the main site would predominantly be used for low impact camping, by Scouts, Cubs, Explorers and even occasional use by our youngest members, Beavers, we would also seek out and welcome bookings from other community youth movements like the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, Woodcraft Folk, Boys Brigade, Girl Guides and adventurous local schools. Experience from other scout campsites is that this makes up around 1/3rd of the camping bookings.

The hut and area around it would be available for public hire, when the site wasn't in use by scouts, for whatever community use they might make of it. I would imagine a local martial arts group, a fitness instructor or two, a dog training group, a life drawing class or even a local resident's special birthday or anniversary celebrations might make use of its facilities. Disabled access would of course be provided.

This community use doesn't only swell our hearts but our coffers too; although relatively cheap it still provides an income which helps offset the inevitable maintenance, insurance, sewerage and rubbish collection, lighting etc costs that a site like this will have.

We would endeavour to maintain and preserve the site with its amazing calm atmosphere and haven for wildlife, taking care of the trees, foliage and wildlife on site whilst at the same time giving our young people and those of the neighbouring communities a taste of wilderness and the amazing beauty of the great outdoors, something that scouting has a deserved reputation for.

We would offer young people who camped on the site activities that are impossible without a community resource like this: pioneering (building dens or bridges from poles and rope), canoeing and raft building, a climbing wall possibly, archery, air rifles, camping under canvas and the obligatory camp fire with toasted marshmallows and a sing-song or two. Truly the stuff of lifetime memories when we do it right!

I do hope that our relatively modest but earnest public community use for this corner of your land is something that you can manage to work into your very impressive plans for nearby Dernford Lake.

Yours sincerely,


Tom Hartley
Cambridge District Scouts Chair