

Planning Application No. 21/P/0803/FUL Construction of a Scout Headquarters and associated works. Land to the west of Wild Country Lane, Long Ashton

My name is Dominic Anderson, Chairman of Long Ashton Scout Group HQ Committee. I'm addressing you this evening on behalf of everybody involved in the Group – our active Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and their families; the team of volunteers that make it happen; over 100 children and their parents and guardians hoping for the chance to join us.

We would love to have been with you in person, but we understand and welcome the Council's desire to limit the risk of spreading Coronavirus.

The main thing I would like to convey is that after several years of searching, this proposal offers the best and most realistic chance for a future for Scouting in Long Ashton. We're ready to work with officers to make it happen.

I've been involved in the Scouts here for 10 years. The resurgence in interest and over the last 7 years shows no sign of shrinking. The steady stream of young families into the village is constant – particularly at the western end where the proposed site is, close to relatively high-density housing.

Our proposal is about meeting the needs of young people; giving kids wonderful opportunities as alternatives to staring at screens or hanging out on streets. There's huge demand for the experiences Scouting offers and the unique way in which it prepares young people for their adult lives: leadership, team working and upholding virtues, such as respect and equality.

We recognise the proposal has shortcomings and would like to work with the council's officers to find solutions to mitigate them – establishing safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and cars and mitigating any ecological impact (the results from our recent bat survey indicate little impact).

About 7 years ago we had to move out of the existing HQ. Since then, we have operated part-time out of the village primary schools offering sessions restricted by space and facilities, with no storage. We've worked patiently and thoroughly trying to find sites within the village. Sadly, there are none.

We need eight meetings per week. There are no existing facilities of a suitable size within the village that has that kind of spare capacity available to us, including the Guides with whom we have a good relationship.

Hope is now on the horizon. Following many years of hard work, we have a great opportunity for a new HQ. On behalf of Long Ashton All Saints Scouts, I would therefore like to ask you to look favourably at this planning application for a new Scouts HQ. It is so desperately needed by the village of Long Ashton.



Dominic Anderson

Chairman of the Long Ashton Scouts HQ Committee