

## Gawsworth Parish Council

**Parish Clerk:** Adam Keppel-Green BSc PSLCC  
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To:

Cllr Sam Corcoran, Leader  
Cllr Craig Brown, Deputy Leader  
Ms Kath O'Dwyer, Chief Executive  
Cllr Toni Fox, Portfolio Holder for Planning  
Cllr Nick Mannion, Portfolio Holder responsible for Estates

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Dear Councillors and Ms O'Dwyer,

### **INSTALLATION OF EE MAST AT PENNINGTONS LANE, GAWSWORTH**

In April 2018 the parish council was approached by Harlequin, acting for telecoms provider EE, concerning the proposal to install a mast on a small green in Penningtons Lane. The genesis for this proposal was that their existing mast sits on one of the strategic development sites in South Macclesfield and as such required removal.

Through a number of meetings with the community, Gawsworth clearly expressed its total opposition to the mast and was pleased when Harlequin advised us that there was a potential alternative site: the Congleton Road playing fields owned by Cheshire East Council. In December 2018 we sought Cheshire East Council's support in bringing this option forward and were disappointed in January 2019 to be told that the council would not consider this site unless all other options had been exhausted.

This prompted Harlequin to submit a prior notification application (19/0287M) for the installation of the mast at Penningtons Lane in February. The parish council, and many local residents, submitted strong objections to this application. Our justification for this was as follows:

*The proposed site on Penningtons Lane/Congleton Road is a small area of amenity open space which comprises a bus stop, postbox, parish council noticeboard and planting area. It is the only open space for the community of this part of Gawsworth and softens the entry to Macclesfield. The surrounding built up area is primarily bungalows. As demonstrated by the significant number of objections from nearby properties, the community of Gawsworth is very much in opposition to the proposed siting of this mast.*

*Policy SE4 of the local plan states that development should conserve the landscape character and the explanatory to this policy requires development to integrate into its setting. The proposed mast and the three large utility boxes will significantly detract from the amenity and*

*character of the area in contravention of this policy. Penningtons Lane is not a dense urban environment and the installation of the mast would constitute urbanisation.*

*The photographs included with the application do not show a view of the mast and boxes as one would really see it from Congleton Road, which is the most visually intrusive. The images below show a before and after which demonstrate the cluttering and detriment the mast and boxes have on the area and the view that the residents of this area would be confronted with daily as they return home via Pennington's Lane. The council considers this will have a severely detrimental impact on residents' sense of place. Furthermore, they demonstrate that the proposal fails to assimilate with the surrounding low built environment which is characterised with few telegraph poles and streetlights.*

In March the community was delighted when Cheshire East Council refused this application because:

*It is considered that the siting and appearance of the installation will have a significant negative impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The proposed telecommunication installation by reason of its siting and appearance would form a visually intrusive feature which would be significantly harmful to the appearance of the open space on which it would be sited. The proposed development in this location would diminish the contribution the open space makes to the area, particularly as part of the gateway into Macclesfield and the transition from the open countryside to a more urban environment. The proposed telecommunications installation is contrary to Policies SE2 and SE1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2017 and paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).*

In June the community was aghast to discover that EE were moving forward with the mast. It transpires that the refusal letter failed to reach Harlequin within the required 56-day timescale meaning that on day 57 they had deemed consent. It appears this is in part due to the letter being sent second class. I cannot adequately express how let down the community feels by the fact that due to a serious administrative blunder from Cheshire East Council a part of our community stands to be despoiled for evermore.

The Parish Council requests that you investigate the processes that led to this issue, in particular why the application was determined so close to a hard deadline (unlike standard planning applications where missing the deadline allows the applicant to appeal, rather than granting consent) and why such an important letter was sent in second class post.

However, whatever transpires from this investigation will not solve the problem. To this end, the Parish Council implores you to work with Harlequin and EE to bring forward the option of the mast being installed on the Congleton Road playing fields instead. This site is not surrounded by an existing housing estate and would allow the mast to blend in more with its surroundings than it would on our community green.

By your council's own admission, the mast will have a significant negative impact on the visual amenity of Penningtons Lane. Due to your council's administrative error, this will be forced on our community. Gawsworth is now looking to you to solve this problem and deliver a positive outcome for the Gawsworth community.

We look forward to hearing how you will progress this.

Yours sincerely,



Adam Keppel-Green  
**Clerk to the Council**

Copy to:

Cllr Laura Jeuda, Macclesfield South  
Cllr Brian Puddicombe, Macclesfield South  
David Rutley MP



Current view



Proposed view



LOCAL COUNCIL  
AWARD SCHEME  
QUALITY GOLD