

Wendy Thompson [via email]

Planning Team

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

14 September 2022

Objection to Planning Application: S/05/49 Land at Hoggs Hill, Barbon Low Fell, Casterton

Proposed phone mast on Barbon Low Fell Full planning permission for installation of a 25m lattice tower supporting 6 no. antennas, 4 no. transmission dishes, 2 no. equipment cabinets, 1 no. meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto including a generator and associated fuel tank, fenced compound, hard standing, and an access track for the Shared Rural Network project on behalf of Cornerstone

Dear Ms Thompson

Friends of the Dales **objects** to this application for the following reasons:

The proposed mast will be placed in a very prominent, isolated and high part of Barbon Fell, which is entirely open and completely unspoilt. It would set a dreadful precedent for both Barbon Fell and other such fell tops.

It is worrying that the locations chosen by the applicant to produce mock-ups of the impact of the mast are so misleading. The mast will be starkly visible from other high ground in the vicinity, which is not covered by the mock-ups. Indeed, the mast would dominate this tranquil and unspoilt fell and be visible from all the 2000 summits in the vicinity as well as the ridges leading to them.

Furthermore, the application ignores the point that all utilities are required to have due regard to national park purposes under the 1985 Environment Act, and that includes the protection of its special qualities, notably remoteness, tranquillity, open fells.

It is worth questioning the need for such a mast at all. The maps showing 4G coverage with and without the mast show clearly that no dwellings are affected, just a small section of the road higher up Barbondale and a large tract of empty moorland. Even though Bull Pot, the headquarter of the Red Rose Caving Club, is in the new area, they already have B4RN connections as well as an emergency phone; the building is normally unoccupied.

As for the prevalent B4RN service, it is considered to be excellent: the speed is very good, with virtually no problems since its installation. The very few problems that have occurred were dealt with in less than a day whereas other providers cannot always boast such efficiency. We have been assured that all properties in the vicinity already have access to B4ARN and thus the need for the mast has not been demonstrated.

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Another concern of ours is the requirement for a new track. This track, whilst limited to wheel tracks, winds its way up the exposed hillside in a sequence of zigzags. The underlying terrain will of necessity involve considerable cut-and-fill to create a steady incline and the several hairpin bends. This will no doubt involve digging into peat, thus opening it up to oxidation and wind and water erosion. This must not be permitted. The creation of a winding track up the hillside will also be visually very intrusive. Again, the lack of need for the mast does not justify such a damaging intervention.

To conclude, the mast is supposed to augment coverage of the road through Barbondale which is already well served by the relatively unobtrusive pole mast at Fell House in Barbondale itself. The applicants claim to be bringing the benefits of high-speed internet access to the area when all properties in the vicinity, even the most remote, already have access to ultra-fast full-fibre broadband internet via B4RN. The very limited benefits of this scheme that remain are certainly greatly outweighed by the harm done to this unspoilt landscape.

For the reasons listed above we object to this application.

Yours sincerely

Signed by Wilf Fenten, Chair, Policy and Planning Committee

Friends of the Dales is a working name of the Yorkshire Dales Society which was founded in 1981 and is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Friends of the Dales is free of political and financial affiliations. We work to ensure that the Government, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and other relevant agencies deliver their obligations to care for the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales, an internationally important area. We do this by considering major planning applications and policy development affecting the Yorkshire Dales and adjacent areas. We offer a year round programme of walks and talks so that everyone can enjoy and learn more about this beautiful area and why it needs protection. We have a membership of around 1,300 individuals, families, businesses and organisations.