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'Flood risk' fears over activity centre plans

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A VILLAGE community says that land proposed for a residential activity centre for school children is a flood risk.

More than 40 residents from Littleton-upon-Severn and Elberton met this week to raise their objections to plans to turn the Whale Wharf Business Park on the banks of the River Severn into an educational activity centre.

They claim the site, which has remained empty for six years, is too great a flood risk to house school children and the road network is inadequate to support an increase in traffic.

According to an application submitted to South Gloucestershire Council, the new activity centre would include accommodation for up to 400 children and teachers, as well as 80 staff members.

Two lakes currently on site would be used for water-based activities and a large field would be used for outdoor sports. The development would also include a sports hall, classrooms and a dining hall.

However, concerns have been raised about the site's suitability.

Mike Hawkins, chairman of Aust Parish Council, said: "There are a number of fairly obvious concerns, the inevitable traffic and whether there is a flood risk. That area has flooded in the past with people having to be evacuated through the upper floor windows.

"The tide comes in very quickly, which questions the safety of having school children on site."

A Littleton-Upon-Severn resident, who did not want to be named, told the Gazette: "I don't understand why they think this is a good idea. The site just isn't suitable. Having hundreds of teenagers so close to the river is crazy."

Cllr Matthew Riddle, South Gloucestershire councillor for the Severn ward, said: "Once again, the two primary concerns I am hearing from residents is about the unsuitably large volume of traffic through the village that any new application might bring, and the fact that the site is in a high flood risk area."

Members of the Longcross Angling Club, who use a lake within the site, also claim the application is a threat to their group.

Chairman Larry Lerway said: "We will need to improve security around our lake, which we just can't afford. We've been here 50 years and having teenagers running around just isn't safe."

Charlie Tull, the developer behind the application, said the new proposals were the best solution.

He said: "We believe this application unlocks previous problems with the site and we hope local people will see the benefits. There would be a drop in traffic, it would create jobs and it would only be used 75 percent of the year.

"We have had a flood risk assessment. We believe if the risk is managed then there is no increase in risk. There would be an appropriate ratio of adults and children on the site at all times so should evacuation be necessary it would be done in an orderly way."

<https://www.gazetteseries.co.uk/news/4643675.flood-risk-fears-over-activity-centre-plans/>