This letter (with no plans attached) has been emailed to the Parish Council prior to sending out in the post, and for information, to the Ward Members

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposal: Construction of a new grain store and creation of an access from Fowlmere Road together with planting and formation of an acoustic bund.

Application Ref: S/3566/17/FL
Location: Land East of Fowlmere Road, Foxton
Applicant: -, Thriplow Farms Ltd

Attached is a copy of the above application for your retention.

We welcome any comments your Parish Council wishes to make, but would ask that they are made using either the online web form available, or on the form below and returned no later than 21 days from the date of this letter. After the expiry of this period, the District Council may determine the application without receipt of your comments.

Below is a link for your convenience to view all copies of documents, plans and forms in respect of the above proposal. As the website updates overnight, these will be available to view the following day from the date of this letter. Please note your comments will be placed on the website.

https://www.scambs.gov.uk/services/planning-applications

Should the Parish Council wish to request that the application be considered by the District Council's Planning Committee, please state the material considerations and planning

EXPLANATION OF APPLICATION SUFFIX

OL Outline
FL Full
RM Reserved Matters
LB Listed Building Consent
CA Conservation Area Consent
AD Advertisement Consent
VC Variation or Removal of Condition
LD Lawful Development Certificate
PA Prior Notification of Agricultural Development
PD Prior Notification of Demolition Works
PT Prior Notification of Telecommunications Development
HZ Hazardous Substance Consent
DC Discharge of Conditions
reasons. Examples of material considerations can be found below. The Chairman of the District Council Planning Committee will respond to all reasonable requests.

The Parish Council: - (Please delete appropriately)

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Comments:

The Parish Council does/does not* request that the application be referred to the District Council Planning Committee *(please delete)

Planning reasons:

Please see detailed appendix attached.

Note: Where a Parish Councils requests that an application is determined by Planning Committee there is real value and importance in Parish Council representatives attending Planning Committee to support their comments. Please note that the Parish Council can be represented at Planning Committee by any of it Councillors or the Parish Clerk (with the approval of their Parish Council).

Signed: .................................. Date: 4/11/17

Clerk to the Parish Council or Chairman of the Parish Meeting

Guidance:

What are Material Considerations?

A material consideration is a matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or appeal against a planning decision.

Examples of material considerations can include (but are not limited to).

- Overlooking /loss of privacy
- Loss of light/overshadowing
- Highway Safety

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VC Variation or Removal of Condition
• Traffic
• Parking
• Noise
• Layout and density
• Design, appearance and materials
• Effect on listed Building and Conservation Areas
• Nature Conservation and or impact on protected trees or the landscape.
• Disabled Person’s access
• Government Policy
• Compliance with the Local Plan.

The following are not normally issues that can be taken into account:

• Loss of property value
• Issues of market competition
• Loss of a view
• The applicant’s motive, character or personal circumstances
• Matters covered by other legislation including restrictive covenants
• Issues relating to landownership/property boundaries.
• Moral or religious Issue

EXPLANATION OF APPLICATION SUFFIX

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Appendix: Foxton Parish Council's response.

Foxton Parish Council (FPC), representing the views of village residents, strenuously object to this application for the following reasons:

- Its visual intrusion into an important landscape area and Green Belt;
- The pre-application advice (on which the choice of site for the grain store was entirely based) was inaccurate and unsound;
- It will create unnecessary heavy traffic use of the junction of Fowlemere Road and the B1368, with associated environmental issues.

Visual intrusion

The application form refers to "Construction of a new grain store and creation of an access from Fowlemere Road together with planting and formation of an acoustic bund". However, the plans and access statements include the following:

- Implement store 1400 m² (15,069 ft²) Ridge height 10m (32.8 ft)
- Mono pitched fertilizer store
- Two 13m high silos
- 5,000 litre water tank
- Weighbridge
- Five liquid fertilizer tanks

Together, these buildings and plant constitute a much larger development than described on the application form.

Foxton Parish Council are in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan, and as part of the evidence base, have employed an independent landscape consultant to aid in creating a Landscape Character Assessment document. Although this document is still in draft form, it emphasises the importance of this character area as follows:

"This character area to the south of the village is an open rolling arable landscape that emphasises the rural setting of the village. The land slopes gently south and east, and it provides separation from adjacent villages, not just Fowlemere to the south, but also Newton to the north east and Thriplow to the south-east, all just visible thanks to their church towers."

The chalk landscape has very occasional small agricultural buildings and the road interrupting its openness and tranquillity. The small 2016 housing development on the brow of the hill, at the
southern edge of the village, also provides some visual intrusion. Its siting bears no relationship to the chalk landscape, and it creates a new village edge escaping over the brow of the hill from the otherwise hidden settlement. External tree screening may in time ameliorate its visual impact.

The stretch of gently rolling chalk landscape between villages of Foxton, Newton, Fowlmere and Thriplow is very open and tranquil in character with large arable fields, occasional field boundaries and low hedgerows along highways and is characterised by long open views across the landscape. Occasional wooded areas are limited to the course of Hoffer Brook between Newton and Foxton and the new plantation of woodland on Chalk and West Hill, Foxton. A single line of trees runs approximately east west, east across fields halfway along Fowlmere Rd.

This landscape is particularly sensitive to development because of its open nature and long views across it from villages, public rights of way and highways that sit in and cross it. The open nature of the landscape means that any development, specifically one of substantial height and mass, will be highly visible from a significant distance. Furthermore, opportunities to mitigate this impact are limited given the mitigation itself may further negatively impact on the openness of the landscape character."

Pre-application advice

Thriplow Farms have confirmed to FPC in writing that a location off the B1368 Newton Road was originally their preferred location, and that the decision to concentrate on the Fowlmere Road location was entirely based on the pre-application advice dated 11th April 2016. However, FPC believe that the pre-application advice given was unsound for the following reasons:

- Page 1 states that "The site on Fowlmere Road is considered most suitable as although fairly open has a number of existing agricultural buildings that contribute to its character". The proposed site is a very open landscape. There is only one small brick-built agricultural building to the west of Fowlmere Road, approx 300m from the site. The only other buildings in the area are a range of buildings forming a car storage business, with heights that would be dwarfed by the proposed grain store. There is no development to the eastern side of Fowlmere Road. The establishment of a large grain store and associated buildings will adversely affect the important open landscape and not contribute to its character.

- Page 2 states that there is no relevant planning history. However, application S/0374/06/F (for a small grain store adjacent to the brick built agricultural building previously referred to) was refused on landscape grounds as follows:

  The character of this stretch of Fowlmere Road, Foxton is one of open countryside affording long distance views in each direction. The erection of the proposed agricultural grain store in close proximity to the road and with a ridge height of 8.5 metres will represent a visually prominent and intrusive feature in this open landscape, contrary to the aims of Policy EN1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which seeks to resist development which would have an adverse effect on the character and local distinctiveness of landscape character areas and Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 which seeks to ensure that built development is integrated with adjoining landscapes. In addition Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 restricts development in the countryside to that which can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location. Given the above harm to the rural character of the area that has been identified the application fails to demonstrate that this development is essential in this particular rural location and that a less visually damaging site is not available.
• FPC agree with the statement on page 2, “The group of agricultural buildings would result in a loss of openness and visual intrusion into the Green Belt and countryside given the site is undeveloped”. However, the statement “However the development is considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of Fowlmere Road that comprises similar scale groups of agricultural buildings set in open arable land” is clearly inaccurate; as previously mentioned, there is no development to the eastern side of Fowlmere Road, and the only other agricultural building in the area is one small brick barn. This barn is to the western side of Fowlmere Road, and not in the Green Belt.

The advice goes on to state that “The sites at Brook Road and Newton Road have a greater rural character and appearance due to the presence of landscape features and lack of groups of agricultural buildings. These sites are therefore considered to be more sensitive in landscape character terms in comparison to the site on Fowlmere Road”. FPC suggest that the very existence of landscape features (woodland at the Newton Road site) would serve to disguise the bulk of the structures, and therefore would be less intrusive than the proposal to build in very open countryside and then try to disguise the buildings with inappropriate earth bund walls and planting.

Notes from the pre-application meeting on 10/04/2017 state (2.4) that “...further evidence including consideration of other sites will be required for the application”. However, the application focuses entirely on the Fowlmere Road site, without consideration for the other sites previously proposed.

**Unnecessary heavy traffic use of the junction**

The site proposed is on the western boundary of the farm’s land. Thriplow Farms have confirmed in writing to FPC that there is the potential for 650 30-tonne grain lorry movements p.a. from the grain store, all of which must travel to the M11. At harvest time there will be a large number tractor and trailer movements loading grain into store, and additionally there will be continual vehicle movements connected to this group of agricultural buildings. The majority of the potentially hazardous vehicle movements could be removed from the junction of Fowlmere Road and the B1368 by siting the agricultural buildings at the alternative site off Newton Road.

There would also be an environmental gain by siting the buildings off Newton Road, nearer the centre of the farm, as the distance to be travelled by tractors and trailers loading the store and bulk grain lorries carting grain via the M11 would be reduced.

**Conclusion**

Due to the controversial nature of this application, FPC request that it is decided by planning committee, and also that a site visit is made to see the detrimental effect that this development would have on the character of the area.