# Wealthy Cheshire village divided over equine centre for children with special needs



In the idyllic village of Over Peover, nestled within Cheshire's prestigious 'golden triangle', a storm of dissent has broken out over plans to establish an Equine Centre aimed at assisting children with special needs. Wealthy residents have expressed vehement opposition to the proposed facility, contending that it threatens not only the tranquillity of their enclave but also their mental well-being.

The site in question is a 44-acre plot recently acquired by Dave Whitmore, a local resident seeking to convert an existing grain store into riding stables. Opposition from some affluent locals has escalated to the extent that police intervention has become necessary, with tensions reaching a boiling point at a recent Parish Council meeting. Objectors argue that the project would transform a peaceful bridleway into a congested route, compromising both safety and the village’s previous serenity.

Whitmore expressed astonishment at the vehement backlash, likening the response to a proposal for a nuclear facility rather than a riding school that would support disadvantaged children. He noted, “I have had good fortune in my life… I want to give something back to disadvantaged kids,” elucidating his desire to provide opportunities for those struggling within conventional schooling settings.

Yet, despite Whitmore’s intentions, however well-meaning, the fears expressed by residents are rooted in tangible concerns about increased traffic and disruption. Some locals have reported witnessed instances of harassment, with one resident allegedly confronting a mute child experiencing their first lesson with the riding school. Such incidents highlight a growing animosity, with one local stating, “They are carrying on as though the rules don't apply to them,” in reference to perceived discrepancies in adherence to planning regulations.

To further complicate matters, whispers of the facility being associated with travellers have fuelled the flames of opposition. Allegations have arisen about unsightly conditions, with some residents fearing a broader encroachment on community values. As outlined in local planning discussions, any conversion of agricultural land, such as this equestrian proposal, must balance community needs with environmental considerations. The Local Plan underscores a commitment to preserving the rural character, thus increasing the stakes for all involved.

Whitmore’s counterpart, Laura Clarke, who manages the riding school alongside her partner, defended the project’s intent. According to her, the focus will remain on working with children who require additional support, mitigating fears of traffic and noise. "We are scaling back… there will be no events, there will be no café and no disruption," she claimed, seeking to allay community concerns. The couple is dedicated to ensuring a high standard of care and providing therapeutic benefits through interaction with horses.

This situation echoes broader trends in affluent areas where community resistance often arises against new developments, especially those perceived to lower property values or alter the social fabric. In regions like Cheshire, where residents frequently grapple with the ramifications of strict planning regulations, even well-intentioned projects can fall victim to opposition driven by fear and misunderstanding.

Notably, this isn’t the first time Over Peover has found itself embroiled in controversy. Previous complaints have emerged over noise from helicopters at local estates and disputes surrounding property expansions that challenge established planning norms. The entangled nature of these issues suggests a village not merely struggling with environmental nuances but also grappling with changing social dynamics.

As Whitmore faces a vocal minority resistant to his plans, the Parish Council remains cautious, deferring judgement until formal planning applications are submitted. The ongoing discussions are a microcosm of a larger narrative playing out in rural communities across the UK, where change often brings not just opportunity but the potential for deep-seated conflict.

Despite the divisions, Whitmore remains hopeful that clarity and transparency might bridge the gap between his intentions and community apprehensions. As planning application processes unfold, the debate in Over Peover will likely continue, shining a spotlight on the complexities surrounding rural development, community engagement, and the balance of local interests in an evolving landscape.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691981/Trouble-paradise-wealthy-homeowners-exclusive-golden-triangle-Cheshire-village-furious-plans-riding-school-SEND-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
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* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691981/Trouble-paradise-wealthy-homeowners-exclusive-golden-triangle-Cheshire-village-furious-plans-riding-school-SEND-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.chesterstandard.co.uk/news/24323023.glamping-pods-plan-rejected-traffic-wildlife-fears/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691981/Trouble-paradise-wealthy-homeowners-exclusive-golden-triangle-Cheshire-village-furious-plans-riding-school-SEND-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/site-allocations-and-policies/rur-7.aspx), [[5]](https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/south-cheshire-planning-conversion-of-equestrian-building-refused)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691981/Trouble-paradise-wealthy-homeowners-exclusive-golden-triangle-Cheshire-village-furious-plans-riding-school-SEND-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk/2020/11/07/residents-support-riding-school-plan-but-officers-want-it-refused/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691981/Trouble-paradise-wealthy-homeowners-exclusive-golden-triangle-Cheshire-village-furious-plans-riding-school-SEND-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.chesterstandard.co.uk/news/23021992.chester-equestrian-plans-get-go-ahead-despite-concerns/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691981/Trouble-paradise-wealthy-homeowners-exclusive-golden-triangle-Cheshire-village-furious-plans-riding-school-SEND-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.chesterstandard.co.uk/news/24323023.glamping-pods-plan-rejected-traffic-wildlife-fears/)
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* Paragraph 10 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691981/Trouble-paradise-wealthy-homeowners-exclusive-golden-triangle-Cheshire-village-furious-plans-riding-school-SEND-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/south-cheshire-planning-conversion-of-equestrian-building-refused)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691981/Trouble-paradise-wealthy-homeowners-exclusive-golden-triangle-Cheshire-village-furious-plans-riding-school-SEND-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.chesterstandard.co.uk/news/23021992.chester-equestrian-plans-get-go-ahead-despite-concerns/> - Cheshire West and Chester Council's planning committee approved a proposal to convert agricultural land into an equestrian facility, including stables and access onto Delamere Lane. Despite concerns over flood risk and the impact on the green belt, the committee voted in favor, citing mitigation measures and the site's location in a low-risk flood area.
3. <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/site-allocations-and-policies/rur-7.aspx> - Cheshire East Council's Policy RUR 7 outlines guidelines for equestrian development outside settlement boundaries. It emphasizes the reuse of existing infrastructure, minimal ancillary development, and the preservation of the surrounding area's amenity and character. The policy also addresses the need for appropriate landscaping and screening.
4. <https://www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk/2020/11/07/residents-support-riding-school-plan-but-officers-want-it-refused/> - Despite support from 52 residents and Penketh Parish Council, planning officers in Warrington recommended refusal of a proposal to expand Friends Lane Riding Centre. Concerns included potential harm to the Green Belt and increased traffic, with the application set to be considered by the development committee.
5. <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/south-cheshire-planning-conversion-of-equestrian-building-refused> - A planning inspector dismissed an appeal for converting an equestrian building in Tushingham Cum Grindley into a manager's accommodation and holiday lets. The inspector cited adverse effects on the countryside's character and appearance, as well as the creation of an isolated dwelling in the rural area.
6. <https://www.chesterstandard.co.uk/news/24323023.glamping-pods-plan-rejected-traffic-wildlife-fears/> - Cheshire West and Chester Council rejected plans for six glamping pods in Lower Peover due to concerns over increased traffic, visual impact on the countryside, and potential harm to protected wildlife. The development was deemed unsustainable and harmful to the area's intrinsic beauty.
7. <https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/politics/council/plans-to-convert-riding-school-into-community-space-to-face-challenge-from-councillors-in-peterborough-4589769> - Plans to convert a former horse riding centre in Peterborough into a community hub face opposition from local councillors and residents. Concerns include potential noise, traffic, and parking issues, as well as the impact on a Grade II listed building and local wildlife.