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BRETHREN: WE NEED A NEW BASE

10:30 - 21 July 2004

Residents fear they could be swamped with worshippers if a religious base gets permission. The Plymouth Brethren, based in Stow-on-the-Wold, want to build a new hall on their land in Longborough, near Moreton-in-Marsh.

But villagers say they could be overwhelmed because services are often held more than three times a week.

Visitors come from as far afield as Birmingham and Swindon.

Speaking at a Longborough Parish Council meeting, one woman, who did not wish to be named, said cars and coaches would flood in.

"Our concern is the impact on the village from traffic.

"They're talking about them coming off the Fosseway but this is not enforceable.

"I'm not anti-Plymouth Brethren but we aren't talking about a little chapel with a service every Sunday. It's going to have a huge impact."

The Brethren said they had outgrown the base at Well Lane, Stow, used since the 1920s.

Congregations can swell to 230 and residents have complained about children running around outside.

A spokesman said: "We have large numbers of children and adults worshipping together which is quite unusual."

An application to build at Eastgate House, Moreton Road, has been submitted.

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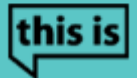
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