

10th May 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Inspectors Appeal Ref: APP/X1735/W/23/3335266.

Havant Borough Council Ref: APP/23/00102.

Applicant: Mr. James Pike.

Site: Northney Farm, St Peters Road, Hayling Island, PO110RX.

We are responding to the Appeal

The applicant's original application of 3rd Feb 2023 was opposed by most villagers, and was unanimously rejected by the North East Hayling Residents' Association. Havant Borough Council made a very thorough assessment of the application, made various site visits, and delivered a very strong rejection of the application, providing evidence from various official bodies. Later that year, the applicants accepted the rejection of the discos and the use of amplified sound, but have re-submitted that part of the application which asks for an increased cap of visitors to the site from 80 to 100.

In their memo refusing permission for this increase (APP/23/00102), Havant Borough Council commented that the expansion would produce an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance, and that the intensification of the business would deleteriously affect both the neighbours and the village in general. They commented that the noise from outside tables would be excessive.

We agree with this, and wish to reiterate our strong objection to the Appeal. Firstly, we consider it damaging to the village as a whole: the point was made by several residents that the project was simply too big, and too noisy for the rural location, and that it would overwhelm the village. Secondly, it impinges directly, and in a negative way, on us. Their barn [REDACTED] was originally given planning permission as an education or exhibition space. To open it up now as part of the tearoom complex would greatly increase the noise that we already suffer. Moreover, to increase the number of clients from 80 to 100 is a threat to our peace and quiet. Visitor numbers are already badly controlled: very many customers (far more than permitted) are allowed to sit outside as it is, and the loud talking, screaming children and barking dogs mean that we cannot use our garden or patio in good sunny weather.

In general, we wish to call attention to the applicant's record over the last few years. They ran several noisy events without permission (as witnessed by the council) and were uncooperative and defiant when asked to stop, even after a Noise Abatement Notice was served on them. They have been in direct contravention to many planning decisions and have signally failed to control events and noise.

There are many inaccuracies in their appeal, some of which we refer to seriatim:

1. We have no wish to use our barn as a domestic dwelling. However, we reserve the right to develop this building into a recreational space such as a summer house, a hobby room or home gymnasium. The original name of the whole building was 'Stubbington Barn'; the fact that the applicant's architect refers to this building as 'the Meadowsweet Garage' and later 'the Meadowsweet Store', does not define its purpose nor what we are entitled to do with it. If the application were permitted on appeal, the noise from the extended tearoom would predetermine what use we can put the barn to, which we find unacceptable; there is only a single wooden wall between us and the adjoining barn.
2. It is not the case that the barn has only rarely been used as an overspill tearoom. It has been regularly deployed as such over the last ten years and without planning permission; see section 6.2 of the Design, Access and Heritage Statement Version 4 of APP/23/00102 dated 18th Sept 2023. Besides wakes, it has been used for wedding receptions, celebrations and children's parties, the latter with amplified sound and overspill of screaming children onto the outside patio. We have no objection to occasional community events: but we must object to the operation of a highly profitable and noisy enterprise which refuses to consider its impact on neighbours.
3. Larger events must apply to Havant Borough Council for a Temporary Event Notice (TEN), before each event is to take place. Only 4 such notices have been received by HBC: one in 2013, three in 2021 plus none up to date. Since alcohol is served at these events, most are noisy, rowdy and badly controlled. Since 2021 we have experienced numerous unlicensed parties, with an existing cap of 3 per week. Most of these events are attended by non-local people and are not of merit to Northney. We do not believe that raising attendance from 80 to 100 clients will improve this situation. Complaints have been lodged with Havant Borough Council on several of these events.
4. No one has ever objected to the ordinary sounds from the farm and farm vehicles; people in the village bought their properties in full expectation of that. What we and others in the village object to is the excessive noise from the tearoom, which has expanded unconscionably since its inception. We have no doubt that it seriously affects the value of our property. Another 20 covers is a large increase and the ratio of inside to outside seating has always been inadequately controlled. Note that the Design, Access and Heritage Statement Version 4 there appears to be a confusion of numbers between what is proposed in sections 6.1 and 6.2.
5. There is a big difference between "sustainable growth" and obtrusive, excessive development. When the tearoom was first mooted as a smaller project, we were supportive and co-operative. However, over last few years we have experienced a progressive increase in catering activity, with little interest in any effect this might have on neighbouring residences or the peaceful character of our rural village. Although tearoom activity was, and still is, restricted by its last planning application APP/17/01071, these restrictions were routinely flouted. Since many of these events have been re-

ported to the Havant planning department, we believe that the Havant planning officers were entirely justified to reject APP/23/00102 on the basis of crowding and noise.

6. There is another "well-established hub" for locals of the village: the Village Hall in the centre of Northney. Exhibitions, community events and private parties etc. take place there at very reasonable hiring rates. The urgent social need for another local venue is not compellingly made. It would appear that the profit motive has become of paramount importance in this application.

It is important to emphasise our mental stress in continuously having to deal with incessant noise and disturbances, both in having to inform the Havant planning department and coping with the administrative demands of continuing new planning developments.

We apologise that the above is only a brief summary of the very many issues which are at play in this appeal; should you need more detail we will of course be very happy to help.

You would also be most welcome to visit us at home to assess our situation.

Yours sincerely,

