

15/9/2021

Subject: Retrospective planning for the installation of a 3.9m high steel post supporting CCTV and ANPR cameras

Date: 14 September 2021 at 16:34

To: development@havant.gov.uk

Site Address: Hayling Island Sailing Club

Planning development.

Mr G Speller

Reference: APP/21/00900

10th September 2021

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

16 SEP 2021

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your notification regarding retrospective planning request for the above installation.

Hayling Island Sailing Club (HISC) have installed a 3.9meter pole and mounted near the top of the pole a collection of (3) large cameras in an area of outstanding natural beauty (reference Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). I contacted Natural England last week who confirmed it is also within the designation of an SSSI.

The cameras and pole which are of an industrial construction are an imposing structure and completely visible from the Causeway. The installation rises above, and dwarfs, the natural vegetation in its vicinity by several meters. It seems to me to be an inappropriate and unnatural blight on the surrounding area and can be seen from a 360 degree aspect. It is even more imposing in its structure when viewed from the waterside of Chichester Harbour. When the water in Chichester Harbour is at low tide it appears significantly higher, dominating the dune skyline and can appear to look over 7 meters high when viewed from the water as a level, and probably looks relatively more so at spring low tide. Its industrial aspect is due to its construction and the camera models seem to be of the type generally used at both airport and hospital carparks. I believe this installation to be entirely inappropriate for this location due to the protections inherent in its designations of an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) and consequently should not, without undergoing due planning process and consents, have been dug and concreted into the sandy ground, including additionally any burying and laying of electricity cables, this also, apparently in a designated area of special scientific interest (SSSI). I understand sand dunes are considered generally a rare habitat with a distinct ecology, and are the most visible characteristic adjacent to the causeway road in conjunction with the beach and waterside area of Chichester Harbour. It seems to me they deserve the protections of their designations.

If the cameras intention is to control traffic it could do so at the main HISC barrier at the junction of Bracklesham Road and Wittering Road, this would have the added advantage of deterring unauthorised cars and camper vans from taking RNLI car parking spaces reserved for volunteers, who need immediate access to their car parking space. Wrist bands although not perfect as a recognition system seemed to have been a better solution in the past than the cameras which seem unable to detect the unauthorised camping of camper vans even when parked adjacent or near to the cameras, nor has the installation completely deterred vandals as the gate had also been damaged since the cameras have been installed. In fairness HISC will remove unauthorised vehicles if telephoned and advised of their presence, but in general the cameras often seem not to alert the club to non members still gaining access to the club grounds or club members parking inappropriately. In the round it seems to me the cameras provide little benefit and have sometimes caused additional queues of traffic. These include delivery lorries on the seafront causeway road stopped at the automatic barrier when going to the club. Vehicles denied access, including large lorries, then have to reverse away from the automatic barrier sometimes trying to do several point turns in limited road space, or alternatively park up whilst waiting for the club to open, thereby blocking the entrance road leading to the RNLI station. In the summer there are a myriad of club members, (membership now numbering well over 3000), and many others try to access the club and beaches on sunny days, people (sometimes several hundred) including families with young children, dog walkers and walkers attempting to navigate the coastal pathway, some residents of Sandy Point all trying to access the beach areas and most walking directly to the beach using the causeway road. Parts of the causeway road are, particularly at high tide, surrounded by water on both sides and there is very little land space for walkers and their families to stand on in order to avoid vehicles, which frankly are not always travelling slowly. Add vehicles reversing at the junction leading to the RNLI station and space on the approaching road becomes acutely short and I feel new safety issues have arisen due to the cameras location and which I ask Havant Council planners to consider carefully when deciding this application.

Queuing vehicles on Bracklesham Road, at the junction of Wittering Road, happens frequently during the summer busy weeks and generally has not changed much since managing the entrance gate with security people. It is this that dissuades unauthorised car intrusion on to HISC grounds. It appears to me that there has been little accessibility benefit to club members since the cameras installation and possibly quite the reverse when considering the traffic confusion near the beach and automatic barrier. Those refused entry by the ANPR cameras when the gates are unmanned have to return alongside a single track road between the two gates against authorised members trying to access the club grounds by car often with boats in tow. Many arguments ensue between drivers, and damage caused to residents property by car drivers using residents drives as passing places is ongoing, and from my perspective appears much worse since the cameras have been installed.

It seems to me HISC in installing these cameras appears to have invaded peoples innate privacy, people who now can be surveilled when walking innocently to the beach with their families and friends or whilst walking towards and from the coastal walkway. I believe they should have the opportunity to benefit from some privacy and to the peaceful enjoyment of the wonderful vistas of Chichester Harbour. HISCs application for keeping these cameras in their current location should not I feel in this case override the welcome relief from surveillance for many people, whilst enjoying the free and relaxing amenity of the beach and waterside. These freedoms accessed in part by a public right of way and soon additional sections envisaged to be designated part of the coastal walkway. The cameras appear overbearing at this location.

It seems to me a better solution could be devised if the automatic gate were to be relocated to the Bracklesham Road entrance to HISC (and if planning approval could be obtained) It would not likely experience the vandalism the gate in its present position has historically experienced. as non members would be unable to get their unauthorised vehicles on to club grounds in the first place.

If the automatic gate was relocated to the Bracklesham Road entrance the RNLI could then enter the grounds in the same way that the police and ambulances already do when accessing HISC grounds. The gate might also benefit from the aspect of several residents whose homes overlook the entrance to HISC, making it somewhat more difficult for vandals to damage it rather than the vulnerable and isolated position it currently inhabits. Alternatively, should the automatic gate be kept in its present position a security camera of sufficient caliber could be sited more sympathetically (perhaps on the existing RNLI building) and so would not impinge so badly on the area of outstanding natural beauty as I feel it does at present.

The Cameras are coated in a seemingly metallic and reflective coating. At sunset as the sun lowers to reach the horizon it can shine directly on their sides. They then become radiating beacons of reflective sunlight highlighting their presence to such a level that consequently I feel they detract badly from the harbours natural beauty and its surroundings. It is therefore likely the reflecting sunlight could be similarly damaging when viewed from the opposite side and given certain common conditions just as intense and visible from the water and Harbour side at sunrise.

The protections inherent in an area of outstanding beauty and also as an SSSI are comprehensive and I believe these designations would also prevent the club from planting a tree to disguise the installation. A tree of the same height would be entirely out of character with the dune aspect of the causeway road and surrounding natural vegetation. It appears to me protections such as these are in place not just to benefit the rare fauna and flora of the area and ensure the habitat remains as nature intended, but, are also to safeguard the location for future generations and are for everybody. It therefore seems to me that this installation is therefore not small in its impact on the natural beauty of this area.

I discussed informally the proposal with a HISC representative before the installation was put up and at that time appraised him of the status of the AONB and SSSI designations of the location, and that the position of the installation were it to be sited as it is now would be entirely out of character with the natural environment, and that the club has a responsibility to protect the area of outstanding natural beauty due to its guardianship and responsibilities as owner of the causeway road.

I request this application be viewed in wider terms than just the club possibly wishing to protect a gate. The often unrestricted entrance to Hayling Island sailing club and single track road leading to the automatic gate area creates unique problems for passers by and for those accessing the beach. To summarise, it seems to me this camera installation is unhelpful in its safety impact on traffic versus pedestrians on the road leading up to it due to it often being the place of reversing and returning traffic from that point.

The knock on effects affecting safety often occur out of sight of the cameras and when the club is closed, and when unauthorised traffic (daily, evening, and during night time hours) can be noted speeding noisily along the single track road including the roadway adjacent to residents homes, primarily because they have been able to gain entry when the main gate is unmanned. It seems to me that when unauthorised vehicles find they can go no further, either through frustration, irritation or embarrassment, they then find themselves where they should not be, and consequently drive out of club grounds often at greater speed. If controls were sited at the entrance to club grounds this antisocial behaviour could be alleviated.

I request this planning application APP/21/00900 be denied and HISC encouraged to find a different solution.

I thank you for your time and attention to the above matters.

Yours sincerely

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