

**Minutes of Neighbourhood Plan Committee Meeting (NPC)  
Tuesday, February 22, 2022 10:00am at**

Present: Cllr V Scott (VS) Chairman, Cllr S Watts (SW) Vice Chairman. Mr S Bronstein (SB), Mrs. J. Gubbins (JG), Mr I Bramble (IB) Parish Clerk.

1. Proposals in relation to the Burgh Island Hotel

This meeting was convened primarily to discuss applications 4774/21/FUL and 4775/21/LBC to SHDC in respect of developments planned to:

- increase room capacity in the Hotel.
- extend and increase restaurant capacity of the Pilchard Inn.
- create permanent staff accommodation on the Island on the site of the tennis court.
- provision of vegetable gardens and a building for the tractor, boat store and workshop on the site of the existing refuse storage area, north west part of the island, called Fisher Fields in the application;
- proposed and potential sources of renewable energy projects.
- demolition and replacement of the Bay View Café to increase its capacity.
- develop at the rear of Warren Cottage to provide further staff accommodation.

Background

It is stated in the Heritage Design and Access Report accompanying the application that the present hotel capacity is insufficient for it to be run profitably enough, to allow proper ongoing maintenance and the capital expenditure necessary for its survival, thus the need to extend the hotel. An increase in the number of guests requires an increase in staff numbers, which in turn requires an increase in staff accommodation to allow staff to live on site, as local accommodation is too expensive and local transport is inadequate for staff to commute daily to and from the island from further afield and during the hours required to be worked.

The NPC noted and regretted the absence of a business plan to demonstrate viability of the proposed development. The committee considered that a business plan is essential in order to justify the increase in staff numbers which, in turn, explains the need for the extra staff accommodation.

The committee also noted that most of the proposed development on the Island (the west wing of the hotel, the staff accommodation on the tennis court and the estate building at Fisher Fields) will be on land allocated in the Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan as 'Local Green Space' (Policy BP15 and Appendix 14A), a basic fact seemingly overlooked/ignored by SHDC planners during their pre-application meetings and in the Planning Statement. The policy states that '*there will be a presumption against all development except in exceptional circumstances*'. Justification for the development proposed has not been provided in the application.

Sustainability issues were raised and the provision of a wind turbine in a prominent location on the island was questioned and considered to be wholly unacceptable.

The reference in the pre-application meeting notes to the provision of yurts and pods as provision for 'glamping' in the north west part of the island Fisher Fields was questioned and thought undesirable.

The committee looked at the individual components of the development as follows.

### The Pilchard Inn

This is identified in the Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) as a locally listed asset. It was considered that the proposed large extension in a prominent location on the seaward side of the Pilchard Inn would result in significant harm to the setting of the Pilchard Inn when viewed from the beach and the mainland. The proposed extension was also too large in scale and its modern design including substantial glazing was felt to be unsatisfactory and out of keeping with the existing building original structure and harmful in its impact on the open green space of the island. In the absence of a business plan the need for increased restaurant capacity was questioned and it was thought unlikely to make much difference to the use of the inn off season.

### Staff Quarters on the Island

The proposal is for staff quarters on the island to be built on the site of the tennis court, resulting in a structure which would be harmful in its impact on the Local Green Space and although to be bunded, partially screened and dug into the topography would be harmful to the appearance of the island from the mainland. It would still be visible from the public footpaths on the island and from the Huers Hut.

### Warren Housing/Bay View Cafe

It was noted that Warren Cottage and the Bay View Café are 'locally listed' assets in the BNP and that the Café has proved to be a successful and profitable enterprise and a popular addition to the attractions of Bigbury on Sea (BoS). The proposal to rebuild and extend the size of the café to increase capacity was supported.

However, the building of additional staff accommodation at the rear of the site was problematical for properties in BoS within sight of it, whose visual amenity would be harmed even with the provision of a flat roof replacing the previously proposed pitched roof. The proposed flat roof would also be contrary to the design guidance for Bigbury on Sea as set out in Appendix 9 of the Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed design would be in conflict with the vernacular of BoS. Also it was thought that the proposal would constitute inappropriate high density development, in conflict with the BNP and its massing and scale would adversely impact on the appearance of BoS and the AONB. The NPC would prefer the site it would occupy to remain as unbuilt and able to be used as car parking for the extended café.

It was also noted that the application makes no mention of the intended use of Warren Cottage and it was considered that this should continue to be used for staff accommodation which itself would reduce the need to provide such a large and inappropriate development on the land at the rear of the café.

### Burgh Island Hotel

The NPC felt that all development on the island would impact on the island's green open space but that the design of the proposed extension and alterations to the hotel would work well aesthetically, when viewed both from the island and the mainland. The NPC did not object to the proposed west wing, the penthouse suites, the spa, 'Nettlefold' extension and the proposals to refurbish and extend the Chirgwin building to provide improved staff accommodation.

### Cream Tea Hut

The NPC have no objection to the hut opposite the Pilchard Inn being used as a tea room and noted that it had previously been used for this purpose. They also had no objection to the proposed terrace for outside seating adjacent to the tea room.

### Proposals to alter footpaths on the Island

The NPC questioned the need for 'improvements' to footpaths on the island. The reasons for any change to the footpaths were unclear.

### Mermaid Steps

The NPC did not object to the proposed improvements for the 'Steps'

### Additional comments

The NPC questioned whether the matter of additional sewage disposal had been adequately dealt with; also, that the committee was not supportive of glamping on the island. It was also noted that the Planning Statement made no reference to some of the objections made by several members of the public at the exhibition.

The NPC was again critical of the lack of attention by SHDC planners to the matter of this development's impact on the unbuilt parts of the island which is designated as 'Local Green Space' and considered that the applicants should have been made aware of this designation, the presumption against development on this land and the need to demonstrate 'exceptional circumstances' during the pre-application meetings.

### 2. Surfers, Cleveland Drive

The revised plans relating to a rear extension to Surfers, Cleveland Drive was discussed briefly. It was noted that there was little change to that previously proposed and NPC did not object to the proposed development.