

LOXHORE PARISH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

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Minutes

Date: Thursday 17th August 2017

Venue: Loxhore Village Hall

Present: Carole Delve {Councillor}
Julie Moir {Councillor}
Chris Bryars {Councillor}
Murray Sharpe {Applicant}
Dani Sharpe {Applicant}
Mike Batson {Parishioner}
Trevor Batson {Parishioner}
Tom Batson {Parishioner}
Carole Nicholls {Parishioner}
Gill Watts {Parishioner}

Minuted by: Priscilla Gellatly {Clerk}

In the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, Councillor Moir opened the meeting at 18:03, welcoming all those present.

1. Apologies: There were apologies from David Smith.
2. Declarations of interest: Chris Bryars declared an interest as he runs a bed and breakfast business in the village.

3.0	Purpose of the special meeting: To discuss planning applications 63386 & 63387: Change of use of land to campsite (including siting of sleeping pods & shepherd's hut) together with conversion of stable block to provide toilet and shower facilities at South Town Farm, Loxhore. Listed building application for conversion of stable block to provide toilet and shower facilities for campsite at South Town Farm, Loxhore.	
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The Parish Councillors had viewed the planning documents online prior to the meeting. Dani and Murray Sharpe (the applicants) were present and answered questions from the councillors and from other parishioners.

They stated that there will be no electric hook-ups and no outdoor lighting. Campers will need to use torches to walk to the shower block area. They will be asked to be quiet by 2230 each night. Cars will be parked only in the designated area and camping equipment will be taken to the field in wheelbarrows. There will be very generous spacing between each pitch. Small campfires/barbeques will be allowed in designated places. The number of toilets and showers is double the quantity suggested in the guidelines.

Comments and questions from two parishioners who were not in attendance had been sent by email and were also answered.

Trevor Smith had emailed comments to the Chairman on 27th April 2017 stating, "I do not mind the campers, pods or yurts depending which way Murray goes but caravans and camper vans trying to negotiate the Loxhore lanes will be a complete pain in the backside (for everybody) and am therefore in favour of the campsite with that restriction, if that is a possibility."

The applicants stated that only tents and pods will be allowed, with a maximum of 15. Although 20 had initially been considered, they had chosen to reduce this to 15.

On 5th May Trevor Smith sent additional comments to the Chairman stating, "I am on spring water at the Old Rectory, I have set up a call with Murray on Sunday to understand how he will dispose of his campers effluent since I do not want it contaminating my supply. It may mean the Council will be answerable if things go pear shaped and they did not do their due diligence. I think I am saying they had best be told to have a think about the infrastructure before final approval. It may be necessary to inform them from the Parish side there is an adjacent spring water supply feeding a household. From my side it is not a big issue but just needs to be properly managed. I went on to the Environmental Agency guidelines yesterday and there does not seem to be any Statutory considerations for the Loxhore area. (Wistlandpound Reservoir is another matter). 50.0m distance is a guideline although that very much depends on the sub-strata and maybe a geologist report will be required."

The applicants had spoken to Trevor Smith and had told him that the effluent will go into the existing small treatment plant.

Although David Smith was unable to attend, he had sent the following comment: "My personal view is that this application, for change of use to a camping site, is most unsuitable for the village of Loxhore, as our narrow lanes will struggle to cope with the increased volume of traffic going to and from the site, and I will be writing to the Planning Dept with my strong objections, as a resident."

In a further email, received on 5th August he put the following points which he asked to be addressed at the meeting:

1. "The application proposes 15 tent pitches initially, located just the other side of the roadway hedge opposite silver telephone box, later to be converted to Pods/Barrels. Assuming an average family of 4, this will mean 60 campers on the site, causing noise, smoke from 15 camp fires, and vehicles coming and going. Is this number of campers excessive and out of proportion to the number of residents in Loxhore?"

The applicants reiterated that the maximum number of pitches would be 15. They stated that the site would only be open for a few months each year and it was thought that all 15 pitches would not be occupied very often.

2. "In addition to the 5 residential properties mentioned, the nearby residents of Halsey Lake - 7 properties - have not been notified or consulted, but will they not also be adversely affected and disturbed?"

The applicants said that the site will not be visible from properties in Halsey Lake and the noise level will be reduced because campers will pitch their tents away from the road. It is also very likely that an area at the bottom of the field, next to the road, will be fenced off and stock allowed to graze there. Trevor Batson, whose property is closest to the proposed camping field, said that he had no objections to it being there.

3. "If the campsite is approved, will this be 'the thin edge of the wedge'? Would this set a precedent, and lead to other farmers, and residents with available fields in Loxhore, doing the same? If so, would this change the present character of Loxhore, as a village, and result in loss of valuable agricultural land?"

Trevor Batson spoke about the earliest campsite in Loxhore, used by groups of school children many years ago. This was on the Village Hall field and the field is still used occasionally by groups of young campers. He said he felt lucky to live in Loxhore and would be pleased if visitors wanted to stay in the village and experience its superb location. It will never have the volume of campers that Morthoe or Woolacombe have and would not be the sort of campsite that stag weekends would want to use.

4. "I am concerned that our single track roads, particularly Cott Hill and Mill Lane, will not cope with all the extra traffic the campsite will bring. If 15 vehicles travel up and down each day, over 1 week will total 210 extra vehicle journeys. Leaving the site more than once a day will result in many more journeys every week. How will this affect and/or pollute the clean air in Loxhore? Who will maintain the roads?"

It was generally thought that although there would be extra traffic, so long as people drove sensibly there should be no problems. CD spoke about the junction at the top of the road from Halsey Lake, where the silver phone box is sited. Although most local people treat this as a roundabout, there is no signage to indicate this. However, most people using the proposed campsite would probably be using the Cott Hill to Arlington road so the junction would not cause them any problems. She suggested that when the decision of the Parish Council is sent to NDC a request should be added asking for this junction to receive some signage. She also wondered if the phone box is now working and whether the PC should ask for it to be removed and the junction levelled and converted into a Give Way T-junction. Dani Sharpe said she would be amazed if all 15 pitches were occupied at any one time so the additional traffic would be unlikely to be excessive. The roads will be maintained as they are now.

5. "Regarding the proposed waste water and sewage disposal, with up to 60 people using the toilet every day, plus toilet paper, will the existing farm sewage system be adequate, or fit for purpose? In addition, some people habitually flush wipes, nappies, etc. down the toilet. Will this also cause blockages/smells?"

The applicants reiterated that the current small treatment plant will be adequate to deal with the extra volume. Notices will be placed telling people not to dispose of wipes, nappies etc. down the toilets. Murray Sharpe said he would personally deal with any blockages which did occur.

David Smith concluded: "So, looking at the bigger picture, is the proposed campsite in the right location? Is it too close to the 12 residential homes?"

The response from all those parishioners present was that they were not at all worried by the proposals and accepted the applicants' assurances that the campsite would be run properly and with minimum disruption to the village.

<p>JM asked if there were any more questions but there were none. Members of the public left at 18:32 after which the Parish Councillors had a short discussion. The final decision was that the proposals should be supported and the Clerk was asked to email this response to Tracey Blackmore at NDC, along with a suggestion that the road junction should be investigated with a view to adding some signage.</p> <p>Chris Bryars, who had declared an interest at the start of the meeting, said he was also in support of the proposals.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18:37.</p>	
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Minutes approved by Chairman..... Date