

Signal Rock

Higher Town

St Martin's

TR25 0QL

27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2017

Dear Planning Officer,

**Planning Application P-17-091 Land At Lawrence's Brow Churchtown St Martin's Isles Of Scilly**

We are writing to object to the above planning application. We are objecting on the grounds that there is insufficient information in the application, there is not a proven need for this type of accommodation, it will not extend the shoulder season and could set a precedent for the proliferation of yurts on St Martin's.

Having been to see the site on 25<sup>th</sup> November we would like to point out that a copy of the planning notice is not being displayed. Does this affect the timing of the planning process?

We feel that there are a number of areas in the application which require clarification.

Protected Species: Policy 1 (e) protects statutorily-protected plant or animal species and the wildlife. As the existing building was erected pre 1947 has there been a bat survey?

Sewage: The application states that the waste from the compost will be used for hedge maintenance/composting. Does this mean that waste containing human faeces is to be spread under a hedge? It should be buried and if this is to happen where on the site will this take place?

Water: The existing barn has a floor space of 18m<sup>2</sup>. There is no information in the application to say if this will provide sufficient grey water for families of four particularly in the event of a dry summer. Is there provision for a back up supply and if so where from?

The application quotes Policy 2 (c) regarding water. The use of grey water for washing is a water conservation measure. However, as there is no provision for a potable water supply buying in bottled water for drinking and cooking, with the associated single use plastic waste, makes the issue of water much less environmentally friendly.

Landscaping: There is insufficient information regarding the landscaping for this project. The site although discreet from the paths next to it, is very visible from one of the paths leading down to the school. What does 'the site would be planted and maintained with sympathy to local flora, fauna and wildlife' actually mean?

The application claims that it will meet Policy 4 (b) that states that proposals will be supported 'where it demonstrably improves the quality of existing tourist accommodation, including that of managed camping sites, or potentially extends the length of the tourist season'. St Martin's already has a yurt, a campsite and an Eco Cabin so the market for accommodation for the more environmentally conscious visitor is already catered for. This application will not increase the quality of existing tourism accommodation.

Furthermore, a yurt will not extend the length of the tourist season. The campsite is not full at either end of the season so an additional camping option for the island is not required. St Martin's has always had under occupancy for the shoulder periods. This is caused by issues such as the provision of inter island boating, fewer facilities on the island at these times to enhance the visitor experience and a lack of appropriate marketing/digital presence of some accommodation providers rather than a lack of accommodation itself. The St Martin's Island Group, which promotes the island as a tourism destination, was contacted this year by one of its members on this issue. A lack of ability to visit other islands during an early season stay was cited as the reason for those visitors not wanting to return to the island. The argument that people from other islands will come and stay on St Martin's to have their photo taken is a spurious one.

To us however, the key issue for this application is what grounds the accommodation is being applied for. Is it under Policy 4 (e), is the land a farm tenancy or simply agricultural land used to raise some livestock. If it doesn't meet Policy 4(e) then granting planning permission would create a precedent on the island where anyone with some agricultural land would feel they had the right to apply to erect a yurt. This would not only have a detrimental impact on the business of the St Martin's Campsite but would not be an appropriate way to meet any need for additional holiday accommodation provision on the island.

We hope that you will take our comments into consideration when making your decision.

Kind regards

Anna Cawthray & Robin Browne