

Andrew King

From: Planning (Isles of Scilly)
Subject: FW: Application P/22/056/COU

From: Roy Smalley <PROVIDED>
Sent: 06 September 2022 00:37
To: Planning (Isles of Scilly) <planning@scilly.gov.uk>
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To whom it may concern:
Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in support of the new venture by Martyn and Lilly to provide take-away Thai food in a central location in Hugh Town. There have been a number of objections, particularly to siting the food van on Holgate's Green. I feel that many of these tend to display a NIMBY attitude, based on cooking smells, litter, noise, damage to grass, and taking up a large area of the green. Closer examination shows how far from reality some of these objections are. The van is about 25 metres away from the nearest dwelling, and smells are unlikely to permeate so far, give that the site is exposed to fairly continuous breeze at least. There are numerous litter bins on the green, and provision could be made, if necessary, for litter to be collected at the van and taken off site. The only noise is from a small generator, which was chosen for its quiet operation, and which, in any case, is housed in the back of the Land Rover, which has had sound insulation installed. The Land Rover is usually parked with the back fully open towards the shore, and it is doubtful if local residents can tell whether the generator is running or not from their homes. The vehicles are required to move away outside trading hours, so movement on the grass is unavoidable. However, the green is well drained, and is unlikely to be churned into a quagmire. If experience shows that damage does occur, steps can be taken to mitigate it. The area required for trading is less than 1% of the total area of the green. All the remainder is still available for people to sit and enjoy the view, to eat some lovely Thai food, or for their children to play. The proximity of public toilets is a decided advantage, and if people just want to

enjoy the scenery away from the food van, there is plenty of seating further along The Strand, including the shelter there.

Look at the other side of the coin: since the Covid pandemic eased, visitor numbers to the Islands have increased dramatically, exacerbated by difficulties in flying, which show no signs of abating in the near future. Most visitor accommodation makes no provision for meals other than breakfast, and the number of food outlets – whether restaurants, cafés, or take-aways – has fallen drastically in the last few years. What is the visitor to do on finding him/herself in this situation? An extra mobile food take-away van could mean a tasty nutritious meal, or a very hungry night waiting for breakfast. A visitor, particularly a first-time visitor, is unlikely to want to return after such an experience. And since the Islands' economy depends very largely on tourism, this is an important consideration. As it is, travel to the islands is extremely expensive: flights to Eastern Europe or Italy can be cheaper.

The Council need to consider the long term needs of the Islands. Restaurants are closing – Juliet's have now joined the list of evening establishments, there are fish & chip shops open a few nights of the week, there are two food vans behind the Town Hall, which are near to Porth Cressa, but quite a way from Town Beach and the view over the harbour. The council should carry out a survey to find out how many individual places there are available in all the evening catering establishments, and compare that with the total number of visitors who come to the islands during the summer season, many of whom will be looking to eat out in the evening, either from choice or from necessity. I understand the concerns expressed in some of the letters to the Council about a change of use of a part of Holgate's Green, and the ideal solution would be to offer a suitable alternative site to Martyn and Lily. The answer is: there isn't one. Anywhere along The Strand will pose similar objections from residents, there is no space behind the Town Hall, unless the car parking area is changed, and in any case this is hardly an ideal site, and is due for re-development in the future. Sites further out of town, such as Carn Thomas or the Industrial Estate would not be viable, as people would not go that far, even if they knew the van existed there. The Council are facing a dilemma: do they make adequate provision for evening meals during the visitor season, or do they risk driving away future visitors in order to protect a small portion of public open space? There is a pressing need for change, and the Council should 'grasp the nettle' and approve this venture.

I have visited the Islands for 56 years, and still spend five weeks there on my twice-yearly visits, and well remember the time when there was no

Holgate's Green, just Holgate's Hotel, which housed one man, and never had any visitors. There was no sea view then for the houses opposite! I could claim responsibility for Martyn's presence on St. Mary's, to which he has brought a number of other skills of great value to the Island. Don't nip this useful venture in the bud before it has got established. It will be a valuable asset in the future.

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