

Andrew King

From: Planning (Isles of Scilly)
Subject: FW: Lily's, planning application P/22/056/COU

From: Lyonesse Scilly <PROVIDED>
Sent: 02 September 2022 22:21
To: Planning (Isles of Scilly) <planning@scilly.gov.uk>
Subject: Lily's, planning application P/22/056/COU

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To the Chief planning officer,

I am writing to register our strong objections to the planning application for a change of use for Hogate's Green to allow takeaway food businesses. We are very concerned that by allowing even one takeaway outlet, the precedent will be set for future expansion. For example, there was a 'pop-up' barbecue this evening (Friday). Did this have permission from anyone? There was no prior notification and it was in direct conflict with Lily's, who also knew nothing about it; neither did it appear to have to comply with the same restrictions, continuing as they did until dark. Or did the many people concerned -not a local amongst them and with nobody seeming to be in charge of the party- just believe that they could do as they wished on open ground? The smell, the smoke and the noise generated unfavourable comments from our guests and angered us.

Five years ago, when there was a proposal to site a Burger van on the Green, the application was refused. The reasons we gave for our objection then have not altered. We were concerned about the impact of noise and cooking odours in a mainly residential area with (some Grade II listed) business premises and in front of the Catholic Church. We were very worried about the increase in rubbish which would inevitably be generated causing the very real potential of added problems with predatory gull behaviour. In inclement weather the site is exposed and customers would be obliged to wait with little protection.

Our previous objections remain valid, and indeed, have increased. Holgate's Green is THE main area on St.Mary's for both visitors and residents alike to meet up, relax, and enjoy the wonderful view over the harbour in peace. The area of the proposed development is the only area which has some shade and which, this year in particular, has been invaluable. As we have been informed, the summers are likely to become hotter and sunnier and this shady area will become more important. At any time during the day, the benches and seats are occupied and the grass too, with blankets on the ground. School groups and walking tours gather there and children can run around. It is in constant use during the long summer evenings -all this could be lost to van movements, noise, smell and queues.

At the moment the ground is baked hard. When the weather is wetter and the predominant wind is from the North-West round to the North-East, the Green will become a quagmire. This, with the added footfall will render this whole recreational space totally unusable. When the 'Tunnel' was first erected on the Green for food provision for the Gig week-end, the subsequential damage to the grass was so severe that it didn't recover for the entire summer. This was the reason that the 'Tunnel' was re-sited to the hardstanding area of the boat park. It will be no different now should the mobile takeaway outlets be permitted. If, as we have been told, there might be hardstanding installed to alleviate this problem, the Green would be further diminished in size -with a loss to everyone.

Our Green is an important space, not least because it is the only area where we can hold various and varied events: Gig week-end, Otillo, Family Fun Days, Music and Fund-raising events, the erection of a marquee for V.I.P. visits and Emergency Service exhibitions and even on occasion, Barn Dances. Where else could they all go?

Another big concern for us is that more food outlets will obviously cause even greater problems with disposable rubbish. Although extra rubbish bins have recently been placed along the Green, and with a much better design, they often fill quickly and overflow. Takeaway boxes are difficult to squash down or are too big (pizza boxes especially) to fit in. Many times we have had to clear up the detritus from across the grass and along the road.

This leads to an even greater problem -the increasingly aggressive and relentless attacks on people by the learnt behaviour of the gulls. On numerous occasions this year we have seen food snatched, people injured, children (and adults) frightened by these big birds, and once, a small girl knocked over in the constant pursuit of food by the gulls. We appreciate that it is difficult to control the number of gulls -but surely the last thing we need to do is to encourage their behaviour by increasing their opportunity to scavenge? The Green is an open space where the gulls can look down from the tall buildings on one side, attack and make a getaway out to sea.

We understand that there might be a need for extra provision of food outlets for our visitors given the number of restaurants that have closed recently. However, surely a better site would be at the already-established position at Porth Cressa. If it could be enlarged by excavating the bank at the side of the TIC, it would answer a lot of the problems. There is hardstanding already in place, some shelter from prevailing winds and weather, less nuisance for fewer local residents from noise and odours. Also, less opportunity and space for the gulls to swoop, steal and fly away.

Finally, we do believe that Scilly is returning to the normal numbers of loyal visitors that we welcomed and who enjoyed their visits here, prior to the pandemic. During the past two years the numbers of visitors on staycations surged to absolute capacity, leading to a great increase in demand for facilities which often we were unable to provide. Restrictions for safe-distancing, table service only, lack of available staff and so on, meant that the pubs, cafes, and restaurants were often unable to adequately service their customers. We feel that this pressure on customers and suppliers alike is now slowly easing. If this situation continues, is there really a need to increase the number of takeaway outlets with the detrimental knock-on effect to our environment and the very way of life that our important visitors specifically come to Scilly to enjoy?

We anticipate that you will take notice of our many concerns when you consider this application and the proposal to alter the status of one of our most important public amenities.

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Woodcock and Alan Hannington
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Lower Strand
St. Mary's