

Supporting Statement for the Planning Department CIOS

We would like to apply for a change of use of part of the western end of the recreational area known as Holgate's Green in Hugh Town, St. Mary's. We wish to use this site to run a mobile hot food takeaway unit in the form of a catering trailer towed onto site by a short-wheeled base Landrover.

In our revised application, we are asking to be allowed to trade for three hours per day on five days a week. This reduction in requested trading hours seeks to address concerns expressed by elected members of the Council of the Isles of Scilly, which led to a refusal of our previous application, particularly in respect of the presence of multiple vehicles. As pointed out by an elected member of the Licensing Committee during the hearing on May 12th 2023, there are not, in fact, multiple vehicles. The food trailer is not classed as a vehicle, given that it has no engine, no steering-wheel and is not self-propelled. Be that as it may, the CIOS policy does not actually preclude the use of multiple vehicles, nor does it state that a catering trailer may not be towed onto site by a vehicle.

Highway safety was another cause for member concern, as previously it was necessary to pause in the road whilst laying down timber ramps, thereby potentially blocking traffic. In fact, the timber ramps proved to be superfluous, so eliminating them has avoided the need to pause in the road. No other highway issues were mentioned.

Whereas the policy does not permit generators, it is impossible to trade in 'fast' food without power. As the CIOS has been unwilling or unable to provide power, then it is reasonable to expect street traders to provide their own. It should be emphasised that our generator is extremely quiet and is very well insulated.

There is an evermore urgent need for more food outlets on St. Mary's, particularly given the recent reduced offer and, in some cases, closure of some restaurants in recent times combined with increasing visitor numbers. Demand far outstrips supply, which is causing significant reputational damage to the islands as a tourist destination. Many visitors complain (locally and via social media platforms) that they cannot get food, especially in the evenings, even when they attempt to book many weeks in advance. Holidaymakers who are unaware of the situation and who, therefore, have not made advance table bookings, complain that even the local supermarket has run out of sandwiches by evening and that food is unavailable. Tourism in Scilly is suffering potentially irreparable damage as a result. Visitors are heard to say that they will not return due to these difficulties. It is often said that tourism accounts for approximately 85% of the islands' revenue. Our proposal, if accepted, would help to mitigate this situation.

Holgate's Green is a large, open area with picnic benches and easy access to public conveniences. It is an ideal location for our proposal. The grassy area is roughly 60 metres long and 24 metres wide. Given the size of our vehicles relative to the size of the whole area, any visually negative impact would be minimal. The towable catering trailer is 3 metre long, 1.65 metres wide and 2.3 metres high. The Landrover is less than 4 metres long, 1.6 metres wide and 1.9 metres high. It would be positioned behind the catering trailer, under the large hedge, to reduce any visual impact when viewed from the Green. The Landrover has been customised to house a generator supplying electric power to the catering trailer. Much research has gone into finding a very quiet generator in order to avoid noise pollution and disturbance for local residents during operating hours. The rear of the Landrover has been insulated and compartmentalised to further reduce noise levels. At the July 11th site meeting, attendees agreed that the noise levels during the simulation of trading were reasonable and, indeed, quieter than the passing traffic. Most of the cooking equipment is gas-powered and, therefore, silent. We do not anticipate strong food odours or atmospheric pollution due to the type of food on offer.

In order to access the site, it is necessary to cross a footpath to get from the highway onto the Green. To facilitate this manoeuvre, we propose always to have two persons present in the interests of public safety. One person would stand on the footpath to advise pedestrians. The Green is used for large public events at various times throughout the year, so this type of manoeuvre is accepted practice locally.

Our trailer has no external lighting. Light would only be emitted when the trading hatch is open during business hours. Ideally, we would like to trade for three hours per day on five days per week during the tourist season with the possibility of occasional trading in the winter, if there is sufficient local demand.

In summary, our proposal is to provide a much-needed food outlet on a wide, open space in Hugh Town, where there are adequate facilities. The fully mobile unit would be removed from the site at the end of each day's trading. It is our opinion that this venture would enhance the tourist provision and contribute to improving the visitor experience.

Martyn and Ammarawadee Smalley