

**St Leonards & St Ives Parish Council
 Planning Committee Meeting
 Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2021 at 6.45pm
 Held in the Village Hall, Braeside Road, St Leonards**

Members present: – Cllr J B Parker, Chairman

Cllr Mrs S Marshall Cllr K Gawler Cllr J W Parker

In attendance: Mr Jonathan Ross, Clerk to Council and members of the Public.

Public speaking: Members of the public spoke about application P/OUT/2021/04412 Proposed Surf Reef. Objections were made on the grounds of road safety on the A31 due to increased traffic at the Woolsbridge roundabout, ecological damage to the heathland, its wildlife and habitat including risks to rare species, inappropriate development of the green belt, environmental concerns relating to light pollution, excessive noise and the excessive use and waste of power, parking issues near to the A31 footbridge and concern over the potential loss of the Avon Heath visitor centre buildings before new ones are constructed.

78. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest: None

79. Apologies for absence: Cllr R Bryan, Cllr Mrs B Waugh, Cllr A Davies and Cllr N Hindmarch.

80. Minutes the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr JW Parker, seconded by Cllr Mrs S Marshall. Agreed.

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2021 were duly adopted.

81. Matters arising from the Minutes: None

82. Correspondence, for information only:

83. Planning Decisions: List to be emailed week of 30th November 2021.

84. Planning Applications:

App	Address	Response
P/OUT/2021/04412	Land to the southeast of the A31 Ringwood Road and to the northeast of Brocks Pine St Leonards And St Ives BH24 2NR Hybrid planning application consisting of: A full planning application	

	<p>for: Change of use of agricultural land (of approximately 11.5ha) to Suitable Alternative Natural Green space (SANG) to be released in phases. Change of use of agricultural land (of approximately 3.8ha) to country park (as an extension to the existing Avon Heath Country Park). Demolition of existing cafe and visitor centre in Avon Heath Country Park. Engineering works to remove hard standing from existing country park and restore the land. Means of access and car parking to serve the SANG and country park. An outline planning application for:</p> <p>Development of a surf lagoon, outdoor climbing wall, visitor reception, cafe and administration building, and associated landscaping, together with ancillary glamping pod site and its service buildings. Erection of buildings in the country park extension incorporating a cafe, toilets, and car park kiosk (to replace demolished country park buildings), play facilities and Suds features. Erection of skate park, cycle park and wild play structures.</p>	
--	---	--

Surf Reef, Brocks Pine, St Leonards

The Parish Council objects to this hybrid outline planning application in the strongest terms. It believes the location is not suitable for a development of this nature. Existing similar surf centres in Bristol and Snowdonia are sited in open rural areas and at considerable distances from residential areas.

Traffic and Roads

The proposed access to the surf reef complex is via Brocks Pine, which is accessed from the Woolsbridge roundabout on the A31. The A31 in this area is an extremely fast road with a 50mph speed limit. It must be noted that the A31 is a main arterial road leading to the north, east and west of the country. It carries a great many commuters at rush hour from very early morning to late evening. This

traffic increases in the warmer weather when holiday makers and visitor numbers greatly increase.

In 1988 Hampshire County Council objected to a major development proposal at St Leonards. One of the reasons was that the 'A31 is overloaded'. The Department of Transport said that the A31 west of the Ashley Heath roundabout was not yet at capacity. However, since then National Highways have said on many occasions that traffic on the A31 greatly exceeds its design capacity. The A31 is already carrying traffic greatly beyond its design capacity in the section between the Ashley Heath and Merley roundabouts. Attachments 1. EiP Dorset SP 1988 (1) and 2. EiP Dorset SP 1988 (2) refer.

Chapter 10.10 of the 'The East Dorset Local Plan' further acknowledges the traffic problems at St Leonards, as follows: "The volume of traffic on the A31 has grown rapidly. The current Annual Average Daily Traffic flow is now over 66,000 vehicles a day east of the Ashley Heath junction, while the A31 to the west carries about 41,000 vehicles a day and the A338 Spur Road carries about 35,000 vehicles."

It is against the policies of the 'The East Dorset Local Plan' to grant permission to a development of this nature which will significantly increase the level of traffic on this already congested and dangerous carriageway.

The roundabout is the first 'obstacle' drivers encounter for over 80 miles when travelling from London and the north. As a result, vehicles approach the roundabout at speeds well in excess of 50 mph and only slow down briefly to negotiate it before carrying on their journey west or east. The result is that local traffic trying to gain access on to the roundabout from Woolsbridge Road or Brocks Pine do so at great risk to their own safety and can often only do so if a vehicle is turning off and when the traffic temporarily slows for a few seconds. The situation is currently so precarious that many local drivers will avoid entering the roundabout from these roads and choose instead to enter from other A31 side roads. It cannot be emphasised enough how dangerous and precarious this roundabout currently is. With the additional projected vehicle movements this new development will attract, the situation will only be exacerbated to the point where accidents and gridlock will be routine.

The Hydrock Transport Assessment is considered to be extremely over optimistic and not an accurate reflection of the real situation. It is believed that traffic movements related to the proposal will be a great deal higher than estimated.

This roundabout is the scene of many accidents. Official statistics very much underestimate the true number and impact of the accidents. For example, on the morning of our recent planning meeting on 22nd November, an accident occurred where a vehicle left the roundabout and half destroyed a metal shed and adjacent fence on the corner of Brocks Pine and the A31. There was a lorry and car collision eastbound the previous week, which was reported in the Echo and then another accident westbound on the day after the planning meeting on 23rd November, which closed one lane, causing massive tail backs and required police and ambulance attendance.

Pedestrian access to the site will be near impossible from anywhere north of the A31 except for the footbridge connecting St Ives and the existing bridleway between the site and the protected heathland. This footbridge is used extensively by residents to access Avon Heath. Visitors to the new development will soon become aware that access to the area and proposed development can be gained by parking for free on local roads and using the footbridge. The impact of parking by visitors on local residential roads will have a marked detrimental effect on the

area. This is an area with narrow roads, it is quiet, peaceful, and pleasant and residents live there because of this. Their enjoyment of this will be shattered if this development were to go ahead. A comment has been made that yellow lines can be put in place to prevent parking. This would just have the effect of moving the problem further around the local area and prevent local residents from parking by their homes. It should also be noted that there is already a serious problem locally with visitors trying to avoid parking fees at Moors Valley Country Park by parking on local roads.

There are already concerns locally about the safety of pedestrians trying to cross the A31 at the roundabout to access Brocks Pine and Avon Heath. Those that do try to cross there take their life in their hands as vehicles speed across the roundabout at around 50mph. If this development were to proceed then it is expected that many local younger people may be attracted by the new park's facilities. For them to try and negotiate this already perilously dangerous road will result in tragedy.

Development in Green Belt

The proposed development is situated within the Green Belt. The NPPF Clause 149 refers to potential exceptions for development within the Green Belt. Specifically for the provision of appropriate outdoor sport or outdoor recreation. As long as it does not conflict with the land within it. This proposal is the most unnatural and inappropriate use of the land imaginable. It is an enormous light blue chlorinated lake within a rare and protected heathland environment. The applicants' consultants do reference this clause in their submission but omit to refer to Dorset's own published **Strategic Green Belt Review**, which specifically identifies and evaluates the area that is proposed as a temporary camping field with future potential for residential development. The Green Belts Review's declared harm rating is assessed as 'High' if this parcel of land (SL15) were released.

Policy PC6 – Tourism, states related development must avoid increasing visitor pressure on Dorset Heaths. Even with the introduction of a SANG and the unnecessary relocation of the Avon Heath Country Park centre and facilities the proposal will undoubtedly have an irreversibly negative impact on the heath. A similar surf park in Bristol has visitor numbers exceeding 450,000 a year. Attendance predictions are that approximately 40% of visitors to the park are non-surfers. It could be suggested that people not surfing may use the adjacent green space for walking or cycling. This translates into potentially an additional 180,000 people a year using the heath that wouldn't have done so previously.

It is apparent that Natural England Dorset regard the visitor centre and adjacent buildings to be too close to the SSSI. That is understandable and it is appreciated that moving this pre-existing facility would be of benefit to the SSSI. However, it surely cannot support moving it such a short distance away whilst potentially creating an additional 180,000 visitors a year – which would arguably be of more damage to the SSSI than the existing buildings.

Local Planning Policies – Green Belt inappropriate development, Chapter 6.97. Policy GB2 within the 'The East Dorset Local Plan' states the following "Within the Green Belt inappropriate development, including uses of land, will not be permitted. Inappropriate development will include any development which does not maintain the openness of the land or which conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, and new buildings except for: (a) agriculture or forestry; (b) essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation or cemeteries and for

other uses which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including the land within it; (c) the limited extension or alteration of existing dwellings or their replacement where the new dwelling is not materially larger than that which it replaces; and (d) infilling within the village infilling policy boundaries of washed over villages.” The proposed development of an artificial surf lagoon, 10 miles from the sea with beaches providing some of the finest watersports facilities in the country, does not constitute an ‘essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation’ and so is in direct contravention of this planning policy.

10.11. Apart from the built-up areas of St. Leonards and St. Ives and Avon Castle, the area forms part of the South East Dorset Green Belt. The generally high conservation value of the land outside the built-up areas also requires close restrictions on development. While housing development on windfall sites within the built-up areas will continue, the low density and special quality of much of the existing housing areas will also require special protection and will limit the scope for new development. There are no identified sites within the built-up areas for which either housing or employment developments are proposed. The re-use for employment purposes of the existing workshops at the military vehicle test ground north of Boundary Lane is proposed if the site should become redundant, while the remainder of the site, which is within the Green Belt and is of high nature conservation value, would be proposed as a nature reserve. 10.12. The strategy for the Parish is therefore primarily one of conservation. Development in the Green Belt will be controlled through the policies set out in Chapter 6.

Chapter 10.21 of the ‘The East Dorset Local Plan’ regarding countryside recreation in the St Leonards parish: “It is expected that the Moors Valley and Avon Heath Country Parks will continue to act as major local facilities for informal countryside recreation. Further improvements to the access to both parks may be desirable, importance **although the nature conservation of the Avon Heath must be protected.**” So, the local planning policy for the parish is one of conservation, close control of any greenbelt development, and protection of Avon Heath. The proposal for the placement of an industrial scale visitor attraction with close to ½ million annual visitors on 4 hectares of greenbelt land within the parish and directly adjacent to Avon Heath is completely at odds with the planning policy for the parish. It would be very difficult to think of a proposal which impacted the existing status quo quite so significantly with potential catastrophic consequences for the community and the protected heathland.

Environment

The power used to generate the waves and lighting mainly from the national grid will be immense and could be argued that it is not within the spirit of the new government Environment Act.

Chapter 6 – Policies – Local Plan

The following extract from the (still) current Local Plan is especially relevant to this application:

6.6. Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policies A to D are key in the consideration of development proposals and the protection of features of natural environmental importance. These are as follows:

Environment Policy A Proposals for development which may adversely affect the integrity of a candidate or designated Special Area of Conservation, “potential” or classified Special Protection Area, or Ramsar site, will be allowed only if there is no alternative solution and if there are imperative reasons of overriding public

interest. In addition, proposals for development which may adversely affect a priority natural habitat or species will be allowed only if they are necessary for reasons of human health or public safety, or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

Environment Policy B Proposals for development which may adversely affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature reserves will be allowed only if it is evident that the benefits arising from the development or land-use clearly outweigh the intrinsic nature conservation or scientific interest of the site itself.

Environment Policy C Proposals for development which may adversely affect Sites of Nature Conservation Interest or Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites will be allowed only if it is evident that the benefits arising from the development clearly outweigh the intrinsic nature conservation or scientific value of the site itself.

Environment Policy D Proposals for development which may result in harm to a specially protected species or its habitat will be allowed only if there is no alternative solution and if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Local Planning Policies – ‘Countryside Recreation’ Chapter 6.69 ‘Countryside Recreation’ within the ‘The East Dorset Local Plan’ states the following: “The countryside is widely used for informal recreation, particularly through its network of rights of way and wider areas of land such as woodlands, commons and country parks to which there is public access. Facilities for more formal recreation, such as outdoor sport and allotments, are also appropriate uses for land in the countryside where they do not conflict with the protection of those features which contribute to its rural character, including its tranquillity, beauty, the diversity of its landscape, the wealth of its natural resources and its ecological and agricultural value. Facilities may include sports fields fishing lakes allotments, golf courses and other forms of recreation which are neither unusually noisy nor require large or obtrusive buildings. Land within the Green Belt in particular is likely to be used for outdoor recreation, although associated new buildings will only be allowed where they provide essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation and must be small and unobtrusive.” This proposal clearly contravenes this local planning policy as the artificial surf lagoon will be unusually noisy as well as buildings being large and obtrusive.

Further Local Plan policy references which must be taken into account when determining this application are:

6.269. Policy TODEV1 The development of tourist attractions, accommodation or facilities will be supported, subject to there being no unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

6.273. Policy TODEV2 New sites or extensions to sites for static or touring caravans, tents, chalets or cabins for holiday use will not be permitted within the Green Belt, or where it would cause harm to the landscape character of the AONB, or Area of Great Landscape Value.

6.277. Policy DES1 Development will be permitted in locations where there is a choice of means of travel and where dependence on the motor car will be reduced. Permission will not be granted for development which increases dependence on the motor car.

6.280. Policy DES2 Developments will not be permitted which will either impose or suffer unacceptable impacts on or from existing or likely future development or land uses in terms of noise, smell, safety, health, lighting, disturbance, traffic or other pollution.

6.282. Policy DES3 New development that generates vehicular traffic will only be allowed where it is served by a vehicular access and local highway network that is adequate in terms of road safety and traffic capacity. Where the need arises for highway improvements as a direct result of the development, then the developer may themselves be required to pay the cost of those improvements.

6.300. Policy DES8 Development proposals will be permitted if: a) they are compatible with or improve their surroundings in: i) layout; ii) site coverage; iii) architectural style; iv) scale; v) bulk; vi) height; vii) materials; viii) landscaping; ix) visual impact; x) their relationship to nearby properties; and xi) their relationship to mature trees. These factors will be assessed in the context of the sites themselves, their immediate surroundings and, if material, more distant views. b) in towns and villages, they will harmonise with the townscape and general character of the areas in which they are set, and c) in the countryside, they will be easily assimilated into the landscape or are well-related to a group of established buildings.

Ecology

There will be a huge negative impact on wildlife if this proposal were granted. Indications are that there are several endangered species that are on the red list that would be negatively impacted. In addition to the potentially harmful chemicals used to sterilise the artificial 'lake', the light pollution and noise generated would affect all wildlife and their habitat over the whole of Avon Heath.

No Benefits to Local Area

The proposal would appear not to do anything of benefit for the local residents. This area does not need additional tourists. The demographic of the St Leonards and St Ives area would indicate that very few residents would use the facility or benefit from the limited jobs created.

Additional Concerns

It is a concern that WH White have no experience with the construction of a surf reef. Their expertise lies with gravel extraction. There is a real concern that if permission were granted then construction could start and not be completed, and we would be left with a huge scar on the landscape. Alternatively, the project could be completed and may not be successful resulting in an abandoned site leaving a huge scar and abandoned buildings.

Planning Conditions

If planning permission were granted for this scheme, then the Parish Council requests that several conditions are included in that permission. They are:

- Prior to any works starting on the surf site the A31 Woolsbridge roundabout is improved to better manage the additional vehicle movements. Consideration to be given to reducing the speed on the A31 to 40 mph in this area, in addition to traffic calming measures.
- Prior to the demolition of the existing Avon Heath Dorset Council visitor centre, café and play area ,all the proposed replacement facilities are built first prior to any work constructing the surf reef complex. This would include the complete parking provision for the new buildings. This is to ensure there is a continuity in the service provided by Dorset Council to visitors.
- The SANG is created in full before any works on the surf reef are started.
- Some form of Traffic Regulation Order is introduced in the St Ives area that protects residents from the effects of visitors trying to park on the local roads and accessing the site from the A31 footbridge. This could take the form of

<p>a 'Parking Zone' with free parking for all residents in the parish area and their visitors but prohibits any others from parking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All power used on site should be generated from a renewable source such as solar panels on site. • The operating hours are consulted on and agreed. • Lighting is consulted on and agreed. • If permission is granted that no further development in any form be permitted on this site in the future. This should include the site's existing farm buildings and adjacent Green Belt land to the South West of Brocks Pine, which is currently in the same ownership. 		
P/FUL/2021/03864	<p>1 Braeside Road Land rear of 14 Malmesbury Road St Leonards And St Ives BH24 2PQ</p> <p>Erect no.1 dwelling with associated parking and amenity space.</p>	<p>The Parish Council objected to an earlier application at 3/20/206/FUL for the development of this site.</p> <p>The Parish Council objects to this application for the very same reasons as previously stated, in that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site entrance is within a few metres of the A31 exit to Braeside Road, this creates unacceptable risks to vehicles accessing and exiting the A31 at this point. • Direct access to the property from the A31 is not possible, the turn is too tight. • Vehicles attempting to access and exit the site will be at a risk of colliding with vehicles exiting the A31 • The access and approach to the site is very narrow and may prove a risk for emergency vehicles to safely negotiate • Vehicle noise, in an area that is deemed a noise important area. It is a concern that noise levels will create a significant health and safety risk for occupants. • Air pollution the proposed property lies just 12m from the main A31 trunk road, with opening windows just 15m from the nearside carriageway. This raises

		<p>significant pollution health and safety concerns for occupants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is considered the site is too small to support this size of property and is therefore • considered a contrived plot. • It is suggested this proposal is affected by policy HE2.
3/21/1223/HOU	1 GREENWOOD COPSE, ST LEONARDS AND ST IVES, RINGWOOD, BH24 2PW	No objection
P/VOC/2021/04021	<p>2 Ashley Drive North Ashley Heath Ringwood BH24 2JL</p> <p>Sever land and erect 1 no 4 bedroom detached chalet bungalow with associated access and parking. Part demolition, alterations and extension to the rear of the existing dwelling.</p>	<p>Objection.</p> <p>It is considered that this application flouts the approved plan 3/19/0383 Rev B and ignores the original planning permission for the erection of a new chalet bungalow. A condition of which was to demolish the south wing of the existing property, this has not been carried out and is ignored in this application. A dividing fence has already been built in the wrong location. It is requested that the planning officer involved with this application states how this has occurred because permission was granted on this proviso.</p>
P/HOU/2021/03828	6 Windmill Lane Ashley Heath Ringwood BH24 2DQ	No drawings available
3/21/1695/HOU	<p>8 Egmont Drive St Leonards And St Ives Ringwood BH24 2BN</p> <p>2m fence</p>	<p>The Parish Council objects in the strongest terms to the erection of this 2m fence with gate access to Hurn Road.</p> <p>It is understood that in this area the preferred method of boundary marking and noise suppression is to erect hedging, trees and foliage and not by erecting timber fencing or walls.</p> <p>The proposed 2m high fence will be unsightly, overbearing and detract from the natural rural setting this area enjoys.</p> <p>Installing a gateway access on to Hurn Road in this location will create an unacceptable risk to road users on what is an extremely fast road where visibility can be obscured by the many twists and turns. The PC understands that the former district</p>

		<p>council (EDDC) adopted a policy that no additional gateway accesses should be created on this stretch of road – due to the inherent danger they would cause to road users.</p> <p>The PC suggests a solution to the problem of noise nuisance is to plant a screen of trees and shrubs on the boundary of the property thereby creating a green foliage screen. Then further back behind this screen install fencing that will add to the baffling of the noise and that can't be seen from the Hurn Road. Any fencing that is installed behind a green screen should not have vehicle access.</p>
P/HOU/2021/03951	10 Ivy Close Ashley Heath Ringwood BH24 2QZ	No objection, but external finish should be in keeping with existing street scene
3/21/1847/CLP	12 Paddock Close St Leonards And St Ives Ringwood BH24 2LD	No objection
P/HOU/2021/03918	15 Juno Road St Leonards And St Ives BH24 2FD	No drawings available
P/HOU/2021/04192	15A St Ives Park Ashley Heath Ringwood BH24 2JX	No objection
3/21/1849/HOU	21 Whitfield Park Ashley Heath BH24 2DX	No objection
P/FUL/2021/03883	Land Adjacent 29 Sandy Lane St Leonards And St Ives Ringwood BH24 2LE	No objection
3/21/1014/HOU	32 BRAESIDE ROAD, ST LEONARDS AND ST IVES, RINGWOOD, BH24 2PH	No objection
3/21/0934/FUL	65 OAKS DRIVE, ST LEONARDS AND ST IVES, RINGWOOD, BH24 2QR	No objection
3/21/1708/HOU	65 Sandy Lane St Leonards And St Ives Ringwood BH24 2LE	No objection
3/21/1773/HOU	The Camellias Ashley Drive North Ashley Heath Ringwood BH24 2JN	No objection

61. Exchange of Information:

1. Next Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 16th December 2021 in the Parish Offices at 7.15pm.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Chairman