

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 19 August 2021, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash.

Present: Cllr P Morris (Chairman), M Fleming, R Kember, Mrs V Lane, G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey, T Pulham and G Tancred. District Cllr D Burn and 23 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** – County Cllr A Stringer
2. **To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda**

Item 6.2 – Cllr P Morris as a notified neighbour

3. **PUBLIC FORUM:** to receive the following reports:

7.37pm Parishioners and Public item brought forward – the Vice Chairman, Cllr T Pulham took over the Chair, the Chairman Cllr P Morris joined the public forum

Cllr Pulham outlined the forum for parishioners comments – each parishioner was allowed up to 3 minutes to make any comments

Parishioners and Public

A parishioner requested permission to record the meeting – no objections were raised

Comments relating to DC/21/04091 – Hill Farm, Grasshopper Lane

On behalf of the applicant a parishioner stated Hill Farm, comprising 150 acres, had been purchased 3 years ago. As it stood the farm was not viable and the applicant was looking to diversify and the background to the application was given to the meeting. The outbuildings were dilapidated and the applicant had taken the view to convert one into an events/wedding venue so as to provide a source of income compatible with farming. The barn would be sound proofed and professional advice had been obtained on the type of queries that would arise as a result of the conversion. The intention was to be part of the community and not separate from it. The owner would be willing to offer use of the facility to the community free of charge.

A summary of Parishioner (P thereafter) comments were received as follows:

P - recently moved from Northamptonshire to Suffolk one of the reasons being a neighbour was intending to set up a wedding venue business. Understands best efforts to sound proof but from experience sound could not be stopped from travelling. People gather outside the building, doors open during summer, live bands, from personal experience sound would be the biggest impact on the community.

P - had previously run a DJ business. Although most venues soundproofed it was not possible to sound proof 100%, base music would always be heard. Traffic wise - there were more children in the village, more children using the roads, single-track roads also used by horse riders and agricultural vehicles.

P - currently surrounded by 5 holiday lets - traffic was an issue, no parking available. Satnavs would direct traffic through the centre of the village creating increased traffic through the single track Stoke Ash Street.

P - access to proposed venue was via a single-track road. Double-glazing was not an option for a listed Building sound would travel straight through windows; a recent outdoor party was very noisy, particularly base music. Nearby caravan site would be impacted, no insulation in caravans, will be very noisy for caravan guests wishing to stay in the peace and quiet of the countryside. Would result in loss of business.

Visibility onto A140 not good enough for large number of vehicles accessing and exiting the venue.

P - concern over increased traffic and access on to A140.

P - supported above. Increased traffic and taxis backwards and forwards plus noise carrying at night.

P - lived directly opposite the site. Noise travelled during summer months and could be clearly heard in garden. Plus noise from the holiday lets. Village cannot take any more noise.

P - Although licence up to 11pm venues had facility for licence creep and extensions to 1am if permission granted. Licence would probably be extended to 1am.

P - Weddings joyous events, high spirits, alcohol. Guests coming and going passing caravan site would disturb caravan guests.

P - would be directly affected as lives near venue. Huggins Lane access only, lane was totally unsuitable, passing places were admission there would be a lot of traffic coming and going. The noise and traffic on a single farm track could not cope plus service vehicles. Photographs had been taken during the winter when visibility was clear. During summer visibility obscured by tall crops.

P - understood farming community needed to diversify. The applicant had been given permission for 8 glamping tents, parishioner had been nearly hit by vehicles using the site when walking dog. Passing places would be a challenge as applicant did not own all fields along access track, no visibility around blind bends, plus people accessing the venue all time of day and night.

Footpath running through the site would have to be re-directed. Wedding & event venue on that scale was not right for the village, it could not cope. If there was traffic congestion accessing site, satnavs would re-route traffic through centre of village.

P - lived 540 metres from the site, seriously concerned about the noise. No information in application to indicate how sound would be kept down and controlled, very anxious it would spoil current amenity.

P - not just noise from the venue building but people coming and going, talking, shouting, high spirits at various times through the night.

P - questioned documentation, planning statement and all the reports, economic benefit for the village questionable, only benefits those directly connected. Nebulous benefits when weighed against harm to the village. Only people supporting the proposal on MSDC website appeared to be those with a financial stake. Reports in the application appeared to be a box ticking exercise, part NPPF. The noise levels & traffic generated would be completely at odds with the village.

Ecology report restricted re. Gt Crested Newts & significant watercourse. Highways report inadequate and could not be relied upon. Planning Authority should be considering commissioning proper reports. No proven need, many similar venues nearby, Urged PC to resist the application.

P - a footpath ran through the site next the venue. Would not be suitable for people to walk the footpath.

P - already problems with traffic from glamping visitors upsetting horses and sheep, noise and traffic.

P - noise carried and would get worse. May be able to control noise in the building but could not control noise from people arriving and leaving, congregating outside, getting into cars, doors slamming, talking and shouting. If hedgerow removed no noise or headlight protection for Roman Way residents. Noise from music would travel through quiet countryside.

P - could hear noise from glamping continually if wind in right direction. Concerns noise, traffic, children playing in the village, access to A140 due to poor visibility, an accident waiting to happen.

Cllr R Maisey stressed to meeting the PC was not the planning authority. Parishioners must send their comments directly to MSDC Planning.

The Vice Chairman thanked all parishioners for their comments; the meeting was closed to the public at 8.20pm

Parish Council Members agreed to bring forward item 6 and in particular item 6.2 on the Agenda - The Chairman, Cllr Morris left the meeting.

6. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

2. DC/2104091: Hill Farm, Grasshopper Lane - application for prior approval for a proposed change of use of agricultural building to Assembly and Leisure (Class D2) under Schedule 2, Part 3, class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) order 2015 (as amended) for an Events/Wedding Venue - Cllr Kember believed the application would impact on parishioners comfort and enjoyment of their own home and would displace business from other nearby and more suitable venues. He had policed such events in London. Once a crowd had congregated it had to be endured. Would set a precedent for other villages, such venues would be seen cropping up all over.

Parish Council Members having considered the application papers and comments put forward by parishioners, a recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed - copy grounds for recommendation attached to the Minutes - page 7.

8.30pm Cllr Morris returned to the meeting and took over as Chairman.

Cllr Burn stated the application would be a delegated decision, ie a Planning Officer decision. Members stated they would prefer the application to be decided by a MSDC Planning Committee. Cllr Burn stated if the application went to Committee the Planning Officer would make a recommendation. Cllr Burn would however ask for the application to go to a Planning Committee.

1. DC/21/04038: Cousins Barn, Clay Lane - erection of 1 single storey 2 bed dwelling (following demolition of existing structure). Members had considered the application papers. A recommendation of refusal was agreed on the grounds submitted to the previous application:

The proposed development was not sustainable, NPPF para 79 and none of the objectives had been fulfilled. There were NO policies in the NPPF satisfied by this application.

The proposal would be a new build in an isolated rural area outside any development boundaries. There was no justification for the proposal which would set a precedent for other development.

So far as was known, there had never been a dwelling on the site. In the past there had been an ancient barn (Cousins Barn). It is believed that building was demolished many years ago and replaced by the current sheds which had no historic value.

Trees and wildlife - it was likely that Bats used one of the remaining sheds on the site and the parish council would like to be assured that a thorough survey had been carried out.

There were mature Oak trees on the site and from the block plan provided either the trees would have to be substantially reduced or they would be badly affected any proposed development. It was suspected if the development was allowed prospects for the trees were poor. The trees should be protected by a TPO.

This was a rural site totally unsuitable for any development which would further damage the peaceful environment in addition to satisfying no planning policies.

3. DC/21/04476: Land at Norwich Road, Wetheringsett cum Brockford (part in parish of Stoke Ash & Thwaite) - application for Outline Planning Permission (access to be considered) for erection of 14 dwellings comprising 5 two bed units, 7 three bed units and 2 four bed units.

It was agreed the meeting was briefly opened to the public for a parishioner comment

Parishioner stated she had issues with the garages and parking spaces – there did not appear to be capacity on the site for visitor/delivery parking and there was no pavement to the A140.

Meeting closed to the public

Members considered the application. A recommendation of refusal was proposed and seconded, 7 in favour, 2 abstentions, proposal carried, on the following grounds:

The increase in the proposed number of dwellings (14 instead of 9) would create additional traffic accessing and exiting on to the A140 - an accident blackspot

There was no provision on the site for parking visitor vehicles

There was no pavement on to the A140 - T11

The increased number of dwellings represented overdevelopment of the site - SB2, GP

3. PUBLIC FORUM (continued)

Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.

County Councillor – a written report had been received from Cllr Stringer regarding replacement of the ‘Unsuitable for HGV’s’ sign at the junction of Deadman’s Lane:

Estimate for the project cost totalled £750 - £1000 and included professional services and construction costs. The estimated cost could go up or down due to any unforeseen costs. The cost would be funded from the County Council Locality Budget.

District Councillor – Cllr Burn stated he would progress the Parish Council’s request to arrange a planning process presentation with a District Council Planning Officer.

Parishioners and Public

Thwaite Defibrillator – Cllr Kember introduced a new resident to Thwaite to the meeting. The resident owned a defibrillator and he would be willing to make it available to the community. The equipment could be fixed to his own property. It was agreed this be an agenda item for the next meeting. The Chairman thanked the Parishioner for his offer to the community and invited him to the next meeting to enable members to consider further. Cllr Kember offered to prepare a report on the proposed project for the next meeting.

Meeting closed to the public

4. To consider for approval Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 15 July 2021

Cllr Leggett proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane and agreed.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes for report

May 2019	Stoke Ash PC vacancy	Reported in parish magazine.
17.5.18	Damaged road signs A140	Reported via Suffolk CC Highways website reporting tool. Action pending.
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich	Deferred pending record office move

	Record Office	
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George's Hall St George's Bring & Buy Sale Mark allotment boundaries and pathways A future joint Community Hall St George's Hall woodwork – obtain Heritage advice	Parishioners' questionnaire on future of Hall – TP/GL deferred due to lockdown. Deferred due to lockdown - RK Allotment plan with four additional plots pending Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. GL/TP
18.3.21	Use of allotments – agreement not to cultivate.	TP to check arrangement with previous Project chairman.
15/7/21	Grit Bins: Replace small bin at A140 junction opposite primary school with larger bin Replace grit in bins at : A140/Church Lane, opposite Stoke Hall and at Huggins Lane/Roman Way Suffolk CC had suggested moving the large grit bin in layby opposite Stoke Ash Post Office opposite side of road next the post box. In its current position it was at edge of the road next an adjacent ditch	TP/GL to move large bin opposite SA post office to A140 junction and replace small bin opposite PO Refill requested via Suffolk CC reporting tool Reported to Suffolk CC Highways: the PC and a parishioner objected due to narrow road, single track which would obstruct large vehicles and involve pedestrians having to walk in the road. Awaiting Suffolk CC response.
15/11/18	PIIP's – identify items of community expenditure from Cil award. Stock fencing at rear boundary of SA Playing Field. Parishioners views on joint village hall or retain separate halls Three new waste bins at village hall Ditch clearance – Church Lane, Thwaite Hardstanding at OSR	Awaiting installation - GL to arrange Deferred pending survey MF/TP TP/RK TP/RK – deferred pending French drain
30.5.19	Monitor road edge – The Street, SA	All councillors. Monitoring extended to both parishes.
18.7.19	Play equipment/play surface grant funding Tyre cleaning Bark chippings – replace with grass Remove molehills	Pursue grant funding with MSDC – Finance Group PM MF PM
18.7.19	Suffolk CC Our Water Project	Working Group to meet Mr Locksmith, Suffolk CC to progress– TP, GT, PM, DM, CM GL. Deferred due to lockdown.
16.1.20	Lunch Club Funding	Possible funding from MSDC – GL pursuing
18.6.20	Local Government Transparency Code – PC compliant	Complete
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	MF, GL, TP & RK
17.12.20	Roman Way – parking on public grassed areas. Ownership confirmed as MSDC Layby – The Street. Suffolk CC options – double yellow lines at pinch point or solid white line at road edge	MSDC looking at developing policy and enforcement of legal powers. Parish Council to pursue white line option

21.1.21	Damaged highway verges	Suffolk CC replacing 'Unsuitable for HGV's' sign
17.6.21	Overgrown footpaths 14, 16 & 17	All footpaths other than that at the rear of the VH field were now clear. TP to speak to landowner.
17.6.21	Van obstructing passing traffic - parked in layby, The Street SA	The van was no longer parking in the layby.
15/7/21	St George's Hall - check insurance cover for stained glass windows	Zurich confirmed cover for the windows. Details/date of damage required to make claim.
15/7/21	CPR training	Agenda item

7. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

- DC/21/03707: Coppins Cottage, Clay lane - discharge of conditions, Application DC/20/02191, Condition 4 Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy and Condition 5 (Fenestration).
Approved with Conditions

8. Planning correspondence

- Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16 modification draft Mendlesham N'hood Plan: Consultation - new end date of Friday 17 September 2021 following publication of the revised NPPF
- Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan - Notice of commencement of Examination Hearing (Regulation 24). Resumption date of the independent examination hearing to be held virtually: Wednesday 2 September 2021 at 9.30am

Members noted the dates for both the above consultation items.

- Proposed Affordable Housing Scheme** - no further report. The Chairman suggested this remain an agenda item.

10. Neighbourhood Watch report

Cllr Mrs Lane reported she continued to receive neighbourhood watch alerts and these were forwarded to parishioners on the contact list.

Cllr Kember had publicised flytipping on the concrete pad on the 140.

The meeting was opened to the public

A member of parish informed the meeting of a van in the village, the driver was selling garden furniture and trees, the number plate of the vehicle was false. The parishioner had been advised to report any suspicious vehicles via the 101 number.

Meeting closed to the public

11. MSDC Cil Award:

- Stoke Ash Village Hall playing field: report on East boundary fence. Cllr Leggett reported the fence would be complete by the end of August.
- Additional Play Equipment - Stoke Ash Village Hall playing field. Awaiting recommendation on suitable equipment from the Village Hall Committee.
- Stoke Ash Village Hall playing field - report on three replacement waste bins - the Village Hall Committee had asked for a quotation for the bins. The previously suggested plastic bins had been deferred.
- To consider additional items of expenditure from Cil funding including:
Ditch clearance - Church Lane, Thwaite - It was reported there would be no need for a licence to close the road during the clearance work. Cllr Pulham would provide a quotation for the clearance work.
Hardstanding next Old School Room, Thwaite. Cllr Leggett reported there would be no need for planning permission to install the French drain. The proposed hardstanding had been deferred pending installation of the French drain. The overhanging tree would also need to be pollarded.
Tree Seat - Wash Lane, Stoke Ash - it was suggested there would not be enough use to warrant a tree seat on Wash Lane. A seat around the new Stoke Ash Village sign was suggested instead. Include as agenda item for next meeting.
- Completion of Cil return 2020-21 - the Cil return was signed by the Chairman and Clerk for return to MSDC.

12. Thwaite Community Projects Group

- Report on allotment review:

The Chairman proposed Cllr R Maisey was appointed Thwaite Allotments Officer. Cllr Maisey accepted the role.

- (i) Map delineating plots and pathways – the plan would be completed following rotavation of the land to incorporate the four new allotments.
- (ii) Rent Review and Tenancy Agreement – allotment group to review.
- (iii) Lettings – Cllr Mrs Maisey stated the new owner of Lavender Cottage was interested in taking over the allotment at the rear of the property with effect from the October renewal date. Cllr Leggett would advertise the availability of the four new allotments. Cllr Leggett reported there had been some opposition from current tenants regarding the interpretation of cultivation. It was understood fruit trees and bushes were classed as cultivation of a plot.

2. Report on St George’s Hall woodwork – Cllr Leggett reported he had been contacted by the Diocesan Architect, Mr David Whymark. The quinquennial inspection of St George’s Hall was due and Mr Whymark would be willing to carry this out, free of charge, when he was in the area to inspect Wickham Skeith church. Pending that inspection the Bat Authority would need to be contacted to agree arrangements for the woodwork treatment – Historic England had already been contacted.

The Village Questionnaire on the future of St George’s was due to go ahead.

3. Old School Room electricity supply – Cllr Mrs Maisey reported the new electricity meter in the Old School Room had been inspected by E.on and was now fully working. Cllr R Maisey was due to contact E.on regarding the night and day readings.

4. Any other items for report – none.

13. **Lunch Club** – Subject to a satisfactory risk assessment, Cllr Leggett reported the Club was hoping to recommence on the fourth Wednesday of September. In the meantime Cllr Burn would be contacted regarding possible locality funding.

14. **Stoke Ash Play and Exercise Area report**

1. Report on tyre cleaning and bark replacement – following further discussion of the problem relating to cleaning and animal contamination, it was agreed the tyre would be removed and bark replaced with grass.

15. **Wash Lane report** – the Chairman was pleased to report the lane was being used.

16. **Stoke Ash – Car Parking:**

The Street – to consider response from County Highways report no. 324247

The response stated: to install a ‘layby’ type parking arrangement Highways would need to allow a minimum of 1.8m (average car width) and maintain the 3.9m road width either side of that section. There was not unfortunately enough available width to allow that. This left two options: to install yellow lines at the pinch point to stop parking (this would need a TRO) or consider a solid white line along the length of the wider section to indicate the edge of the carriageway.

Members considered the options put forward and agreed to pursue the White Line option.

Parking on Roman Way grass verges – to consider response from MSDC Tenant Services dated 3/8/21

Two options had been put forward by MSDC in an attempt to protect the verges: installing barriers around the green verges or alternatively to create additional parking spaces along the verge. This option would however be expensive largely because there would be a need to upgrade any services underground and working around the trees.

Having considered the two options Members suggested installing grass guards, these would preserve and grass as well as protecting tree roots. It was agreed MSDC were asked whether they could supply the guards.

17. **Finance**

- 1. To consider s.137 donation requests – none received.
- 2. Accounts for Payment

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
19/8/21	SALC	Internal audit fee 2020-21	£158.00	£31.60	£189.60	Agreed	100499
19/8/21	Clerk	Sal-expen July-Aug 2021	£328.49	-	£328.49	Agreed	100500

Cllr Leggett proposed payment of cheque no. 100499, seconded Cllr Kember and agreed.

Cllr Mrs Maisey proposed payment of cheque no. 100500, seconded Cllr Leggett and agreed.

Bank Reconciliation:

Stoke Ash & Thwaite PC bank account statements at 31.7.21

Community account balance	742.75
PC BPA Account	<u>14,162.34</u>
Total	14,905.09
Balance per cash book	14,905.09

Cllr Pulham proposed acceptance of bank reconciliation, seconded Cllr Leggett and agreed.

3. Finance report including actions arising from Internal Audit report 2020-21 – deferred to next meeting.

18. To consider for adoption the following policy documents:

Equality and Diversity 2021-22

Standing Orders 2021-22

Deferred to next meeting.

19. Clerk's report/correspondence

Notification of SALC Area Forum meeting via video call – 29 September 2021

MSDC Public Realm – to assist bin emptying, a request was made by MSDC that parishes keep waste and dog bins clear of overgrown vegetation.

20. Platinum Celebrations 2022 – to appoint a Working Group

The following offered to join the Working Group: Cllrs P Morris, Mrs V Lane, G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey, T Pulham, G Tancred and non-councillor Mrs Abbi Turner.

21. **To consider CPR Training** – deferred to next meeting

22. **Chairman's report** - none

23. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests

Pre-winter Litter Pick – include on next agenda.

Community Xmas event including consideration of costs – include on next agenda.

24. Date of next meeting: Thursday 16 September 2021, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash

Meeting closed 10.10pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Item 6.2 of Minutes - Parish Council Response to Application. No: DC/21/04091 [Application for prior approval for a proposed: Change of use of Agricultural Building to Assembly and Leisure \(Class D2\) under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\)\(England\) Order 2015 \(as amended\) for an events/wedding venue.](#)

Hill Farm Grasshopper Lane Stoke Ash Suffolk IP23 7ER

At a meeting held on 19th August, Stoke Ash and Thwaite Parish Council discussed this application, and voted unanimously to object in the strongest possible terms.


The Village Hall was full to capacity for this item, with all members of the public in attendance wishing to register their objection, other than the applicant's mother and her friend, a contractor for the applicant.

The reasons given for objection by members of the public were varied, with most if not all referring to noise and the dangerous increase in traffic. Others were also concerned about the loss of amenity for residents that such a development would bring, and the change in character of the village and environs. In particular Huggins Lane itself was mentioned many times as a quiet and peaceful area to walk with dogs, children, cycling and general play and used as an access to the footpath network in the village. It was felt that this would be lost and unusable due to increased danger associated with traffic, and also that the peaceful nature of the area in general would be ruined due to the very large numbers of vehicles and visitors envisaged in the application. This disruption was seen as having the potential to be constant, given the times of operation, servicing the site and so on. Safety concerns were also mentioned by most, with the roads in the village being mostly single lane, and also the three junctions joining the A140 having seen many and continuing accidents.

Of particular concern was the fact that the "tidal" traffic would mostly need to queue on the A140 in order to turn right in to the village. Another general concern was traffic movements through the village especially at night, when residents would normally expect peace and silence, and not the noise and light nuisance associated with heavy traffic close to their homes. Stoke Ash has no streetlights and is usually very quiet and dark at night.

The wider economic benefits claimed were questioned, as the only beneficiaries identifiable with any certainty are

those directly connected with Hill Farm. There would only be wider economic benefit if all other venues in the area were unavailable, therefore there is no need for this venue and doubtful benefit to the wider area. The supposed benefits for these few must be weighed against the harm which will be done to the village, and the misery and nuisance caused to those who have made it their long-term home. The only supporters thus far of this damaging scheme were those with a financial interest. The only person present who spoke in support was the co-owner of Hill Farm, mother of the applicant.



Specific comments from general public attendees

The applicant's mother was invited to speak first, and explained that when buying the 150 acre farm they did so with the intention of diversification. She thanked the Parish Council for supporting their application for the glamping enterprise, and said that they wanted to further diversify by using one of the barns as a wedding/events venue. The barn would be sound proofed and professional advice had been obtained on queries likely to be raised by members of the community. Their intention was to be a part of the community and not separated from it.

A resident stated that he had recently moved house from Northamptonshire to Suffolk with one of his reasons being that a neighbour was intending to set up a wedding venue business. He understood that best efforts would be made in soundproofing but from experience sound can't be stopped from travelling. People gather outside the venue, doors open, live bands invariably noisy, and from his personal experience noise would have the biggest impact on the community.

A resident who is a professional provider of karaoke, disc jockey and other musical services to venues and events stated that "there is no way that the noise can be contained within the building". He particularly highlighted "bass" noise, and the fact that doors and other openings would not always be closed, with revellers coming outside to smoke and other things. Traffic wise, there are more children in the village and using the roads, the single-track roads also used by horses and agricultural vehicles.

Another resident living some distance from the farm (580 metres) stated that he had moved to Stoke Ash in order to get away from noise, and that the noise from the events and guests arriving and leaving would be intolerable, as he already suffered from noise and disturbance emanating from the glamping site at the farm, which is quite close to the proposed venue. He thought that this was due to the topography of the area, with Hill Farm being located almost opposite his property on the other side of the small Dove valley which might amplify sounds. He could sometimes quite clearly hear conversations from the site, as well as the more general noise from the site such as shouting, loud laughter, children loudly playing and so on.

Residents of Roman Way and The Street stated that their peace was often spoiled by noise from the glamping site, and they were concerned that there would not only be the extra noise generated by people at the site, but also extra vehicle movements at anti social hours. Concern was expressed that many of these drivers and passengers leaving the venue would likely be in high spirits, leading to disturbance outside the venue as well as when passing through the village. At least one long standing resident said that they would be forced to move out of the village if this venue is approved.

A resident stated that their home was a listed building, and as such they were unable install double glazing, a recent one off event was very noisy, particularly the base music. She also said that her farm also runs a Touring caravan site for several caravans, and that her clients expect and look forward to staying in the peace and quiet of the countryside. The proposed development will cause a loss of business. Guests coming and going past the caravan site would upset caravan guests.

A resident of Roman Way said that living opposite the site noise from the site travels particularly during the Summer months and is very clear, with the glamping noise sometimes seeming as though it was in her back garden. The village could not take any more noise.

A Roman Way resident was concerned that although the application states a finishing time of 11 pm for events, venues have the facility for licence creep, and that extensions up to 1 am would be likely.

A resident of Hill Farm Cottages said that the lane was totally unsuitable, being an ex farm track, and that the lane couldn't cope with the volume of traffic, a reasonable person would guess that 130 guests would result in 70 – 80 cars, plus service vehicles etc. The unofficial passing places mentioned in the application are actually private property. The applicants proposal of new passing places was an admission that there would be heavy traffic, but would make little difference as only 25% of land adjoining Huggins Lane was under control of the applicant. He didn't want his liberty

to come and go at will curtailed by activities at Hill Farm. Photographs submitted with the application were taken at a time of minimal crop growth with better visibility.

A resident of The Street was concerned about visibility around the blind bends, she had been nearly run in to already by users of the glamping site. The footpath running through the site would bring walkers in to conflict with venue guests. The venue is just not right for a village such as this, it cannot cope. At times of traffic congestion Sat Navs will direct traffic through the centre of the village.

A resident of Hill Farm Cottages questioned the Planning Statement and Reports provided with the application. Economic benefits were questionable, other than for those directly connected with the venue, and the nebulous claimed wider benefits needed to be set against the harm done to the village environment, and the misery and nuisance caused to those who have made it their long term home. Economic benefits for the wider area could only accrue if all other venues were unavailable, therefore there would be no extra benefit for the area as a whole. The only supporters of the application are those with a financial stake. Noise and traffic generated would be completely at odds with the village. The Ecology and Highway reports were restricted and inadequate, and the Planning Statement draws wrong conclusions from these and the Acoustic report. He thought that the Planning Authority or Parish Council should consider commissioning their own independent reports. There is no proven need for this venue, there are plenty of others already.

Huggins Farm resident said that noise carries readily, and that noise would get much worse. Noise inside the building may be somewhat controlled, but this is not so for the noise made by people arriving and leaving, congregating outside, getting in to cars, doors slamming, talking and shouting. If the hedgerow was removed it would remove noise and headlight protection for Roman Way residents. Noise travels easily through the quiet countryside.

A resident of Roman Way said that noise from the glamping site could be heard continually if the wind is in the right direction. His main concerns were noise, traffic, children playing in the village, access to the A140 due to poor visibility an accident waiting to happen.

A Thwaite resident had experience of policing such events, and said that once a crowd gets together it just has to be endured, there is no stopping it. Approval of the application would be setting a precedent for this village, and other villages.

Residents comments above are abridged, we apologise for the length, but felt it necessary to include them in order to provide context for the Parish Council response.

Objections came from a complete cross section of residents, from those who had lived here all their lives to the most recent arrivals. There was universal condemnation of the very dangerous multiplication of traffic movements, and universal fear that they would no longer be able to enjoy peaceful occupation of their homes.

Stoke Ash and Thwaite Parish Council

Discussing this item, the Parish Council fully endorsed all of the residents comments above. In addition, Councillors have carefully read all of the comments of objection on the planning web page, and wish to thoroughly endorse them. There would be no benefit for the village and a significant impact on village amenity. There would be benefit only for the applicants, with the possibility of displacing business from other nearby and more suitable venues. The proposal will result in increased traffic, excessive speed for the roads with increased noise and light pollution. There was concern over parishioners comfort and enjoyment of their homes. There were already problems in the village regarding traffic and parking, there are now more children in the village playing, Church lane is a single-track road as is Huggins Lane, the proposal is not suitable for a quiet village such as ours.

All Councillors were present other than Chair, who as a notified neighbour was excluded and left the building.

Councillors voted unanimously to object to the proposal

The applicants are now fully aware of the depth of feeling in Stoke Ash about proposed and existing developments at Hill Farm, and fear of the ensuing disruption to the village as a whole and to their individual lives. It has been reported to us that the applicants have been actively canvassing traders in the area to express their support for this their plans, and we feel that this regrettably seems to show a callous and selfish disregard for the feelings and wellbeing of the local Community. This being despite the statement made at the meeting that they “wanted to be part of the Community and not separated from it”.

The proposed development will have serious impact on the amenity of the village as a whole, with the most damaging impact on the residents of Huggins Lane, and is quite unacceptable.

Detail

The proposal is for “Change of Use”, but we think that none of this building is suitable for incorporation in to the venue. The structure of the building is steel re- enforced concrete columns, supporting a wood and asbestos roof. Some residents are quite familiar with the building, which is adjacent a public footpath. Clearly the roof cannot be used, and the supporting columns seem to be at the end of their useful life, with some having the reinforcing visible and also having suffered damage over the years from farm machinery. Therefore we believe that the building is not suitable and will need to be completely renewed, and that accordingly the application should be for a new build, rather than attempting to use Permitted Development legislation. We note that that there is no structural engineers report

with the application.

There will quite clearly be a major adverse impact on Highway safety.

We do not believe that Suffolk Highways response has been properly considered, or has taken sufficient account of the current usage of Huggins Lane, or the amount of traffic which will be generated by the proposed development. The Transport Report accompanying the proposal is incomplete and misleading, and so decisions based on the information contained within this document are likely to be mis-informed.

The report states that the existing glamping and guest accommodation can accommodate 50 guests for an over night stay. The report does not mention anything at all about the number of guests expected at the proposed venue, which is 130. Therefore, any reasonable person would expect that this would result in at least 60 – 80 extra vehicles using the lane, not including service vehicles. Huggins Lane historically has had very low traffic. The proposal would therefore result in up to at least 180 extra vehicle movements, probably a 10 fold increase.

The report states that there is ample parking on site, yet the provided block plan identifies only 36 parking spaces. Assuming that 8 of these would be in use by glampers, this means that there will be 28 parking spaces for at least 60 – 80 guest vehicles.

The Report states that the existing use of Huggins Lane is to access only Hill Farm, Hill Farm Cottages and Huggins Farm. This implies that the only usage of the lane is for vehicles. This is a substantial oversight and over simplification. Huggins Lane is much loved and used by residents and others as being the quietest and safest lane in the village. It is a haven for pedestrians, either alone or with dogs, pushchairs, children, youngsters learning cycling and so on. As it is a no through road it is the only access to the bridleway and road network for the horses at Hill Farm Cottages. At the end of the public section of the lane is access to footpath 17 and the rest of the footpath network. Huggins Lane is a narrow lane, bounded for the most part by raised verges, and has no adjoining footpath. The Planning Statement states that “the section of Huggins Lane which is adopted highway does contain a number of unofficial passing spaces on the grass verge and field accesses”. There are in fact 2, one of which is the entrance to the sewer beds and in frequent use by tankers, and both are private property, and unsuitable for heavy usage.

The applicant has under their control only about 25% of the land adjoining Huggins Lane, thus the opportunity for providing passing spaces is limited, and will do very little to mitigate the risks for non vehicular traffic. We believe it to be common practice for venues such as this catering for 130 guests plus staff and up to 50 glampers to be required to have one way traffic, i.e. one road in and one road out, in order to properly cater for emergencies and emergency vehicles. The proposed passing spaces are an entirely inadequate solution.

The report makes no mention of pedestrians or other users, which is a very significant oversight. This usage of the lane is discussed elsewhere, so we will mention here only the footpath which is routed through the farm yard at Hill Farm, between the proposed venue and the car park. The potential for unpleasant contact between revellers and footpath users would appear to be obvious. In addition walkers of rural footpaths do not expect a vista of parked (or moving) vehicles, and a venue akin to a nightclub.

The Highway Report states that “vehicles utilising Huggins Lane for the proposed event space will be tidal, all arriving in single direction within a similar time period. Thus, two passage of event related vehicles is not expected”. This statement has been mis-used in the Planning Statement, which says “the proposal is highly unlikely to cause two way passage” etc. This of course takes no account of traffic other than “event related”. This traffic could be cars, tractors, pedestrians, horse riders, children cycling and so on, just going about their daily business. The conflict between these users and event traffic (tidal, maybe 60 - 80 vehicles) is potentially disastrous, and very high risk indeed.

We feel it important to note that the Report gives no detail as to how emergency vehicles would access Huggins Lane in the event that it was full of this “tidal traffic”.

Junctions to the A140 are known to be dangerous and requiring extreme care, with much reduced visibility in summer months. Photographs forming part of the Traffic Report were taken before the growth period for plants. The proposal to remove a section of hedge “obscuring forward visibility” is rendered pointless once the crops have grown up, and visibility is once again obscured.

The Traffic Report takes no account of traffic queuing on the A140 waiting to turn right into the village. This traffic being “tidal”, it would be reasonable to assume a queue of large numbers of vehicles, with drivers unfamiliar with their surroundings.

The Traffic Report also fails to mention that aside from Roman Way, which often has parked cars, all other routes in the village are single track. The sudden deluges of 60 – 70 vehicles in the village is completely unrealistic, and would cause major disruption and risk to other road users, particularly pedestrians and playing children.

The Report mentions that there is a history of zero injury accidents on Huggins Lane in the past 22 years, and states “The existing use of Huggins Lane is safe”. Quite true, but the proposed use of Huggins Lane will likely be an entirely different story.

The Report summary quotes NPPF Para 109, and goes on to explain why the proposal is considered safe. We reject completely these conclusions, and have explained our reasoning above. The proposed development should be refused on highways grounds, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 109, as there would be

an Unacceptable Impact on Highway Safety.

Noise Impacts of the development

The Planning Statement States that “The report confirms that with suitable mitigation measures and controls, the development will not impact on the amenity of the occupants of the cottages”. This is false. The acoustic report makes no such statement. In addition, the noise will have a seriously adverse impact on the occupants of the cottages. The acoustic report states the background noise level at the cottages boundary is 29 dB. It also states that this measurement can be used to set limits for sound of 34 dB, being 5 dB above the typical background level. This is entirely unacceptable in this quiet rural area, representing in

excess of a two-fold increase in sound, due to the logarithmic scale of measurement. For every 3 dB increase in sound, sound is twice as loud. In addition this sound would be completely alien in nature, not the type of sound associated with a rural location, and therefore would be intensely annoying and distressing. At 3.18 in the Acoustic report is the statement that “Car parking is just north of the barn, adjacent existing glamping parking at approximately 170 metres from the nearest noise sensitive premises”. This is also false, the car park is approximately 60 metres from the garden of the cottages. In addition, the report references “a typical scenario of 40 vehicle movements”. This is not acceptable, and the report should instead reference the maximum number of vehicle movements, which with the venue catering for 130 guests, plus service personnel, is more likely in the region of 70 – 90 vehicle movements. These movements may occur at any time of the day or night, and would likely be accompanied by the anti-social noise associated with this type of venue. One of the cottage residents (our Chair) has suffered significant mental illness, such that he could no longer work, and uses the area of his garden with a pond and closest to the venue and car park as a “quiet place” to sit and listen to nature. This peacefulness would be completely destroyed. In addition the residents of the cottages would no longer be able to enjoy their property in accordance with the Human Rights Act Protocol 1, Article 1, which says that everyone is entitled to peaceful enjoyment of their property.

Noise from the glamping site (DVC/19/02353) already causes significant nuisance to residents of Stoke Ash, please see objections, and travels readily on the calmer summer evenings. We think that the geographic location of Hill Farm is partly responsible for this, and cause noise to be easily heard at some distance. Residents of The Street, Roman Way, Church lane and Thorndon Road are all disturbed by the noise. We just cannot be further impacted by the noise generated by this proposed events venue, and the noise from traffic movements. Stoke Ash has always been a quiet village, and this development will result in loss of amenity and yet more nuisance. The report concentrates on the cottages as the nearest properties, but the noise will affect the whole village. When considering the impact of noise we feel it very important to recognise not only the volume, but the type of noise. Residents can happily put up with the drone of a combine harvester or other agricultural machinery at various times of the year, however the noise produced by revellers is extremely irritating, and Stoke Ash is not the right place for such a venue. We note that the Planning Statement seeks to shift the responsibility of noise control to the Planning Authority, and suggest that the best way for the Authority to deal with the noise problem is to reject the application.

This proposal should not go ahead due to the **Noise Impacts of the Development**

Ecology

It is unfortunate that the existing glamping site has already caused considerable harm to the natural environment. The proposed development will cause even more harm. The Planning Statement says “The report confirms that the building is of low ecological value and no further surveys are necessary”. We disagree with this glib and superficial assessment. The ecology report is restricted in its scope and conclusions. Those with a more thorough knowledge of the area can easily recognise this. Disturbance to wildlife will be very significant, please refer to the objection comments of Paul Morris. Great Crested newts use all the ponds in the area for spawning and breeding, and will need to traverse the car park and other area of the proposed development. It is likely that Otters visit the ponds in the area, although perhaps the glamping has already displaced them. The vastly increased (probably increased from zero) traffic movements late at night will cause casualties among nocturnal animals. Village residents have already remarked on the decrease in animals since the glamping started, and this can only be exacerbated.

The previous occupant of the farm entered the farm in to an environmental stewardship programme under which wildlife flourished, ponds were made in to better habitat as were other parts of the farm. The wildlife was safe and largely undisturbed, and grew in numbers and variety. This development will be reversed if the proposal goes ahead. We note that the ecology report states that “there are no significant watercourses in the locality”. There is a main watercourse about 110 metres from the car park, and the River Dove is about 60 metres further. There is a hedge and ditch system ending at the car park which connects directly to the River Dove and is a wildlife corridor.

We believe that this proposal will result in an

Unacceptable Impact on Wildlife and the Environment Sustainability

When purchasing Hill Farm in 2019, the applicants would have been well aware of the agricultural prospects for the holding. This application is an attempt to exploit Permitted Development legislation in order to further establish an unsuitable commercial enterprise which under other circumstances would not be considered. It would appear to us that little attempt has been made to make the farm sustainable through agriculture, concentrating instead on the leisure and hospitality sector.

The applicant lives in Surrey with her partner and has a highly salaried career. Due to this we believe that this development cannot be justified on sustainability or diversification grounds.

Summary

The application does not meet the relevant criteria for permitted development under Class R. The “change of use” of the building from agriculture to a flexible commercial use (wedding/events venue) will result in severely adverse impacts in terms of highway safety, noise, and ecology.

The proposal if approved will be in contravention of the following NPPF policies and guidance :-

Paragraph 84(c)

85

92(b) 98 100 104 110(d) 112 171

Stoke Ash and Thwaite Parish councillors having carefully read all the comments of objection to date would like to thoroughly endorse and echo them, and would urge and request that you set aside the time necessary to study them. This proposal if approved would have a devastating impact on the village and the lives of residents, as well as increased risks of accidents due to traffic.

We object in the strongest possible terms to this proposal

Finally, we apologise for the length of this response, but we feel that nothing less than the future of our village is at stake. If you have the necessary time, we would be very pleased to welcome you to the village where a Parish Councillor would be happy to provide a guided tour.





Illustration 2: Land adjacent not in control of applicant

Tractor meets glamperv Driving North



Summary of Action points

May 2019	Stoke Ash PC vacancy	Reported in parish magazine.
17.5.18	Damaged road signs A140	Reported via Suffolk CC Highways website reporting tool. Action pending.
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	Deferred pending record office move
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George's Hall St George's Bring & Buy Sale Mark allotment boundaries and pathways A future joint Community Hall St George's Hall woodwork Use of allotments – agreement not to cultivate.	Parishioners' questionnaire on future of Hall TP/GL Deferred due to lockdown - RK Working Group Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. GL/TP TP to check arrangement with previous Project chairman. Working Group
18.3.21	Review Tenancy Agreements/Rent	GL
18.3.21	Advertise additional allotments	TP
19.8.21	Rotavate additional allotments	
15/7/21	Grit Bins: Replace small bin at A140 junction opposite primary school with larger bin Replace grit in bins at : A140/Church Lane, opposite Stoke Hall and at Huggins Lane/Roman Way Suffolk CC had suggested moving the large grit bin in layby opposite Stoke Ash Post Office opposite side of road next the post box. In its current position it was at edge of the road next an adjacent ditch	TP/GL to move large bin opposite SA post office to A140 junction and replace small bin opposite PO Refill requested Reported to Suffolk CC Highways: the PC and a parishioner objected due to narrow road, single track which would obstruct large vehicles and involve pedestrians having to walk in the road. Awaiting Suffolk CC response.
15/11/18	PIIP's – identify items of community expenditure from Cil award. Stock fencing at rear boundary of SA Playing Field. Parishioners views on joint village hall or retain separate halls Three new waste bins at village hall Ditch clearance quotation– Church Lane, Thwaite Hardstanding at OSR	To be completed end of August - GL to arrange Deferred pending survey MF/TP TP/RK TP TP/RK – deferred pending French drain Include on next agenda
19/8/21	Stoke Ash Village Sign Seat	
30.5.19	Monitor road edge – The Street, SA	All councillors. Monitoring extended to both parishes.
18.7.19	Play equipment/play surface grant funding Tyre removal Bark chippings – replace with grass Remove molehills	Pursue grant funding with MSDC – Finance Group PM MF PM
18.7.19	Suffolk CC Our Water Project	Working Group to meet Mr Locksmith, Suffolk CC to progress– TP, GT, PM, DM, CM GL. Deferred due to lockdown.

16.1.20	Lunch Club Funding	Possible funding from MSDC – GL pursuing
18.6.20	Local Government Transparency Code – PC compliant	Complete
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	MF, GL, TP & RK
17.12.20	Roman Way – parking on public grassed areas. 2 options put forward – barriers or parking spaces Layby – The Street. Suffolk CC two options – double yellow lines at pinch point or solid white line at road edge	PC suggested Grassguards on verges Parish Council - pursue white line option
21.1.21	Damaged highway verges Deadman’s Lane	County Highways to replace Not Suitable for HGV’s sign – complete.
17.6.21	Overgrown footpaths 14, 16 & 17	All footpaths other than that at the rear of the VH field were now clear. TP to speak to landowner.
15/7/21	St George’s Hall – check insurance cover for stained glass windows	Zurich confirmed cover for the windows. Details/date of damage required to make claim.
19/8/21	CPR training and Thwaite Defibrillator	Agenda September 2021 – RK to produce defibrillator report