

## **APPENDIX 1 The background to the site as described in the report to Authority Committee in 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020.**

There has been a long and, at times, controversial and acrimonious 'history' of this site since the Authority purchased it in 2012. A brief resume is presented below, as newer Members may not be aware of the background.

The Authority Meeting on 30th March 2012 approved the purchase of two fields amounting to eleven-acres near Foolow. The intention of the purchase was to remove the possibility of static caravans /'park homes' being developed on the site by a developer and for the site to be used as a touring caravan and camping site only.

This use was the original intention of a planning permission granted in 1998, but was subsequently interpreted by Planning Inspectors as allowing static caravans/park homes throughout the year.

At Audit Resources and Performance Committee on 25th January 2013, Members were presented with an options analysis paper for the development and disposal of the site. The Committee resolved that officers should report on the development of the options before a planning application was made.

At Audit Resources and Performance Committee in May 2013 it was resolved, that a planning application was pursued with any finessing required as part of the planning process.

Community consultation took place in November 2014 and a planning application was submitted in December 2014. The proposal comprised of: 20 all year pitches to include 5 camping pods, 14 touring pitches and 1 warden's pitch plus 30 seasonal grass pitches for use from Easter to 31st October. The application also included an amenity block, new site access and services. As a significant amount of objections were received to that proposal it was decided that the application should be "paused" and subsequently withdrawn whilst further community consultation was undertaken.

Further consultation took place throughout 2015 between Authority staff including the Chief Executive and a group comprising neighbours and a representative of Foolow Parish Meeting.

Several meetings were held to listen to and discuss the proposal, the different elements of it and the local communities concerns with regard to value of the site. The main objections highlighted by the community representatives were the impact on the landscape, impact on community, access, and "planning creep".

Following this public consultation and with further valuation advice from the District Valuer at the March 2016, Audit Resources and Performance Committee resolved that another planning application should be made reflecting these concerns. This planning application was submitted in October 2016 but was refused by the Authority's Planning Committee in March 2017.

A 'back to basics' appraisal of the site was undertaken throughout 2017/2018 and a wide range of every potential use for the site were considered. The conclusion was that only a touring camping and caravan site was suitable in planning policy terms and would at the same time allow the Authority to re-coup a sufficient amount of its substantial financial investment in the site.

Audit Resources and Performance Committee considered a proposal for a less intensive site than previously submitted on 7<sup>th</sup> Sept 2018. The proposal to submit a new planning application was considered consisting of:

- 20 year round touring caravan/tent pitches.
- An additional 10 touring caravans/tents Easter to end of October
- An additional 20 touring caravans/tents on Bank Holidays between Easter and October.

The maximum number of pitches at any one time on site would remain at 50. This would be at Bank Holidays. The Warden would occupy one of the permanent pitches. A new design for a single storey amenity block, new site access and services was also put forward.

The proposal again met significant opposition from both the local community and others. However, with the caveat that further consultation would take place with the local community before a planning application was submitted, the Committee resolved as follows **(Minute No 49/18)**

**1.To submit a full planning application for a revised proposal described in paragraph 4 of the report and as amended at the meeting to include touring caravans, together with an amenity block based on the floor space of the 2003 amenity block approval (which expired) with any required minor modifications/finessing undertaken as part of the planning process. There will be detailed consultation with the community before submission of the application submitted**

**2.Following the outcome of the planning application, an analysis for future options for the site is then presented to Members at a meeting of the full Authority**

The Chair of the Authority and a Member (who was the Chair at the time of the purchase in 2012) attended meetings with the Follow Parish Meeting to try to alleviate the concerns of the local community. However, this did not prove to be possible and it was decided to submit the planning application in accordance with the above Committee resolution.

The Planning Committee considered and approved the application on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Again, there was considerable opposition to the proposal by the local community and others.

**‘Material operation’** Should the Authority wish to dispose of the site; it will need to carry out a ‘material operation’ to the site in order that the planning permission can be ‘passed on’ to a new owner. The definition of material development under the Planning Acts is:

- any work of construction in the course of the erection of a building;
- any work of demolition of a building;
- the digging of a trench which is to contain the foundations, or part of the foundations, of a building;
- the laying of any underground main or pipe to the foundations, or part of the foundations, of a building or to any such trench as is mentioned in paragraph
- any operation in the course of laying out or constructing a road or part of a road;
- any change in the use of any land, which constitutes material development.

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