

**Cllr Wilson – Deputation to the Development Management Committee**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING – 17<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2017**

**RE: THE HAYLING BILLY**

Chairman and Members of the Committee

I am grateful for this opportunity to address you tonight. As you will be aware, I asked for this particular application to be brought before the Committee for determination. The reason why I did so was because I had grave concerns with regard to the viability of this business in the event of a refusal. At the time I red carded this application the Officer recommendation was unclear and notwithstanding the recommendation to approve it remains important that the issues are addressed in a public forum given the objections.

Before I address the specific,s I believe it is appropriate to provide some background with regard to the history of this area to put both the application and the objections into context:

Going back forty or fifty years this area known as Gable Head was a main shopping area and the Co-op on the opposite side of the road has been in situ since the 1930s. In my memory this row of shops included an estate agents, a travel agents and a newsagents. Gradually the shops migrated south to Mengham and at some stage it lost its designation. Those of you who attended the site visit will recall that there remains a mixture of shops, restaurants, takeaways and increasingly residential buildings. The density has increased, for example, there are four townhouses on the St Mary's Road side of this small wedge of land where once there was one house. The Committee will also recall the original Hayling Billy pub which was subject to a recent application and as a result of the approval of that application a McCarthy & Stone retirement development is currently being built on the original site.

Mrs Keillor, who is the landlady of the Hayling Billy, was also the last landlady of the original Hayling Billy pub originally employed by the brewery at a time when pubs were suffering and breweries

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were consolidating and selling their riskier assets. In this context the pub was earmarked for sale. Before it went on the market, Mrs Keillor who had put an awful lot of effort and personal funds into keeping the pub viable had the wit to contact the Co-op and advise them of the sale and asked them, rather cheekily, whether they would be prepared to buy it and allow her to manage and continue to run the building as a public house. The Co-op were clearly thinking strategically and were worried that in the event that this pub were sold they would have a rival supermarket placed on the site. They quickly agreed and Mrs Keillor built a successful pub with a number of community activities such as a regular classic car meet and car boot sale making use of the area. She also entered an arrangement to provide overflow car parking for some of the nearby shops.

Sadly, this was not to last as is widely known the Co-op faced its own financial difficulties and it became an obvious asset for disposal. The sale or whatever arrangement with McCarthy & Stone allowed that disposal without the potential of a rival retailer on the site.

In the meantime, there was an application to make this site a community asset in part due to the community use which Mrs Keillor had created but sadly that application was rejected by this Council. Ironically, one of the key reasons was that Mrs Keillor had had the initiative to approach the owner of a derelict shop in the row and had opened or was in the process of opening the new Hayling Billy pub.

Turning to the issues at hand, this application concerns retrospective approval for changes to the façade which I do not believe is controversial. The addition of the conservatory and the smoking shelter which are controversial and the fence and gates which again are not particularly controversial. The smoking shelter would appear to be less of an issue, according to the answers to questions from Ms Kennedy and Mrs Smith as had seemed the case on the recent site visit.

The Committee had the opportunity of visiting the flat of the tenant who is an objector to this application. It cannot be denied that his bathroom window overhangs the rear of the application site and the bathroom window below is not in the most pleasing situation. However, this building

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which interestingly used to contain shops and offices on the ground floor and was converted to residential, was built right on the boundary line meaning that the three windows in question overhang and open out into the application site. Potentially, these would have been actionable interferences but for the effluxion of time and in a sense are part of the problem.

I have been involved in this matter for some time and this includes visits from the Environmental Health Officer to consider ways of mitigating any potential nuisance. The difficulty in this application is that the planning issues are limited and most of the concerns and their remedies come within a different jurisdiction than your own. I can confirm that Mrs Keillor has worked hard to address those issues within the context of this mixed use development area. The extension and smoking shelter are essential to the viability of this business. At a time when we all bemoan the loss of our pubs, Mrs Keillor is bucking the trend and I would like to see the business prosper.

I would urge you to support the recommendation to grant planning permission.

**Cllr. Michael Wilson**

**17<sup>th</sup> August 2017**