

**Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Planning Committee of Luppitt Parish Council
called to discuss the planning application for a slurry lagoon at Higher Wick Farm and
held in the Village Hall on Tuesday, 1 August 2017 at 9.30 pm**

Present: Cllrs John Thorne (Chairman), Gavin Brake (Vice-Chairman), David Barlow, Tom Nancarrow, Paul Prettejohn, Brian Pulman, David Key (EDDC) and two members of the public

In attendance: Rosalind Buxton (Parish Clerk)

1.0 17/1381/MFUL – Higher Wick Farm, Wick, Honiton, EX14 4TY – construction of manure slurry store lagoon and associated earthworks and landscaping for existing dairy unit complex

Cllr Brake began by saying that Luppitt Parish Council has demonstrated its support in the past for promoting sustainable and viable agricultural businesses. The Parish Council fully understands the importance of agriculture to the rural community. However, there were so many unanswered questions in this planning application that much more information was needed.

There was a general discussion about the omission of essential information from the planning application. The following points caused serious concern to the committee:

- No details of the scale of the operation are given. This makes it impossible to calculate the timeframe envisaged and, consequently, the number of lorry trips each day.
- There is no mention of the amount of imported soil required and the impact on lorry traffic.
- The proposed design of the slurry lagoon was discussed in detail. The plan is to build the lagoon on the side of the hill. There is no engineer's report to say that this design is even feasible.
- There is no information given of a structural plan. There is no indication that there is sufficient clay of suitable quality on site to line the lagoon.
- A report from Hydroc, prepared for the applicant, suggested up to 30 two-way HGV movements per day between the hours of 08.30 and 17.30, Monday to Friday. However, further on in the report, it states that construction traffic will be operating on a six-day week basis. The hours of operation for Saturdays would be between 09.00 and 16.00. This scale of lorry traffic would be considered unacceptable.
- The route for lorry traffic to and from Higher Wick Farm was deemed to be wholly unsuitable. It was only designed to reduce the possibility of construction traffic meeting and did not take into account any impact on local traffic.
- There is no mention of the soil and dirt that has already been transported to Higher Wick Farm.

It was agreed that Cllr Thorne should write to the Chief Planning Officer at East Devon to ask him to deal with this planning application personally taking into account the sensitivity of the issue. The clerk will draw up a letter. There was also concern about the 21-day statutory consultation period which would be totally inadequate. Cllr Key advised that the public notification was going to be erected at Higher Wick Farm on Wednesday, 2 August. The letter to the Chief Planning Officer will ask for clarification on when the 21-day period will commence (details of the planning application were sent to the clerk by email on Friday, 28 July) and also request that far more than the 21-day consultation period should be allowed for such an important issue.

It was unanimously decided to recommend refusal of the planning application on the following grounds:

- Omission of information regarding the scale of the proposed operation and the volume of imported material required.
- Structural and engineering assessments and reports are needed to establish (i) the suitability of the clay on site and (ii) whether it is feasible to build a clay-lined slurry lagoon on the side of a hill using imported materials of unknown structural stability.
- The Parish Council is deeply concerned at the possibility of the engineering works failing which would result in thousands of tons of mud and slurry sliding down the hill and polluting the River Love and the River Otter. This would be on an unprecedented scale with repercussions for years to come.

The exact wording of the recommendation for refusal will be agreed by Cllrs Thorne, Brake and Barlow. The clerk will then post the comments on EDDC's planning website.

Cllr Key undertook to keep a close eye on the progress of the planning application and to keep the Parish Council fully informed at all times.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm.