**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF SANTON DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY, 28TH JUNE AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Mr Michael Mackender (Chairman) Mrs Debbie Cock (Parish Councillor)

Mr Andrew Butcher (Vice Chairman) Mr Paul Brown (Parish Councillor)

Mrs Sylvia East (Parish Clerk)

In attendance: Mr Victor Lukanuik (County Councillor) Mr Phil Wittam (District Councillor)

Presenting Application DC/21/0835/FUL – Change of use from Horse Paddocks to holiday let with one chalet was Mrs Christina Field

Members of the public (residents of the village) were also in attendance

**THIS IS A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING AND IS A TRUE OVERVIEW OF WHAT TOOK PLACE, DOES NOT COVER EVERYTHING SAID OR IS NECESSARILY IN ORDER OF OCCURRENCE - THE CONTENT IS ACCURATE AND EASILY CLARIFIED BY THE RECORDING, WHICH IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST. THE RECORDING WILL BE HELD AS AN OFFICIAL RECORD**

The Chairman opened the meeting advising the Parish Clerk had carried out her duties as directed by the Parish Council. This statement was in clarification of inappropriate criticism of the Parish Clerk.

The Chairman advised the meeting would be recorded to provide full transparency and accuracy. The Chairman then invited Mrs Field to begin her presentation.

Mrs Field opened her presentation with a short history of how her parents came to the village and she had been born here. Mention was made of three Nissen huts that used to be on the land, housing three families. Mrs Field stated a lot of thought had gone into making the farm viable and the holiday chalet seemed the least disruptive, otherwise possibly this would need to return to a working farm, which she stated would put more pressure on the private roads with tractors and other farm vehicles.

Mrs Field gave a brief detail of how the chalet would be blended into the area and would contain two bedrooms, two en suites and an open plan kitchen and living area. Two parking spaces are allotted. Mrs Field advised Ecology and other studies had been undertaken with no issues arising to date.

**Questions and Answers**

The main concern of several residents present and a significant number of residents not present, was once the change of use is granted a ‘precedent’ will be set and to quote “it could be the thin edge of the wedge”. In answer to this concern Mrs Field stated she could make no promises but, in her lifetime does not envisage this scenario.

A significant number of residents have strong concerns about the fabric and culture of this small Conservation village being changed, with the village turning into a mini holiday village! A question was raised about the possible rowdiness of visitors and Mrs Field stated that the holiday let was targeted to a certain genre.

There was concern expressed over the increased usage of the private roads owned by the Parish Council. The Chairman commented that life in general has moved on, we now have far more delivery vans coming into the village, fast food deliveries bigger waste trucks. Mention was made of the car boots and usage of the Village Hall and The Breckland Club. ***these make little difference as the private road used is minimal.***

A resident asked whether there was a possibility of caravans, camping, and glamping. Mrs Field stated that caravans would not be involved but advised she could offer camping options as long as the site is used for camping on fewer than 42 days in a row, or fewer than 60 days in any 12-month period.

An important issue was raised with regard to the upkeep of the private roads, in the Conveyance and Deeds of ownership of village property there is reference to the responsibility of all house owners towards the upkeep of the roads. A few residents could recall having made contributions in the past. Comments were made that the residents pay Council Tax which gives the Parish Council its Precept, raised to assist with the responsibilities of the Parish Council. It was acknowledged this is true but with ever rising costs and ageing facilities the Precept is insufficient to cover all of the Parish Council responsibilities.

The Chairman advised information had been presented only recently and legal advice would be sought.

A resident asked whether a vote should take place, the consensus was this was not appropriate.

To conclude the Chairman again advised legal advice would be sought, and a further closed Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting would take place before sending West Suffolk Council the application response. West Suffolk Council would then make its own decision on this matter.

*In the aftermath of the meeting an extension to the conclusion of the Parish Consultation was sought and given to the 20th July.*