

Letter to Deborah McCann (Independent Examiner)

29 July 2020

Hi Duncan

Please can I ask you to forward this on to Deborah for us.

Many thanks
Kate

Dear Deborah

Having reviewed the response to your questions from the Qualifying Body (South Huish Parish Council) we wish to raise further concerns as it doesn't address the modification to the boundary or the fact that there was no consultation with the local residents.

This was a significant change and it was only by chance we found out about it, doesn't the Parish Council (PC) or the Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG) have a duty/obligation to consult with the residents about such a change? I understand the new modified boundary increases the total settlement area for Galmpton by 20%.

The settlement boundary was amended based on comments from a couple of people, so in the interest of fairness, at the very least, it should be changed back based on the comments/objections of at least 16 people, including the South Hams Society.

The South Hams Society document highlights that if the settlement boundaries are adopted they will be in conflict with the Joint Local Plan (JLP) as they extend into the Heritage Coast/Undeveloped Coast, therefore, are not compatible.

The District Council has also expressed concern about the Galmpton settlement boundary and the need for the boundary and whether the boundary affords the protection to Galmpton that no boundary would bring. Especially as a settlement boundary assumes a presumption in favour of development, whereas its omission means all development proposals will be considered against the JLP countryside policies.

If the modified settlement boundary is implemented it will include an agricultural field – Kennel Field, that has already been refused planning and the appeal against the decision was also dismissed:

“the main issues in this appeal are firstly, the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, in particular whether it would conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the

Undeveloped Coast and secondly, whether the appeal site would be an appropriate location for housing” – Please see Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/W/17/3183532 for full details.

The Appeal Decision explains why any development within this field should not happen and therefore explains why this field should at the very least be excluded from any proposed settlement boundary.

“A quiet pastoral quality is most evident in the uninterrupted views of the site from the south. The views of the site from this direction and indeed from the roadside contribute significantly to the character of Galmpton”

It clearly states the importance of the field to the village of Galmpton and the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that AONBs have the highest status of protection with regards to landscape and scenic beauty.

The response to you from the Qualifying Body (South Huish Parish Council) confirms that comments were received from David Rossiter and explains he is the farmer and owner of Kennel field etc, but it fails to mention comments were also received from Anne Rossiter who is a Parish Councillor (Vice Chairman), so again in the interest of fairness and transparency, we would like this noted as we need to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

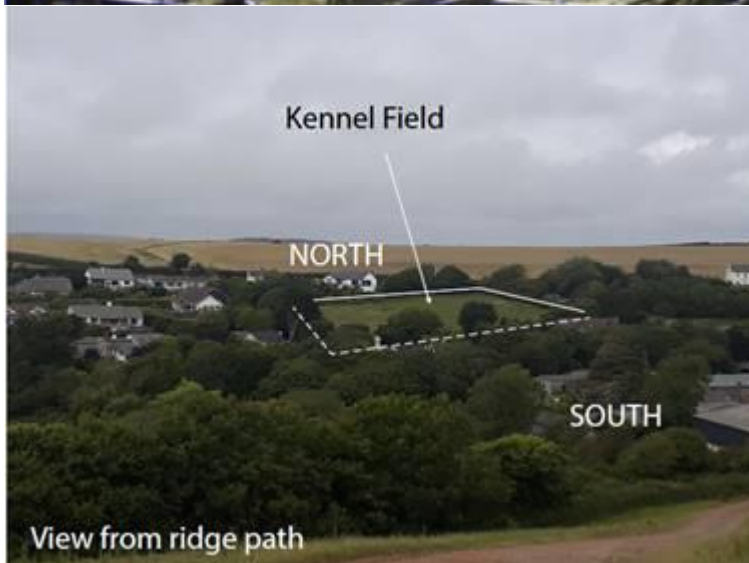
The original comment as to why the boundary was changed was “to more accurately follow the historic boundary”. Please can we have sight of the evidence provided to support this change.

In the response to you - additional information came to light – “The PC & NPG accepted the argument that Kennel field was entirely surrounded by buildings. There was evidence of buildings having been on the field in past times. That there was an existing road access to the site. That the field was largely hidden and as such any appropriate building would not impinge on the surrounding landscape”.

Please can we have sight of any evidence provided to support the above points?

Where did this additional information/comment come from as it wasn't included in the Reg 14 comments detailed on the website – has there been further consultation/meetings that we were not aware of?

We are not sure if you have visited the area yet so we have included some pictures of Kennel field which as you can see sits on its own, surrounded by trees and hedging. There are a number of properties (one being ours – we overlook it) that sit in proximity to it but it is not surrounded by buildings.



The existing road access is narrow; the field is not largely hidden, as can be seen from the pictures and as noted in the Appeal Dismissal document:
“There are clear views of the site from several vantage points including public rights of way to the south. From these viewpoints, the slope of the field as it rises from the wooded sides of the valley is particularly apparent and represents a significant feature in the landscape.”

As we don't have a full understanding of the process, it's difficult to understand why the response to your questions came from the PC rather than the NPG and why Reg 15 comments were not reviewed and actioned in the same way as Reg 14 comments?

I hope you are able to answer our questions or point us in the right direction for who we should speak to but what is clear to us is that the last minute change to the settlement boundary, without consultation doesn't show the process to be fair and transparent and we hope you see fit to revisit this.

As time is of the essence and due to the seriousness of the situation we have asked for this to be passed on to you, we hope you don't mind.

If you have any questions or would like any further information please contact me:

Kate Bosworth, email - katebosworth@hotmail.co.uk , Tel - 01548 561830

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Kate Bosworth & Steve Hedley

Shepherds Corner, Galmpton