

Meeting between SB Homes and local residents with regard to proposed campsite. Katie's Homemade Kitchen Cafe. 5.30pm Monday 9th March 2020

1. Present:

SB Homes: Steve Byram, Sophie Byram, Amy Byram. **Apology** from Hannah Byram.

Local residents:

Minutes taken by

2. Introduction to meeting by chair

3. Outline of proposed project by SB Homes

Steve Byram began by describing the proposed development as meeting the need for a campsite to serve growing local tourism, to the benefit of both new and existing businesses in Marsden. He stated that Hannah Byram has considerable sector experience, having worked for CampAmerica, Project Sport and Kirklees, supporting sport, leisure, holiday and bushcraft activities.

The land became available from Canal River Trust, and SB Homes considered it to be suitable for such a development, being sustainable, and within walking distance of the village centre. Access was one challenge, but a highway engineer was consulted and SB Homes were assured that access could be made viable for such a low-scale development.

Steve Byram said that while the land is designated greenbelt, 29 out of 35 campsites in West Yorkshire are on green belt land, demonstrating that camp sites have been viewed as permitted development on green belt land.

After the initial consultation the development was scaled back and adapted considerably in order to meet concerns raised. Further screening has been added, and camp fires and music aspects have been removed.

Steve Byram said that he believes the development will enhance this otherwise disused piece of land. He argued that it will become an asset for the village, and has considerable support in the wider community.

4. Questions from local residents

asked for clarification on whether approval has been obtained for bushcraft activities on site.

Steve Bryam responded that bushcraft has approval, subject to conditions of improved site access and parking. He said that a parking area will be created with a low visible impact system called grasscrete. These works have not yet been completed because services to the site need to be established first.

asked about the capacity of the proposed camp site, and whether that number of campers would make a significant contribution to the village economy?

Steve Byram replied that the proposal is for 4 camping pods, accommodating up to 10 people, plus space for 5 camper vans. Tents are no longer included in the proposal. Most existing trees will remain and further planting of native trees is planned. Sophie Byram added that while the number of campers coming to the site would not be huge, they would still be new customers for local businesses, and new people coming and staying in the village would enhance the village's profile.

asked what the opening season would be for the campsite, and expressed concerns about site security when it is not open.

Sophie Byram responded that they intended the site to be open for business all year round, and one condition of approval for the development is the residence of an on-site warden.

expressed concern about noise from motorcycles and camper-vans.

Steve Byram said it would be the site warden's responsibility to apply the site's rules and conditions. Sophie Byram said that the Byrams themselves live and work in Marsden and appreciate peoples' concerns for the village and its residents.

expressed concern that full services to the site would undermine the green belt principle.

Steve Byram responded that full services were necessary because an on-site residence for the warden are a condition of planning approval.

asked about how and where services would be connected to the site, and how long it would take for the camp site to be completed.

Sophie Byram said that the precise arrangement of services would not be known until utility companies become involved. Steve Byram said he appreciated that the connection of services is likely to be the most noticeable disruption for local residents during the construction stage. The work to create the site itself will be done during normal working hours, and the structures themselves will largely be made off-site and then assembled on-site.

asked about connection for drainage at the site, and about security.

Steve Byram responded that connection for drainage at the site was relatively simple due to the main sewer running along one side of the site. With regard to security, Steve Byram said that SB Homes is fully conscious of the need for site security during and after construction.

said it was good to have this meeting, and receive information first hand. He acknowledged that there are numerous campsites in West Yorkshire on green belt land, but noted that most were on farmland, and considerably further away from existing housing than the proposed development. He and others are concerned about noise and other impacts on nearby residents.

Steve Byram acknowledged these points, and said that plan had already been revised with lower numbers of campers and increased screening, in order to mitigate effects on local residents. He also said that any noise will likely be less than that from the Band Room, the canal, and the traffic on Marsden Lane.

asked about the various gates on the plans.

Steve Byram talked about how the site had been planned for car parking and disabled access, and how the gates served access to the site.

asked about the types of trees to be used for screening the site. She was concerned that deciduous trees would not provide screening in the winter.

Steve Byram welcomed the input, saying that the mature beech trees intended for the screening had been recommended by a landscape architect and would retain their leaves in the winter.

voiced concern that the temporary camping structures would at a later date be replaced by more permanent structures.

Steve Byram said that the land is green belt land, and that he would not comment on something that is not in the current plans for development.

asked about lighting for the camp site.

Steve Byram said that lighting would be screened, protected, low level and angled to minimise disturbance to neighbours.

questioned the sustainability of the camp site business model, given that Steve Byram had publically stated on a previous occasion that the campsite would not make a profit.

Sophie Byram said the intention was for the camp site to make a modest profit, but also to compliment other businesses in the village. Steve Byram said that they were making a significant investment in the project, but was unable to predict the future.

also commented on the question of sustainability, given the need to pay for a full time on-site warden and to pay for the bushcraft and other work to be done by Hannah Byram.

Steve Byram responded by saying that he believed the business would succeed, at least in part because of strengths of Marsden as a tourist destination.

asked whether the pods would have running water.

Steve Byram said that having reduced the total number of pods in order to meet concerns they are thinking that the remaining pods will be better specified, to include running water, to generate higher rent income.

asked if the toilets on site will be accessible to disabled people.

Sophie Byram said yes, because this is a building regulations requirement. Steve Byram talked about the accessible community garden aspect of the plan, he hopes the local community will become involved.

asked whether local scouts would be involved with the bushcraft activities.

Steve Byram said he has consulted with a local scout leader. Aimee Byram said the intention is to offer the bushcraft services to local schools and youth groups. Hannah Byram will liaise with local groups and schools.

asked about the potential conflict between providing access for the community and ensuring the need for safety when working with children.

Steve Byram said that Hannah is well aware of the health, safety, and safeguarding aspects of bushcraft work with children. He also said that a lot of other bushcraft activities currently go on in unregulated and unsuitable areas, and that their site would be considerably better.

sked if there would be an on-site shop.

Steve Byram said that this is not intended, and that the site is close enough for customers to use the village shops.

welcomed the opportunity for dialogue and asked for the residents to be kept fully informed of the changes in the development plans as they go through the planning process.

Steve Byram said that he was happy to have dialogue with residents. He pointed out that it can be difficult to provide an up to date, accurate picture of the scheme as the planning process is long and the scheme is continually changing in response to consultations.

He also pointed out that the Canal River Trust compound adjacent to the site is already on residents' doorstep, and the camp site will be an investment and improvement to the area.

referred to the sense of powerlessness felt by local residents, the lack of transparency in the entire planning process, and the lack of consultation with them on the part of SB Homes prior to this meeting.

Steve Byram acknowledged the comment but sought to reassure the meeting that planning officials had fed back residents' expressed concerns to him and that they had informed the changes that had been made.

5. Closing comments by chair

thanked everyone for their contributions. He regretted the previous lack of effective community consultation and observed that this meeting had been the kind of engagement with residents that had been needed all along.

John told the meeting that while Monday 9th March was an official deadline for comments on the plans, all parties with an interest can send their comments to Kirklees Council right up to 2 days before the meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee, which is due on Thursday 26th March.