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Mrs K Marriott
Chief Executive
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13th September 2022

Dear Mrs Marriott,

Hickling Basin and Wharf Building – planning concerns

Further to our recent email correspondence we would be grateful if you would consider the additional information (attached) relating to our concerns about the planning situation at The Wharf & Basin in Hickling and specifically relating to the Wharf Tearooms business. We hope that you will help and support our proposal to initiate a thorough investigation into the situation that we face here.

We would like to emphasise our support for local businesses in the village. As a traditional rural village in a modern world these are quite varied. In addition to the Wharf Tearooms, these include local dairy farms, Sherwood Farms (egg farm), The Plough Inn, AE Faulks haulage business (which shares an access with the tearooms business), Wadkin & Son tree surgeons and a number of small businesses operated by residents from their homes. These businesses operate in a balance with each other and with the wider needs of residents and visitors.

There is community support for the Wharf Tearooms business and, naturally, very strong support from their customers. However, the business has developed considerably beyond the small café which was approved in 2015 and there are legitimate concerns about over-development and the unacceptable impacts which have arisen from this unauthorised expansion.

At the beginning of the planning processes in this location (2015) both the planning & the conservation officers established that changes would be, “modest, reversible and would have minimal impact upon the character and appearance of the building.” This prioritised the need to protect this sensitive location against over-development. At the same time concerns about road safety and parking were identified as significant constraints to the size of the development and it was determined that customer parking should not be allowed to overspill on to Main Street and the activities of the business should not add to the existing problems experienced in this part of the village. Limits were also put on the number of covers by restricting outdoor seating areas.

Despite a complicated planning history over the last seven years, only two applications at this location have received approval (the second of these has since expired). Nevertheless, the business has developed considerably since opening in 2017 – we now have a hectic hospitality business which has quadrupled in capacity from 40-50 covers to its present capacity of 190 covers plus a lively takeaway business.

The most recent application was withdrawn in July & we believe this break between applications offers an opportunity for all concerned to conduct a full and detailed review – to gain an oversight of the situation outside the scenario of a live planning application. We would like to propose:

- An investigation into the current planning situation; identifying what permissions are in place and identifying planning breaches in need of investigation and resolution.
- An independent traffic survey to accurately record the pressures on this section of Main Street in Hickling.
- That Hickling Parish Council be allowed to work alongside Rushcliffe Borough Council to seek practical solutions for this ongoing situation.
- That no further applications should be validated at this location unless the proposals are materially different from those that have gone before.

The Hickling Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted in March 2022 and it built on the many protections which were already in place for this location. It is of great concern to the Parish Council and to Hickling residents that this current situation has emerged despite these extensive protection measures and we seek reassurance that appropriate investigations will be undertaken and solutions put in place to resolve these concerns.

Most importantly, we ask you to understand the extraordinary significance of this location to our community and to recognise the anxiety and pressures that this ongoing situation exerts on us all. It is our hope that you will agree to work with us to achieve a sensible and practical resolution for all involved.

With kind regards,

Cllr Simon Lane (Chair)

On behalf of the Parish Council of Hickling and Hickling Pastures:

Cllr T Prosser (Deputy Chair) Cllr J Adlam Cllr W Brown
Cllr S Green Cllr C Lamb Cllr P Playle

CC: Mr P Muter - pmuter@rushcliffe.gov.uk
 Mr M Hilton – MHilton@rushcliffe.gov.uk