

**PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**  
**10 April 2024**  
**ADDITIONAL PAGES UPDATE** (*Published 09.04.2024*)

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GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

<b>ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS ON AGENDA ITEMS: Page 1 - 5</b>		
<b>Agenda No:</b>	<b>Ref No:</b>	<b>Content:</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>22/04163/FUL</b>  <i>(The Feathered Nest Inn Nether Westcote)</i>	<p><b>Additional comments received from the Agent:</b></p> <p>Please see attached letter from JPPC dated 08.04.2024</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>24/00055/PLP</b>  <i>(Land South of 1 - 3 Corner Houses Driffield)</i>	<p><b>Update to Case Officer Report:</b></p> <p><b>Page 67 – 3. Site Description:</b></p> <p>The site area is <u>0.095</u> hectares, not 0.95 hectares.</p>

JPPC ref: SS/ 8565  
LPA ref: 22/04163/FUL

To All Planning Committee Members  
Cotswold District Council

8<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Dear Councillor

**APPLICATION SEEKING PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE  
ERECTION OF EIGHT UNITS OF OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION  
AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT THE FEATHERED NEST INN,  
NETHER WESTCOTE, CHIPPING NORTON, OX7 6SD  
CDC REF: 22/04163/FUL**

I am writing to you in advance of your consideration of this planning application at the District Council's Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

Councillors will note that the application has been called in for consideration by the Planning Committee at the behest of the Local Ward Member given the high level of interest in the application and to enable Councillors to fully assess the application in the context of submissions from internal consultees, all of whom support the application.

The current iteration of the scheme is the product of lengthy dialogue between the applicant and the Council's Planning and Conservation Officers – your Officers have assessed the scheme's impact upon the Cotswolds National Landscape, both in terms of the impact upon its character and visual impact which are two separate considerations. The landscape character impact of development has been assessed as being low, whilst long term visual impacts would be negligible following the implementation of a landscape masterplan.

The impacts of the proposal upon the setting of the Conservation Area and the Feathered Nest Inn (a non-designated heritage asset in its own right) have also been carefully assessed by your Officers and found not to be harmful to the significance of these assets.

National planning policy is clear that planning applications which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. This is the case in the current instance.

The proposal ensures that visitors to The Feathered Nest are able to stay and spend money in the locality – the Council's own website acknowledges that 17% of jobs in the District are tourist related, with a visitor spend of £360 million in 2019. Overall tourist spend in the

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Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB) is estimated to be around £1bn per annum.

Moreover, short-stay accommodation where this is ancillary to licensed establishments is important in sustaining such facilities, particularly in smaller settlements where the catchment for wet-led trade is very localised – this is a needed benefit which the hospitality industry has acknowledged for quite some time.

On the CAMRA website is an interview with Paul Nunny, the Executive Director of Cask Marque from 2019. The article is reproduced in full as **Appendix 1**. The key points to note are:

- There is significant latent demand for accommodation alongside pubs and this is a growth sector;
- Increased demand in the sector has attracted investment which has driven up standards;
- Rural pubs – those which are most under threat from closure – provide the best opportunity to offer accommodation as they generally have more available space, offer a local experience and tend to be more homely.

The Feathered Nest is an important community asset for the residents of both Church Westcote and Nether Westcote. The current operator is keen to ensure that wet-led trade is not lost, as this would be a significant loss to the village. However to ensure this, wet-led trade needs to be subsidised by other income streams, which requires the growth of other areas of the business. Additional growth needs to be accommodated in ways which will preserve what is special about the village and the wider environment in which it sits. This is what the applicant has sought to achieve, and the report of your Planning Officer endorses the approach which has been taken.

Please do take these comments into consideration when determining this planning application.

Yours sincerely



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## APPENDIX 1

*Successful pubs will be those offering accommodation writes Paul Nunny (Camra Website 2019)*

When we set up Cask Marque we identified a need to improve cask beer quality as an essential part of retaining and attracting new drinkers to the sector. This has taken us 20 years of lobbying for investment and equipment and the training of staff. Today, 77 per cent of cask ale drinkers now recognize the Cask Marque plaque and through the CaskFinder app we have 60,000 followers per month seeking to find Cask Marque pubs.

Similarly, a few years back, we identified pub accommodation as another income stream to help in the survival of the pub. Pubs now challenge restaurants with the quality of their food offering and why shouldn't they challenge hotels with their accommodation offer. You can eat, drink and sleep under one roof, mix with the locals, enjoy a log fire and some great food and drink.

Our first action was to commission a 100 page report covering the industry and consumer research. Encouragingly:

- 48 per cent said they would prefer to stay in a pub
- 27 per cent said they preferred a branded hotel
- 5 per cent a B&B

We then set up a website called Stayinapub.co.uk so that consumers could find pubs on the internet. 70 per cent of people now book accommodation online. This website now lists 1,700 pubs.

We have created an Accommodation Forum which meets quarterly and includes trade bodies, Visit England and key retail groups and website / booking platform developers. This group now organise annual seminars to educate the industry on best practice.

Visit England say that one of the Top Three attractions inbound tourists want to visit is a British pub. Sadly, under accommodation, they only just had hotels and B&B's. Now, to their credit, they have included pubs on the drop-down menu and linked into the Stayinapub website. 16 per cent of all enquiries now come from abroad.

We know we are in a growth sector. We have over 5,500 pubs with rooms and 21 per cent of pubs are planning to add extra rooms and 64 per cent planning refurbishment within the next 12 months. Companies are now showing their performance on accommodation in their annual reports to shareholders.

Some examples of this happening is Sheppard Neame saying revenues up 6.4 per cent and total bedrooms 294. Fullers now have 781 bedrooms in 32 pubs and are looking to increase rooms to 1,000 in two years. Wetherspoons now have 57 pubs with 1215 rooms from a standing start. There are now even pub groups largely dedicated to accommodation such as Upham with 15 of their 16 pubs with rooms and Oakman Inns very focused on accommodation."

With investment comes improved standards. Gone are the days when a pub was just a bed for the night. A lot of the pubs would challenge established hotels and are very boutique in their style and offer Egyptian cotton sheets, high quality mattresses, free wifi,

complimentary breakfast and great customer service as well as freshly cooked food and atmosphere to enjoy and relax.

Rural pubs have the most opportunity to develop this sector as opposed urban locations as they normally have underutilised rooms, more space to add on accommodation, can offer the whole local experience and are cosier, more homely and quieter. These are the very pubs that are under threat in today's marketplace. As well as gaining extra revenue from the bedrooms, 56 per cent of pubs with rooms say that it improves their food and beverage sales.

We have two issues that need to be addressed. How do we get people to think about staying in a pub when booking accommodation? Suggest it and they think it is a good idea as shown from our earlier research. We have hosted events for the Guild of Travel Writers and the British Guild of Beer Writers in the hope that they will mention pub accommodation in their features. We issue monthly newsletters and we have the Stay In a Pub website to link directly to the pub's booking platform. It will take time to plant this thought in the consumers mind.

The second area of concern is the cost to the industry of OTA's (Online Travel Agents). Seventy-four per cent of pubs use them to sell rooms but frequently the commission charges range from 16-20 per cent. Fullers pay £2.75m in fees and Shepherd Neame £34m to name buy a few. Also the customer is never owned by the pub as the booking information is held by the OTA. Research shows that 60 per cent of people booking via an OTA look for the pub's website but still go back to the OTA to book! We are encouraging pub operators to offer a discount if booked direct and Stay In A Pub links straight to the pub website with no commission but just a small fee to cover the costs. Fullers are leading by example by offering a 15 per cent discount and a number of other operators are now giving a discount code when booking via Stay In A Pub.

These are early days for pub accommodation. Investment is there, the offer is right and enjoyed by the consumer and today people are looking more for the experience than a branded offer. We ask everybody to spread the word on the great accommodation offer pubs can provide and do #bookdirect.

*Paul Nunny is a chartered accountant who set up Cask Marque in 1997 to improve beer quality standards and help reverse the decline in cask ale sales. His is a former managing director at Adnams.*