

In anticipation of further developments once the covid pandemic was over, the PC submitted a Freedom of Information request to the PDNPA on 22nd December 2020 regarding the Fairholmes cafe application (NP/HPK/1218/1205) in respect of copies of the records of all communications by letter, electronic means, telephone conversations and meetings between any member of the PDNPA and:

Severn Trent Water  
Fisher German  
Rob Garnham (Mediation in Planning)  
Baynes and Mitchell Architects  
Summers-Inman  
Artelia  
Environmental Dimension Partnership  
The leaseholders of the kiosk at the Fairholmes Visitor Centre

From 1st January 2017 to 22nd December 2020

A response was received on 20th January 2021 in the form of 6 zip files containing e-mail threads. As a result, several aspects of the application have become apparent:

Hazel Earnshaw, Site Supervisor for STW contacted John Scott and John Keeley of the PDNPA on 19th July 2017 to request a meeting to discuss visitor facilities at Fairholmes. Furthermore, A pre-planning application advice request form (no. 30486) completed and delivered by Hazel Earnshaw was received by the PDNPA on 24th July 2017. A meeting took place at Aldern House on 28th July 2017.

[Note: The Parish Council suspected that STW were making plans to develop Fairholmes in some way and in late November 2017, surveyors were seen at Fairholmes. Subsequently, the Clerk to the Parish Council contacted Fairholmes Visitor Centre staff. Despite the Site Supervisor's communications with the PDNPA regarding possible development of visitor facilities at Fairholmes, the response only mentioned a new home for the Dambuster's museum.]

On 9th July 2018, Hazel Earnshaw contacted the PDNPA with a second pre-planning application advice request form (no.33423), site location plan, site photographs and initial design drawings.

On 28th August 2018, the PDNPA Planning Officer (Adam Maxwell) assigned to the application pointed out that the development should facilitate recreation, environmental education and interpretation rather than be an attraction in its own right.

[Note: On 17th October 2018, the PC met with Hazel Earnshaw, Jenny Salt of Fisher-German and Dominic Robinson, Head of STW Visitor Experience at St Henrys Hall. Mr Robinson's opening gambit was that they were there to promote trust between STW and the PC/residents of the parishes.]

On 16th January 2019, Adam Maxwell when contacting Fisher German (presumably Jenny Salt) mentioned an internal PDNPA meeting where an automatic gate with key fob onto Derwent Lane had been suggested "to provide some traffic management benefits". On 24th January 2019, Jenny Salt having spoken with STW advised the PDNPA that residents were against a barrier to replace the gates on the traffic island at Fairholmes for traffic going in the direction of the dam wall and that "the main traffic issues are between the A57 and Fairholmes roundabout".

[Note: Ms Salt who has no connection with Derwent and Hope Woodlands and works in Leicester is now advising the PDNPA of the wishes of DHWPC residents on behalf of STW without authority and when no community consultation has taken place.]

On 20th February 2019, Jenny Salt contacted Adam Maxwell to ensure that certain points to promote the development were included in his recommendations to the Planning Committee. Whilst she

conceded that there are more objections than support, she still said that there was support for the new building. Jenny Salt also said that a cafe "will increase the duration of visitor's stay at Fairholmes" and that this "will reduce the overall number of visitors visiting Fairholmes, due to the limited car parking spaces available on site". Surprisingly, Jenny Salt had also considered sending of a formal rebuttal letter addressed to Adam Maxwell because he had expressed concerns particularly in respect of traffic issues. Also of note, she reported that 2530 black bin bags of rubbish were collected in the valley in 2018

[Note: The totally flawed approach of the application is finally explained. Residents had said that the development would increase both traffic and visitor numbers in an unsustainable fashion. In terms of "limited" parking suggested by Ms Salt, there are 160 parking spaces at Fairholmes (Fisher German estimate) whilst 71 could park at Derwent Overlook (PC estimate) only 100m from Fairholmes. In addition, STW's proposal completely overlooks the fact that traffic and thus visitors would still enter the valley in anticipation of a new facility even if the cafe and car parks were full.]

Note: The PDNPA e-mail of 20th January 2021 states that one item of correspondence (received between July and December 2020) is being withheld under:

Regulation 12(5)(f) – interests of the person who provided the information to the public authority.

The information has been provided to the Authority with an expectation that it would not be disclosed.

The individual providing the information has indicated the harm that is likely to result from disclosure at this time.

The regulation is a 'qualified exemption' and the PDNPA is therefore, obliged to apply the public interest test. The Authority is committed to openness and transparency in the carrying out of its functions, but on this occasion, has decided that the public interest in the disclosure of the requested information does not outweigh the public interest in withholding it. The Authority has considered the relative weight of the arguments for and against disclosure – the likelihood and severity of any prejudice; the age of the information; how far the requested information will aid public understanding; and whether similar information is already in the public domain.