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Tuesday 22nd October 2024

Dear Nikki

Planning reference: 2023/0864/FUL | Erection of 74 dwellings, 1 no. children with disabilities home, including means of access, drainage, landscaping and associated works. Land At 377700 149200 Packsaddle Way Frome Somerset

I am writing on behalf of the People For Packsaddle Committee.

We note the 30th August 2024 email from Des Dunlop on behalf of Live West, which was recently uploaded to the portal. In his email, Mr Dunlop claims that "The site was grazed by cattle regularly up to about 2005. Since then, a mixture, but mainly horses."

This statement is wholly incorrect.

As you are aware, the site was granted Asset of Community Value status in February 2023 and as part of this process long standing local residents confirmed the land had not been used for the grazing of cattle for decades. Instead the fields had been left to develop into a naturally green space, rich in biodiversity. Somerset Council's estates team were not able to provide any evidence to the contrary and therefore the site was awarded ACV status.

A couple of horses were grazed for a short period of time in a small fenced off area of one field but since that ended several years ago the grazed part of that field took on the characteristics of the rest of the fields.

The only grazing that has taken place in recent history is when, following the ACV status being granted in 2023, Somerset Council suddenly allowed a farmer to graze cattle in the fields. The local community complained to Oliver Woodhams, Service Director – Strategic Asset Management for Somerset Council, as the grazing was restricting the community's use of the ACV and impacting the biodiversity of the site. Mr Woodhams responded saying that the ACV status "has no relevance" and that the council were "introducing measures to manage the growth of vegetation" as recommended in the Application's LEMP. However,

given the fact that planning permission had not, and has still not, been granted the applicant's LEMP should not have been a consideration.

The 2023 cattle grazing was only short lived and was stopped following damage to fences of neighbouring properties, cows escaping onto main roads multiple times and the death of one of the cows.

Please ensure the correct information regarding the current and past use of the land is used in your planning report. It is not agricultural or grazing land, and has not been for many decades. Rather, it is a well used Asset of Community Value.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Cretney
On behalf of People For Packsaddle