

# Wells Harbour Commissioners

Old Lifeboat House, West Quay, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, NR23 1AT  
[harbouroffice@wellsharbour.co.uk](mailto:harbouroffice@wellsharbour.co.uk)  
[www.wellsharbour.co.uk](http://www.wellsharbour.co.uk)



Tel: 01328 711646

Harbour Master Robert Smith MBE

Licensing Section  
North Norfolk District Council  
Council Offices  
Holt Road  
Cromer  
Norfolk  
NR27 9EN



11<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **APPLICATION FOR LICENSABLE ACTIVITY; HILLVIEW PROPERTIES (LONDON) LTD**

Please take this letter as notification from Wells Harbour Commissioners as a formal objection to the proposed application.

Wells Harbour Commissioners are deeply concerned with the proposal on several fronts which are raised below but more widely, we would first like to point out to North Norfolk District Council that the Commissioners have recently spent considerable time and effort obtaining 'Heritage Harbour' status not only for Wells but for North Norfolk. In order for Wells-next-the-Sea to be awarded this accolade, the Commissioners were required to demonstrate the harbours heritage importance in order to help safeguard the harbourside, buildings, facilities and businesses that are vital to support our working maritime heritage.

This status is supported by Maritime Heritage Trust, National Historic Ships UK and Historic England. Local communities such as ours develop, maintain, and enhance the historic port area, its environmental features, facilities, and cultural heritage activities like the recent maritime festival held in Carnival week. The significance of having such a status is due to the increasing threat across the UK maritime heritage sector of the loss of waterside buildings, businesses and facilities to unsympathetic new development which detrimentally harms the location and significantly, destroy the historic character of a small port such as Wells-next-the-Sea.

Whilst the Harbour Commissioners were aware of the Pop-in leisure application to develop a restaurant, the Commissioners were certainly not believing this would in all but name become a segue for an application to turn it into a possible nightclub especially considering the 1 a.m closing time. Such an act would materially challenge and put into question how this supports being a 'Heritage Harbour'.

This application, if approved, brings with it all the potential for the antisocial behaviour associated with that type of premises. The likelihood for disruption to visiting boats that pay to moor on the quayside pontoons overnight are within 100 metres of the premises. Visiting boats not only provide vital income to Wells Harbour Commissioners but also to the other businesses in the Town. Our reputation of having such a welcoming, professional, and wide range of facilities in easy reach for visiting vessels is key to this success. Should this be disrupted and /or create negativity, visitor numbers would undoubtedly suffer. The Quayside, Car Park and quay (all privately owned by the Wells Harbour Commissioners) itself would become a natural gathering point and therefore a flash point, especially at turnout time that will be likely be after 1a.m. decreasing the distance from 100 metres to as close as 10 metres.

The return of the Dutch sailing clipper 'Albatros' to the Quayside at Wells-next-the-Sea was a welcome return however Wells Harbour Commissioners entered into in depth discussions and negotiations with the new owners to form a new legally binding agreement that places restrictions/conditions especially in relation to music (live and/ or recorded) together with the sale and consumption of alcohol. This was due to the fact of our own past experience for antisocial behaviour, typically associated with alcohol, and the consequential disruption that used to be caused to visiting boats. With the new agreement in place Wells Harbour Commissioners have now mitigated these past experiences, all to be unravelled and arguably create an even worse situation given the potential numbers of people that could be accommodated at the 'Pop-In' premises.

The Quayside and surrounding area have well documented litter problems already especially in the high season. Allowing this application to be approved naturally creates even more impact and scale to the problem as well.

There is also no question that with premises servicing alcohol over extended periods of time there is a correlation on the potential increase for damage to occur – the Harbour Authority already have experience of noise complaints from visiting yachtsman during carnival week with the travelling fair on the adjacent football field but accept this is for only a short period in August. Our delicate harbourside is already directly in the firing line which would only be magnified at weekends.

Wells Harbour Commissioners commit resource and considerable expense to maintain the picturesque harbour and firmly believe that should this application be approved it will only negatively impact the harbour, the other businesses and reputation of the town.

On behalf of Wells Harbour Commissioners

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Robert Smith.

Robert Smith MBE  
Harbour Master