



TREGARTHEN'S

ST MARY'S ISLES OF SCILLY

27th April, 2020

Ms Lisa Walton MRTPI
Senior Planning Officer
and Chartered Town Planner

Council of the Isles of Scilly
Email: lisa.walton@scilly.gov.uk

Dear Lisa,

Re: Application P/20/019/ROV Tregarthen's Hotel

Further to comments received regarding the above application we wish to set out a response in the context of the current operation of the Hotel under the Coronavirus Regulations and the practical impacts of the global pandemic.

Like many businesses, local and national, the Hotel faces a very uncertain future and the current restrictions mean that the Hotel has been fully closed for business until 1st July at the earliest. Having seen your e-mail to Lisa Jackson of 21st April and its attachment we stress, this does not present an opportunity for building works. Neither building materials nor workforce are currently available from the mainland and contractors are not able to travel to the islands.

At present the Hotel has furloughed most of its full-time staff. However, as may have been seen by Officers and Members on the BBC News, 20th April, HMRC restrictions on payroll cut-off dates has meant that not all the seasonal staff can be furloughed. Some have been unable to return home and to whom we have a duty of care to support. This all places an additional burden on the operation and finances of the hotel this season. Indeed, the hotel business can only survive with CBILS support, such funds not available for construction or other such works.

We have managed forward bookings postponed from the Spring with these now nominally booked in from July 2020. In ordinary times we would anticipate the Hotel fully operational and fully booked from July to October given current reservations, however, the lifting of Social Distancing and business restrictions in the hospitality sector leaves this far from clear. In reality we expect a very poor season. That said, self-catering bookings' performance is stronger with greater extension into the shoulder months.

We cannot accept the idea of removing the restrictive working condition for a year only. It is far from clear whether any construction work can be commenced in 2020. We do not see the Condition as reasonable given that we must in any event protect our self-catering guests throughout any construction period and in so doing we must naturally protect any residents or businesses surrounding the site.

After the financial losses inevitable in 2020, we cannot be at all certain about when we can progress the important upgrades to the Hotel or when they might be completed. Given the international picture and the widespread halt to 'business as usual' we need flexibility to create a more long-term sustainable business; it is key that permission is granted to give us the best chance to succeed. We need as much support as possible, both financially and administratively, if we are to create a robust future for Tregarthen's Hotel at this most difficult time. Indeed, without substantial assistance and latitude, input on this matter, the hotel may fail to recover and ultimately close.

I hope this is helpful context for the application, but please contact me should you need more details. I would stress that no one should underestimate the gravity of the COVID-19 crisis for us or any business on the Scillies.

In closing, I would add that suggestions such as those in the email (sender redacted) on your Planning register, dated, 17th April 2020, are not only unhelpful but also reflect a lack of appreciation of the current crisis for local businesses.

Yours sincerely,



Nigel Wolstenholme