



Request for Change of Use – Island Fish Ltd, Bryher Isles of Scilly, TR230PR

Supporting Statement

Proposal: This application to the Planning Committee of the Council of the Isles of Scilly is for a Change of Use.

Island Fish Ltd currently has a designation that limits the use of the building for the purpose of the processing and sale of fish/shellfish only. Over the years due to demand Island Fish has established a small café side of the business with 8 tables all outdoor. In line with our existing planning constraints, we sell only fish/shellfish. Although more visible than some aspects of our business this part of our enterprise whilst important is di minimus to the main part of the business (processing of shellfish) – there are no plans alter this operational balance nor to increase the volume of tables on offer.

However like all aspects of the business its potential needs to be maximised and the needs of the customer must be met, and in this case we are continually being asked if we sell alcohol so that on a sunny day, they, the customer can partake of a bottle of wine or a glass of beer with their shellfish meal. In order to offer this service a change of designation to a mixed-use building with café/shop is required.

To be absolutely clear the purpose behind this application is solely to be able to move forward and offer our customers the option to purchase an alcoholic drink with their shellfish meal. Island Fish will always - as the names suggests sell only locally caught fish/shellfish. We have no space for indoor seating, all our seating – 8 tables are outside and this will not/cannot change for very practical reasons (not enough staff/staff accommodation, no room for indoor seating) If this application for a change of use is successful, the next stage will be to apply to the Licensing Committee for the relevant permissions.

Background:

Island Fish Ltd based on Bryher and incorporated in 2015 currently employs 3 full time members of staff as well as 4 part time employees on a seasonal basis.

In 2018 the current Island Fish premises at Kenyhton, Bryher were completed on time and under budget providing the company with a work unit/retail space that allows for the processing, cooking and sales of fish/shellfish. Since that time the business has gone from strength to strength, increasing turnover and providing an ever-expanding range of services on both a wholesale and retail basis for the benefit of visitors to Scilly and local residents. In return Island Fish has invested heavily back into the islands, investing in staff accommodation and the development of a new home for permanent members of staff that will be able to make Bryher their home adding to the social and economic diversity of Bryher – something which is much needed.

From its inception the business has been the recipient of a range of awards both regionally and nationally, including Shellfish fisherman of the Year, Best New Business and as well as runner up in the regional Best Family Business Awards hosted by the Federation of Small Business.

But fishing is a fragile business at best. Restricted not just by poor weather that inevitably ends up ensuring that there are at least 4/5 months of the year when the boats are unable to go to sea before they even attempt to secure their catches but also by the ever-increasing bureaucratic burden that fisherman have to face ranging from compulsory medicals, real time monitoring, and the volatile nature of fisheries politics and restrictive practices. This means that as a business we are far more vulnerable to variables outside of our control than almost any other industry. **Hence everything that Island Fish has done in the last few years has been to try and de-risk and safeguard our business.** Part of this means meeting the needs of our customers and ensuring the maximum possible spend per head. From our very inception our customers have periodically asked if we sold alcohol which we did not, however over the last year this trickle of requests has risen to a torrent and whilst most of our customers eat with us because they cannot get what we offer elsewhere and accept that they cannot purchase a drink, our inability to meet this need has certainly meant that we have lost some trade – and to be fair if you are eating a seafood sharing platter it does not seem too much to be able to enjoy a bottle of wine – and this is what this application is all about - meeting the needs of our customers whilst at the same time increasing our spend per head and helping to safeguard a traditional island business that supports several local families and has track record of putting back into the islands in every way possible – we ask for your support.