

Matthew Turner, [REDACTED]

I, Matthew Turner, have prepared this statement for the planning inquiry into the appeal against the refusal of planning permission The Queens Hotel SDNP/21/00069/REF. In preparing this statement, I have read the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) and the parties' Statements of Case (SoC).'

I have lived in Selborne for the past 19 years with my wife, where both of my children were born and raised, attending the local village school. I have been a member of the Selborne Parish Council since October 2021, serving as vice-chair of the council for the last two years. I also serve as the treasurer for the Selborne Recreation Ground charity which is responsible for providing a well-used community resource in the village, including a pavilion that is available for hire for events by residents. As a member of a local function band, I have regularly been at events hosted in the Selborne Village Hall, Gilbert White Field Study Centre, Selborne Primary School, the Selborne Arms Public House, and The Queens Hotel, Selborne.

I have provided written comments of objection on several occasions during the planning history of The Queens Hotel, and attending public meetings at the EHDC offices in Petersfield.

[3. Community offerings in Selborne]

There are several community facilities in Selborne with which I am familiar;

1. The Selborne Arms

A traditional public house on the High Street in the centre of the village. Serves beers, wines, spirits and food at lunch and in the evening. Open seven days, and used by locals, tourists and visitors alike. Garden with children's play equipment, an outside smoking area and free parking, although not dedicated for patrons of the Selborne Arms -- this is often full, especially at weekends. The Arms provides no rooms for overnight stays by visitors, and there is limited indoor space for large gatherings, performances or other community events. Open during lunchtimes and in the evening, although often closing early.

2. Gilbert White Field Study Centre (FSC)

A large converted barn operated on a commercial for-profit basis by the Gilbert White Museum. The FSC caters to approximately 100 guests, with kitchen and bathroom facilities and has an adjacent car park which is not dedicated to the FSC, and which requires payment. The FSC is a short walk from the Selborne High Street. The FSC does benefit from access to extensive outdoor space to the rear which is managed by the museum. The venue is relatively expensive to hire in comparison with the village hall, pavilion and the Queens Hotel, and provides no on-site catering meaning that it is only economical to rent the space for large gatherings. Additionally, the space is only available to use when not required by the museum for its educational and related activities, meaning that it has limited use by the local community.

3. The Village Hall

A typical Village Hall, located on the High Street in the centre of the village. There is no parking provision, other than an adjacent layby for up to two vehicles. No access to outdoor space other than the kerbside next to the busy high street which needs to be crossed to access the rest of the village. The village hall can cater for approx 100 guests, with the provision of bathroom and kitchen facilities and is available to hire on a commercial basis. Has a small additional room for hire, and has a stage for theatre and music performances. Hosts the annual pantomime, Zig Zag beer and wine festival along with other ad-hoc events. The village hall does offer reduced rates of hire for local residents, and provides a commercial standard of kitchen for use by hirers. There is no on-site catering, no overnight accommodation is provided nor on-site parking.

4. The Pavilion, Selborne Recreation Ground

Recently refurbished sports pavilion, located at the south end of the village and a short walk from the high street. Extensive grounds (with play equipment for children), free parking and bathroom and kitchen facilities. Available for hire on a commercial basis, although operated on a charitable basis, supported by donations and other fund-raising activities to maintain accessibility to all residents. There is no on-site catering, rooms for overnight accommodation or alcohol license.

5. St. Mary's Church, Selborne.

Church of England parish church in the centre of the village which hosts regular services and incorporates a graveyard. Very limited parking and no kitchen facilities. Popular venue for weddings.

6. Selborne C of E Primary School

Local primary school, hosting a limited number of events in aid of fundraising for the school; annual music festival, quiz nights and fairs.

Loss of The Queens

The loss of The Queens has resulted in a significant loss of needed community needs, principally a serviced space in which members of the local community could hold events such as birthday parties, wakes and wedding receptions in a space that could accommodate large groups in a single room creating a communal, cohesive atmosphere. The Queens was open all day (unlike the Selborne Arms), where locals and visitors could enjoy three meals a day with drinks and snacks in between those services.

It is also important to distinguish between what The Queens offered from what is currently available in terms of community space for hire. Whilst the Pavilion, Village Hall and Field Studies Centre all provide spaces for community gatherings, all on a commercial hire basis, none of these three facilities provided serviced food and beverages -- these needs are not met by the facility, and require the hirer to provide these at additional cost and complexity. This has led to a reduction in the number of community events held in the village in comparison with the years in which The Queens Hotel operated. Although the Selborne Arms does provide food and beverage services, it

does not offer a large space for community events, and so it does not provide an adequate replacement for the facilities which The Queens provided for the local community.

The developer's plans include the addition of a new Field Studies Centre in the building of The Queens which would be a hireable community space; however, this would be in addition to the existing community hireable spaces (village hall, pavilion) for which there is no obvious need and it does not provide the serviced food and beverage provision offered by The Queens hotel. In this important regard, the proposed development does not replace the community facilities which have been lost.

There is currently a small bar operating out of one room of The Queens hotel, trading as "The Jubilee Tap", operated by the Gilbert White museum. The tap room operates for limited hours in the early evening, closing at 9.30pm on two days a week, and from 2pm on Saturdays. There is no on-site provision of food other than snacks and platters brought across the road from the museum kitchen, and the room can cater for small gatherings, certainly, many fewer than The Queens was able to accommodate. The tap room does compete with The Selborne Arms for the alcohol trade, and has demonstrated an appetite amongst the community and visitors to the village for additional hospitality of this type when run with enthusiasm, creativity and business acumen. However, although successful in its limited aims, the Jubilee Tap room does not provide replacement of the lost community facilities of serviced meals, all week, all day opening times nor serviced rooms which have been lost by the unnecessary closure of The Queens hotel.

Visitors to the village have also been deprived of the same facilities that the community has lost; and in addition, have lost the seven en-suite double rooms for short-term stays on a commercial basis. As there are no other serviced rooms in the village or within reasonable and safe walking distance, the loss of The Queens Hotel results in visitors to the village being unable to stay overnight in serviced rooms and the loss of free parking on-site. With The Queens being located in the centre of the village, it offered visitors easy access to other village amenities, businesses and the countryside whilst staying at the Hotel.

4. Nature of visitors to Selborne

Selborne benefits from a large number of visitors throughout the year,

- Walkers and Cyclists exploring the extensive countryside, footpaths and bridleways providing open access to National Trust land
- Visitors to the Gilbert White and Oates museum and grounds with café
- Wedding guests and other visitors to St. Mary's church
- Visitors to regular events such as the annual Zig Zag beer and wine festival, the FOSStival music festival, May Fair, and organised Parish Walks.

Each of these groups is unable to stay overnight in the village, meaning that

opportunities are missed to further grow and sustain the local economy and the employment opportunities within the village for the local community