

Bell Tent Glamping at Royal Victoria Country Park

1. Introduction

This is a retrospective planning application for the site used by Bell Tent Glamping for the past 8 years as a glamping site. Its previous use having been a camping and caravan rally field.

Applications for projects in all Hampshire parks were gathered in 2017 as all parks had to become self-funding. Bell tent glamping was successful in gaining the site to operate a glamping business in the country park. A 1-year contract was given at this time. This was a rolling 1 year contract until after the issues of 2020 were resolved. We now operate under a 5-year rolling contract issued by Hampshire County council.

A singular complaint was raised for the first time in 8 years earlier this year where it was ascertained that the site is not 100% compliant, therefore a retrospective planning application is now being made.

2. Description of the Proposal

All of the buildings on the site are temporary structures in one way or another as they can either be towed, lifted, or in the example of the tents, simply be taken down.

The site operates with 10 bell tents, and 6 camping pods, as shown on the layout. Please do also view the website www.belltentglamping.net as this also has a 360 tour.

To assist in the operation of the tents we have a shared toilet and shower block. This existed before we arrived on the site and was connected to the mains drainage already. We have upgraded this in the time we have been on site but this was a simple swap as it's a shipping container.

We also have a shared kitchen, in case of rain the customers can't cook on BBQs outside so they need the option of being able to cook inside.

Because we provide sheets for the beds we also have a small laundry and store for cleaning equipment and sheets etc.

There is a small shed for use as a reception for our guests

Because we are in a public place, and of course we have 24hr guests on site, there is a huge need for 24hr security and trained health and safety / 1st aiders on the site so we have a staff accommodation building as well. This is a temporary structure that provides an appropriate, safe, and healthy work environment.

3. Planning Policy Context

Netley, like the rest of the UK tourism and hospitality sector, is influenced by policies focused on environmental sustainability, economic recovery, and community wellbeing. These policies aim to promote responsible tourism practices and support businesses.

To this end, the site is built almost exclusively from recycled and recovered materials. We actively seek out local building sites and reclaim as much wood as we can from them placing it to landfill. We are partnered with Miniml (Eco cleaning products). We dry our washing outside on the line rather than tumble driers as policy. We have replaced all of our lighting with PIR detectors to reduce wasted electricity. We employ locally, we have worked with local schools to take work experience kids. During covid we took in, and homed, and in some cases helped rehabilitate the homeless. Every year we have a week long duration devoted to families in financial need. We have planted in excess of 30 trees.

In short, everything we do is considered, and we do our best, possibly better than a lot of companies, to be sustainable and community focussed.

4. Justification for the Proposal

Benefits: We are a community employer and we help finance the country park as we pay them considerable rent to be there.

Mitigation: If you didn't know we were there you would be hard pushed to find us, we have very little impact visually as we are away from the main part of the park. We, at our peak, add 16 cars to the country park that are set up to park thousands of cars a day, so our traffic is almost insignificant. We are a family site by design, and this is to ensure that we do not have excessive noise as children go to bed earlier, which encourages the adults to be quieter into the evenings. This is also managed with a no noise after 11pm which is managed by our on site, site management.

5. Site Analysis

We fit in perfectly with our surroundings. In recent history the site that we occupy has been used by the camping and caravan club for the last 30 - 40 years. So we offer a slightly smarter alternative to what has been provided all that time.

Then if you look back further, Royal Victoria is the site of a world war hospital, and an army hospital past that time. As such, the fields that we occupy were filled with white cotton field tents to house the extra soldiers that wouldn't fit in the hospital. Pictures of this exist in the historical reference photos around the grounds and as such we even hold historical significance.

6. Conclusion

We, Bell tent glamping, and Royal Victoria Country Park, apologise unreservedly for the oversight that has lead us to apply for a retrospective planning permission for the site. I hope that I have demonstrated that we are a company with good intentions, operating in a considered and considerate manner, to the benefit of our surroundings, customers, and employees. I hope that we might be granted planning permission for us to be able to continue operating on the site for year round success.

Kind regards

John Wild