

**From:** [Dyson, Alison](#)  
**To:** [Christopher Hartley](#); [Sarah Wotton](#); [Submit Appeal](#); [Chesterton Parish Council](#); [Heritage, Sophie](#); [Matthew Swinford](#)  
**Subject:** APP/C3105/W/20/3259189  
**Date:** 08 February 2021 14:37:04  
**Attachments:** [Payne BHGS Letter 8 February 2020.pdf](#)

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All

Please find the attached, received from Mr Graham Payne (owner Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa), which has been seen by the Inspector.

Kind Regards

Alison



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FAO Ms Alison Dyson  
The Planning Inspectorate  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol, BS1 6PN

8<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Ms Dyson,

**Appeal reference:** APP/C3105/W/20/3259189

*Land to the east of M40 and south of A4095 Chesterton Bicester Oxon - Redevelopment of part of golf course to provide new leisure resort (sui generis) incorporating waterpark, family entertainment centre, hotel, conferencing facilities and restaurants with associated access, parking and landscaping*

I am writing with reference to the above appeal, which I understand is due to be heard from tomorrow until early March. I write in my capacity as the owner of the land and the neighbouring hotel, spa and golf course. This letter has been written in response to the letter of Mr Paul Brain to the Inspector, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, and is intended to correct matters raised therein. I appreciate that this is submitted only a day before the appeal inquiry begins but Mr Brain's letter was only published on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021 generating the need for this response.

Since purchasing Bicester Hotel, Golf and Spa in November 2000, I have seen the hotel develop with the expansion of rooms, the new Grey's restaurant and most recently the new Performance Centre. However, the trend over recent years has been that membership and use of my golf club has dropped. While the pandemic has seen a temporary upturn in activity at the club, my experience is that the overall trend is one of decline and I would expect memberships to again decline once the pandemic is over. I have therefore taken the decision that, given this change in the market, the best direction for my business is one of reinvestment in the reconfiguration and renovation of the nine holes and upgrading of the practice facilities, to provide an enhanced experience for members and players. The Great Wolf project would secure this much needed investment in golf on the site which we believe will encourage wider use, including by those not traditionally interested in the game and particularly those in the local community who might take it up. Frankly, without Great Wolf this investment would not be possible.

Reviewing Mr Brain's letter I provide the following comments and corrections. Mr Brain suggests that the Appellant and Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa have failed to give a true picture of the existing golf operation in terms of its viability. However, I can confirm that the financial and business data shown in Mr Ashworth's Proof of Evidence accurately replicates

information supplied by me and my management team subsequent to the letter submitted in March 2020 by the Financial Controller. Mr Ashworth accurately reflects the state of the golf business at Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa. In particular, Mr Brain's assertion that revenues from food and drink and from golf societies is not included is incorrect. Mr Ashworth expressly refers to golf society rounds and acknowledges the spend in the hotel on food and beverage from golfers. In the case of the latter, it is not the case that every member spends £10 per round on food and beverage – most spend no more than the price of a cup of tea – and any revenue generated is diluted by 75% cost of sales.

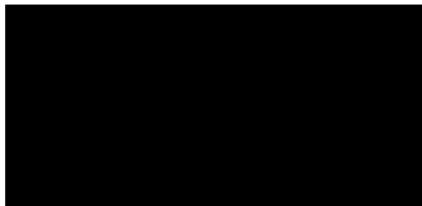
Mr Brain also criticises the proposed reconfiguration of the nine holes and wide reinvestment in the golf offer. A series of questions are asked relating to course dimensions, health and safety and principles of the design. These matters all appear to be clearly addressed in the appendix to John Ashworth's proof of evidence, prepared by Howard Swan of Swan Golf Designs Ltd, who we have worked with to prepare the designs as submitted.

As a local business owner, I support the significant investment that it will bring to the area, providing a welcome boost to the local economy at this time of uncertainty. We will also see an ongoing benefit to businesses across the county from the expenditure by guests. In addition, from my understanding of Great Wolf's practices in the USA, they have a strong track record of investment in their local communities, support for local charities, strong ties with local suppliers and retailers and investment in their employees through training and development.

With the hospitality sector having been hit very hard during the pandemic, the 600 new jobs that the resort could bring will be particularly welcome as will the more-than 900 jobs that will be created on-site during construction.

I ask that you consider this letter of response to the comments made by Mr Brain and would be grateful if you could take my wider views into consideration. I believe that we should welcome a responsible company like this, willing to invest so heavily in our community.

Yours sincerely



**Graham Payne**

Owner, Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa

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