

My wife and I met our new neighbour on 23rd May, 2020; we went over to his field to ask him not to burn acrid smelling material on his fire. He apologised and said one of his neighbours had re-lit his fire with some other rubbish. He went on to say that he was clearing the field to bring in 6 to 10 trailers which would be converted for holiday or living purposes. He said he had one of his own which was a converted John Lewis high trailer.



This could be seen on his social media account, where he lived and the trailer that is on the field now was next to it, used amongst other things as a gym. He said he would improve the field by planting trees and maybe having a lake/pond as that was his business and expertise. He also said that he was going to get water and electricity connected to the site. We asked if he was going to apply for planning and he said no he would act first and get retrospective permission or appeal as necessary. He said the council was weak and powerless due to the pandemic and lack of funds. He never mentioned any intention of using the land for agriculture but that he wanted to live “off grid” with several tenants.

We also said to him that he should not cut back hedges during the bird nesting season. Again his reply was that he would do it anyway irrespective of regulations. He called at our house later that day to explain how it would improve the area and we should not object to change. He also sent us an email:

“Hello David, Nicholas here your new neighbour.

Was lovely to meet you and your wife, just sorry about the circumstances and the fire.

I will be speaking to David about it and it won't happen again.

I need to burn normal vegetation but I will only do this once the wind is in the correct direction or i've agreed it with you first.

I want to assure you that I'm very big on nature and the the natural environment and living in harmony with your surroundings. I am aiming to create a better habitat moving forward and certainly increase the biodiversity of the field.

Hope you have a nice evening.

Best Nicholas”

Over the next days he continued to hack back hedges with a digger, saying “just brambles” but it was hawthorn and blackthorn bushes as well.

A TSN was served on 27th May, 2020 just after he had brought a trailer onto the site; he then brought a container in on the following day in direct contravention of the order. Over the next few days he continued work on the hardstanding and ditches for water and services to the field.

The ditches that he has dug are for water and services not for drainage (and certainly are not improving drainage). He has dug a soakaway in the SW corner of the site which cannot assist the agricultural use of the field, the only possible use is perhaps for waste from a residential unit. This constitutes engineering work for possible residential use. From an engineering perspective the soakaway would have to be in the lower eastern part of the field to be of benefit agriculturally. Given the state of the pig area it clearly does not benefit them.

The hardstanding was created for the trailer and possible future ones, it required several large lorries of hard-core material to make it and existing earth was removed where it was laid. This means levels were altered and

constitutes an engineering work requiring planning permission. It is also less than 5 metres from the boundary which is against B.2(f) of Permitted Development Rights and no advance notice was given to the LPA of his intentions.

The field is of poor quality and subject to flooding (we have lived next door for over 20 years and seen it flooded on many occasions and never used for anything but occasional grazing and hay). Agriculturally it would not be possible to make a living from it. The piglets were brought in after the appeal was lodged and they are kept in very poor conditions, they should have at least a small area of dry land (DEFRA requirement) which is almost impossible in this field.

The ditch dug from West to East across the middle of the field has a water pipe and a service conduit with a pull-through rope inside for electric and other services. Clearly this is not just for agriculture.



In summary, Mr Butler has no intention of using the field for agricultural purposes. His objective is to bring in more trailers for residential use. He has shown that he intends to continue riding roughshod over any planning or other regulations exactly as he has said to my wife and I, when we first met. The

trailer there now has no agricultural benefit, the container possibly but that was installed in contravention of the TSN while it was in force. The land is on the edge of Newtown in a green area and in sight of the South Downs National Park. A footpath to the SDNP starts at the end of Dradfield Lane.

He needs to be stopped until he submits and receives planning permission in the normal way, as other ratepayers in the area have properly done.