

Copies of correspondence received by Winford Parish Council regarding the use of Winford Manor to house asylum seekers

From: Hayley Verrico Sent: 29 August 2022 To: Town & Parish Clerk Winford
Cc: Hugh Gregor (Councillor)
Subject: **RE: Winford Manor**

Dear Paula

Winford Manor has been identified by the Home Office as a hotel for asylum seekers awaiting their application to remain in the UK to be processed. The council was only alerted to this a short time ago and it has been made clear to us that we cannot object to the use of the premises. Each local authority has been instructed to accept an allocation of asylum seekers but it is our understanding that the government are anticipating that the hotels are a short term arrangements and that local authorities will soon be expected to identify alternative forms of housing, we are awaiting the details on this. I am the senior responsible officer for the asylum seeker programme and I have made it clear to the Home Office that North Somerset Council are very concerned about the remote location of the hotel, despite this I am advised that it will open to asylum seekers in early September. I am meeting with Home Office colleagues and other agencies including the Police, Public health and NHS colleagues weekly to discuss the running of the hotel and another one located in North Somerset and any concerns that Parish members have should be directed through Cllr Gregor in the first instance. If it provides any reassurance, we already have one asylum seeker hotel in North Somerset and whilst there were initial concerns, there has been very few problems arising and this has been in part due to volunteers from the local community working together to ensure any minor concerns are addressed as early as possible. Best wishes Hayley Verrico, Director Adult Social Services North Somerset Council

From: Hayley Verrico Sent: 31 August 2022 To: Town & Parish Clerk Winford; Steve Hogg (Councillor); Steve Bridger (Councillor); Christopher Frank Stott

Subject: RE: Winford Manor

Thanks you for your e-mail. As I have advised previously, the Home Office have commissioned this hotel and not the council, and are therefore it is the Home Office who are in a position to respond to resident concerns. They have also appointed an operator and again they would be well placed to attend and answer questions. The Home Office should be in a position to provide their contact details. I have included Christopher Frank Scott in on the response as he works in the Home Office and may know who best to contact in his department. Please be aware that Christopher has not commissioned the hotel nor is he involved in its running but may be able to provide relevant contact details only. Cllr Steve Hogg has kindly offered to attend a meeting with Cllr Hugh Gregor on behalf of the council to share the experience and learning from the Holiday Inn hotel which opened to asylum seekers a few months if residents would find it helpful. I have copied Cllr Hogg into the email

Hayley Verrico Director Adult Social Services North Somerset Council

On 30 Aug 2022, at 11:18, winfordpc@gmail.com wrote:

Dear Dr Fox

Winford Parish Council has been inundated with complaints and concerns from local residents regarding the Home Office decision to house asylum seekers in the Winford Manor Hotel. The Parish Council support residents' concerns and request that you raise this with the Home Office as a matter of urgency please, because we understand that the men will start arriving from next week onwards. We understand that North Somerset Council have been powerless to object to this decision, despite their concerns at the remoteness of the hotel. The hotel is situated in open countryside, with no local facilities or access to public transport. Applications for planning permission to build housing in the vicinity have been turned down on the basis of the remoteness of the location. The nearest village (Winford) is a country village with a post office, small community shop and pub and no recreational facilities. The village and nearest bus stop can only be accessed by foot by walking down unlit, single track, country lanes with 60mph speed limits. If the reports that 70 men are to be housed at the hotel are true, this would represent not far off 10% of the total population of Winford village, which simply does not have the facilities to support such an increase. Regards Paula Shelley Clerk to Winford Parish Council

From: DOUGLAS, Ione Sent: 30 August 2022

Dear Ms Shelley and Everyone Else

Thank you for your communal email to Dr Fox. The news is dreadful and Dr Fox has already written to the Home Office to raise this issue. He will certainly send on this excellent email from Winford Parish Council.

Yours sincerely Ione Douglas MBE (Mrs) P/A to the Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP

From: Home Office Sent: 02 September 2022 To: winfordpc@gmail.com

Subject: RE: Winford Manor

Dear Paula

We engage extensively with Local Authorities, Police, Fire and other partners when establishing a hotel, including using Multi-Agency Forums to ensure concerns are addressed promptly as the site operates. For the safety, security and wellbeing of those we house we do not routinely engage directly with the local community and will not be able to attend public meetings about this hotel. We are happy to address concerns and queries raised by councils and local partners via our Asylum Support Engagement Team inbox, [REDACTED]. We would kindly ask if you did not provide this email address to members of the public. In providing guidance to members of the public in contacting the Home Office, please follow the instructions on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office#org-contacts>. Many thanks for your time.

Regards Chris Stott Service Delivery Manager, Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration, UK Visas and Immigration Home Office, Vulcan House, Sheffield.

Sent: 16 September 2022

To: Town & Parish Clerk Winford

Subject: RE: Planning permission for hotel housing asylum seekers

Dear Paula

Thanks for your email.

We have only been informed in the last day or so that Winford Manor Hotel is being used as a "hostel". I'm afraid we don't have information about the use it is being put to at the moment, however I note your reference to asylum seekers. We need to investigate before I can comment any further. This has been logged as a new enforcement case under reference 22/00347/COU. We will come back to you with an update once we have looked into the matter.

Kind regards [REDACTED] Delivery and Enforcement Service Manager, Place Directorate North Somerset Council

Ms Paula Shelley winfordpc@gmail.com

DECS Reference: TRO/0433555/22

20 September 2022

Dear Ms Shelley,

Thank you for your email of 14 September about your concerns.

You will probably be aware from the media that boat crossings of the Channel have continued to be high over the first part of the year. We have been working hard on every option available to us to enable us to comply with our statutory duties to accommodate people seeking asylum who are at risk of destitution, but essentially this means relying on further alternative contingency accommodation, including hotels.

Each site is assessed for its suitability and the availability of support services within the local area, our service providers will ensure that service users are able to access health and other service within the area to support their health, wellbeing and integration. There is a range of experience across our providers in managing remote locations and they have a dedicated strategy for this which covers everything from provision of transport through to maximising on-site facilities for leisure and recreation.

The Government has a duty to protect the security of the UK and the safety of its citizens and all asylum seekers undergo security checks against immigration and police databases to identify those who may have been involved in criminality both in the UK or abroad –including war crimes, crimes against humanity and terrorism.

Our service users are clearly advised of the expectations the Home Office and our providers have for them to behave responsibly while they accommodate our properties and not to engage in any form of criminal activity.

All incidents are reported to the Home Office immediately by the providers and this is a contractual requirement. We then work with the provider to put additional measures in place, if required. This will include working with other Statutory bodies including Police to investigate any potential criminal activities.

Yours sincerely,

Khaleed Edoo

Email: Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk