

West Dereham Parish Council

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R & C Mellor Ltd
1 Grange Farm
Lynn Road
Crimplesham
Norfolk
PE33 9ED

29 February 2016

Dear Mr & Mrs Mellor

Thank you for your letter to the PC dated 22 January, postmarked 5 February and received by me on 8 February. I am pleased to assure you that your letter will indeed be read out at the next Parish Council meeting as all correspondence is.

At the conclusion of the Morton tenancy on Grange Farm, the news that the rented single farm area was being extended to the Village side of the A134 and was changing from arable to pig farming, not surprisingly, caused interest in West Dereham as to how this quite significant change may impact on the Village.

In response to a number of questions from within the Village, the PC sought answers from Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Property Services, our MP and our County Councillor with the latter suggesting the questions be put direct to you; this was done on 17 September 2014. At no point has the PC requested a visit to your farm. On 9 October 2014 you invited Cllrs to view the farm on 22 October and discuss the issues.

Cllrs wholly appreciate that you are a working farm and doubtless you will appreciate that finding a time to accommodate a visit by 7 Cllrs - all of whom work, like you, and all of whom fit their voluntary PC duties around this and their families - would be difficult.

In November 2014 I suggested you provide some dates from 12 January 2015 onwards; in February 2015 I chased up this request. At the end of April 2015 you offered 3 dates which the PC could not make (our equivalent of Harvest time) and in May I offered 7 June, July and August dates which you could not make. In July I offered 6 dates and you accepted one but had to cancel for family reasons. In November 2015 I tried to arrange further dates and in the same month I contacted you again without reply.

At the end of the day Cllrs have never asked for more than a response to the perfectly understandable practical questions that people living in West Dereham have asked. While Cllrs quite appreciate that you do not have to answer these questions there can be no reason why you would not do so. When you carry on any business in a residential community you have an effect on that community and it would be very unusual if residents did not want to know how it could impact on

their lives – whether a narrow exit lane will be blocked by farm vehicles when children are being taken to school or people are leaving for work and whether their homes and gardens will be affected by smells and insects. Sadly, your very delayed answers to these genuine questions appear to be uninformative at best and obstructive at worst; in the light of these responses the PC will redraft the questions in a further attempt to elicit some realistic and sensible information.

Turning to the other points in your letter, the PC was surprised at your assertion that tidying your farm made it a pleasure to drive past. A ‘tidy farm yard’ was, in part, accomplished by the numerous trailer loads of detritus from your farmyard that you dumped into the historic lime kiln pit on the Village side of the A134 in November 2014, destroying the flora and fauna of that area, and resulted in the Environment Agency ruling requiring you to clear it. Cllrs also feel that it is something of a value judgement that muddy fields full of pigs with large heaps of dirty bedding of muck and straw are a more pleasant sight than green fields; such statements are best left unsaid.

The Parish Council wholeheartedly agrees however that, from the road, your pigs do indeed look well cared for in an attentive operation (with the exception of the distressing sight last summer of the baby piglet which lay squashed in the road for some days). It is also always good news when employment is provided for 4 local people. The Parish Council employs 2 local people and firmly believes that being accountable to the community in which you live and operate is always the most effective and beneficial way to proceed.

Cllrs will be in a position to answer your question as to how the pigs have affected WD since they arrived as soon as you are able to fully answer the questions that have been put to you which are wholly about the effect of having the pigs housed the Village side of the A134.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Thorpe

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Clerk to West Dereham Parish Council