

## March 2020

### **The History of the Planning Application for housing on Manning's Pit (described as "Land off Windsor Road" in the 2015 Sales catalogue and 2017 Planning Application.)**

An important note in regard to the Clive Emson Catalogue Description for the Auction scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup> :

It is suggested that "**new residential developments adjoining to the west and south hint at future potential,**" in actual fact, Barratt David Wilson Homes, who building the new development adjoining Manning's Pit, have very recently given support to our **Buy Manning's Pit campaign from their new Community Fund.**

### History of our Campaign:

**Manning's Pit was sold at Auction** on October 2015 to Summix Ltd, a successful Nationwide business who specialise in gaining outline planning permission.. The Friends of Manning's Pit were formed to save the land from development.

**In March 2016, Framptons, the agents for Summix, held a Public Exhibition** in Barnstaple. Their plans for 138 houses in Manning's Pit were vehemently opposed by virtually all who came to the Exhibition.

**February 2017 - a planning application** was submitted for a reduced number of houses – down from 138 to 41. The Friends of Manning's Pit commissioned Ecology, Traffic and Landscape Consultants to fight the application, and up to 300 local people sent in letters of objection. **The planning application number was 62524, and the site address was described as "Land at Windsor Road, Barnstaple EX31 4AG."**

**The Barnstaple Town Council met in the Guildhall** on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 and were unanimous in their recommendations for the planning application to be turned down, as were the crowds of local people who attended the meeting.

**The Consultation closed on March 16<sup>th</sup>.** Our MP had sent a strongly worded letter of objection to the Council. Up to 300 local people sent similar letters.

**In November 2017** Summix submitted more documents to North Devon Council's Planning Department, in regard to habitat surveys and Highways

matters. Consultation was re-opened to conclude on December 21st 2017. The Friends of Manning's Pit commissioned further reports on Ecology and Traffic. Objections were also received from leaders of all the local Political Parties, adding to our MPs objections.

**March 2018 Very shortly before a decision on the application had to be decided by the Council, Summix withdrew their application.** Everything pointed to the fact that that they knew they had no chance of winning. By withdrawing, they avoided having this on record, and we can presume with confidence that they did not think they would win on Appeal.

**July 2018 The Friends of Manning's Pit asked North Devon Council to have Manning's Pit made an Asset of Community Value,** and this was confirmed in September 2018. The owners had a number of weeks in which they could have contested this, but they did not do so.

**In October 2018 the Local Plan was adopted, with Manning's Pit outside the Development Boundary.**

**Since the Asset of Community Value Moratorium period was triggered** the Friends of Manning's Pit have joined with local Charity the Pilton Green Man CIO (Charity No 1170742) to raise money towards the purchase of Manning's Pit. They had hoped for more time to raise money, but have raised around £51,000 with more pledged.

**February – March 2020** Manning's Pit – described in the Auctioneer's catalogue as **Land to the East of Windsor Road** – came up for sale with no warning on February 24<sup>th</sup> with only four weeks until the sale on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The catalogue with details did not go online until February 28<sup>th</sup>.

The catalogue hints that because of development in progress adjacent to Manning's Pit, the site may have potential for building in future. In fact, the developers of the adjacent site have donated to the Buy Manning's appeal.

**About The campaign to Save Manning's Pit - and the Buy Manning's Pit appeal.** This has one aim in mind, to save Manning's Pit from threats of development, and keep it as it is for the benefit of the local community and the wildlife.

Since November 2015, the Friends of Manning's Pit have held numerous events, including Art Exhibitions, an Environmental Exhibition, a Photo Competition, Parties, Dances, Coffee Mornings, as well as demonstrations. Two

films have been made about the fields, and an Exhibition about the [Cultural and Historical Aspects of Manning's Pit](#) was held at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon. A [Nationwide Poetry](#) competition was held with great success, also attracting entries from abroad. Messages of support have come from far and wide across the globe.

**Endorsements** by eminent people came from far and wide including the scientist James Lovelock, Sir Jonathon Porritt, Film Directors Ken Loach and Sir Richard Eyre, Richard and Anne Williamson (son and daughter in law of Henry) as well as Dr Sandie Byrne (author of The Unbearable Saki.) The Manning's Pit have many important cultural associations, most particularly with Saki (H H Munro) Henry Williamson (Tarka The Otter) F R Lee RA and J M W Turner RA.

A letter of support was also received from Sir Michael Morpurgo. All the local politicians, including the present MP and two past MPs, County, District Councillors and Town Councillors have supported the campaign to Save Manning's Pit and the Prime Minister held up a Buy Manning's Pit poster in support during the General Election. Go to [www.manningspit.com](http://www.manningspit.com) to learn more.

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Since the pandemic closed down most activity, and the first auction was cancelled, fundraising had to be curtailed, but the amount raised and pledged is now around £83,000.

Whatever happens at the Sale, The Friends of Manning's Pit will continue to campaign for Manning's Pit to be owned by the community. They are in the process of setting up a Manning's Pit Saki Short Story Competition that will be advertised nationwide. Well known judges have already agreed to take part.