

East Lothian Council planning meeting hit by web failure

A public planning meeting was thrown into disarray after the webcast system crashed halfway through an item this week.

East Lothian councillors were nearly an hour into the meeting when the connection to their remote public access was lost.

After more than an hour of delays as they tried to re-establish the link they had to abandon plans to get back online telling participants the hybrid meeting would have to switch to council chambers only.

The live webcast, which allows the public to watch the decisions being made and records it for archiving, was abandoned due to 'technical issues' on Tuesday morning and decisions made issued later via email.

They included the committee's decision to uphold officers recommendations to refuse permission for an old bird hide at Kilspindie Golf Course to be converted into a holiday let and grant permission for a new dog park at Meadowmill, Tranent.

The application from Wemyss and March Estate to turn the hide adjacent to the second and third greens of the golf course into a seasonal holiday let for guests would have seen visitors cross the course on foot or by buggy to reach their accommodation.

However objectors raised concerns that the front door to the new home opened into the line of the third tee and guests

could face '100-mile-an-hour' golf balls flying at them.

Officers backed the concerns saying the applicants had not demonstrated it could go ahead without "increasing the safety hazard to guests" and councillors agreed, refusing permission.

The proposed dog park at Meadowmill Cottages also faced objections as well as support with 11 letters against it and five welcoming the venture.

Applicant Margaret Firth applied for permission to turn agricultural land behind Meadowmill Cottages into three enclosed fields with parking for dog owners to book for private use.

Dog parks have become increasingly popular across Scotland as places where owners can let their pets off lead in secure environments.

Ms Firth said the new dog park would have a member of staff available throughout opening hours to support customers, and the rules of use would be displayed for all visitors.

Objectors raised concerns about safety on the quiet road accessing the site, noise and light pollution, and smells and vermin attracted by its use.

One person objected to dog poo waste being put out for collection kerbside next to their home, while another said they were concerned it would lead to the site being expanded into kennels.

However planning officers recommended approval saying: "The provision of a dog walking facility is a leisure use that requires an area of land large enough to facilitate that use."

Councillors agreed to approve the application but only granted consent for one year initially .

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter