# Holiday let dispute in North Norfolk highlights clash between tourism ambitions and council regulations



Mark Short and his husband Lawrence Wolfe have found themselves embroiled in a contentious battle with North Norfolk District Council over their holiday let, Lilac Cottage, located in Swafield. The couple was compelled to halt operations at their five-star accommodation due to council concerns regarding road safety, specifically related to the size of their driveway. This decision not only forced them to shut down their business but also has significant implications for their future aspirations in the region.

The origins of this dispute can be traced back to the couple's retrospective application for planning permission, submitted after discovering they needed it to sell their property. According to North Norfolk District Council, the driveway lacks adequate visibility onto the main road and does not provide sufficient space for cars to turn around safely. These claims highlight the council's ongoing commitment to maintaining road safety standards, yet the couple argues that their operation has been without incident, having hosted over 120 guests since opening in March 2023.

Despite having invested upwards of £16,000 in transforming a former carpenter's shed into a luxurious stay, which accommodates a maximum of two guests at a rate of £85 per night, the couple feels that their efforts to enhance the local economy and hospitality offerings have been overlooked. In a statement regarding the situation, Mr Short expressed his deep frustration, stating, "It has ruined our life here in Norfolk. It has changed our life completely. We cannot afford to stay here now. It was going to be our forever house."

This case is not isolated. A similar situation occurred with Richard and Victoria Kerrison, who faced a protracted five-year dispute with the council over their holiday let at Roundabout Farm. They were ordered to cease operations due to alleged unauthorized changes and noise complaints, ultimately prompting frustration so profound that they opted to sell their property valued at £1.85 million. This trend suggests a growing confrontation between homeowners wanting to capitalise on the burgeoning holiday let market and local councils enforcing regulations designed to protect community interests.

The rise of holiday lets in North Norfolk has been further complicated by proposed regulations aimed at addressing the local housing crisis. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities posits that increased oversight is necessary, with homeowners potentially needing planning permission to convert properties into holiday lets. This sentiment has garnered support from local politicians like MP Duncan Baker, who has noted the detrimental effect of second homes on community cohesion. In his view, the proliferation of holiday lets has "hollowed out" local communities, making it increasingly difficult for residents to find affordable housing.

Tensions do not just arise from road safety concerns or housing affordability; they also manifest in conflicts over land use. In areas like Sea Palling, traditional fisherman ancestry clashes with the encroachments of holiday home owners, threatening long-established practices and community livelihoods. This tension resonates deeply in the local populace, reflecting a wider cultural conflict over land rights and usage priorities, further exemplified by the recent disputes in neighbouring regions over land designated for boat storage historically utilised by fishermen.

This complex interplay of interests showcases the realities facing local communities in Norfolk, where developers and homeowners seek economic opportunities through holiday lets, while councils and residents advocate for road safety, community integrity, and housing availability. As Mark Short and Lawrence Wolfe await the outcome of their appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, the case serves as a microcosm of broader societal challenges, encapsulating the difficulties of balancing individual ambitions with collective community needs.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25176169.north-norfolk-holiday-let-battle-ramps-appeal-emerges/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.the-independent.com/life-style/couple-council-decision-road-holiday-home-b2744686.html> - Mark Short and his husband Lawrence Wolfe were forced to close their five-star holiday let at Lilac Cottage in Swafield, Norfolk, after North Norfolk District Council deemed their driveway too small for safe guest access. Despite hosting 120 guests without incidents, the council cited inadequate visibility and insufficient space for cars to turn onto the road. The couple had invested over £16,000 in converting a shed into luxury accommodation and charged £85 per night. They are now appealing the council's decision to the Planning Inspectorate.
3. <https://www.northnorfolknews.co.uk/news/24517608.thurning-couple-loses-90k-holiday-let-council-dispute/> - Richard and Victoria Kerrison, owners of Roundabout Farm in Thurning, Norfolk, faced a five-year dispute with North Norfolk District Council over their holiday let business. The council ordered them to cease operating Courtyard Barn as a holiday let, citing unauthorized changes and noise complaints from a neighbor. Despite spending £90,000 on legal battles, the Kerrisons decided to sell their £1.85 million property and relocate, expressing frustration over the council's actions.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/mar/24/holiday-home-owners-threaten-decades-old-way-of-life-for-norfolk-fishers> - In Sea Palling, Norfolk, holiday home owners are challenging the traditional use of land by local fishers for boat storage. Fishermen like Clarke, a third-generation fisher, rely on this land for storing their boats, essential for their operations. The dispute centers on a 1771 law allowing fishermen to store gear near the sea. The local parish council supports the fishers, emphasizing the longstanding practice and its importance to the community's way of life.
5. <https://www.northnorfolknews.co.uk/news/23460886.new-plans-limit-second-holiday-homes-north-norfolk/> - The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities proposed stricter regulations on short-term holiday lets in Norfolk to address the housing crisis. Homeowners may need planning permission to convert properties into holiday lets. North Norfolk MP Duncan Baker welcomed the plans, stating that the high number of second homes has 'hollowed out' communities, making it difficult for locals to afford homes in the towns they grew up in.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/07/12/party-house-holiday-let-will-be-catastrophic-for-wi-branch/> - A proposed conversion of a former hostel into a 10-bedroom holiday let in Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, has raised concerns among local residents and the Women's Institute (WI). The WI hall, established in 1923, is adjacent to the proposed development. Members, many of whom are elderly, fear that the conversion into a 'party house' will disrupt their activities and access to the hall, which is vital for their community events.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4ngej1j19jo> - Norfolk County Council's 'Stay Focused' campaign revealed that 42% of drivers involved in road traffic collisions in Norfolk were distracted before the incident. The campaign aims to encourage residents and businesses to pay more attention while driving, offering free training to help drivers stay focused. Distractions include passengers, sat-navs, and tiredness. Chief Inspector Vicky McParland emphasized that driving while distracted is as destructive as drink or drug-driving.