# Dunstan residents celebrate council decision to block holiday cottages



Residents of Dunstan are expressing relief and celebration following a critical decision by local councillors to block the construction of two new holiday cottages in the village. The proposal had been initially recommended for approval by council planners but faced significant opposition from the community.

The application, submitted by hotelier Janet Stansfield, sought permission to build the holiday lets on land North and East of Dunstan House, which she owns. This marks the second rejection of Stansfield's plans, with a previous application for holiday homes on the same site being refused in April 2023.

According to the Craster Neighbourhood Plan, which governs development in the village, 55% of the homes are already classified as holiday lets, which has led to strict policies against new housing unless intended for permanent occupancy. Furthermore, the Northumberland Local Plan stipulates that new second homes are not supported in parishes where more than 20% of households lack permanent residents.

Despite these policies, council planners maintained that the current application for holiday homes could be considered acceptable, a position supported by Stuart Palmer, the applicant's agent. He highlighted the intention behind the project, stating, "The intention is to create a holiday destination on site, not to create second homes. To stay in one of these houses would cost in excess of £3,500 a week."

However, the planning committee meeting on Thursday drew significant attention, with Craster Parish Council Clerk Adam Shanley characterising it as "groundhog day" for locals, reflecting the ongoing struggle against such developments. Following a considerable level of community opposition, the proposal attracted 124 objections.

Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson, representing the Bamburgh ward, expressed concerns that approving the application could set a detrimental precedent for planning regulations across the country. He voiced: "Every single one of my parishes is now 20% or more holiday lets. If we allow this today, it would set a very dangerous precedent, not just for Northumberland but for the whole of England."

Wooler councillor Mark Mather also emphasized the importance of the neighbourhood plans crafted by the communities, warning, "These areas are at risk of losing their communities, and if you lose them what are you left with?"

Local ward councillor Wendy Pattison moved to propose the refusal of the application, citing that it was incompatible with both the neighbourhood plan and local planning guidelines. As a result of the discussions, the committee voted unanimously against the plans.

After the decision, Craster Parish Council Chairman Martin Smith, who resides in Dunstan, expressed his satisfaction, stating, “We are delighted that the planning application for Dunstan House has been refused for a second time." He underscored the implications of the proposal for not just the locality but for other coastal villages across Northumberland with similar planning frameworks.

Mrs Jackie Reeves, a Dunstan resident and neighbour to Dunstan House, echoed the community's sentiments by highlighting the importance of their collective opposition. "I am proud that our community came together to make their views known with the highest ever number of objections to any planning application in the area," she stated, emphasising the need to maintain the unique character of coastal villages.

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

## References

* <https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/news/politics/council/council-refuses-holiday-lets-plan-at-dunstan-on-the-northumberland-coast-5001141> - This article corroborates the decision by local councillors to block the construction of holiday cottages in Dunstan, highlighting the community's opposition and the council's refusal of the proposal.
* <https://www.nikiinews.com/content-village-joins-battle-against-holiday-lets-proposal/> - This news piece supports the claim of significant community opposition to the holiday lets proposal, noting over a hundred local residents voiced their opposition.
* <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Local-Plan.aspx> - This link would provide information on the Northumberland Local Plan, which stipulates policies against new second homes in areas with a high percentage of non-permanent residents.
* <https://www.craster.co.uk/neighbourhood-plan/> - This link would offer details on the Craster Neighbourhood Plan, which governs development in the village and emphasizes strict policies against new holiday lets.
* <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/planning-inspectorate/decisions-and-notices> - This website provides access to planning decisions and notices, which could include details on previous applications and rejections related to the Dunstan site.