# Couple appeals against North Norfolk council over disputed five-star holiday let access



Mark Short and his husband, Lawrence Wolfe, are currently embroiled in a dispute with North Norfolk District Council over the status of their five-star holiday let at Lilac Cottage in Swafield. The couple was forced to close the holiday rental due to safety concerns raised by the council regarding their driveway's size, which was deemed too small for safe vehicle access. Following a refusal of their retrospective application for the holiday let, the couple has since appealed to the Planning Inspectorate, seeking to overturn the council's decision.

The controversy erupted after the council determined that the driveway did not provide adequate visibility of the main road and lacked sufficient space for cars to turn around safely. Although the council's concerns centred on road safety and parking logistics, Short and Wolfe argue that their apartment has operated without incident since its opening in March 2023, hosting over 120 guests who have encountered no accidents.

In their efforts to create a luxury getaway, the couple invested more than £16,000 converting a modest carpenters' shed into an inviting holiday home. During this period, they also faced additional challenges, including a potential demand from the council for further environmental remediation works estimated at £10,000, aimed at addressing water pollution concerns. Such financial burdens have disheartened the couple, who may now be forced to return to their previous life in Milton Keynes, a prospect they find overwhelmingly disappointing.

The issues surrounding Short and Wolfe's situation highlight broader tensions between local councils and property owners attempting to convert homes into holiday lets. The increased popularity of short-term rentals has prompted authorities like the North Norfolk District Council to advocate for stricter regulations around such conversions. Recently, proposals have emerged to require homeowners to seek planning permission to transform residential properties into holiday accommodations, in light of concerns about housing availability for local residents and the potential for communities to become lifeless off-peak.

This struggle resonates within the larger narrative of balancing tourism and community integrity. A recent debate in Parliament raised critical questions regarding the role of holiday lets in local economies, especially in areas heavily reliant on tourism revenue. Concerns were echoed about the potential for communities to become 'ghost towns' as they transition to an overabundance of holiday rentals, ultimately impacting residents' quality of life.

As Short and Wolfe's appeal unfolds, their case may illuminate the ongoing complexities of planning regulations in tourist-heavy areas, addressing the need for a solution that affirms the rights of property owners while maintaining the essential character and vitality of local communities. Their hopes to preserve their holiday let may not only redefine their future but also reflect the evolving relationship between tourism and community living in North Norfolk and beyond.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
2. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4
3. Paragraphs 2, 3
4. Paragraph 5
5. Paragraph 5
6. Paragraph 6
7. Paragraph 6

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.inkl.com/news/couple-forced-to-close-85-per-night-holiday-home-due-to-barmy-council-decision> - Mark Short and his husband Lawrence Wolfe were compelled to shut down their £85-per-night holiday home in Swafield, Norfolk, after North Norfolk District Council deemed their driveway too small for safe vehicle maneuvering. Despite investing £16,000 in converting a shed into a luxury lodge and hosting 120 guests without incident, the council raised concerns about road safety and required an additional £10,000 for 'nutrient neutrality works' to prevent water pollution. Facing these challenges, the couple decided to return to Milton Keynes. ([inkl.com](https://www.inkl.com/news/couple-forced-to-close-85-per-night-holiday-home-due-to-barmy-council-decision?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.inkl.com/news/the-driveway-decision-that-closed-a-beloved-holiday-home> - In Swafield, Norfolk, Mark Short and Lawrence Wolfe were forced to close their £85-per-night holiday home after the council ruled their driveway insufficient for safe vehicle access. The couple had spent £16,000 converting a shed into a luxury lodge and had hosted 120 guests without issues. The council's decision also imposed an additional £10,000 requirement for environmental mitigation works. Disheartened by these demands, the couple chose to relocate back to Milton Keynes. ([inkl.com](https://www.inkl.com/news/the-driveway-decision-that-closed-a-beloved-holiday-home?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23562151.call-new-powers-curb-airbnbs-broads-coast/> - The Broads Authority and North Norfolk District Council are advocating for new powers to restrict the conversion of properties into holiday lets and second homes along the Broads and Norfolk coast. They propose that homeowners obtain planning permission for such conversions to address concerns about housing availability for locals and the impact on community life. The authorities also support the introduction of a register for short-term lets to better monitor and manage these properties. ([edp24.co.uk](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23562151.call-new-powers-curb-airbnbs-broads-coast/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-services/planning-policy/local-plan-examination/> - The North Norfolk Local Plan is undergoing independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate to assess its soundness and legal compliance. The examination includes public hearing sessions and consultations on proposed changes to address identified concerns, such as housing provision and policy approaches for small growth villages. The process aims to ensure the plan meets the necessary standards before adoption. ([north-norfolk.gov.uk](https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-services/planning-policy/local-plan-examination/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2021/11/24/appeal-highway-safety-fears-scupper-norfolk-ex-army-camp-conversion> - Plans to convert former army training buildings in Norfolk into four holiday lets for disabled individuals were rejected after an inspector identified serious concerns about highway safety for pedestrians and wheelchair users. The appeal highlights the importance of considering accessibility and safety in planning decisions for holiday accommodations. ([theplanner.co.uk](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2021/11/24/appeal-highway-safety-fears-scupper-norfolk-ex-army-camp-conversion?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-05-23/debates/31AA1908-8E63-409D-8802-7F1092416FF5/Short-TermHolidayLetsPlanning> - In a UK Parliament debate, members discussed the impact of short-term holiday lets on local communities, particularly in areas like North Norfolk, where tourism generates significant revenue. Concerns were raised about the availability of housing for local residents and the potential for communities to become 'ghost towns' during off-peak seasons. The debate highlighted the need for balanced policies that support tourism while preserving community integrity. ([hansard.parliament.uk](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-05-23/debates/31AA1908-8E63-409D-8802-7F1092416FF5/Short-TermHolidayLetsPlanning?utm_source=openai))