

Sarah Coffey

From: publicaccess@middevon.gov.uk
Sent: 08 January 2012 19:00
To: Development Control
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 11/02007/MFUL

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 6:56 PM on 08 Jan 2012 from Mr Martin Wolfe.

Application Summary

Address: Land at NGR 307117 120011 (Greenham Reach)
 Holcombe Rogus Devon

Proposal: Use of land for siting of a temporary agricultural worker's dwelling for a period of 5 years together with an agricultural barn with PV array, poultry hatchery/brooder, W.E.T. waste water treatment system, bore hole, and alterations to existing highway access and private ways as part of a scheme for new entrants to ecological agriculture

Case Officer: Mrs Alison Fish

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: Mr Martin Wolfe
Email:
Address: Wakelyns Agroforestry, Metfield Lane, Fressingfield, Eye
 IP21 5SD

**Comments Details**

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: This statement is made in support of the remarkable initiative being developed by the Ecological Land Co-operative to encourage development of sustainable land use by small-scale producers in an ecologically sensitive and attractive part of the English countryside. The Management Plan sets out how the proposed development of three residential smallholdings at Greenham Reach, Devon, 'the site', will be managed. The principal aims of the Plan are to: maintain and enhance the habitats and species diversity; maintain and enhance the landscape quality; and facilitate the provision of low-impact

livelihoods and an increase in productivity, without prejudice to the first two aims. All aspects of these aims are covered in a comprehensive and thorough manner, which is crucial to the aims of the Plan, but which is also fair to the tenants involved. In my view, the principal aims are admirable, particularly in the current environmental situation. There is a pressing need to maintain actively our native ecosystems, habitats and diversity to try to preserve and enhance ecosystem services. As far as possible, this needs to be done within the context of local food production, as one of those services. Regrettably, such initiatives are rare and not as well thought through, so there is an imperative for dissemination of this concept and its practical progress. We need examples like this to illustrate what is possible with sensitive and integrated land use. I understand that concern has been expressed regarding the size of the site as a whole and the viability of dividing the site into three separate holdings. However, given the experience of a number of members of the Organic Growers Alliance and others, I am quite sure that, by using the appropriate methods of ecologically sound production, making use of crop diversity and highly diversified rotations, it will prove possible to make an acceptable and sustained living from each of the three units. An important point in this context is to encourage collaboration and co-operation among the tenants, particularly in relation to marketing and market development. The Plan is admirably comprehensive to the point of seeming highly restrictive, but this ensures that all issues that might interest a concerned outsider are properly covered; in this sense, it goes well beyond any Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) and Cross-Compliance standards as defined by DEFRA and RPA. For the tenant, it is a comprehensive Plan that also acts as a guide for ensuring a high standard of sustainable land management. Moreover, the Plan will be maintained at a high level through provision of an annual system of monitoring and auditing. There may be sound reasons, of course, to introduce modifications to the Plan in the future. For example, there will be a need to slacken adherence to the use of 'native trees' in order to introduce species that are better able to cope with the forecasted climate change effects. I am sure that the ELC is well aware of this and has the mechanisms available to make such changes. Indeed, in this context, the tenants are encouraged to develop plans, based on the site and its needs that fit in with the aims of the ELC. The Plan focuses on a wide range of annual monitoring measures, including landscape, biodiversity, soil, water, etc., which may appear somewhat burdensome to a prospective tenant. However, this is an important tool for maintaining the aims of the ELC. It should also be regarded positively by the ELC and the tenants as a means of recording progress, such as numbers of trees planted, bird and plant species recorded, etc. By maintaining continuous monitoring records of the major aspects, there is an opportunity to build a long-term database for following change in the different aspects of sustainability and climate change. This could be of considerable importance both to the

sustainable development of the site and to the development of the output model for general dissemination. Within this context, tenants should be encouraged to develop their own biodiversity monitoring since external monitoring carried out on an annual basis will inevitably overlook many components of the whole annual cycle. One further small point on monitoring is that it may be necessary to keep the borehole extraction under review in relation to Local Water Authority advice, again thinking of the problems of climate change instability. Given the constraints on land use on the sites, it is likely and desirable that the tenants or the ELC will apply for organic certification. If so, it may then be possible to ease some of the requirements, for example, it may not be necessary to monitor for agrochemical residues if the tenant(s) are certified as organic. Indeed, for simplicity and to encourage organic production, would it be worth considering the possibility of certification of all tenancies as a single unit? This would be of obvious benefit in relation to ELC's aims, but could also be beneficial to ELC and the tenants if certification could be completed through a single inspection (many of the recommendations and constraints laid down by ELC for the tenants are actions required for organic certification) which simplifies administration and helps to keep costs down. From outside, it is difficult to gauge the quality of the imposed planting plan without direct practical experience of the site in question, but the principles applied by ELC and the form of the Management Plan suggest that it is likely to be highly appropriate. In summary, I believe this to be an admirable and timely initiative with a strong chance of success. In this sense, I think that an important quality of potential tenants should be an ability to communicate the story of the Greenham Reach ELC holdings on as broad a stage as possible, as it unfolds. Em. Professor Martin Wolfe Wakelyns Agroforestry

