

Agricultural Appraisal for Greenham Reach – Plot B
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Introduction

Mr. Stanton and Ms. Long will be the lessees of Plot B at Greenham Reach, where they intend to establish a smallholding combining salad leaf, herb and free range egg production, alongside a four acre agroforestry plantation comprising top fruit, soft fruit and herbaceous plants.

I have been asked to provide an agricultural appraisal of the three proposed smallholdings at Greenham Reach, as a result of my academic studies and experience in sustainable agriculture. I have an MSc (Distinction) in Sustainable Agriculture from Wye College, University of London. Following my degree I was employed for two years for Somerset Food Links, a local authority sponsored food initiative, as a research and development worker. I have also undertaken extensive research into how small farmers can sustain their own physical, mental and emotional energy while undertaking the challenging task of earning a livelihood from sustainable land management. The result of my research was a book, “Surviving and Thriving on the Land: How to use your time and energy to run a successful smallholding”, published by Green Books in 2008. I have worked as an agricultural consultant since 2002, producing agricultural appraisals and acting as an expert witness at several successful planning appeal public enquiries.

For fourteen years I have worked on a variety of organic market gardens and mixed farms, producing vegetables, apple juice and cheese for sale at farm shops and farmers' markets. I have also worked as a seasonal lambing assistant at three larger farms. In 2005 I took part in a two week permaculture design course, and since then have tried to integrate permaculture principles

into my own market gardening activities. At present I run a small market garden which supplies several shops and restaurants with a variety of seasonal organic vegetables. As a result, I am familiar with the current markets for such produce and the practical labour requirements of running a market garden.

In addition, for the purposes of this appraisal I have drawn upon the expert opinions of some people who are more knowledgeable than me about certain aspects of this business. The following people have contributed their knowledge of agroforestry and fruit crops:

- Professor Martin Wolfe - Principle Scientific Advisor at The Organic Research Centre at Elm Farm, and owner/manager of Wakelyn's Agroforestry, Suffolk. Specialist knowledge of arable alley cropping in agroforestry systems, and nut production.
- Ben Law - Chestnut coppice worker and forester, Author of "The Woodland Way". Specialist knowledge on squirrel control and mushroom production.
- Dr. Paul Benham – Primrose Organic Centre, which includes a 0.5 acre forest garden producing commercial quantities of soft and top fruit.

Site History and Description

I visited Greenham Reach on 6th August 2011, during an open day for prospective lessees of the smallholdings. I was shown around the site by Ms. Wangler and Mr. Maxey, who explained where the boundaries for the three plots would lie, where the dwellings and barn will be located and the location of the WET water treatment system.

Plot B is approx. 6.8 acres and consists a large field sloping to the South East), combined with a strip of the westernmost field (mainly Plot A). The polytunnels and salad garden will be located in this strip, since it is sheltered and screened by a tall hedge. A further half acre or so of the northern most field at Greenham Reach will also belong to Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton, and I understand that this is where the dwelling is to be located. The whole site is Grade 3 agricultural land and the soil is a clay-loam, with a clay subsoil at 1-2ft depth, while the underlying bedrock is a fine grained sandstone. The presence of Juncus reeds indicates a tendency for the soil to lie wet, but previous arable cultivation may have led to compaction, which has the potential to be alleviated through application of organic matter and the avoidance of heavy machinery. The intended agroforestry plantation in the main field of Plot B is likely to improve the soil and benefit from the moisture.

Description of Proposed Business

The proposed business for Plot B includes half an acre of organic horticultural production, combined with a four acre agroforestry plantation composed of top fruit trees, soft fruit shrubs and a herbaceous under storey. The strategy for earning a livelihood from this seven acre plot is to produce high value products, such as salad leaves, herbs, soft fruit and honey, and then add further value by processing. The business will consist of the following elements:

- Organic salad bags
- Organic culinary herb bags
- Free range eggs
- Honey and beeswax
- A range of gourmet fruit condiments and other salad dressing ingredients will be made from honey, soft fruit and cider vinegar.
- Apple and pear juice
- Organic soaps, balms and shampoos made from home produced honey, beeswax and herbs (To be introduced when other enterprises are fully established).

Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton have lived in the area for over ten years, and are familiar with the local food network. They have identified a niche for their salad and salad dressing ingredients business, and will sell their products at a combination of farmers' markets, cafés and whole food shops.

I understand that during the establishment phase of the business, Ms. Long will be full-time employed on Plot B, while Mr. Stanton will work off-site two or three days a week to supplement the family income and work on the holding the remaining days.

Relevant Planning Policy

This is an application for an agricultural workers' dwelling. As such, the main national planning policy which relates to this proposal is contained in Planning and Policy Statement 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas”:

Para. 10 (p3) Isolated new houses in the countryside will require special justification for planning permission to be granted. Where the special justification for an isolated new house relates to the essential need for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside, planning authorities should follow the advice in Annex A of this PPS.

Annex A of PPS7 goes on to elaborate upon the circumstances under which an isolated dwelling in the countryside may be permissible, “to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work”. While it states that it will often be as

convenient or more sustainable for such workers to live in nearby towns and villages, it acknowledges that *“there will be some cases where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, the site of their work”*. In order to detect attempts to abuse this policy, a series of tests have been devised to ensure that the proposed activities are genuine, are reasonably likely to materialise, are capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time, and require one or more of the people engaged in them to live nearby. The policy for a temporary agricultural workers’ dwelling associated with a new enterprise is as follows:

Para 12 (p3) – If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan, a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation. It should satisfy the following criteria:

- i) clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new farm buildings is often a good indication of intentions);*
- ii) functional need (see para.4)*
- iii) clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;*
- iv) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and*
- v) other normal planning requirements, e.g. on siting and access are satisfied.*

Para 4 (p1) – A functional test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. Such a requirement might arise, for example, if workers are needed to be on hand day and night:

- i) in case animals or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice;*
- ii) to deal quickly with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss of crops or products, for example by frost damage or the failure of automatic systems.*

The Greenham Reach project as a whole has sustainable, land-based living as its core aim, and as such is supported by specific passages in Planning Policy Statement 1.

Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)

Para. (p2) *“Sustainable development is the core principle underlying land use planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations”.*

Para. 4 (p3) states the four aims for sustainable development set out in the Government's 1999 strategy:

- *social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;*
- *effective protection of the environment;*
- *the prudent use of natural resources; and*
- *the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.*

These aims should be pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment, and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being, in ways that protect and enhance the physical environment and optimise resource and energy use.

Para. 19 (p8) Plan policies and planning decisions should be based on, “the potential impacts, positive as well as negative, on the environment of development proposals (whether direct, indirect, cumulative, long term or short term).

Para 22. (p9) Regional planning authorities and local authorities should promote resource and energy efficient buildings; community heating schemes; the use of combined heat and power, small-scale renewable and low carbon-schemes in developments; the sustainable use of water resources; and the use of sustainable drainage systems in the management of run-off.

Para 24 (p10) Planning authorities should ensure that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in their development plans. In particular, they should carefully consider the inter-relationship between social inclusion, protecting and enhancing the environment, the prudent use of natural resources and economic development – for example, by recognising that economic development, if properly planned for, can have positive social and environmental benefits, rather than negative impacts, and that environmental protection and enhancement can in turn provide economic and social benefits.

The application for an agricultural workers dwelling at Greenham Reach represents a proposal for development in the open countryside, which in general is discouraged by the Mid Devon Core Strategy in order to protect the landscape and reduce car use. However, in line with national policy, there are exceptions when the dwelling is for a person employed full-time in agriculture:

COR18 "Development outside the settlements defined by COR13 to COR17 will be strictly controlled, enhancing the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Detailed development control policies will permit agricultural and other appropriate rural uses, subject to appropriate criteria, as follows: a)housing essential to accommodate an agricultural or forestry worker and accommodation ancillary to a dwelling;

If the exception above is proven, there are a number of other elements within the Core Strategy that support this proposal specifically, due to its focus on a very high level of environmental stewardship combined with increasing access to affordable opportunities to farm. I have identified the following as policies and principles that are relevant to the Greenham Reach smallholdings:

Para 4.2 Community Strategy for Devon (2004) - "By 2015 we want Devon to be a county with safe, healthy and inclusive communities, a strong and diverse economy and a cherished environment". In order to achieve these aspirations, the plan sets out a number of goals, the first two of which are:

"... help tackle national and global environmental issues, make it easier to adopt greener lifestyles and working practices through the conservation of natural resources, recycling, traffic management, enhancing landscape and biodiversity, adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change". (p16)

"Ensure that economic prosperity is shared by all parts of the community, whilst also maximising the benefits of Devon's unique quality of life by encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship, supporting a skilled and adaptable workforce, raising productivity, building upon environmental assets and providing sustainable transport solutions". (p17)

Meeting Employment Needs (COR 4) "The employment needs of the community will be met through: c) measures to diversify the agricultural and rural economy in ways which protect countryside character. (p31)

Climate Change (COR 5) "Measures will be sought which minimise the impact of development on climate change and contribute towards national and regional targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas

emissions, including.....c) all new development will be carbon neutral in development and use.....” (p33)

In addition, the Mid Devon Local Plan, Adopted in 2006, contains the following policy relating to agricultural buildings in its economy section:

E14 Agricultural buildings will be permitted outside the Defined Settlement Limits provided that: i) the primary purpose is to support farming activities related to the land holding or the immediate agricultural community and the building is needed for that purpose; ii) the building is located so as not to cause harm to the living conditions of nearby residents and the character and appearance of the area.

Application of Planning Policy

I will begin by applying the national policy for “Agricultural, Forestry and Other Occupational Dwellings” (PPS7, Annex A) COR 18 of the Mid Devon Core Strategy 2026 states that “*Detailed development control policies will permit agricultural and other appropriate rural uses, subject to appropriate criteria, as follows: a)housing essential to accommodate an agricultural or forestry worker and accommodation ancillary to a dwelling;* I take these criteria to be the same as those referred to in PPS7, Annex A (Para 12). By applying the tests outlined in PPS7, I will therefore also be addressing policy COR of the Mid Devon Core Strategy.

- 1) Clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new farm buildings is often a good indication of intentions)*

I have met Mr. Stanton and Ms. Long briefly, only once, but have read about their experience and seen the references provided from previous employers for the ELC selection process. Both members of the couple seem to have a good spectrum of experience combining horticultural experience, food processing and catering, and business management. In particular, the fact that Mr. Stanton has worked at Linscombe Farm, which appears to be a highly successful organic market garden, will provide valuable commercial growing experience to complement his experience of growing for residents and courses at Beech Hill, and Ms. Long's experience from Tiverton Community Garden. Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton have identified a niche in the local market for salad leaves, herbs and dressings, and appear to have thoroughly researched the market for their proposed products. I understand they have participated in a course in salad growing with Charles Dowding, a highly successful commercial salad grower, who has written several bestselling books on organic gardening. If they follow his model, they are likely to provide themselves with a good livelihood. Their catering experience and training in food hygiene gives me confidence that they have the skills and

awareness to process and market their produce safely. I believe they are entirely genuine in their aims to earn their livelihood from the land at Greenham Reach, and are fully capable of achieving them.

2) *functional need*

There are several reasons why I believe it is necessary for Ms Long and Mr. Stanton to live on site in order to effectively manage their smallholding, and these relate mainly to their salad leaf and poultry enterprises.

Salad crop cultivation and harvest - Salad leaf and herb cultivation will provide the mainstay of the business in the early years. Such horticulture is highly labour intensive, and for success relies on routine seed sowing, planting, irrigation and harvest to ensure a constant, year round supply of high quality leaves. It will be necessary for them to maintain a regular seed sowing routine, to ensure a succession of seedlings are ready for planting, while planting seedlings and keeping them weed free will be ongoing throughout the year. Many of these tasks can take place within the working day, but a few need to occur early in the morning or late at night

- *Harvesting* – The optimum time to pick salad leaves is early in the morning on the day of sale. This is because the leaves are still moist and cool from the night, and will not have started to wilt. During the summer, but even during the spring and autumn on warm, sunny or windy days, there is a window of opportunity between 5am and 9am, when it is cool and dew still lies. Leaves picked and immediately packed at this time will arrive at market looking fresh and appealing, and will have a longer shelf life in retail shops. Salad leaf picking, sorting and packing is a detailed and time consuming process, due to the number of different leaves. At the scale of salad production proposed by Ms. Long, I would expect most mornings will be spent harvesting either salad leaves or herbs for at least 2-3 hours. Early morning harvesting is also necessary in order to prepare produce in time for markets or retail deliveries, which often require produce by 9am.
- *Watering of seedlings and salad plants* – The quality and continuity of salad leaves will require a disciplined watering schedule, since such plants are very tender and vulnerable to drying up. Seedlings will need daily watering, and salad plants in the polytunnels will need watering every 2-3 days depending on the weather conditions. The Soil Association Organic Standards state that horticulturists should “*water crops in the evening or early morning to minimise evaporation losses*” (Soil Association 2011). This is because it is cool, and less likely to be windy at these times.
- *Frost protection of seedlings and salad plants* – Although many of the salad leaves proposed for the winter are relatively frost hardy, it is still

necessary to protect them with horticultural fleece prior to harvest, otherwise they will not be of a quality worth picking until later in the day after a frost.

- *Slug protection* – Seedlings propagated in the polytunnel must be protected against slugs and snails during night time slug patrols. A single slug can do immense damage to a tray of seedlings, and such losses can negatively affect the succession, which relies on seedlings being ready to plant out at regular intervals.
- *Wind and snow protection of polytunnels* – On windy nights polytunnels are vulnerable to being blown, and in extreme situations it is sometimes necessary to cut the plastic to prevent the frame being distorted. Such a decision would have to be made very quickly, and the situation could not be assessed adequately from a distance, yet a new cover costs at least £200, so it is not a decision to take lightly. Similarly, when snow falls are heavy, it is also necessary to be vigilant to sweep snow off the plastic and prevent frame distortion. During the last two cold winters I have seen photographs of polytunnel frames dramatically distorted by snow, and this could have been prevented if a person had been present on site to sweep the snow away as it fell.
- *Protection of outdoor crops against pests* – Salad crops are particularly susceptible to attack from rabbits and deer, as well as slugs and caterpillars. While I anticipate that the salad garden will be securely fenced against rabbits and deer, ongoing vigilance is required to prevent breeches in the fence. In the event of the fence being breached, dawn and dusk are the best times to see rabbits in the garden and deal with them. There is nothing like a regular human presence, preferably with a dog, walking around at dusk or early in the morning to deter pests. Furthermore, slugs and snails are active at night, and can be hand picked off plants by torchlight and disposed of.

Chicken Protection – The chickens require a least twice daily attention for letting out, feeding and watering, egg collection and putting in again at dusk. In the summer they will stay out until 9 or 10pm, meaning that were the family not resident on site it would be necessary for someone to return to the farm to shut up the chickens. It is during this dusk period that they are at greatest risk from fox attack. The chickens are to be used partly as insect pest control in the salad and herb garden, so it will also be necessary to move them from place to place in the morning and/or evening, and ensure that they do not get into areas being cultivated, where they could cause immense damage.

While each of these individual reasons justifies an on-site dwelling for at least part of the year, it is the combination of all these tasks that makes a case for there being a functional need for an agricultural workers dwelling. It is the multi-functional nature of the holding that makes it possible to generate the income forecast from such a small farm. Throughout long working days, and throughout the year, a flow of tasks require the attention of at least one

person, usually two and sometimes children as well. The stress of managing such a complex land-based business from afar would be unbearable, and the project would be forced to simplify dramatically, thus compromising its economic viability. I have studied cases where people have tried to run small-scale land-based businesses from a distance, and they rarely last for long. They are not sustainable in terms of “human energy”.

The practical viability of the holding relies on the integration of the life of the family with the farm. As highlighted above, the salad enterprise will require work to be undertaken at unsociable hours, early in the morning and late into the evening. Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton have a five year old daughter. Were the applicants unable to live on site, they would have to travel in and out from the holding several times per day to manage the household (preparing and eating meals, washing, cleaning etc) alongside running their business. Family life would inevitably suffer, if one or both parents regularly were absent from home first thing in the morning, at mealtimes and at bed time. Furthermore, their daughter is too young to be left totally on her own, which means that on rainy days or if she is ill, one parent would have to stay at home with her. If the family are able to live on site, they could leave her inside, while they get on with jobs on the holding that are within shouting distance of the house. In permaculture, salad and herb production are both enterprises that should be located close to the dwelling due to their need for frequent attention.

Finally, the applicants are keen to minimise their environmental impact by living and working on the land. Many of the benefits of low impact living would be lost if they were unable to live on site. They would have to commute at least twice daily to the farm by car and would not be able to benefit from the renewable energy available and energy efficient design of the house. In section below, “Relevant Appeal Decisions”, I outline other cases in which residential planning permission has been granted on the grounds of permaculture demonstration purposes and the multiplicity of tasks that must be performed.

I therefore conclude that the needs of the salad and herb business, combined with protection of the chickens and the desire to minimise environmental impact constitute a clear functional need. I do not believe it would be possible for Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton to carry out the proposed business were they unable to live where they are working.

3) clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;

I have studied the business plan for Plot B in great detail. The strategy for generating a livelihood from this smallholding is to focus on high value products, such as salads, herbs and honey; to add value, by processing top and soft fruit into juices and fruit condiments; and to spread risk through a diverse product range and marketing strategy. Some of the income will be

obtained from annual crops which it will be possible to establish quickly (such as salads, eggs and honey), while the products of the agroforestry plantation, will take longer to contribute to income, due to the time the trees will take to mature. Agroforestry is a specialist area of agriculture, with which I am not familiar. I have therefore sought advice from others (Martin Wolf and Paul Benham) who have assured me that the figures in the business plan are achievable. In addition, I refer you to the letter of support written by Martin Crawford, who is a leading authority in agroforestry in the UK and runs the Agroforestry Research Trust (Appendix B).

During the establishment phase the business proposed for Plot B is comprised of six main enterprises, with interconnections between them. I understand that in the long term Ms. Long wishes to develop a range of herbal soaps and shampoos using beeswax, honey and plants from the forest garden, but this will only begin in year 5 with the lip balm enterprise. I will comment on each of the individual enterprises, before making some general comments on the business as a whole:

Salad leaves – During the first five years, commercial salad leaf production will be the mainstay of the business, supplying from 18 to 140 bags per week in years one to five. I see no reason why this production target should not be achieved, and believe that there will be a strong demand for the product, providing the leaves are sufficiently fresh, diverse and of good quality. The addition of perennial leaves from the agroforestry area will add a unique selling point, which may provide an edge over competitors.

Herbs – Sales of herbs are predicted to increase from just under a kilo per week (including small and catering sized bags) to 10kg per week in Year 5, bringing an income of £7,800 by year 5. Once again, I believe this is an achievable target and I believe they will be in demand.

Fruit condiments – A central feature of this business appears to be the branded range of fruit condiments made from soft fruits from the forest garden, combined with honey, which will be sold as ingredients for salad dressings. The processing of soft fruits into these condiments will provide a less time-sensitive method of marketing perishable soft fruits, while increasing the price for which they can be sold. Such an enterprise relies on customers having sufficient disposable income to purchase non essential products, and in this current time of recession it might be wise to start this enterprise cautiously. However, I understand that feedback received by Ms. Long during her market research revealed a gap in the market for such products.

Fruit juice – Apple and pear juices will start to generate an income in Year 3 (£70 from 35 bottles), rising to £150 for 75 bottles in Year 5. Production is anticipated to rise thereafter to 350 and 225 bottles of apple and pear juice respectively, once the trees are mature (years 6-10), increasing the annual income stream from this enterprise to £819. The planned price of £2 per bottle is modest for organic apple juice, which is often retailed at £2.50-£2.80/bottle. Unless there is significant local competition, I see no reason

why this enterprise shouldn't meet and exceed its production targets. Furthermore, once the juicing equipment has been purchased, this is an enterprise that could potentially be expanded if desired, using surplus fruit from other holdings.

Eggs – I understand that maximum productivity not a priority, as the chickens are as much a pest control solution and means of manure production as an enterprise. The breed Maran produces fewer than average eggs per bird, but the eggs are a dark brown colour that proves popular with customers at farmers' markets. The eggs make a useful addition to the overall income of the business and, being produced in modest quantities, are likely to find a market even in this area of competition for egg sales.

Honey – The honey enterprise is projected to go through a rapid phase of growth after year 1, from 5 to 25 hives. While I think that the figures for honey production from the 25 hives are accurate, I anticipate that while learning beekeeping on this scale it may take more than two years to achieve optimum yields. Nevertheless, I believe that in time it will be possible to reach these production targets and for the honey to form an ingredient in the fruit condiments.

Lip Balm – The lip balm business will begin in Year 5. Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton have planned a low and slow growth trajectory for this product and I believe this is a sensible approach.

The profit and loss tables for years 1 to 5 show a progressive increase in annual income, expenses and operating profit. By year 5, an annual income of £18,879 is anticipated, with a net profit of £11,900. I understand that of this £9,000 will be taken as owner drawings leaving £2,900 to be retained in the business. From year 6, the annual profit is projected to rise, but the applicants intend for withdrawals to remain around £9,000. While £9,000 is a low income for a family of three, it is by no means unrealistic, especially when many of their living costs such as accommodation and subsistence (valued at £2,486.16, p14 of business plan) will be provided in kind on the land. I know several families living a low impact, land-based lifestyles, which live on a similar annual income. Furthermore, I understand that in the first two years of the business, Mr. Stanton will continue to work off-site as a builder for two or three days per week, to supplement the family's income. The sum retained in the business from the end of year 5 will provide a significant buffer in case of unexpected expenses or drops in sales. If all goes according to plan, some of this profit is likely to be reinvested in the business, leaving a sum available for saving each year.

The long term production potential of the agro-forestry plot must also be considered. The benefits of this resource, which is likely to take at least five years to mature, will only really start to appear on the profit and loss sheet after the initial five year temporary permission has ended. The establishment of the agroforestry plantation will require labour and investment which could have been devoted to enterprises with a more short-term gain. An

agroforestry enterprise has been chosen due to the benefits it will bring to the land in terms of soil improvement and increased biodiversity, as well as the unusual fruits and salad leaves it will provide. In addition, Ms. Long's long term aim is to use her skills as a biochemist to develop a range of organic herbal soaps and shampoos. Compared to annual crops, perennial crops, once they are established, are a highly efficient and sustainable way to produce biomass. The agroforestry plantation, combined with the bee enterprise will provide the raw materials for natural beauty products for the local market, for which there is likely to be a strong demand.

4) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and

There is no other accommodation in existence on site. An internet search of local estate agents revealed very little suitable accommodation for rent in the local area. There was one two bedroom cottage available for in Holcombe Rogus for £650 per month, while in nearby Sampford Peverell all properties for rent cost between £725 and £900 per month. In Wellington, which is five miles away, rental properties were cheaper, ranging from £395pcm for a one bedroom house to £595pcm for a three bedroom one. However, these were more urban properties, unsuitable for the muddy boots, dogs and seed trays involved in running a smallholding. Furthermore, living five miles away from the holding would result in a very high annual mileage as it would be necessary to drive to and from the holding at least once per day, and in many cases twice or three times in order to integrate early and late jobs on the smallholding with childcare and the domestic demands of running a household.

Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)

Para. 4 (p3) states the four aims for sustainable development set out in the Government's 1999 strategy:

- *social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;*
- *effective protection of the environment;*
- *the prudent use of natural resources; and*
- *the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.*

These aims should be pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment, and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being, in ways that protect and enhance the physical environment and optimise resource and energy use.

I believe that the smallholdings at Greenham Reach address each of these aims the integrated way envisaged in this policy. It could be said that they will not promote high levels of economic growth. However, I would contend that they are addressing some the many problems resulting from the relentless pursuit of economic growth at the expense of the environment and society, and creating a more sustainable form of economic growth that is based on primary production.

Para. 19 (p8) Plan policies and planning decisions should be based on, “the potential impacts, positive as well as negative, on the environment of development proposals (whether direct, indirect, cumulative, long term or short term).

In my view the positive impacts of the proposed development considerably outweigh the negative ones, such as the visual impact of a development in the open countryside and the potential generation of traffic. In the immediate future, this trio of holdings will provide much needed opportunities for young people to enter the agricultural sector, providing valuable examples of sustainable rural enterprise. The emphasis on environmental protection, low carbon lifestyles and minimal fossil fuel use, means that the smallholders at Greenham Reach will be preparing for the long term future when fossil fuels will be more expensive and local food will be a necessity rather than a luxury. I believe that the skills and infrastructure that they will be developing from the day they start their enterprises will be highly valued in the future.

Para 22. (p9) Regional planning authorities and local authorities should promote resource and energy efficient buildings; community heating schemes; the use of combined heat and power, small-scale renewable and low carbon-schemes in developments; the sustainable use of water resources; and the use of sustainable drainage systems in the management of run-off.

I understand that the proposed low impact dwellings will incorporate several of the energy efficient and renewable energy technologies listed above.

Mid Devon Core Strategy 2026

Para 4.2 Community Strategy for Devon (2004) - “By 2015 we want Devon to be a county with safe, healthy and inclusive communities, a strong and diverse economy and a cherished environment”.

In my view, the proposed developments at Greenham Reach embody the ambitions set out in paragraph 4.2. The principle aim of the Ecological Land Co-operative (ELC) is to create affordable access to small-scale farming opportunities, to enable new entrants into agriculture to establish sustainable land-based enterprises. ELC requires the lessees of its smallholdings to adhere to strict environmental principles in their land management and

lifestyles. As such, the smallholdings at Greenham Reach will simultaneously achieve health (by encouraging physically active employment combined with the production and consumption of fresh, organic food); inclusivity (by enabling a previously excluded sector of society access to agricultural livelihoods); a diverse economy (by allowing new agricultural enterprises providing foods and crafts to be directly sold to the public) and protection of a cherished environment (by requiring the very highest standards of environmental stewardship).

Meeting Employment Needs (COR 4) "The employment needs of the community will be met through: c) measures to diversify the agricultural and rural economy in ways which protect countryside character. (p31)

The proposed enterprise will add diversity to the agricultural sector by providing a number of innovative food and craft products to local people, whilst managing the land to conserve and enhance its biodiversity, protect its hedgerows and add a several orchards.

Climate Change (COR 5) "Measures will be sought which minimise the impact of development on climate change and contribute towards national and regional targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including.....c) all new development will be carbon neutral in development and use....." (p33)

By producing food for local markets using organic methods Mr. Stanton and Ms. Long will be reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Most salads sold in supermarkets will have been transported hundreds of miles between the farm and the consumer, requiring a centralised distribution network and refrigerated lorries. The salad leaves produced here will be cultivated and harvested by hand, and sold within a thirty mile radius of the holding. Central to organic farming is the building of soil using organic matter (compost and manure), a process which stores carbon and thus removes it from the atmosphere. Furthermore, by living in a well insulated, low impact house, run using renewable energy (solar electricity and wood fuel heating), the family will be further cutting their carbon emissions compared to the national average.

E14 Agricultural buildings will be permitted outside the Defined Settlement Limits provided that: i) the primary purpose is to support farming activities related to the land holding or the immediate agricultural community and the building is needed for that purpose; ii) the building is located so as not to cause harm to the living conditions of nearby residents and the character and appearance of the area.

The agricultural buildings associated with this proposal are all necessary to support the business concerned. I understand that great care will be taken to minimise the visual impact of all the structures, by locating them out of the

view of nearby residents and planting hedges/belts of trees/orchards to screen any buildings that might be seen from further afield.

Relevant Appeal Decisions

The proposed business is mainly horticultural, with only a small livestock element, represented by the chicken enterprise. I am aware of two appeal decisions relating solely to organic horticultural enterprises, which have acknowledged that the detailed attention required to make a diverse organic market garden a success require a worker to reside on site.

- Green and Pleasant, an organic market garden at Upsydling, Dorset (APP/F1230/c/07/2055628 and 9) – Among the individual functional needs listed in Inspector C.A.Thompson's decision letter (paragraph 17) are: manual polytunnel ventilation, monitoring temperature and humidity in seedling propagation, emergency heating of polytunnels to protect against frost, early morning and late night irrigation both inside and outside polytunnels, protection of polytunnels and their contents from wind damage, protection against pests such as badgers, rooks and pheasants and harvesting leaf crops at cool times of day in the summer. He concluded that, *“although none of these matters individually would mean that workers are needed to be on hand day and night, taken together they make a compelling case for someone being required to live on or very near the premises. This to my mind represents a clear need of the enterprise rather than that being just a measure to gratify the personal preferences of the individuals concerned. The functional test has been satisfied”*. Temporary permission was granted.
- Trevalon Organic Vegetables, Liskeard, Cornwall (12th August 2008 APP/K0805/C/07/2058055 and 2058053) – A number of individual functional needs were accepted by Inspector Roger Priestly in his decision report in paragraphs 15 to 19. These include late night action to protect seedlings from unexpected frost damage in March and April, responding to windy weather conditions and pest attack, prevention of petty theft and routine jobs such as watering and harvesting. He concluded that *“taking all these factors into account, I consider it to be essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for someone to be readily available at most times”*. Temporary permission was granted.

The case for multiple functional needs at Greenham Reach Plot B is, in my view, strengthened in comparison to the purely horticultural holdings, due to the needs of the poultry within their enterprise mix. It has been also been recognised in several recent planning decisions, that the multiple needs of a small-scale but diverse holding constitute a legitimate functional need for an agricultural workers dwelling. These include:

- Fivepenny Farm, a mixed organic farm on 43 acres in Wootton Fitzpaine, Dorset (1st April 2005 APP/F1230/C/04/1162420, 1159852 and 1162421) – Inspector B. C. Wilkinson decided that *“the diversity and character of this enterprise is bound to give rise not only to the occasional emergency, but also to a constant stream of smaller problems”* and concluded, *“on balance, that taking into account the nature of the enterprise, the early stage in its development, and the character and location of the appeal site, the only practicable and available solution to the needs I have identified is for both families to live on that site”*. Fivepenny Farm was granted permanent permission on the same grounds of functional need in August 2009.
- Ourganics Evolving Systems, Litton Cheney, Dorset – Following a period of temporary permission, Ms. Pat Bowcock was given permanent permission at Committee (West Dorset District Council) in November 2009. This was on the grounds of the multiple functional needs of a mixed horticultural, poultry and educational site, and the need to be resident to fulfil the demonstration function of the permaculture project. Her main business centred around the production of salad leaves both outside and in a polytunnel, with similar functional needs to those outlined in this appraisal.
- Blackthorn Farm – Temporary permission for an agricultural workers dwelling for this 28 acre holding in West Dorset was given at Committee in September 2010. In his agricultural appraisal, Peter Williams of Reading Agricultural Consultants recognised that, *“the activities – and sustainability ethos – undertaken at Blackthorn Farm are sufficiently similar to the Fivepenny Farm model for the above findings to be highly relevant, and a material consideration sufficient for the functional test to be met.”* (See Appendix A)

A number of other recent planning decisions have recognised the need for appellants to live on site due to their sustainability objectives, resulting in powerful educational examples of permaculture in action:

- Quicken Wood, Wealden District Council (APP/c1435/C/08/2076232) – Inspector Alan Woolnough concluded that the couple, who “have an underlying objective of living in a sustainable and ultimately self-sufficient lifestyle requiring a holistic approach” would not be able to achieve their aims, “particularly in relation to recycling and utilisation of renewable energy”, if they were living elsewhere in an ordinary dwelling. Temporary permission was granted.
- Steward Community Woodland (1 June 2009, APP/J9497/C/08/2083419-28) - The grounds upon which a second round of temporary permission were granted to this woodland permaculture community by Inspector Brian Cook were, “that the venture has evolved into one where the education resource provided

by what is, in effect, a demonstration project of permaculture principles being applied in practice is of significant wider benefit” and “having regard to the total reliance on renewable energy sources and reclaimed/reused materials I believe the development meets many of the national policy objectives concerning sustainable development”.

Other Material Considerations

Attraction of new entrants into agriculture – The average age of farmers is consistently increasing, while fewer young people are entering the profession due to low remuneration combined with a perception of the work being hard and monotonous. This trend is a cause for concern, due to the uncertainty it brings about who will have the skills to manage the countryside in the future. It appears that organic farming is more attractive to younger people than conventional farming. A survey conducted by the University of Essex found that in 2003 the average age of organic farmers was 49, compared to 56 in the conventional sector (Maynard and Green 2004, p51). The lack of affordable opportunities to begin farming is, however, a major barrier to many new entrants. Blackthorn Farm provides a model of how a small farm can produce a livelihood for a young family, as well as an attractive and rewarding employment opportunity. Templates such as this are needed if we are to boost national food security and manage the landscape.

The Transition Movement - There is evidence that the age of cheap and plentiful oil is nearing its end. Global peak oil production is predicted to occur between now and 2015, after which the cost of oil will start to rise. It is important that as a society we plan for a future which is less dependent on fossil fuel energy, to prevent the potential economic instability that the increased cost of oil could cause. Already, through the “Transition Towns” movement many communities in the UK are already planning for this eventuality (Hopkins 2008). The smallholdings at Greenham Reach will contribute to this movement by providing a rich array of local food products and a living model of sustainable agriculture which is actively reducing its reliance on fossil fuels.

Low Impact Policy – Other parts of the UK, mainly in Wales, are actively encouraging low impact development through planning policies aimed at projects like that proposed at Greenham Reach. Pembrokeshire National Park Authority's Policy 52 (Low Impact Development making a Positive Contribution) and the draft replacement for the Welsh Assembly Government's TAN6 (One Planet Development) two such examples.

Conclusions

The smallholdings created by the Ecological Land Co-op are designed to provide new entrants into agriculture with affordable opportunities to produce local food using sustainable farming methods.

Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton's proposed business is based on a detailed knowledge of the local food system in this area, and the recognition of a gap in the market for salad leaves and salad dressings. I believe that their business meets the tests in PPS7, Annex A for evidence of intention and ability, and there being no alternative accommodation available to meet their needs. From a financial perspective, the business plan is ambitious, comprising no less than seven enterprises. While I have no doubt that a salad, herb and egg business could be established on this site to provide a full time livelihood for one or two people within five years, Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton have chosen to invest some of their time and money into establishing an agroforestry plot. The financial benefits of this investment will only just be starting to show within five years, but will really begin between years 6 and 10. In the long term, the agroforestry plot will provide a wider range of opportunities for diversification and marketing land-based produce than would be possible from just annual crops, while providing environmental benefits. I do therefore believe that this business is planned on a sound financial basis, even though I think it will only just be providing a full-time wage for the family by year 5.

I am certain that the business would be unable to operate without the family living on site, due to the complexity of managing so many different enterprises with multiple functional needs. Its financial success will rely on producing high yields from small areas of land, and each enterprise is highly labour intensive in nature. The potential losses resulting from living off-site would be proportionally more significant, due to the scale of operation.

I understand that the leasehold model which the Ecological Land Co-operative is pioneering has built into it a mechanism to ensure that the smallholders at Greenham Reach continue to farm. Should the Applicants' business fail for any reason, they will be in breach of their lease should they cease to earn his living from agriculture, and hence will risk losing the smallholding. Not only will this provide an extremely strong incentive for them to ensure that the business works, but it also provides a fall-back in the event of unforeseen circumstances preventing Ms. Long and Mr. Stanton from carrying out their proposed business. In this event, either another smallholder would be found to purchase Plot A, or, due to the low impact nature of the structures, the land could revert to pasture and orchard. However, having studied the Applicants' plans with great care, I see no reason why they should not proceed as proposed.

Furthermore, I have greater confidence in the potential success of this business as part of a trio of low-impact smallholdings than I would if it were isolated. The long hours and hard work required to establish a business such

as that proposed mean that to have both practical and moral support close at hand will be invaluable. The interactions which will occur between the three businesses, in terms of trading resources, tools and labour will enable each to work more efficiently, while the sharing of resources such as the barn, the solar array and the water treatment system reduces their individual consumption of resources. I am sure that as the holdings develop they will also develop efficient, co-ordinated distribution and transport systems that reduce the amount of traffic compared to three isolated smallholdings. Whilst researching for my book, "Surviving and Thriving on the Land" I visited and interviewed smallholders living in a wide range of different circumstances, and concluded that the ideal model is exactly that proposed by ELC. There are a handful of examples of such "clusters" of smallholdings already in operation, but I believe that as a society we would be making better progress towards sustainable development if more young people were offered opportunities such as those available at Greenham Reach.

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Mid Devon Local Development Framework – Core Strategy 2026 (Adopted July 2006)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004). Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005). Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

Soil Association (2011) Soil Association Organic Standards: Farming and growing, Revision 16.4. Para 4.16.25, p89

Appendix A – Reading Agricultural Appraisal for Blackthorn Farm, West Dorset



Our Ref: 4932dr-1
Your Ref: 1/D/10/000673

12 July 2010

For the attention of Mr D Rogers

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Dear Mr Rogers,

Application No: 1/D/10/000673

Proposal: Retention of an existing timber-framed structure used for residential purposes for an agricultural worker's dwelling at Blackthorn Farm, for a temporary period in the first instance of 3 years

Location: Blackthorn Farm, Shipton Road, Shipton Gorge, Bridport

I write further to your letter of 19th May regarding the planning application submitted by Mr and Mrs Mark Rainbow for retrospective permission to retain a dwelling at Blackthorn Farm, Shipton Road, Shipton Gorge, Bridport. Your letter of instruction requests that Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC) undertake an appraisal of the application for a dwelling in the context of the current planning policy advice for development in the countryside, particularly that provided in Annex A to Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7).

The appraisal has been undertaken by P Williams (Director of RAC) and is an independent assessment of the planning application. The report does not make any recommendation for, or against, the application. The report does not consider the wider sustainability or lifestyle issues raised by this application, as these are concerned with planning issues rather than with agriculture and horticulture.

In order properly to apprise myself of the matters of fact, a site visit was undertaken on 14th June when I was able to meet and discuss the application with the applicants. The facts presented in this report are derived from:

- the comments made during the site visit;
- the documents submitted with the planning application, including an appraisal of need prepared by Rebecca Laughton.

Background

Blackthorn Farm extends to 11.3ha (28 acres) and was purchased by the applicants in January 2008. Included in the sale were 19 sheep, four cows and a goat, and the unit was purchased to enable the Rainbows realise a lifelong ambition of living off the land in as sustainable manner as possible. For the first fifteen months this was achieved whilst living in rented accommodation in Symondsburry and commuting to their farmland, but it became apparent that such a situation was not sustainable and so



the house on site was erected over one long weekend - by the Rainbows and an army of helpful friends

The design of the house is entirely in keeping with the sustainability ethos and it is not connected to electricity or sewerage; rather it relies on renewable energy sources including solar systems; and compost toilets. In future water may be sourced from a spring with the use of ram pumps. The wood for the main structure was all sourced locally and the roof is turfed.

The "farm" is intended to provide for three basic tenets, described in more detail in the application submissions, including:

- i) local food production (including for home consumption) - with beef, lamb, eggs, vegetables and fruit. Although definitive stock numbers have not been provided it is intended that stock numbers will be increased according to the stocking capability of the land with sheep and Dexter cattle; poultry numbers are also being expanded as the market for eggs is developed;
- ii) the establishment of an alternative energy demonstration barn. Planning permission for a new barn will be sought in due course for a barn for lambing, chick rearing and seedling germination with all the energy requirements for the barn - the lighting and heating systems - provided by renewal systems including wind and solar power and anaerobic digestion and the barn will be used as a demonstration facility with courses provided demonstrating the systems deployed;
- iii) land-based healing. The applicants are both trained in the provision of alternative therapy treatments including Shiatsu and provide such services from a centre in Bridport. It is hoped that this aspect can be provided in a treatment room incorporated in the new dwelling.

The agricultural appraisal submitted with the application makes the statement that the three aspects of the proposal are integrally linked such that the failure to be able to provide one of the aspects would result in the failure of the whole, though whether such justification can properly be made for the "land-based healing" aspect is possibly tenuous. However, this element does provide a holistic plan for the unit - and could be construed as a farm diversification project and accord with Local Plan Policy ET5, albeit it is intended to be operated from an, as yet, unauthorised structure.

The application before the Council seeks retrospective permission to retain the dwelling, in the first instance, on a temporary basis for three years albeit the dwelling is clearly intended as long-term/permanent structure.

Policy Background

The Development Plan Framework against which this application will be determined includes Policy HS6 of the West Dorset District Local Plan (2006) which deals with dwellings for essential rural workers. This sets out nine criteria which have to be met if dwellings are to be permitted for agricultural workers, as follows:

- i) *that it is essential for the operation of the holding or enterprise, for a worker or additional worker to be resident on that holding or enterprise and the need cannot be met in another way;*
- ii) *that no dwelling serving or closely connected with the holding or enterprise has recently been sold separately from the land, or otherwise alienated from the land;*
- iii) *wherever possible, the dwelling is located close to existing buildings, to meet the functional needs of the farm or enterprise;*
- iv) *the scale of the proposed dwelling is appropriate to the established functional requirement of the holding or enterprise;*

- v) *where the application is for a permanent dwelling, the holding or enterprise has been established for at least three years, has been profitable for at least one of them, and can show evidence of a sound financial basis justifying the future need for the new dwelling;*
- vi) *where the application is for a new permanent dwelling, there are no suitable buildings on or adjoining the holding or associated with the enterprise (within the control of the applicant) which are capable of being converted for the accommodation purposes;*
- vii) *occupancy is limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture or forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person and to any resident dependent; or in connection with the enterprise;*
- viii) *the amenities of the surrounding areas are safeguarded and visual intrusion in the countryside is minimised; and*
- ix) *adequate highway access, parking and utility services are provided, or will be provided**

Paragraph 6.4 19 expands upon this, stating:

"The accommodation should be in the form of a temporary dwelling, unless it can be shown that the farming enterprise is economically viable through a financial test".

This policy broadly follows the guidance set out in the national Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7), Annex A, paragraph 12 for temporary dwellings - which is used for the basis of this assessment - in accordance with the Council's instructions. Paragraph 12 states:

"If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan, a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation. It should satisfy the following criteria:

- (i) *clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new farm buildings is often a good indication of intentions);*
- (ii) *functional need (see paragraph 4 of this Annex);*
- (iii) *clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;*
- (iv) *the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and*
- (v) *other normal planning requirements, e.g. on siting and access, are satisfied.*

Paragraph 15 of the Annex also has relevance for the non-agricultural aspects and states:

"There may also be instances where special justification exists for new isolated dwellings associated with other rural based enterprises. In these cases, the enterprise itself, including any development necessary for the operation of the enterprise, must be acceptable in planning terms and permitted in that rural location, regardless of the consideration of any proposed associated dwelling. Local planning authorities should apply the same stringent levels of assessment to applications for such new occupational dwellings as they apply to applications for agricultural and forestry workers' dwellings. They should therefore apply the same criteria and principles in paragraphs 3-13 of this Annex, in a manner and to the extent that they are relevant to the nature of the enterprise concerned"

Appraisal

Clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned

Paragraph 2 of PPS7, Annex A states:

"It is essential that all applications for planning permission for new occupational dwellings in the countryside are scrutinised thoroughly with the aim of detecting attempts to abuse (e.g. through speculative proposals) the concession that the planning system makes for such dwellings. In particular, it will be important to establish whether the stated intentions to engage in farming, forestry or any other rural-based enterprise, are genuine, are reasonably likely to materialise and are capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time".

On the issue of intention I consider this is proved as the application is retrospective and the lifestyle/sustainability project has a) been commenced and b) is being undertaken. The applicants purchased the land in 2008 and farmed it for the first fifteen months living off site - but this proved impractical. The house was erected in 2009 and the land and business has been developed further since that time. Sheep, cattle and poultry are being kept on the holding and all stock produced has been sold, or kept for home consumption. Fundamentally, this is a project that seeks to prove its sustainability and this element - which possibly fits the "other rural-based enterprise" notation in Annex A, paragraph 15 - can only be tested over time, hence the application to the Council.

The issue of ability is clearly more difficult to determine - without the benefit of hindsight - but it is clear that the applicants are highly motivated and knowledgeable in the subject of permaculture. It is also noteworthy that this is not an isolated project and that there are other similar "farm"-based permaculture units in the area, including *Five Penny Farm* and *Ourganics*. These other units have each been established for 5+ years and have become well-established and sustainable. It is known that the applicants at Blackthorn Farm have the support and practical backing of these and other units should unforeseen difficulties arise evidenced in part from the 100+ letters of support received by the Council.

Overall and based a) on the detailed written information provided and b) the breadth and depth of responses to questions asked at the site visit, I consider that the applicants were able to demonstrate a clear intention and ability to establish the unit, as outlined.

The functional test

The Council will be aware that the projects being undertaken at Blackthorn Farm - the farming, energy demonstration barn, and holistic medicine - are similar in construct to those undertaken at Five Penny Farm, Wootton Fitzpaine which I assessed in 2004. I reported the diverse objectives of that unit as:

- i) to maintain and enhance the habitats and species diversity;
- ii) to maintain and enhance the landscape quality;
- iii) to facilitate the provision of livelihoods and an increase in productivity (without prejudice to the above);
- iv) to plant new woodland;
- v) to conserve and enhance hedgerows;
- vi) to maintain the newly established orchards with a view to commercial fruit production;
- vii) to continue developing the growing areas;
- viii) to conserve and enhance the meadowland;
- ix) to conserve and enhance the stream;

- x) to safeguard all notable species of flora and fauna;
- xi) to cause minimal adverse impact upon the landscape;
- xii) to carry out agricultural, forestry and other land management activities with due regard for global environmental impacts and for sustainable development as defined in the Rio Declaration;
- xiii) to carry out all domestic activities in a way which minimizes impact on the immediate environment and the global environmental footprint;
- xiv) to facilitate public access and enjoyment of the site

and I concluded:

"The functional need for accommodation at Five Penny Farm related to agricultural activities alone is either small-scale, or can be managed with the use of appropriate technology from a nearby village. RAC does not comment of the wider sustainability issues raised by this application"

In the event the refusal of permission was appealed and the Inspector reported at paragraphs 24 and 25 that:

"One of the main features of this enterprise is the diversity in the crops grown, the animals on site, and the variety of items produced. Others are sustainability of materials and energy, organic principles, integration of different elements of the enterprise, self-sufficiency and a reliance upon methods which, for the most part, employ low levels of technology and capital cost. All of these, and other factors, make the enterprise very labour intensive and give rise to a need for the physical presence of one or more of the appellants on the site throughout a long working day, frequently during the evenings, and sometimes at night. It is also a material consideration, albeit a minor one, that two of the appellants have four young children and the other couple one. Whilst all four appellants are full participants in the agricultural enterprise, it is to be expected that at least one parent from each family will often be needed for childcare duties

I recognise that some of the work involved could be reduced by automatic systems and the use of more machinery but, for the scale of operations involved in many areas of the appellants' enterprise, it is doubtful that such methods would be either affordable or cost-effective. Furthermore there are many processes on the site where they could not be usefully applied. The appellants make some use of modern technology, and clearly do not regard it as necessarily inconsistent with the ethos of their enterprise. However, the importance they attach to sustainability is in accordance with government thinking and in such a context, and on a holding as small as this, their reluctance to use machines such as tractors, unless there is no reasonable alternative, is understandable and worthy of support. Having taken into account all of the relevant matters, and on the basis of the enterprise described at the inquiry, I conclude that, for the proper functioning of that enterprise, it is essential for both couples to be readily available at most times ...

.. Whilst I shall not repeat the analysis in the preceding section, much of it is equally germane to the present question, and I have taken it into account along with all of the other relevant matters. I conclude, on balance, that taking into account the nature of the enterprise, the early stage in its development, and the character and location of the appeal site, the only practicable and available solution to the needs I have identified is for both families to live on that site".

The activities - and sustainability ethos - undertaken at Blackthorn Farm are sufficiently similar to the Five Penny Farm model for the above findings to be highly relevant, and a material consideration, sufficient for the functional test to be met.

Appendix B – Letter from Martin Crawford of the Agroforestry Research Institute



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3rd December 2011

Comments of Agroforestry elements of business plan – the Stanton family

I have looked at the Agroforestry elements of the plan in detail.

In my opinion, the cropping figures are likely income achieved are accurate and realistic for

- Perennial salad crops to contribute to salad bags
- Apple juice production
- Pear juice production
- Bush fruit and fruit condiment production

The anticipated labour requirements also appear realistic.

I have also examined plans of the site and soil analyses .

I believe the Agroforestry elements of the plan are sound and should be achievable.

Your sincerely

Martin Crawford, Director