

Gladestry Community Council

Minutes of the planning meeting held on Tuesday 2 August 2016 in Gladestry Village Hall

Purpose: the meeting of the Council had been called to discuss planning application P/2016/0700 – Wern Farm.

Present Ms Jane Bisby (Chairman), Mrs Dianne Moore (Vice Chairman), Mr Viv Lloyd, Mr Gareth Croose, Mr Dan Cosgrove and Mr Kenneth Waugh (Clerk).

Apologies. Mr Derrick Carrington and Mr Melvyn Hughes.

Observers. Dr Joanna Crawshaw, Dr Bob Terry, Mr Norman Evans, Mrs Marlene Evans, Mr Howard dean, Mrs Margaret Lloyd and Mr David Twiddy.

Welcome. Jane welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded them that the meeting of the Council had been called at the request of Councillors in order to prepare a response to the consultation invited by Powys CC in respect of the above planning application for a free-range egg production unit at Wern Farm, Gladestry.

Process. Jane then said that the absent Councillors had provided written statements; before these were read out by the Clerk members were reminded that Powys no longer furnish Councils etc with all relevant paperwork; all research must be undertaken through the Planning Website, and the Clerk had sent Councillors the consultation letter which also contained the appropriate link to that website. The Clerk had provided a small number of extracts from the planning documents for the benefit of Councillors, if needed.

Jane informed the meeting that there were inaccuracies in the Ecology Statement, in that its statement that there were no SSSIs within a 5km radius of the proposed site, there were in fact two SSSIs, being Glascwm and Gladestry Hills and Stanner rocks; the former being because of red grouse and heather, the latter because of the Radnorshire lily and Peregrine falcons. Viv mentioned that he considered the application process should begin again because the map grid reference used by Powys did not relate to this site at Wern farm.

The Clerk then read the submission from Melvyn. [Included at appendix 1]

Gareth said that the Usk/Wye Foundation has confirmed that phosphates do cause damage to waterways, and Jane added that ammonia, also produced from poultry, caused damage to heather and whinberry. Viv said that he was concerned about the effects of heavy rainfall washing spread manure off the land and into waterways. He added that there was a need for a large structure, as proposed, to be well screened as it was going to be visible from Hergest Ridge.

The Clerk read out Derrick's comments, which focussed on the odours likely to be produced, and the extra vehicular traffic. The meeting felt that the issue of odours had been covered but that traffic was not seen to be a particularly serious issue as it would not be entering the village.

Jane mentioned that she had been in contact with the three households near to the proposed site to let them know about possible detriment, especially odour. David

Twiddy was invited to comment, and said he was not overly concerned about the proposal.

Gareth was concerned about possible effects on tourism, and was conscious of the trade off between farming jobs created by projects such as this and jobs in tourism which may be affected by any subsequent drop in tourist numbers because of pollution and unattractive views.

In summary, Councillors agreed that the areas of concern that they wished to notify to Powys were:

- the issues relating to ecology and SSSIs;
- the possibility of pollutants entering water courses;
- air pollution and odour; and
- visual impact and detriment to tourism.

Conclusion. At the conclusion of the debate the Clerk was instructed to compose a response to the planning proposal; this response was not an objection to the application, but an expression of concerns articulated and agreed by Councillors. [The agreed response is included at appendix 2.].

Addendum. The Clerk asked Councillors to agree to him now issuing a cheque to the British Heart Foundation as our request for funding for a defibrillator had been accepted; all Councillors attending agreed.

The meeting was then closed by Jane.

So we have another free range poultry unit application before us. Unfortunately I am unable to attend this meeting due to a family commitment and have requested that my viewpoint be included in any discussion on this issue.

There are approx 10,000 million eggs produced in the UK annually out of a total annual consumption of 12,000 million. Currently the home production number is made up of roughly 50% cage(battery) and 50% free range/barn eggs. If you went back 20 years ago the figures were 80% cage and 20% free range. Since then due to a consumer led campaign the cage produced numbers have been replaced by an increase in free range eggs, which is as we all probably agree a more acceptable form of production.

Times are changing in the farming world as we are all aware and with a lowering of agricultural subsidies farmers have to look outside the box for alternative areas where they can achieve equal returns, which in turn gives them a chance to maintain or expand work opportunities, whether it be for family members or others in the community.

Free range poultry production although quite mechanised still requires a lot of labour input, a shed of this size probably needs equivalent of 8 man hours per day, 7 days a week. Even though the hens have outside access, the majority of the manure produced will be left indoors under the perches and will be removed from the building and spread on land, there is a part of the application which deals with this point in great detail.

Although poultry manure contains a high level of phosphate etc, when spread on land with the correct weather conditions this organic product causes very little problems to the eco system, as it is usually replacing an inorganic form of phosphate, which is essential for good grassland production.

The siting of the building is such that it provides the essential visibility splay as required by Highways, and is in a position that, after lowering a few levels and planting a few trees it will be barely visible from any distance.

Therefore after having read all the reports submitted for the erection of the free range poultry unit at Wern Farm I have no hesitation in supporting this application and would urge the other members of this Community Council to do the same, because if this unit is not built here it will no doubt be built in a neighbouring community council area, taking away another opportunity for jobs whether or not they be part time or not.

Melvyn.

GLADESTRY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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4 August 2016

Re: Planning Application P/2016/0700 – Wern Farm, Gladestry.

Following the Gladestry Community Council Special Planning Meeting held on 2 August, Councillors have instructed me to write to you with the following observation relating to the above planning application.

- There is a degree of inconsistency in the submitted document relating to the ecology of the area. In section 13 – safeguarding biodiversity and natural habitats – the document claims that the survey results reveal no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), important bird areas or national nature reserves within a 5km search area but then goes on to three of these areas on a map. One wonders which other areas of the report may also contain inaccuracies, which may require technical expertise to challenge. Two such Sites of Special Scientific Interest which lie within a 5 km radius of the proposed plan are Glascwm and Gladestry Hills and Stanner Rocks. The former is designated in order to protect red grouse and the heather on which they depend; heather is particularly vulnerable to ammonia in the atmosphere. The latter is noted for being the last remaining location where the Radnorshire Lily survives in the wild, and also for its breeding Peregrine falcons. The Council is concerned that there may be detrimental effects to these sites from air borne pollution in the form of ammonia.
- The Council is concerned about the possibility of water borne pollutants, especially phosphates, entering local water courses, and eventually the river Arrow; and also into

drinking water through local bore holes. The Council seeks assurance that all necessary precautionary measures will be incorporated into planning and building work.

- In a similar vein, the Council has concerns about air borne pollution, particularly ammonia, and unpleasant odour associated with this sort of farming, and again seeks reassurance that measure will be put in place to mitigate against noxious side effects.
- The Council seeks assurance that any negative visual impact from the site will be minimised by appropriate landscaping.

In summary, the Council does not object to changes to the agriculture of the area, recognising that many farmers need to diversify to maintain and improve livelihoods, and to encourage younger family members to remain in the profession. It also bears in mind that this area is currently very attractive to tourists, particularly walkers. The preceding comments are made with the desire to maintain this environment free from pollution and visually stunning.

Finally, the Council regrets that it receives no feedback on its comments, which are sent in a spirit of helpfulness and after proper consideration by locally elected Councillors who devote their valuable time to attempting to assist the planning process.

Yours sincerely

KEWaugh

Kenneth Waugh
Clerk to the Council