

Notes of Visit to Warland Farm on 30 June 2021– Planning Application 21/00495/LBC

Present: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

This visit came about as a result of Todmorden Town Council's consultation response to this planning application which appears on the Calderdale Planning Portal. [REDACTED] emailed [REDACTED] to invite them to visit the farm and see the site for themselves.

The answers to the concerns raised by TTC are below:

- 1. Concern was raised especially about the amount of traffic this proposal would generate in the area and the lack of parking on the site. Although it is hoped that the majority of visitors would travel by public transport, by cycle or on foot, Riggs Garden Centre nearby (where people travel from near and far) has a car park for 100+ cars.*

The Q&A document provided by the applicants says that there could be around 16 parking spaces altogether, some on a woodland site below the farm and others outside two cottages they have purchased near the canal. It should be noted that the access road to the farm and other properties nearby is single track, unmade and full of potholes. It would not be able to cater for any other than a very small number of individual vehicles.

The applicant's vision for the site is for nothing like the tearoom at Gordon Riggs. Entry to the site will be by invitation only and people will be advised in advance to arrive by public transport or alternatively they could be picked up from a railway station by a communal minibus. They want to live by this approach and believe that the people they work with be open to operating this way. The 'tearoom' is tiny and would accommodate a maximum of 8 people at a guess although there is a sitting area outside the tearoom.

The applicants said that they do not envisage that the site will be a 'visitor centre' and they will turn away anyone not 'fitting in' with their approach.

There was some discussion that the erection of suitable signage could alleviate the potential parking and access issues.

- 2. Concern was raised about the arrangements for drainage, especially foul drainage – where a soakaway into a field is proposed.*

Package treatment plants are proposed. There are two compost toilets on the field intended for camping. On low level usage, the applicants said that one can be used for 9 months before it is left fallow for a period of time and the second toilet used. This obviously depends on the number of people using it. The applicants did talk about events they had before Covid19 such as an annual rush festival which presumably attracts members of the public. It is not known if the compost toilet would be sufficient for this.

3. *Concern was raised about the reference to a roof being made from asbestos cement.*

The applicants said this was an error in the application and that the two asbestos roofs (installed in the 1960s) would be removed and new non-asbestos roofs fitted instead.

4. *The plans are adventurous but it was felt that more detail was required. Members expressed an interest in visiting the site.*

The applicants said that they would welcome visits from other members if they would like to visit.

5. *General:*

The applicants were very worried that Calderdale Highways would prevent the application from being successful on the basis of the access road and parking. They said that they were going to submit more information about their proposed arrangements for parking and risk assessments.

The access road to the site also crosses over the canal so this could potentially be an issue.

The applicants said that they were not planning to run activities for children on the site although currently, a play/family therapist is offering activities in the field near the canal.

The applicants are interested in the generation of electricity through solar, wind and hydroelectric methods. There is a fast moving stream nearby and when exploring the possibility of HEP they were advised by the Environment Agency that the water 'used' would be charged for. A copy of an email subsequently received from [REDACTED] about the climate projects they have/are undertaking.

They have worked with various organisations such as Treesresponsibility to plant 20,000 trees on their land.

Comments on Calderdale Planning Website About the Planning Application

As of 13 July, there have been 39 comments about these plans, of which 13 have been objections.

Objections:

- Changed view of the farm from Warland Farm Gate and possibly the road,
- Changed long range views from Warland Barn (behind Warland Farm)
- Serious lack of parking
- Lack of mention of waste disposal methods
- Trade waste
- Drainage of waste to reed beds
- Rights of access issues between applicant and neighbours
- Concern about vague references to potentially large events which will generate crowds
- Change to rural area

- Access from busy A6033 on to a single track road which is classified as a footpath. Previous applications (in 2000) have been declined on the basis of this.
- Concern that the applicants view of a harmonious community is one sided and not shared by several of the neighbours.
- Safety on road/footpath if traffic increases. The amount of existing traffic already leads to accidents. Cars already have to access private drives to turn round or make way for other cars to pass.
- Doubt about the credentials of the applicants to undertake such a project
- Impact on biodiversity – bats, water voles, toads
- Concern about the change the applicants have brought to the community
- Over-intensification of the site
- Concern that applicants could potentially use all the viable parking in the area so that residents cannot use this (such as next to the canal) when they cannot access their homes by road in bad weather
- Local footpaths in area have deteriorated since development at Warland Farm
- Alleged that the applicants are displacing residents and buying up the properties
- Maintenance of private road – currently it is not in a good condition and extra traffic will make it worse for resident access including farmers with their animals and vehicles
- Concerns about creating additional parking at the old mill site
- The use of non-traditional materials such as a corrugated cement roof and polycarbonate sheeting walkways will seriously damage the listed buildings
- The use of these buildings as a farm should be retained. Should not be used for brewery and entertainment.
- Changes are not in keeping with existing appearance.
- The potential for increased noise in the area if the site is used for entertainment purposes. Events previously held (Rush Bearing) have been noisy.
- The number of people on the site – in bunk bed accommodation and staying in additional properties purchased at Warland.
- Changes will alter the beauty of Pennine setting.
- Plans reduce the amount of parking in the yard which will prevent the owner from turning round and so will require vehicles to back out onto the road. This will be more problematic with large vehicles such as a minibus.
- Overdevelopment of the site which will dominate the area.

Supportive Statements:

- Eco friendly
- Arts Facility
- Craft Centre...brewery
- Community vibe
- Improving the farm and listed buildings
- Co-operative living and working
- Sharing traditional skills

- Treesresponsibility – supports applicant’s vision for avoiding climate damage
- Increased biodiversity – insects
- Todmorden has a need for accommodation and for learning opportunities. Too many farms are becoming homes for the few.
- Warland Farm offers a haven for the young and older to meet, develop new skills, confidence, grow and thrive in a small, safe community.
- The plans are sympathetic to the environment.

Email Received from [REDACTED] about the climate emergency projects they have/are undertaking:

[REDACTED] and I have always been very serious about minimising the impact we have upon the environment. Warland Farm and the Upper Calder Valley have provided us the means to make this commitment real. This document describes the activities and projects that we are pursuing.

We are actively engaged with Slow the Flow, Natural Flood Management and similar initiatives. We welcome the Government and Todmorden Council’s Climate Emergency focus and will happily engage in their initiatives to address the impending crisis.

The Source Project [REDACTED] and I approached Treesresponsibility to re-afforest Warland Farm in late 2011. As a result, we became the first major planting by the Source Project. The story of this project is recorded in their first newsletter. Treesresponsibility planted 10,000 trees here with many volunteers, recreating six acres of Warland Wood, establishing six acres of valuable hazel, oak and other coppices, and creating a wildlife corridor from moor to valley floor with half a mile of hedges. Following their lead, [REDACTED] and I and our friends and family planted another 10,000 trees including the steepest slopes, resilience plantations, osieries and many more hedges. Five years later, the insect and bird life are noticeably increasing each year and the trees are now sequestering twenty tons of carbon a year. The SOURCE is a working partnership with a long term vision of ecological restoration in the headwaters of the River Calder.

It aims to:-

- Minimize flash flooding through appropriately-sited tree planting and moorland restoration
- Treat damaged land and control erosion21/00495/LBC
- Improve the quality of the River Calder
- Undertake educational activities and encourage volunteering so that people of all ages and from all walks of life become aware of the value of our rivers and uplands.

Partners include Treesresponsibility, The Calder and Colne Rivers Trust, The Upper Calder Valley Wildlife Network, Todmorden Moor Restoration Trust, Calder Futures, Calderdale

MBC, The Environment Agency, Pennine Prospects and the White Rose Forest. More information at <http://www.treesresponsibility.com/the-source/> Turner Wood, Slow the Flow and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust [REDACTED] and I bought Turner Wood, fifty-three acres of ancient oak and beech near Rishworth Mill, in 2018 because we love woodlands. We have established a Forestry approved, ecology and community focussed woodland management plan and a small business—The Tree Finger Gang—to implement it. This will involve re-establishing some over-stood coppice, gradually removing invasive beech plantations and establishing woodland experiences and skills training. The more local people love the woodland, the longer it will survive!

A unique feature of Turner Wood is the half-acre millpond that once drove the world's largest mill wheel. All of the pond sluices are well preserved and a local group have started renovating them and are hoping to de-silt the pond. We see this as an opportunity to create a 1 to 2 mega-litre flood attenuation reserve that can be used to hold flash storm waters and help alleviate flooding in the Ryburn Valley. There are also opportunities to install leaky dams and wetlands. Through Slow the Flow, we are awaiting an ecological survey by Calderdale Council's Natural Flood Management initiative prior to applying for a grant to assist with these projects. <https://eyeoncalderdale.com/natural-flood-management>. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust have created a project to restore river water quality and wildlife habitats throughout Yorkshire. They have awarded Turner Wood a grant to assist with the removal of invasive beech plantations, which are destabilising the banks of Booth Dean Clough, followed by regeneration of the native oak woodland. <https://www.ywt.org.uk>

Slow The Flow is a charity working to advance the education of the public in Natural Flood Management, Sustainable Drainage Systems and other renewable methods of managing the environment, including the exploration of alternative practices which safeguard the natural environment and its resources in a manner which best fits the specifics of a local geography. <https://slowtheflow.net>

Warland Farm Arts and Crafts School

The big project underway at Warland Farm is to create a self-sufficient Arts and Crafts School. The principles guiding this are to:

- Protect and enhance the land's natural productivity through Permaculture;
- Practice and teach sustainable craft;
- Perform and encourage local arts and cultural activities;
- Enjoy real food together; and within those
- Maximise the kindness, mutual respect and happiness in our community.

When we moved here, Warland Farm was tired grazing land where the turf was rolling downhill from grazing pressures. There was only one 300-year-old, gnarled and wizened oak left of the Warland Wood marked on maps. We had local wildlife experts survey all of the land to assess what was there and whether we should intervene: "This land will be so glad you've arrived!" We replanted Warland Wood and created six acres of native coppices with Treesresponsibility's kind help, then went on to plant a traditional orchard, hop garden and forest garden. We started to mow the meadows and take away the grass as hay for mulch, to reinstate conditions for a wider variety of meadow species which are now returning.

If the food production can sustain twenty souls, as planned, the farm will have returned to its central role in the life of the village, the food miles of our community

will be reduced dramatically and the soil will be replenished for future generations.
[https://www.facebook.com/warlandfarminfo/Warland Community energy and heating](https://www.facebook.com/warlandfarminfo/Warland%20Community%20energy%20and%20heating)

Since we arrived in Warland, we have been scheming to generate our own electricity. The land faces south-west and its slope is pretty good for solar photo voltaic panels; the rain pours off in streams that have generated power for centuries; and the Pennine valley winds are everywhere harvested for electrical energy. There are other energy projects possible, too: our woodlands already supply firewood to heat many of the neighbours' homes and there is great scope for a community heating scheme based on heat pumps powered by our own electricity. Our implementation of these ideas will start with "solar bike sheds" in the farmyard. These modest, oak-framed structures—invisible from outside the yard—will provide supports for solar panels and provide useful storage beneath. We did get a grant for installing a micro hydro-power turbine, driven by the farm's spring water overflow, but the Environment Department's conditions were too onerous and the output too little to justify the fuss. Now, though, we think we have access to and a way to harness Walsden Water, a powerful hill stream, to create enough energy to feed a dozen nearby houses. This will be developed as a shared investment with our Warland neighbours and friends.


27th June 2021