

Development Management Committee

31 January 2024

Present (In Person)

Dr M Havard (Chair)

Councillor Steve Alderman, Councillor D Clements, Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor R Jordan, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall, Councillor B Price, Councillor M Wiggins, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor C Williams.

Present (Remotely)

Councillor Dr SL Hancock MBE, Mrs S Hoss, Councillor M James, Mr GA Jones, and Dr RM Plummer

Officers in attendance

Mr C Felgate (Solicitor), Mrs S Morris (Director of Placemaking, Decarbonisation and Engagement), Mrs K Attrill, (Development Management Manager), Ms B Gledhill (Planning Officer), Mrs C Llewellyn (Minutes)

[Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock and Virtually 10.00am – 11.15am;
11.25am – 1.15pm; 1.20pm - 1.45pm]

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J James and Councillor R Owens.

2. **Disclosures of interest**

The following Member(s)/Officer(s) disclosed an interest in the application(s) and/or matter(s) referred to below:

Application and Reference	Member(s)/Officer(s)	Action taken
Minute 6 below – general declaration as an NRW Board Member and Plantlife Trustee	Dr RM Plummer	Remained in the meeting and played a full part in the discussions and voting
<i>Minutes 6(a) below</i> NP/23/0246/FUL – Tretio Caravan & Camping Park, St. Davids	Councillor S Alderman	Withdrew from the meeting while the application was discussed
	Councillor P Morgan Councillor B Price	Disclosed a personal interest



		and played a full part in the discussion on the application
	Mr C Felgate	Disclosed a professional relationship with a speaker on this application.
<i>Minute 6(b) below - NP/21/0752/FUL – Mountain Ash Cottage, Sandy Hill Road, Saundersfoot</i>	Councillor C Williams	Withdrew from the meeting while the application was discussed
	Councillor R Jordan	Disclosed a personal interest and played a full part in the discussion and voting on the application
<i>Minute 6(d) below – NP/23/0451/FUL - Trewern, Velindre, Crymych</i>	Councillor S Alderman	Disclosed a personal interest and played a full part in the discussion on the application

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on the 13 December 2023 and 8 January 2024 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that on the proposal of Dr Havard, seconded by Councillor Jordan the minutes of the meeting held on the 13 December 2023 be confirmed and signed.

It was **RESOLVED** that on the proposal of Dr Havard, seconded by Councillor Clements the minutes of the meeting held on the 8 January 2024 be confirmed and signed.

NOTED.



4. Right to speak at Committee

The Chairman informed Members that due notification (prior to the stipulated deadline) had been received from interested parties who wished to exercise their right to speak at the meeting that day. In accordance with the decision of the National Park Authority of 7th December 2011, amended 16 June 2021, speakers would have 5 minutes to speak unless they had spoken on the same application previously when they would have 3 minutes in which to present new information (*the interested parties are listed below against their respective application(s), and in the order in which they addressed the Committee*):

Reference number	Proposal	Speaker
NP/23/0246/FUL <i>Minute 6(a) refers</i>	Change of use of pitch & putt area & expansion with 10 self-contained bespoke mobile lodges/caravans & car parking together with ecological – Tretio Caravan & Camping Park, St Davids	Rhodri Price Lewis KC – objector Phil Rees – Applicant
NP/21/0752/FUL <i>Minute 6(b) refers</i>	The erection of 2 no. 4 bedroom detached dwellings – Mountain Ash Cottage, Sandy Hill Road, Saundersfoot	Andrew Milne – objector Jack Ellis – Agent
NP/23/0594/FUL <i>Minute 6(c) refers</i>	Full Planning permission for 3 x polytunnels for agricultural use. – Land to North East of Penrallt, Felindre Farchog	Adam Payne – Applicant
NP/23/0451/FUL <i>Minute 6(d) Refers</i>	Retrospective application for agricultural workshop and equipment store. – Trewern, Velindre, Crymych	Wyn Harries – Agent



5. Members' Duties in Determining Applications

The Solicitor's report summarised the role of the Committee within the planning system, with particular focus on the purposes and duty of the National Park. It went on to outline the purpose of the planning system and relevant considerations in decision making, and the Solicitor added that consideration also needed to be given to the National Development Framework - Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 adopted by the Welsh Government on 24 February 2021 as well as its own Local Development Plan 2. The report also noted that the Authority also had a duty to carry out sustainable development, ecological considerations which included the role of the Environment Wales Act 2016, human rights considerations, the Authority's guidance to members on decision-making in committee and also set out some circumstances where costs might be awarded against the Authority on appeal. Finally, the Solicitor added that the report didn't mention that the Authority's decisions were subject to scrutiny and could be subject to a judicial review and it was therefore important that they were lawfully based.

NOTED

6. Report of Planning Applications

The Committee considered the detailed reports of the Development Management Team Leader, together with any updates reported verbally on the day and recorded below. The Committee determined the applications as follows (*the decision reached on each follows the details of the relevant application*):

[Councillor S Alderman had disclosed a prejudicial interest and withdrew from the meeting while the following application was considered.]

- (a) REFERENCE: NP/23/0246/FUL
APPLICANT: Mr and Mrs B & P Rees
PROPOSAL: Change of use of pitch & putt area & expansion with 10 self-contained bespoke mobile lodges/caravans & car parking together with ecological enhancements
LOCATION: Tretio Caravan & Camping Park, St. Davids, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 6DE

It was reported that this application was a proposal for a major development and was subject to a Committee Site Visit on 8 January 2024 (Minute 3 refers). A number of neighbour objections had been received to the proposal and these were summarised and addressed in the officer's report.

The Officer's report set out a detailed consideration of the relevant policies contained within the statutory Development Plan (Future Wales and Local Development Plan 2) and National Planning Policy in the form



of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) and Technical Advice Note 6. It was considered that, having regard to all material considerations, the proposed scheme was unacceptable as the proposed extension to the caravan site was not considered to be well-screened within the landscape and would result in a visual intrusion. The application also wished to change the use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land which should only be developed if there was an overriding need for the scheme and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades was unavailable; this was not considered to be the case. In addition the proposal was not in a sustainable location, resulting in an increase in car usage, and failed to protect the sense of remoteness and tranquillity, and the identity and character of the historic settlement adjacent, and the pattern and diversity of the landscape. The officer recommendation was therefore one of refusal.

At the meeting, the officer addressed a number of questions raised at the site inspection, confirming that the site had originally been granted planning permission in 1969 for no more than 30 caravans and the manager's caravan had been granted through a Certificate of Lawfulness in 2016; further planning history was outlined in the report. She also advised that the trees had been planted prior to the application for the Pitch and Putt golf course in 1993, and noted that a condition on that application required the site to be returned to agricultural use to prevent extension of the caravan site.

The officer also advised that she was not able to validate the contents of a letter received by Members from the Agent the previous day as it had not been copied to her; not all Members had received that letter. The letter contained a complaint that the applicant and agent were unhappy that a positive pre-application letter had been received in 2022. Having looked at the letter from the Authority, the officer noted this had been sent in the summer months when the site was better screened and in future, Officers would caveat that the site would need to be assessed in all seasons.

The officer went on to highlight the large size of the extension which was equivalent to that of the original caravan site, but of much lower density. She also drew attention to the glimpsed views into the site from a number of inland paths, but noted that it was not visible from the coast path. In response to a question from Members, it was clarified that in respect of its designation as BMV agricultural land, it was not significant that the land had not been farmed in 40 years as she believed the quality of the soil had been preserved and there was nothing to prevent it being returned to agricultural use. Although the Agent had circulated a letter from a Chartered Surveyor regarding the agricultural classification of the land, this had not been accompanied by soil samples and could only be taken as opinion.



The first of two speakers was Mr Rhodri Price-Lewis K.C. who lived in Tretio and who endorsed the recommendation of refusal. He considered Tretio to be a very special place, consisting of seven dwellings, five of which were occupied full time. He stated that all the neighbours opposed the application. He described the hamlet as remote and self-contained, with no public transport, and believed that the proposals would change the character of the area. The site itself was on rising ground and was visible from a wide area, particularly from the right of way which linked to the coast path. Mr Price-Lewis K.C. considered the location to be unsustainable for further development as it would be accessed entirely by car and this would affect the character and amenity of the area. Turning to the status of the land as BMV agricultural land, he stated that neighbouring farmers considered that it would be easy to return the land to agricultural use. Finally he stated that he was surprised to see a reference to the planting of 3000 trees as he was unsure where these had been planted; nevertheless he noted that there were no leaves on the trees for six months of the year. He concluded by saying that the proposal was an unsustainable development which would harm the special qualities of the National Park.

The second speaker was Phil Rees, the applicant. He was disappointed that all Members had not had the opportunity to see his Agent's letter and reiterated its pertinent objections, noting that he had gained encouragement to proceed from the positive pre-application in 2022 and was disappointed to see the recommendation of refusal. He considered that the site retained tree cover, even in winter, and noted that the proposal included the planting of further trees and native plants to the northern hedge as well as a wildflower meadow. Referring to the BMV agricultural land, he noted that the land had been cut, rolled and intensively managed as a golf course and he did not believe it was practical for such a small block of land to be returned to agricultural use. Responding to concerns of the site's unsustainable location, he noted that only 10 units were being proposed and guests would be encouraged to cycle (he was looking to hire bikes out) or use the flexi bus; there was no highways objection. Mr Rees noted that there had been a rise in demand for self-catering accommodation with a longer season, and a decrease in numbers of tents and touring caravans. He urged the Committee to reconsider the recommendation and support a small business that was trying to safeguard jobs and bring additional business to the St Davids area.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Rees advised that he wasn't able to validate that 3000 trees had been planted as it was his father who had planted them having taken advice. He also confirmed that there was no other access to the field that was the subject of the application and that



the Pitch and Putt was only open to site residents, as ground conditions allowed. In order for the field to be used for agricultural purposes the ground would have to be levelled (banks had been created as part of the golf course), however due to the single access any machinery would have to access through the caravan site. He advised that the site was currently open from March through to 10th January, but that it became quieter from the end of October. It was likely that of the 10 chalets proposed, a proportion would be sold on the same basis as the existing statics on site – with the ‘plot’ leased and a ground rent charged.

Several Members expressed support for the officer recommendation of refusal due to the need to protect BMV agricultural land, the visual/landscape impact and scale of the proposal as well as concerns regarding accessibility and lack of sustainable transport. Others, however were struggling to support this, noting that it was highly unlikely that the land would be used for agricultural purposes and considered that the less dense layout proposed for this field would look better than tents and tourers. Nevertheless Councillor Wilcox proposed refusal, seconded by Dr Plummer and this was carried.

DECISION: That the application be refused for the following reasons:

- 1. The extension to the caravan site is not considered to be well-screened within the landscape. As such a proposal to increase pitch numbers in this location without environmental improvements to the site as a whole does not meet the criteria of Policy 41 (Caravan, Camping and Chalet Development) of the adopted PCNPA LDP2.**
- 2. The proposed additional pitches and track would result in a visual intrusion into the landscape of the National Park which is identified in this location as having a medium/high sensitivity with limited capacity for medium static site proposals. This would be contrary to the provisions of Policy 8 (Special Qualities), Policy 14 (Conservation and enhancement of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and the Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance Document on Caravan, Camping and Chalets adopted May 2021.**
- 3. The application wishes to change the use of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land into a Caravan and camping site. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) requires that BMV agricultural land should be conserved as a finite resource for the future with considerable weight given to protecting it from development. Such land should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the scheme and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades**



are unavailable. As such the proposal would fail to accord with Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 and Technical Advice Note 6.

4. **The proposal is not located within a sustainable location and the increase in 10 pitch units would result in an increase in car usage which is contrary to the principles of Planning Policy Wales Edition 11, Policy 29 (Sustainable Design) and Policy 59 (Sustainable Transport).**
5. **The proposal fails to preserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park, contrary to the aims of Policies 8 and 14 of the Local Development Plan 2 and contrary to the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape Character.**

[The meeting was adjourned between 11.15am and 11.25am]

[Councillor C Williams had disclosed a prejudicial interest and withdrew from the meeting while the following application was considered.]

- (b) REFERENCE: NP/21/0752/FUL
APPLICANT: c/o Mr C Cox
PROPOSAL: The erection of 2 no. 4 bedroom detached dwellings
LOCATION: Mountain Ash Cottage, Sandy Hill Road, Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire, SA69 9PL

It was reported that the application site was located within the local centre of Saundersfoot, to the rear of a detached dormer bungalow. The existing dwelling was situated within a large plot with a significant difference in levels between the front and rear of the site. As a result of the difference in levels, the front elevation of the proposed dwellings would appear single storey with pitched dormers while the rear was three-storey with a gable projection.

It was also noted that there was an existing valid planning permission on the application site for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of 2 new dwellings. This could be implemented and was described as the fallback position.

The officer's report set out a detailed consideration of the relevant policies contained within the statutory Development Plan (Future Wales and Local Development Plan 2) and National Planning Policy in the form of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11). It was considered that the proposed development was acceptable in terms of the principle of the proposed new dwellings and would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the surrounding area or the residential amenity of any neighbouring properties in accordance with the policies of the Local Development Plan. Affordable housing provision in the form of an off-site commuted sum had



been secured through a Unilateral Undertaking. The recommendation was therefore one of approval; arboricultural, parking, lighting and ecological matters could be acceptably controlled through planning conditions.

At the meeting, a Member sought clarification on the affordable housing contribution and was advised that this would be paid to Pembrokeshire County Council, whose housing manager would assess how best this could be spend on affordable housing. The Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance included the provision that if the money could not be spent within Saundersfoot within 3 years, it could be spent on affordable housing in the wider area and if not spent within 5 years returned to the developer. It was also requested that should the application be approved, the lighting condition be amended by adding 'and retained as such in perpetuity'.

The first of two speakers to address the Committee was Andrew Milne, an objector. He advised that when he had purchased an adjacent property in 2023 he was unaware that this application had been submitted in 2021. He believed the lack of notification to be unsatisfactory. He drew Members' attention to the green wedge and footpath shown on page 61 of their papers which he considered broke up the existing linear development. This was particularly apparent when viewed from the Conservation Area on the opposite side of the valley. He considered that the proposed development was sited too far down the slope and would effectively connect Sandy Hill Road with Lawnswood in a classic infill. He believed this overdevelopment would have both a visual impact and a detrimental effect on wildlife, particularly the bat foraging area. He further considered that the proposal was not in keeping with the distinctive settlement characteristics and had a detrimental impact on the quality of the environment contrary to LDP2. He considered the reserved matters application approved in November 2022 to be more appropriate and sensitive to its location. Drawing Members' attention to the plan on page 62, he noted that the proposed dwelling would impact his right to light in his downstairs bedroom on the west elevation.

Turning to the eastern elevation of the proposed dwelling on page 67, he counted 20 windows, 10 of which opened onto the first floor balcony. These would overlook his garden with poor screening provided by a tree. The windows would also look directly into the bathroom and bedroom windows of his house leading to a loss of privacy. Turning to page 69 he considered the proposed dwellings to be too large with four bedrooms over three storeys. He believed there were few other buildings in Saundersfoot of this size and their character didn't match the surrounding architecture.



Mr Milne noted that Saundersfoot Community Council were opposed to the application and asked that it be rejected as it had a detrimental impact on amenity and privacy and was incompatible with its surroundings. If Members were minded to approve the application he asked that the dwellings be re-located as per the 2022 application, with frosting to the first floor fenestration and removal of the east balcony.

The second speaker was Mr Jack Ellis, speaking for the Pegasus Group. He reiterated that the site already had planning permission, granted in 2016, with reserved matters approved in 2020 and therefore the site could still be built out. The current application proposed small changes to the siting and layout which would allow retention of the existing dwelling on site, which the Building Conservation Officer had advised had a local heritage value. Mr Ellis also noted that the 2016 application required payment of a commuted sum of £38,400 whereas the application before the Committee would instead generate £140,360 for affordable housing delivery. He therefore considered that it was preferable to approve the application in order to retain the existing dwelling and provide both an additional dwelling to meet local housing need and a greater affordable housing contribution.

In response to a question regarding the difference between the two schemes, Mr Ellis explained that the original application was of a similar scale, however there was a blank elevation at basement level. The current application therefore proposed ground engineering works to allow that level to be occupied.

Members were concerned about the separation distance between the balcony on the eastern elevation and Mr Milne's property. Officers replied that as the dwellings were located in a built up area, overlooking was to be expected, however the overlooking would be at an oblique angle and the consideration was not great enough to be of concern. Another Member was concerned about run-off from the site into the Lawnswood estate at the bottom of the slope, once the land was cleared and the officer replied that SAB (Sustainable Drainage) consent would be required and there was a detailed arboricultural study and methodology for how work would be undertaken, however consideration could also be given to a condition requiring a Construction Method Statement to be produced. Other concerns expressed were the proliferation of glass, with the potential for light pollution, and visual intrusion into the green 'finger' of the valley.

Councillor Clements moved deferral of the application, seconded by Councillor Morgan, to allow officers to ask the applicant if they would consider changes to the design of the properties. This was followed by a motion to defer to allow a Committee Site Inspection to be undertaken,



whilst officers asked the applicant if they would consider changes to the design of the properties, which was proposed by Councillor Jordan, seconded by Councillor Price. This was carried. It was clarified that should amended plans be provided, they would be presented to the Committee when the application came back for consideration. Members asked to view the site from the neighbouring property. Councillor Clements then withdrew her motion.

DECISION: That the application be deferred to allow the Committee to inspect the site whilst officers ask the applicant if they would consider changes to the design.

- (c) REFERENCE: NP/23/0594/FUL
APPLICANT: Southern Roots Organics
PROPOSAL: Full Planning permission for 3 x polytunnels for agricultural use.
LOCATION: Land to North East of Penrallt, Felindre Farchog, Crymych, Pembrokeshire, SA41 3XW

It was reported that the land, which was the subject of this application was located within the countryside, and there were 5 existing polytunnels and 2 agricultural buildings already located on the site. Whilst the site was well screened from the public highway running to the south of the site (B4582), the site was visible from the wider landscape including from Carningli.

Officers considered that the proposal would represent an increase in floor area under polytunnel of over 50% and as such, would be considered to significantly intensify the use of the land which would result in an unacceptable cumulative impact in terms of visual intrusion as the polytunnels would be clearly visible within the landscape, especially when viewed from Carningli (a Scheduled Monument). In turn, this would have a harmful impact upon the Newport and Carningli Special Historic Landscape. A recommendation to refuse permission was therefore made.

In response to questions from Members, officers confirmed that the two agricultural buildings had been subject to agricultural notification, rather than planning permission, and also that the site was an agricultural business and the applicant had advised that he had no intention to submit an application for a One Planet Development.

The applicant, Adam Payne, then addressed the Committee. He explained that since gaining planning permission for 5 polytunnels and an access, further investment in the business had taken place. It now employed three people and sold vegetables to many local households and food businesses. The site was over 12 acres, producing high quality organic produce and had been shortlisted for young organic farmer of the year. Having compiled their pre-order for the coming year it had become



apparent that there was a need to scale up and employ more people, however this required additional polytunnels. In submitting the application, a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment had been commissioned, and this had concluded that there would be no impact on nearby sites of significance, and only minimal impact in longer distance views. However, Mr Payne noted that many farms were visible from the top of Carningli; from its summit, the development was over 4km away and partially obscured by the hedge. He stated that it had previously been determined to be acceptable, and if the business was not able to develop and expand, its future was in jeopardy. He considered that it was important for the country to produce sustainable produce and he believed that the development would be good for the community, and cause no harm. He added that polytunnels were temporary structures by their nature. In response to questions he confirmed that there was no lighting on the site and that the polytunnels needed to be clear, rather than green, to allow light for the plants to grow. In response to a question about siting of the polytunnels, Mr Payne advised that they could not be put in a line as the ground dropped away, and could not be located closer to the hedge as there would be insufficient light. However, he did not believe there would be any noticeable difference in the view as the polytunnels read as a lighter tone in the landscape, rather than as a structure.

Several Members were pleased to see the success of the horticultural business and felt that local production of organic food with a low carbon footprint should be encouraged. It was also suggested that the landscape impact was a question of judgement. A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, was proposed by Dr Plummer, seconded by Councillor Clements, with the reason for going against the officer recommendation being that they did not consider the landscape impact to be such that there was a conflict with policies of the Local Development Plan. There was also an economic benefit to the local community. The Development Management Manager suggested that the following conditions would be appropriate: timing of the development, accordance with plans and documents, approval for a period of 15 years following which the land should be restored and no internal or external lighting. Members agreed with these.

The Director advised that if Members approved the application, she would not invoke the Authority's Cooling Off period as it was a matter of interpretation regarding the harm to the landscape, rather than being a decision contrary to policy.

Motions to undertake a site visit and to refuse the application were proposed, but neither was seconded.



DECISION: That the application be approved subject to conditions relating to timing of the development, accordance with plans and documents, lighting, approval for a period of 15 years following which the land should be restored.

[Councillor SL Hancock and Dr R Plummer tendered their apologies and left the meeting at this juncture.]

[The meeting was adjourned between 1.15 and 1.20pm]

- (d) REFERENCE: NP/23/0451/FUL
APPLICANT: Trewern Farms Ltd
PROPOSAL: Retrospective application for agricultural workshop and equipment store
LOCATION: Trewern, Velindre, Crymych, Pembrokeshire, SA41 3XE

It was reported that this application was a retrospective application for an agricultural building which formed part of a wider complex of buildings which were the subject of a current Planning Enforcement Appeal. The close proximity of the site to the North Pembrokeshire Woodlands SAC, an old sessile oak wood with an exceptional diversity of rare epiphytic lichens, had meant that proposals to increase livestock numbers had required appropriate assessment under the Habitat Regulations to assess potential impacts. In this case the proposal was for an agricultural workshop and store. The design and siting of the building was considered acceptable. Subject to a condition ensuring the building could not be used for livestock, to ensure no potential ammonia impacts on the SAC, the proposal was considered acceptable and to meet relevant Local and National planning policy requirements.

At the meeting, the Development Management Manager suggested two additional conditions, seeking submission of a landscaping scheme and the planting of a proportion of trees (as had been previously proposed within another current planning application which was currently undetermined) within the following planting season.

One Member highlighted the lack of response from Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The Director replied that the Authority's Ecologist had been consulted and had advised that as the building would not be used for livestock and would not contribute to airborne ammonia, she did not consider that there would be likely significant effects on the SAC and an appropriate assessment was accordingly not necessary. It was suggested that NRW may not have commented for similar reasons.

Mr Wyn Harries, the Agent, then addressed the Committee. He explained that this was an application for a covered area which formed part of a group of buildings which were well screened. They were built in 2015 and



were subject to enforcement. The building would not be used to house animals and no further increase in livestock was planned at the holding.

A Member expressed disappointment that proper process had not been followed in applying for the development and the agent expressed frustration with time it had taken to consider the appeal and particularly with officers from NRW. He confirmed that the additional conditions would be acceptable.

The motion to approve the application subject to conditions, including the additional conditions, was proposed by Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor Clements.

DECISION: That the application be approved subject to conditions relating to biodiversity enhancements, use only as an agricultural workshop and equipment store, lighting and landscaping.

7. Appeals

The Development Management Team Leader reported on one appeal (against planning decisions made by the Authority) that was currently lodged with the Welsh Government, and detailed which stage of the appeal process had been reached to date.

NOTED.

The Minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the meeting of the Development Management Committee held on 13 March 2024 without amendment

