

WENTLOOGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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COMMUNITY COUNCIL

04.07.26

Dear Sir/Madam,

PARTIAL DISCHARGE OF CONDITIONS 2 (CEMP), 5 (WILDFLOWER MIX SCHEME), 6 (BIO DIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT) AND 7 (SOLAR ARRAY DETAILS) OF 24/0772 EXTENSION OF EXISTING POLYTUNNEL, ERECTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL BARN WITH A PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAY ON THE ROOF AND INSTALLATION OF A SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM

We take the protection of our environment very seriously especially due to the details below and the area being close to Green Belt and in Green Wedge.

The area of the Wentlooge Levels is open countryside, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Cadw/ICOMOS UK Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest, an Archaeologically Sensitive Area, adjacent to the new Wales Coastal Path and to the internationally important RAMSAR site of the Severn Estuary.

The Levels are a Special Landscape Area (SLA) recognised nationally and internationally (NCC LDP Policies SP5 and 8).

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 10 sets out that "planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity" (para 6.4.5 refers). This policy and subsequent policies in Chapter 6 of PPW 10 respond to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016*.

It is important that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience considerations are considered at an early stage in development plan preparation and when proposing or considering development proposals. Planning authorities should be proactive and embed appropriate policies into local development plans to protect against biodiversity loss and secure enhancement. We recognise that the updated application has made efforts to address the biodiversity issues, however, due to the previous overdevelopment of the site and no remedial action following previous refusals, we are wary of the applicant sticking to these plans.

The attributes of ecosystem resilience (PPW para 6.4.9 refers) should be used to assess the current resilience of a site, and this must be maintained and enhanced post development. If this cannot be achieved, permission for the development should be refused.

The area of the Wentlooge Levels has seen a revival in species of recent years which has been helped by the Living Levels project. An example of which has been an increase in the sightings of one of the U.K's rarest bees, the Shrill Carder Bee, a significant rise in the swan population together with many other nesting and migrating birds, water vole, otter and dive beetle just to list a few. The fear is that the wildlife and its habitat will be greatly affected with the loss of environment on such a large scale.

The Wentlooge Community is passionate about the protection of the environment and preventing further harm to that which has already taken place on the Wentlooge Levels.

Wentlooge Community Council has carefully considered the above application and wishes to object to the proposed amendments for the following planning reasons.

The Council's principal concern relates to the proposed amendments to the approved agricultural barn elevations. The revised drawings introduce several significant alterations, including:

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- An external industrial-style metal staircase providing access to the upper floor.
- A second-floor east-facing metal security/fire door served by the external staircase.
- The addition of twelve new windows across the building elevations.

Collectively, these amendments substantially alter the external appearance and character of the building previously approved. Rather than retaining the simple, functional appearance expected of an agricultural building, the revised design creates a structure with a far more industrial or commercial appearance. The combination of the external staircase, elevated access door and extensive glazing is not typical of a traditional agricultural barn and represents a material departure from the appearance of the development originally granted planning permission.

The Council is also concerned that the large number of windows gives the building an unnecessarily domestic appearance. Agricultural buildings are generally designed to be functional, with limited glazing required only for operational purposes. The proposed extent of glazing appears excessive for the stated agricultural use and raises legitimate questions regarding whether the design remains consistent with the purpose for which permission was originally granted.

Furthermore, the proposed windows have the potential to create unnecessary light pollution within this sensitive rural location. Light spill from numerous upper-floor windows could adversely affect the character of the surrounding countryside and have an impact on local biodiversity, contrary to the objectives of protecting rural landscapes and ecological interests.

The application also proposes the installation of a sewage treatment system. The Council questions the operational necessity of such infrastructure for an agricultural barn and considers that further justification should be provided to demonstrate why this is required in connection with the approved agricultural use.

Whilst the extension to the existing polytunnel has previously been approved under the original planning permission, the Council remains concerned that the current submission does not appear to adhere closely to the form and character of the development that was originally considered acceptable. The discharge of conditions should not be used to facilitate significant changes to the approved appearance or function of the development without full planning scrutiny.

For these reasons, Wentlooge Community Council is unable to support the application in its current form and respectfully requests that the Local Planning Authority carefully considers whether the proposed amendments remain consistent with the original planning permission and whether the revised design continues to represent an appropriate agricultural development within this rural setting.

Kind regards

Nikki Malpas

Clerk

Wentlooge Community Council