Oak Court Farm: Planning Support Statement

In support of a Full Planning Application for a Rural Worker Dwelling, Access Track and Cycle Parking Facilities at Oak Court Farm, (adjacent to Vron Farm), Llewelyn Road, Vron, Tanyfron, Wrexham LL11 5TW

Contents

Oak Court Farm: Planning Support Statement 1

Executive Summary 2

1. Planning Statement 3

1.1 Introduction 3

1.2. Site Context 5

1.3. Applicants' Profile 5

1.4. Policy Context 6

1.5. Compliance with National Planning Policy 6

1.6. Compliance with Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP) 8

2. Agricultural & Functional Need Statement 11

2.1 Introduction 11

2.2 Description of the Enterprise 12

2.2.1 Livestock Enterprises 12

2.2.2 Horticulture 12

2.2.3 Processing and Sales 12

2.2.4 Conservation and Land Management 13

2.2.5 Family Model as Succession Strategy 13

2.3 Justification for On-Site Presence 13

2.3.1 Animal Welfare 13

2.3.2 Crop Management 13

2.3.3 Off-Grid Infrastructure Oversight 13

2.3.4 Security and Practical Access 13

2.4 Labour Requirements 14

2.5. Static Caravan (Rural Worker Dwelling) 14

2.6 Access Track 14

2.7. Phasing and Accommodation Strategy 15

2.8 Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal 16

2.8.1 Functional test 16

2.8.2 Time test 16

2.8.3 Financial test 16
2.8.4 Other dwelling test 17
3. Heritage Statement 18
4. Ecological and Conservation Statement 21
4.1 Green infrastructure 21
4.2 No-dig/low-impact regenerative agriculture 23
4.3 Habitat Management Plan 24
4.3.1 The Marsh 26
4.3.2 The Pond and the Dewpond 27
4.3.3 The Riverbanks 27
4.3.4 The Woodlands 28
4.3.5 The Hedgerows 28
5. Transport Statement 29
6. Flood Risk Assessment Statement 30
7. Coal and Development High Risk Area Statement 30
8. Location and Block Plan 32
8.2 Static Caravan 32

Annexes supplied herewith:

Annex I: OS Maps 1879-1961
Annex II: Policy and Legislative Framework
Annex III: Business Plan
Annex IV: Profit and Loss Forecasts and Cashflow Budget for Years 1-3
Annex V: Humanure Composting
Annex VI: Constructed Wetland for Grey Water Processing
Annex VII: Images of Offa's Dyke
Annex VIII: Access Drainage Improvement and Erosion Mitigation
Annex IX: Photos of Oak Court Farm: The Pond and the Dewpond Jan 2025
Annex X: NRW Survey 2016
Annex XI: Coal Authority CONM29 Coal Mining Report 25 June 2024
Annex XII: Location and Block Plan
Annex XIII: Floor plan and elevations of proposed static caravan

Executive Summary

This Planning Support Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the construction of a rural worker dwelling and associated access track at Oak Court Farm, a diversified agricultural holding of approximately 5.46 hectares located in Wrexham.

Oak Court Farm is operated by Oak Court Enterprises Ltd and managed day-to-day by the four directors/shareholders, all of whom are new entrant farmers, and two of whom are also Young Farmers. The enterprise is demonstrably active, with established horticulture, livestock arriving soon, and conservation operations in progress. The applicants live and work full-time on the land. The functional need for permanent on-site accommodation is pressing, well-evidenced, and consistent with national and local planning policy.

This proposal responds directly to the criteria set out in TAN 6 and PPW 12, as well as the Wrexham LDP and UDP, demonstrating both agricultural and functional justification for the dwelling, and a clear intent to support the long-term viability of a sustainable, multi-generational rural business. The application integrates strong environmental stewardship, minimal visual impact, and sustainable construction principles aligned with Future Wales Plan 2040[1] goals and Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015[2] objectives.
The Statement is supported by extensive documentation, including a robust business plan, demonstrating enterprise viability, ecological mitigation strategies, location/block plan, and detailed functional need assessments. The proposed development forms part of a broader programme of responsible rural enterprise, land restoration, and low-impact infrastructure to serve the current and future needs of the holding.

The applicants have taken great care to align their approach with relevant statutory and policy requirements and principles, and respectfully seek approval to regularise the existing rural worker presence on-site and enable this new farm business to flourish within the policy framework of rural Wales.

> "*Small and medium sized enterprises are an important part of our economy*"
>
> *Future Wales Plan 2040[3], p.36*

1. Planning Statement

1.1 Introduction

This Planning Statement supports a full planning application for the siting of a rural worker's dwelling in the form of a static caravan, and the creation of a new access track and cycle parking area at Oak Court Farm, adjacent to Vron Farm, Llewelyn Road, Vron, Tanyfron in Wrexham County Borough.

The application is made in response to case references ENF/2025/0147, ENQ/2025/0105, and prior notification P/2025/0006 (withdrawn). It is submitted on the basis of:

- The immediate, ongoing, and year-round agricultural and environmental work carried out on-site;

[1] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf
[2] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents
[3] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf

- A demonstrable functional and business need for on-site accommodation; and
- Strong alignment with local and national planning policy (TAN 6, Wrexham LDP, Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023, among others).

The applicants are grateful for the pre-application advice provided by the Case Officer, and the advice provided in person on site by the Enforcement Officer, and have sought to respond to all substantive planning considerations within this submission. While some elements of requested scale drawings are not included in standard architectural format, the key site relationships, dimensions and proposed development layout are clearly set out and supported by robust accompanying material.

In response to the Case Officer's pre-application advice, the applicants acknowledge the request for a set of formal plans including:

- A Location Plan at 1:1250 scale, OS-based, showing a north point and at least two roads. The site to which the application relates to be edged in red and any other land in the applicant's ownership edged in blue.
- Existing and proposed site plans at 1:500 or 1:200 scale, showing features such as access, private way, parking, position of caravans and other proposed buildings and associated garden areas etc
- Elevation of the proposed units at 1:100 scale
- Floor plans of the proposed units at scale 1:50

Due to the self-funded and self-prepared nature of this application, professionally drafted architectural drawings are not included. However, the accompanying documentation includes carefully scaled and geo-referenced plans which illustrate the landholding, track, access, siting of the static caravan, and key spatial relationships, as well as the dimensions and elevations of the static caravan.

The applicants respectfully submit that these are sufficient for the purposes of assessing policy compliance and functional need. Should the Local Planning Authority require any further scaled drawings, the applicants will be happy to provide them in an appropriate format as part of a validation response or follow-up submission.

The proposal has been carefully designed to support the functional needs of an emerging diversified agricultural enterprise, run by a multi-generational family business. The dwelling and access track are essential to the sustainable and active management of the holding, which encompasses mixed livestock, horticulture, food production, and conservation work. The development will facilitate on-site presence to support the welfare of animals, care of crops, operation of off-grid infrastructure, and delivery of environmentally-responsible land stewardship. The proposed cycle parking area is a natural extension of the applicants' ethos, and is in full alignment with Welsh government objectives:

"*The Welsh Government's aim is to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private vehicles, and support a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport.*"

Future Wales Plan 2040[4], p. 84.

1.2. Site Context

The holding comprises approximately 13.48 acres (5.46 hectares) of agricultural land, including areas of pasture and woodland listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, as well as river and riverbank habitat. The land includes a boundary along Offa's Dyke, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and is accessed from the highway Llewelyn Road via a private tarmac driveway which crosses the Dyke before entering the property.

The proposed static caravan, access track and cycle parking area are sited well away from the sensitive woodland area and neighbouring properties, in order to minimise any visual or environmental impact. The land is currently undergoing ecological restoration and agricultural improvement, with active rewilding, habitat creation, and no-dig crop systems being implemented.

A series of historical Ordnance Survey (OS) maps (1879 – 1961), provided at Annex I herewith, demonstrate that field boundaries and agricultural use have remained unchanged for nearly 150 years. This reinforces the site's longstanding rural character and suitability for small-scale agricultural habitation.

The Scheduled Monument triggers considerations under Policies EC11 and EC14 (UDP), as well as Policy NE2 (LDP) concerning heritage and natural environment protection. Further detail on the compliance measures proposed by the applicants is available at Annex II: Policy and Legislative Framework. Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is being sought concurrently and is anticipated to be granted.

1.3. Applicants' Profile

The applicants [redacted] own and operate Oak Court Enterprises Ltd, a registered business with company number 16121199. Oak Court Farm is the main trading arm of the business. The farm is registered with RPW under CRN A0078199 and holds a valid CPH number 56/009/0031**.** All four are directors and shareholders, and are actively engaged full-time in the day-to-day running of the business. All four are new entrant farmers, [redacted] bring energy, long-term commitment, and alignment with Welsh Government rural development policy.

The farm is fully off-grid, using solar and wind energy, humanure sanitation, and rainwater harvesting to operate without reliance on mains utilities.

[4] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf

> *"It is vital that we reduce our emissions to protect our own well-being and to demonstrate our global responsibility. Future Wales together with Planning Policy Wales will ensure the planning system focuses on delivering a decarbonized and resilient Wales through the places we create, the energy we generate, the natural resources and materials we use and how we live and travel."*[5]

The applicants respectfully suggest that they are part of the *solution*, not the problem.

1.4. Policy Context

This section sets out how the proposed development complies with relevant planning policies at national, regional, and local levels. The table at Annex II herewith provides a summary of the Policy and Legislative Framework, together with brief information about the compliance measures proposed.

The adopted local plan is the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, supported by supplementary planning guidance. While the Local Development Plan (LDP) remains unadopted (see Annex II), its policies are material considerations. It is regrettable that the LDP policies are not accessible to the public, but research has been carried out to try to establish the policies' objectives, where possible.

Each of the policies is addressed individually in more detail throughout this document where relevant, including the site's sensitive heritage context (Offa's Dyke), agricultural justification, environmental stewardship, and sustainability credentials. The applicants respectfully submit that the proposal is consistent with policy aims across all levels of the planning hierarchy.

1.5. Compliance with National Planning Policy

The assertion under your ref ENF/2025/0147 that the formation of a "new agricultural unit" constitutes a breach of planning control is respectfully challenged. The activities carried out on the land – including horticulture, the grazing of goats for landscape management, and the tending of nursery plants and produce – fall squarely within the definition of *agriculture* under Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which explicitly includes "horticulture" and "grazing land" among other uses. (Please see Annex II.) The use of the land for agricultural purposes has remained continuous and lawful throughout. A change of ownership does not, in and of itself, constitute a material change of use, nor does the formation of a new holding from previously amalgamated land parcels.

The applicants acknowledge the importance of clarity in planning classification, and have therefore set out further information in Annex II, and within this document and associated documents, evidence the continued agricultural status of the land, in line with national legislation and policy.

[5] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf p.46

Furthermore, the Welsh Government has made explicit its commitment to supporting new entrants into agriculture and to encouraging sustainable and diverse farming systems, including horticulture, through legislation such as the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023[6], which enables support for horticultural and diversified activities within Sustainable Land Management (SLM) goals.

The definition of agriculture to include horticulture among other activities is also reflected in TAN 6 (please see Annex II). The suggestion that lawful agriicultural use should be subject to additional scrutiny, or require a change of use application, undermines this national policy objective and is without foundation in planning law. Accordingly, this application proceeds on the basis that the land is already in lawful agricultural use and that no change of use has occurred or is required.

TAN 6 sets out the criteria under which planning permission for rural enterprise dwellings may be granted. The application responds to the requirements for a new dwelling by addressing in its Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal (at section 2.8 below) the following tests, as set out in TAN 6[7]:

> "The appraisal should address the following tests:
>
> - The *functional test* to provide evidence of whether there is a need for a resident worker for the proper functioning of the enterprise. (See paragraph 4.8.1.)
> - The *time test* to provide evidence of the labour requirement for the worker who is working on the justifying enterprise. (See paragraphs 4.9.1).
> - The *financial test* to provide evidence of the economic sustainability of the justifying enterprise and identify the size of dwelling that the enterprise can sustain, ensuring that the size of the dwelling is commensurate with its functional need and financial justification. (See paragraphs 4.10.1 – 4.10.3.)
> - The *other dwellings test* to identify whether there is an existing dwelling or building suitable for conversion on the enterprise or dwelling in the locality that could meet the identified functional need. (See paragraphs 4.12.1 – 4.12.2)." (S.4.7.1, p.20.)

As demonstrated in section 2 below, this proposal meets all of the above criteria in that:

- The enterprise demonstrates a **functional need** for someone to live on site;
- The enterprise is **financially sustainable**;
- No suitable existing accommodation is available nearby;
- The dwelling is **modest in scale** and clearly related to the functional need.

A full Agricultural/Functional Need Statement is included below in support, together with the Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal, detailing the year-round demands of livestock care,

[6] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-11/agriculture-wales-act-2023-introducing-sustainable-land-management-framework.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[7] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf

crop tending, off-grid system management, and food production across multiple small-scale enterprises. The business is at an early but well-structure stage, supported by a comprehensive business plan (provided at Annexes III and IV), RPW registration, a valid CPH number, membership of FUW, Farming Connect guidance, and specialist accountant.

In addition, the development supports key objectives under the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023, including:

- "to produce food and other goods in a sustainable manner";
- "to mitigate and adapt to climate change";
- "to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide"; and
- "to conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources and promote public access to and engagement with them, and to sustain the Welsh language and promote and facilitate its use"[8].

The enterprise embraces regenerative practices, low-impact energy and water systems, humanure composting, biodiversity enhancement, and heritage grazing to restore and preserve Offa's Dyke. These align directly with the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) framework set out in the Act.

1.6. Compliance with Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP)

The applicants note from the Enquiry Response ref: ENQ/2025/0105 that:

> "*At this time, the Local Development Plan (LDP) is unadopted and has returned to the status of an emerging plan. The development plan for Wrexham now comprises Future Wales (Welsh Government) and the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, which was adopted in 2005. The weight applied to UDP policies in the determination of applications is dependent upon whether they are in accordance with national policy and whether there is more recent evidence to justify an alternative approach. Given that the LDP was found sound following examination, significant weight can still be afforded to some of its policies and evidence base*."

The proposal also aligns with Wrexham's policy on rural enterprise dwellings as set out in Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy H5, unadopted Local Development Plan (LDP) Policy H7 and amplified in *Local Planning Guidance Note (LPGN) 13: Housing in the Countryside*. Key provisions include:

- Policies H5 (UDP) and H7 (LDP): Permits dwellings in open countryside where there is a demonstrable essential need for a full-time worker on site for agriculture or forestry. The proposed static caravan and access track meet this test in full, as detailed within the supporting Agricultural Functional Need Statement below, demonstrating a requirement for 24/7 on-site presence**.**

[8] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2023/4/section/1

"Outside defined settlement limits new dwellings will only be permitted where:-

[…]

c. an essential need to house a full time agricultural or forestry key worker can be established and

i) the long term financial viability and functional management of the enterprise is proven; and
ii) the person, due to the nature of the work, has to live on the site rather than in a nearby settlement; and
iii) there are no suitable buildings nearby which could be converted into a dwelling; and
iv) the new dwelling is sited adjacent to an existing building, can be landscaped, and is a form, bulk, design and materials which reflect the locality's rural character.

Any permission will be conditioned to limit residential occupancy to essential workers."[9]

- Rural enterprise dwellings under **LPGN 13** are regulated as follows*:*

"*Dwellings required to accommodate staff employed by rural enterprises may be granted planning permission where it can be demonstrated that there is an essential requirement for someone to be present on site at most times. Policy H5 of the Wrexham UDP allows for the erection of dwellings outside defined settlement limits where an essential need to house a full time agricultural or forestry worker can be established*."[10]

- The Wrexham LDP allows temporary dwellings (e.g. static caravans) for up to three years to support emerging enterprises – consistent with TAN 6:

"*Where the case is not completely proven for a dwelling permission should, not be granted for it, but it may be appropriate for the planning authority to test the evidence by granting permission for temporary accommodation for a limited period. Three years will normally be appropriate to ensure that the circumstances are fully assessed."*[11]

The applicants respectfully suggest that this Planning Support Statement, together with its supporting documentation provide ample evidence for the case to be "completely proven", but since Oak Court Enterprises Ltd is a new business, it is acknowledged that planning officers may wish to tread carefully.

[9] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/udp-statement.pdf p 34
[10] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-11/lpg-13e.pdf p. 2
[11] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf s. 4.6.2, p. 19.

Other Relevant Local Policies

- **Policy EC6: Biodiversity Conservation**
  The proposal includes indicative details of planned ecological restoration of woodland, marsh and pasture, enhanced habitats for protected species (e.g. water voles, great crested newts), and a non-invasive access route. This meets the policy's objectives for proactive enhancement:

  "*Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported*."[12]

- **Policies NE2 and GDP1: Landscape & Visual Protection**
  By locating the proposed development away from neighbours and preserving a bucolic grazed field for rotational grazing in field 1, and keeping the static and associated infrastructure limited to a small, well-screened area of the site, the proposal conserves the landscape character and prevents harm to open countryside.

The proposed access track uses a reinforced grass mesh system to preserve the open, green character of the site. From the viewpoint of neighbouring properties to the north, the track will be indistinguishable from grass, and no visual disruption will result. To reduce the impact on neighbours, all main infrastructure – including the static caravan, crop systems, infrastructure and tool storage – will be located within the second field, which is not overlooked. The first field will remain a managed grazing area, maintaining a pleasant and pastoral appearance. It should be noted that this will represent a significant improvement on the current state of the fields, which have suffered from neglect in previous years, and have been overtaken by unsightly weeds:



Field 1, July 2025



Field 2, July 2025

[12] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/udp-statement.pdf p 22.

2. Agricultural & Functional Need Statement

2.1 Introduction

This statement supports the justification for a rural worker's dwelling (static caravan) at Oak Court Farm, under the provisions of TAN 6, where the proposal aligns with Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities, and Wrexham's Policy H5 (UDP) and Policy H7 (LDP) regarding agricultural workers' dwellings. It also reflects the aims of Future Wales and PPW Edition 12 in supporting rural economic sustainability:

> "*Lack of employment opportunity is a key reason behind rural depopulation, particularly in the younger workforce; it can also contribute to deprivation and inequality. […] Rural areas should develop a broad economic base which supports a strong foundational sector, agricultural and forestry industry, innovative and emerging technology based enterprise, start-ups and micro businesses.*"[13]

This statement demonstrates a clear functional need for on-site presence, confirms the business is genuinely agricultural, and sets out the labour requirements of a diversified and growing enterprise.

Oak Court Enterprises Ltd is a registered farm business operating on a 5.46-hectare-holding of pasture and ancient woodland. The business is operated full-time by four directors/shareholders: Tom and Katherine Pruen and their two adult sons, Dominic and Toby Devlin. All four are new entrant farmers, with Dominic and Toby also qualifying as Young Farmers under Welsh Government definitions[14].

The need for on-site accommodation arises from the following:

- Year-round livestock care (poultry, goats, pigs, future sheep/cattle)
- Diverse no-dig horticultural operations
    - *It is worthy of note that <u>all</u> the field crops planted in the spring were lost, due to the extreme weather conditions which meant that the crops required on-site maintenance and care. At that time, the applicants were living over an hour away and it was impossible to properly care for the crops.*
- Labour-intensive, off-grid infrastructure requiring close management
- Integrated compost sanitation and grey water systems. (Please see Annex V: Humanure Composting and Annex VI: Constructed Wetland for Grey Water Processing.)
- Security for animals, produce and equipment.

[13] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf p.69

[14] https://www.gov.wales/docs/beta/young-people-into-agriculture-guidance-notes-en.pdf

2.2 Description of the Enterprise

The enterprise is structured around diversified agricultural activity, with all production and processes carried out on site. The business plan is submitted herewith as Annex III, demonstrating both the definitively agricultural nature of the enterprise, as well as the clear functional need for at least 4 full-time employees.

It is a complex enterprise, including:

- Multiple livestock types: poultry (for meat and eggs), goats, pigs, future sheep and cattle
- Processing operations: value-added meats, eggs, preserves, confit products, etc.
- Horticulture: year-round, premium & specialist crops, as well as household staples for the local community
- Direct sales: delivery, market pitches, subscription boxes
- Conservation and habitat management
- Infrastructure maintenance (off-grid utilities, humanure, rainwater harvesting, grey water, etc.)
- Future education and tourism activities.

Given the applicants' focus on high animal welfare standards and with very little machinery and no mechanised systems, there is inevitably a higher focus on manual labour – labour which cannot be deferred or automated. It requires real people, every day, on site.

2.2.1 Livestock Enterprises

- Poultry for eggs and meat: chickens, ducks, quail, geese and turkeys
- Goats for milk and future cheese/yoghurt processing
- Pigs for value-added pork products (e.g. sausages, hams, pâté)
- Planned future introduction of sheep and cattle

2.2.2 Horticulture

- No-dig small-scale crop production including tomatoes, agretti, asparagus, salads, and wild garlic
- Field crops, mainly for animal feed.
- Nursery plants
- Use of composted humanure, grey water irrigation, and sustainable mulching.

2.2.3 Processing and Sales

- Value-added food production (e.g. charcuterie, preserves, pestos).
- Direct-to-consumer sales via market pitch, delivery rounds, and eventually a farm shop.
- Horse-drawn delivery carts: the "Cart of Curiosities" and "Wagon of Wonders".

2.2.4 Conservation and Land Management

- Restoration of ancient woodland and riverbank habitat.
- Target species include water voles (*Arvicola terrestris)* and great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*).
- Grazing of Offa's Dyke for bramble control and monument restoration (subject to SMC).

2.2.5 Family Model as Succession Strategy

The business is structured to support long-term, multi-generational rural enterprise. The two young adults are active partners in the business, representing future continuity and expansion (please see section 1.3).

It is anticipated that, as the business grows, more employment opportunities will be created for others bringing economic benefits to the local area.

2.3 Justification for On-Site Presence

2.3.1 Animal Welfare

- Daily feeding, health checks, predator protection, breeding support
- 24/7 response required for kidding, farrowing, predator events, and emergencies
- Welfare standards and niche product quality require hands-on, continual management

2.3.2 Crop Management

- Routine daily care of field crops, market garden and nursery crops
- Watering/irrigation
- Pest control
- Sowing/propagation

2.3.3 Off-Grid Infrastructure Oversight

- No mains power, water, or waste systems
- Solar/wind systems, water harvesting, compost toilets, and grey water management require daily monitoring
- Failures could result in immediate health, hygiene, and animal welfare risks

2.3.4 Security and Practical Access

- Isolated rural location with livestock, equipment including processing equipment, and tools vulnerable to theft and/or vandalism
- Delivery logistics (especially horse-drawn) require staff on site to load, dispatch, and receive

2.4 Labour Requirements

A full-time year-round presence of at least four workers is essential. Labour is split across:

Enterprise Area	Tasks	Labour Demand
Livestock	Care, cleaning, feeding, health, breeding	1 – 1.5 FTE
Horticulture	Sowing, watering, harvesting, pest control	0.75 – 1 FTE
Processing and Sales	Slaughter prep, food safety, packaging, market runs	0.75 – 1 FTE
Site & System Management	Compost, water, fencing, security, power	0.5 FTE
Conservation & Public Engagement	Species monitoring, habitat management	0.25 – 0.5 FTE
TOTAL:		**4+ FTE**

2.5. Static Caravan (Rural Worker Dwelling)

The siting of a static caravan is essential to support the functional, environmental, and logistical demands of Oak Court Enterprises Ltd – a diversified, year-round agricultural operation requiring 24/7 on-site management. The key functional reasons for the on-site dwelling are set out in section 2.3 above, so are not repeated here.

The static caravan will be sited discreetly within the second field, away from neighbouring properties and screened by topography and planting. It will be modest in scale and sympathetic to the landscape. No permanent structures are proposed at this time, nor are any planned for the longer term. The applicants' ethos is such that they do not want to make any permanent alterations to the land, just improvements.

2.6 Access Track

The proposed access track is required to facilitate safe and efficient movement between the static caravan and other operational areas of the farm, including grazing zones, growing plots, and eventual market delivery staging. As discussed in the Heritage Statement at section 3 below, the access track crosses Offa's Dyke at a previously disturbed point and uses reversible low-impact methods. The proposed access track will follow a non-intrusive route that also crosses the Dyke at the previously disturbed point, but which moves away from the Scheduled Monument boundary at the earliest possible opportunity. Scheduled Monument Consent is being pursued separately, with agreement in principle already obtained.

Key features of the access track proposal include:

- **Surface:** Reinforced grass mesh to allow for vehicle access while retaining a grass-like visual appearance. From neighbouring viewpoints, the track will appear as an uninterrupted green field.
- **Ecological and Heritage Sensitivity:** No hedge removal, tree felling, or earthworks are required. The route moves away from Offa's Dyke at the earliest possible point, and is positioned well away from the ancient woodland and will not interfere with habitat or root protection zones.
- **Visual Impact:** The access track necessarily begins within the first field before terminating in the second. The first field is overlooked from the northern boundary. The use of grass mesh ensures minimal aesthetic disruption. This field will be used solely for rotational grazing, preserving a bucolic appearance.
- **Functional Justification:** The access track is required to ensure safe access to the static caravan and fields during all weather conditions, especially for tasks involving livestock transport, crop movement, and equipment access.

2.7. Phasing and Accommodation Strategy

The applicants are currently living on-site in a temporary and unsuitable touring caravan, which has been properly identified as a breach of planning control by Enforcement Officer Gary Evans under enforcement reference ENF/2025/0147, due to the absence of available accommodation and the urgent need to be present full-time to manage the enterprise. The applicants have made significant personal and financial commitments to the land, which now serves as both their home and livelihood.

Formalising a suitable static caravan dwelling is essential to ensure health, safety, and compliance. This planning application, therefore, is submitted in hopes of regularising the planning breach and achieving approval for the proposed development to assist with their proposed long-term stewardship of this land.

The applicants have made enquiries with Wrexham County Borough Council's housing department, to explore formal housing options. However, they have been informed that they do not qualify for housing assistance due to having "no local connection" to Wrexham. Their previous rental tenancy, in Llanfyllin, Powys, ended on 16th June 2025. They were aware that this would be the end of their tenancy, and were given proper notice to hand back the property. They have not made themselves intentionally homeless.

No viable or affordable alternatives are currently available to them, having invested all their available funds into the purchase of the land, and the basic starter infrastructure they currently have. Therefore, the applicants respectfully suggest that with their land-holding and business located in Wrexham, it is logical for them to remain on site – even without the functional needs of the business – from a personal welfare perspective.

Residence at Oak Court Farm is the applicants' only financially-viable option at present. Fortunately, this aligns directly with the demonstrated need for at least 4 full-time employees to be resident on site, in order to ensure the agricultural business can operate

effectively. The proposed static caravan represents a modest and appropriate solution providing the basic level of stability required for a family-run agricultural enterprise in its critical early stages.

2.8 Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal

2.8.1 Functional test

The ***functional test*** is met by the demands listed in section 2.5 above:

- Animal welfare;
- Crop management;
- Infrastructure oversight;
- Security; and
- Operational efficiency

The applicants submit that it is "*essential, for the proper functioning of the enterprise, for one or more workers to be readily available at most times*."[15]

2.8.2 Time test

The ***time test*** is met by the evidence of the labour demands of this intensive diversified enterprise, as provided at section 2.4 above, and confirmed in the Business Plan provided at Annex III.

The applicants submit that, having demonstration the **functional** need, the "*scale and nature of the enterprise will be relevant. Where there is currently no dwelling associated with the rural enterprise the worker for whom there is a functional need for new accommodation must be a full-time worker.*"[16]

It has been demonstrated that there is a need for a minimum of four full-time workers to effectively manage and operate the enterprise.

2.8.3 Financial test

The ***financial test*** is met by the Business Plan provided at Annex III, together with the Profit & Loss Forecasts and Cashflow Budgets provided at Annex IV which robustly demonstrate "*the economic sustainability of the justifying enterprise and identify the size of dwelling that the enterprise can sustain, ensuring that the size of the dwelling is commensurate with its functional need and financial justification.*"[17]

[15] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf s4.8, p 21
[16] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf s4.9, p.21
[17] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf s4.7.1, p.20

The applicants suggest that it would be foolhardy to invest in a more expensive form of accommodation in these critical early stages of developing the enterprise. This aligns with TAN 6:

> "*Dwellings which are unusually large in relation to the needs of the enterprise, or unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income it can sustain in the long-term, should not be permitted. It is the requirements of the enterprise rather than of the owner or occupier which are relevant to determining the size of dwelling that is appropriate."*[18]

Furthermore, the Business Plan and associated financial documents provide the required evidence:

> "*To assess economic sustainability it will be necessary to show the business has a reasonable prospect of providing a market return for all operators for the amount of management and manual labour inputs, including the job for which the rural enterprise dwelling is being sought, for at least five years from the anticipated completion of the proposed development. This should be assessed on the basis of what is a realistic income for the skills of the operator."*[19]

The applicants submit that they are very aware of the traditionally low incomes associated with agricultural businesses and have planned their diversified business and lifestyle accordingly. They are confident that sufficient income will be available for all four workers as the business develops. Given that the profit and loss forecasts and cashflow figures are estimated for the next three years, and being a start-up micro business, the applicants respectfully submit that estimating to the full extent of 5 years would bring no additional benefit to the evidence submitted.

2.8.4 Other dwelling test

The Oak Court Farm site has no pre-existing buildings of any kind. In line with TAN 6, "*[t]he siting of the proposed dwelling should relate closely to the activities for which there is a need. […] in the case of dwellings for agricultural enterprises, should not be […] in locations that could encourage farm fragmentation. Local planning authorities should resist planning applications for rural enterprise dwellings that are prominent in the landscape."*[20]

The applicants have carefully considered the arrangement of the key areas for the functioning of the business. The proposed location for the static caravan was chosen for several key reasons:

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[18] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf s4.10.2, p.21

[19] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf s4.10.2, p.21

[20] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf s4.12.1, p.22

- *Neighbour amenity/landscape impact:* the proposed location is not overlooked by any neighbor, nor visible from highways or anywhere in the surrounding area;
- *Proximity to key business functional areas:* the proposed location is very close to the main market garden area, which runs down the eastern boundary. It is also close to the main paddock area, which will be on the sloping part of the second field. Much of the poultry and smaller livestock, such as rabbits, will be housed nearby also, ensuring that animal welfare standards can be maintained consistently.
- *Proximity to infrastructure equipment and tool/machinery storage:* the proposed location is close to where the main infrastructure is established, providing security and deterrence of crime.
- *Environmental impact:* all the areas of Oak Court Farm with significant potential as habitats and which would benefit from managed conservation efforts are located along the southern boundary and in the hedgerows to east and west, and bisecting the two fields. The proposed location was deliberately chosen to stay at a significant distance from these areas, ensuring no disturbance to wildlife.
- *Scheduled Monument impact:* Offa's Dyke is a considerable distance away from the proposed location.

As indicated at section 2.7 above, enquiries have been made with Wrexham Council's Housing Department but to no avail. The applicants are not in a financial position to engage in a further private rental, and in any event, the functional need has been evidenced for all four of them to remain on site to meet the needs of the business.

On this basis, the applicants respectfully request that their application for a rural worker dwelling in the form of a static caravan be approved.

3. Heritage Statement

This section addresses the significant importance of Offa's Dyke which follows the western boundary of Oak Court Farm, and whose area extends some distance into the first field from the western edge. The historical value of such monuments is hard to quantify but impossible to ignore.

It is regrettable that the years of neglect have led to the Dyke's being entirely subsumed under weeds, particularly unchecked overgrowth of brambles, which has virtually destroyed its proper visual aspect. Originally constructed as a linear earthwork in the 8th century by King Offa of Mercia, it marked the border between Mercia and Wales. Please see Annex VII: Images of Offa's Dyke for examples of some of the better-maintained sections of the Dyke, and comparison with current photographs of the Dyke as it is now.

It is also important to note that the site has already been subjected to significant disturbance in the form of the previously-constructed tarmacadam driveway, which irreparably crossed the Dyke. This existing intervention demonstrates that archaeological integrity has already been compromised in that area. The applicants seek to ensure that any remaining archaeological artifacts will be preserved, undisturbed, for as long as they have stewardship of this land.

While stewards of this land, the applicants seek to make improvements to the surface appearance of Offa's Dyke, so that it can be returned to the local community as a beautiful as well as historic asset. In doing so, the applicants recognise the vital importance of preserving the potential archaeological value of the earth beneath the Dyke, which may be of interest to this or future generations.

The proposed access track necessarily crosses Offa's Dyke, a Scheduled Monument, which triggers considerations under Policies EC6, EC11 and EC14 (UDP), as well as Policy NE2 (LDP) concerning heritage and natural environment protection.

Policy EC6 requires:

> "*Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where such development is permitted, damage should be kept to a minimum, and compensatory measures should be provided. Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported.*"[21]

The applicants submit that the evidence provided within this full planning application meets all of these criteria.

Policy EC11 stipulates:

> "*Development which would adversely affect the site or setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument or archeological site of national significance will not be permitted.*"[22]

The proposed development of the Access Track and the Rural Workers' Dwelling outlined in this full planning application have been carefully designed to ensure that there will be no adverse effect on the monument. The applicants hope to be able to restore the Dyke's condition as a benefit to the wider community as well as for its own sake, and to improve the wildlife corridor/habitat value of the boundary hedgerow. (This is also a relevant consideration under Policy NE2.)

Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is being sought concurrently and is anticipated to be granted.

Policy EC14 relates to the protection of controlled waters:

> "*Development which would have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the capacity, flow, quality or availability of controlled waters and associated land will not be permitted.*"[23]

[21] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/udp-statement.pdf p 22.
[22] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/udp-statement.pdf p.25
[23] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/udp-statement.pdf p.25

The River Gwenfro runs along the southern part of the applicants' landholding. Although this river is not classified as "controlled waters", it is a 'feeder river' for the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC which are (rightly) protected. The proposed development will have no impact whatsoever on the "capacity, flow, quality or availability" of the River Gwenfro, nor of the controlled waters downstream. The applicants respectfully submit that this need not be a concern for the Planning Authority.

Key heritage considerations:

- The track is surface-level only, constructed using a grass mesh system.
- The proposed works are limited to surface dressing and minor shallow grading, with no excavation, preserving any remaining historical layers for future archaeological investigation.
- Ground disturbance is minimal and avoids permanent damage to archaeological strata.
- The entrance has been re-graded to improve drainage and reduce erosion:

    - Gravel bags have been applied to level out the gradient and improve drainage. This also provides a firmer ground to support vehicle movements across it.
    - Straw has been added to assist with drainage and nourish the soil for healthier grass growth, to improve the visual aspect.
    - The addition of fresh top soil stabilises the area and prepares a level surface for application of the grass mesh.
    - This has been over-sown with a robust 'gateway' grass seed mix, which is already growing through. Over time, this will produce a strong, interlinked roots layer which will hold the grid mesh in place, as well as restoring the appearance of that part of the access.
    - Photographs are provided at Annex VIII: Access Drainage Improvement and Erosion Mitigation Measures, showing the careful layering of surface dressing as described above.

- Careful hand work has been used, thereby avoiding any mechanical impact.
- The applicants have endeavoured, overall, to minimise disturbance and integrate the access visually and environmentally with the landscape.
- The track deliberately diverts away from the Dyke as early as practicable and proceeds across the northern part of the site from west to east.
- The entire length of the track is set well away from the river, woodland and sites of potential conservational interest.
- The static caravan and core infrastructure are located well away from the Dyke and its visual setting, as well as being in the northern part of the second field, where no neighbor's view or amenity is impacted.
- In alignment with the Welsh Government's commitment to supporting the Welsh language and cultural identify, the applicants intend to install bilingual Welsh/English information boards following the Dyke's restoration. These will explain the history and function of the Dyke, supported by the restoration/conservation methods used to maintain its condition. This will promoted local heritage and bilingual accessibility.

- This initiative will:
    - Enhance public understanding of local history
    - Support national aims for increased use of the Welsh language
    - Contribute to the cultural visibility of Oak Court Farm's enterprise.

- The applicants believe – in alignment with the Future Wales Plan 2040[24] – that meaningful interaction with heritage contributes to local identity, tourism, and educational value.
- The applicants have had preliminary feedback from Cadw that the grazing of goats along the Dyke, to help clear the brambles and overgrowth of weeds, would be in keeping with the proper maintenance of the monument. In this way, the applicants hope to be able to restore the section of the Dyke which borders their land to its former glory, and thereby help educate visitors as to its historical and cultural significance.
- There is a public footpath which runs along the northern boundary of the site, so it would be possible to place bilingual information boards in such a position that visitors can see the Dyke and learn about it, without the need to walk over it and possibly cause damage.

The step-by-step low-impact methods used to stabilise the entrance slope are shown in Annex VIII. No excavation or mechanical groundwork was carried out at the entrance, or anywhere within the extensive boundary of Offa's Dyke. Rather, gravel bags were layered in an interlocking pattern, to provide structure, then topped with straw and top soil to allow for natural improved vegetation regrowth and improved drainage. The grid mesh was then pegged down over the surface, and the area over-sown with 'gateway' grass seed. This method was chosen specifically to avoid damage to any archaeological deposits and to remain fully reversible, preserving future archaeological investigation potential.

4. Ecological and Conservation Statement

4.1 Green infrastructure

Oak Court Farm operates entirely off-grid with strong ecological principles, aligning with Policies SP18 and NE6 (LDP) and LPGNs 16 and 32, particularly with regard to sustainable land use, biodiversity, and low-impact development:

Little or no information is available about the specifics of Policies SP18 and NE6, however LPGN 32 states:

> *"…it is also vital that more common species and habitats are maintained and that the contribution of farmland and urban spaces to support biodiversity are not overlooked.*

[24] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf p.55

Wildlife corridors situated in built up areas or in areas used intensively for agriculture provide important continuous areas for the movement of plants and animals."[25]

And

"*Development should be designed to conserve as much of the original habitat as possible and retain and protect wildlife corridors. It should seek to avoid damage to, or adverse effects upon, existing biodiversity (species and habitats) through appropriate site design and working methods."*[26]

LPGN 16 is concerned with Parking Standards:

"*The way in which people are likely to choose to travel to and from developments is key to determining how many parking spaces will be required to service it. This can be influenced by a number of facts including:*
[…]

- *How easy it is to access a site by safe walking and cycling routes."*[27]

The proposed cycle parking area is intended to encourage active travel to and from the site for visitors, in alignment with Future Wales 2040:

"*The sustainable transport hierarchy in Planning Policy Wales, which prioritises active travel and public transport, is a fundamental Welsh Government principle that underpins Future Wales."*[28]

While Future Wales policy focus is on walking and cycling, which the applicants seek to promote, they respectfully submit that horse-driving is also "active travel", and as such, should be encouraged and supported. The applicants hope to provide horse-drawn transport to collect and return visitors from an appropriate location in the City for special events on the site.

Key green infrastructure measures include:

- Compost sanitation (Please see Annex V: Humanure Composting) and zero foul water discharge
- Grey water recycling for irrigation in the northeastern corner of the site, where all soaps and washing liquids (including any products containing phosphorous) are used solely for personal hygiene, dish washing and laundry. This area is exclusively designated for crops and produce, and any run-off after irrigation/watering of the crops naturally percolates through the entirety of the rest of the field (a distance of at least 90m) before reaching the river boundary (vitally important in the context of

[25] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/lpg-32e.pdf p.1
[26] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/lpg-32e.pdf p.4
[27] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/lpg-16e.pdf p. 1
[28] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf p.84

the significance of the River Gwenfro to the health of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC – please see section 4.3 below)

- A purpose-designed wetland treatment system is planned (see Annex VI: Constructed Wetland for Grey Water Processing), sized to 5m x 3m x 1m depth, based on Constructed Wetlands Assocation guidelines for septic effluent, thereby providing a conservative treatment margin for grey water processing. The multi-stage natural filtration system described fully in Annex VI:

    - Reinforces water quality management;
    - Enhances biodiversity; and
    - Provides ecological resilience.

- The site has no utility connections for water, electricity, or gas, nor are any such connections planned.
- Rainwater is harvested and used for personal hygiene, dish washing and laundry. The applicants plan to install their water purification system to provide both filtration and UV treatment to transform rainwater into drinking water in due course. (Currently, drinking water is being purchased at local stores.)
- Electricity requirements, including for electric fencing, are solely met by solar and wind power, with occasional supplementation (as required at this early stage) of a hybrid generator, running on propane gas. Eventually, the applicants hope to invest in further solar panels, small wind turbines and batteries, in order to be able to harness and store more of the natural power resources available on site and reduce reliance on the generator.

4.2 No-dig/low-impact regenerative agriculture

Decades of neglect of these particular fields have left the soil in very poor condition. The applicants are working to restore the natural fertility of the soil, improve its drainage and nutrient value for crops and produce, using a range of traditional methods.

Key regenerative agriculture measures include:

- Minimal disturbance to the soil through no-dig cultivation methods in the market garden area:

    - The weeds/grasses are strimmed down and left on the surface to rot down over time, thereby adding organic matter to the soil below;
    - Cardboard is laid over the surface, ensuring that light is completely blocked out, to prevent weed regrowth;
    - The cardboard is wetted to help it settle. The cardboard, too, will break down over time and add organic matter to the soil below;
    - A mixture of well-rotted compost, top soil, wood ash and strategic other inputs (depending on the crop) are placed over the cardboard, leaving an edge of cardboard to prevent weed encroachment;
    - Seeds/nursery plants are sown/planted into this soil, and mulched with straw to retain moisture and suppress weed growth.

- For field crop areas, the applicants intend to use a horse-drawn chain harrow, to help to break up the clay layers and open up the soil, so that it can receive the ameliorations which will be applied. Significant weeds, such as docks, thistles and nettles, can be removed and composted, and then the soil can be improved by the application of well-rotted compost and manure to improve both drainage and soil fertility so that field crops can be grown successfully;
- As each area of the field is cleared, cover crops will be sown wherever a field crop is not going in, to ensure that the soil is protected and allowed to regenerate naturally.

The applicants are confident that these methods, over time, will restore the natural fertility and health of the soil ecosystems across the site.

4.3 Habitat Management Plan

The site includes part of the Afon Gwenfro Wildlife Site along the course of the River Gwenfro to the south. This triggers consideration of Policy NE2 (LDP) although very little information is available about this policy. The applicants understand that it outlines the council's approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity, natural habitats and landscapes, while also addressing issues of air quality, water resources and flood risk. While the River Gwenfro itself does not have any official wildlife site designations, it flows into the River Dee, and Bala Lake which is a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The River Dee is recognised for its important habitats and species, including freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), and otter (*Lutra lutra*). The Gwenfro's waters contribute to the biodiversity of these protected areas and may have a significant impact – for good or ill – on the protected species which make it their home.

Therefore, the applicants' evaluation of these areas of the site is made in the context of the local authority area. Even though the river itself may not be a designated site, its role in the larger ecosystem and its contribution to the health of the Dee and Bala Lake – now and into the future – are important material considerations.

The applicants have identified some particular areas of the southern part of the site – across both fields – which are likely to benefit from habitat management and improvement (please see Annex IX: Photos of Oak Court Farm The Pond and the Dewpond Jan 2025). These include:

- Marsh-like area ('the Marsh') to the southwestern area, north of the river (field 1);
- Flood-plain pond ('the Pond'), also north of the river, at the lowest point of field 1;
- Dewpond ('the Dewpond') with drainage channel to the river, situated north of the river at the lowest point of field 2, below the clump of trees;
- Riverbanks ('the Riverbanks') along the whole length of the river at the south of the property;

- Woodland ('the Woodland') habitat throughout the ancient woodland which forms the southern boundary of the property (across both fields).
- The Hedgerows along the western and eastern, and running north to south, dividing the two fields.

The key policy considerations relating to this aspect of the proposal are as follows:

- AWA 2023 (Sustainable Land Management)
- TAN 5 (Nature Conservation and Planning)
- TAN 6 (Rural Enterprise)

The **Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023** supports sustainable farming practices and ecologically-sound land stewardship:

> "*The first objective is to produce food and other goods in a sustainable manner, and in doing so –*
>
> *(a) to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and*
> *(b) to contribute to achieving the well-being goals in section 4 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015."*[29]

TAN 5 provides that:

> "*The town and country planning system in Wales should:*
>
> - *work to achieve nature conservation objectives through a partnership between local planning authorities, CCW, the Environment Agency Wales, voluntary organisations, developers, landowners and other key stakeholders (PPW 5.5 and 5.25);*
> - *[…]*
> - *plan to accommodate and reduce the effects of climate change by encouraging development that will reduce damaging emissions and energy consumption and that help habitats and species to respond to climate change (PPW 2.2.1 and 2.3.2)*[30]*"*

and

> *"Sensitive landscaping and planting, the creation, maintenance and management of landscape features important to wildlife, and the skilled adaptation of derelict areas can provide extended habitats."*[31]

[29] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2023/4/section/1
[30] Guidance on planning and climate change is available in The Planning Response to Climate Change - Advice on Better
Practice, ODPM, Welsh Assembly Government, Scottish Executive, 2004.
[31] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan5-nature-conservation.pdf p.7

TAN 6 provides further encouragement for the applicants' proposals:

> "*Many economic activities can be sustainably located on farms. Small on-farm operations such as food and timber processing and food packing, together with services (e.g. offices, workshop facilities, equipment hire and maintenance), sports and recreation services, and the production of non-food crops and renewable energy, are likely to be appropriate uses."*[32]

Key aspects of the Habitat Management Plan include:

- Restoration of riparian habitat
- Proposed reintroduction of native flora
- Monitoring of wetland and woodland species
- Use of low-impact grazing (goats) for bramble control and woodland margin management
- Expansion of hedgerows and replanting to fill in gaps, providing complete wildlife corridors

The applicants suggest that their on-site residence, business operations, and stewardship of the land will lead to ecological enhancement which will be a major benefit of the proposed development.

4.3.1 The Marsh

The applicants intend to carry out careful survey work, in collaboration with NRW and other experts, to identify species of interest in this area. It is anticipated that a number of significant flora species, particularly, may well be found here. The applicants seek to ensure that any such flora (and fauna) can thrive and will carry out whatever maintenance, restoration and conservation work is necessary to facilitate this.

It is hoped that it might be possible to introduce (or find naturally occurring) devil's-bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) which is essential for the marsh fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurinia*). The Marsh Fritillary is a priority species in Wales and is protected under various UK and European legislation due to its declining status. In England and Wales, it is a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981[33].

The Marsh area on Oak Court Farm is in a naturally-sheltered spot. It is nestled at the lowest part of the first field, well below the bridge over the river which forms part of Llewelyn Road. As such, the applicants believe it could be an ideal position in which to try to reintroduce the Marsh Fritillary, where it could survive and thrive without disturbance.

Oak Court Farm is home to a significant number of butterfly and moth species already. The applicants are already assisting with a 'citizen-scientist' butterfly survey, providing butterfly counts through the app, *Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count*. However, they would

[32] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf s3.7, p.13

[33] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69#commentary-c4955061

like to make a more significant contribution and the potential introduction/reintroduction of Marsh Fritillaries to the site could be an important step.

The Marsh also provides suitable habitat for abundant insects, which inevitably attract a wide variety of birds. Furthermore, the Marsh might also offer extended habitat opportunities for mammals, including water voles (*Arvicola terrestris*), although they would probably thrive better along the riverbank.

Nevertheless, the Marsh at Oak Court Farm offers abundant opportunities to restore and maintain habitats for a wide range of significant species of flora and fauna. Bilingual education boards could be placed in suitable locations, so that visitors may learn about the inhabitants of these beautiful spaces, and carefully-positioned wildlife cameras might be able to capture sightings of them – both to share with the public, and to assist with monitoring of habitat restoration.

4.3.2 The Pond and the Dewpond

The Pond is little more than a depression in the land, and in the dry spring and summer months, is almost completely drained. However, in January 2025, there was a considerable amount of water held there. Please see Annex IX: Photos of Oak Court Farm: the Pond and the Dewpond (January 2025).

Although the NRW Survey provided at Annex X does not relate specifically to this site, it nevertheless provides useful advice concerning "[m]aintaining the ponds without allowing them to silt up". As is clear from the photos in Annex IX, both the Pond and the Dewpond are sadly overgrown, and 'choked', so are not providing the thriving habitats they could.

The channel connecting the Dewpond to the river is also considerably overgrown. With careful sedge and silt removal and possibly strategic replanting of native species, the applicants believe the habitat potential for this area in particular could be vastly improved.

The applicants are keen to improve the habitat potential in these areas, in collaboration with NRW and other experts.

4.3.3 The Riverbanks

As with the rest of the site, the Riverbanks have also suffered from years of neglect. Nevertheless, they are evidently already occupied by a number of species of both flora and fauna which appear to be coping with the unmanaged habitats.

The applicants intend to work with NRW and other experts to provide enriched and restored, undisturbed riparian habitats along the whole length of the river which borders the Marsh, as well as improving the riparian habitats along the rest of the river. It is hoped that visitors will be able to walk along the eastern part of the river and enjoy the woodland areas. This will include the introduction/reintroduction of native flora to assist with the regeneration of this ecologically-valuable environment.

Bilingual education boards can be posted in these areas, to assist with community engagement in conservation measures.

4.3.4 The Woodlands

The Woodlands are listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, which triggers consideration of **Policy NE2 (LDP)** and **PPW 12**:

> "*Ancient woodland, semi-natural woodlands, individual ancient, veteran and heritage trees and ancient hedgerows are irreplaceable natural resources, and have significant landscape, biodiversity and cultural value. Such trees, woodlands and hedgerows are to be afforded protection from development which would result in their loss or deterioration unless very exceptionally there are significant and clearly defined public benefits;*"[34]

None of the development proposed in this full planning application could have any effect – detrimental or otherwise – on the ancient woodland which forms part of the site. The applicants intend to liaise with NRW and other experts to formulate a robust management plan for the Woodlands with a view to:

- providing careful forestry management to improve the health of the living trees, clear some areas to improve light access to the Woodland floor, thereby increasing opportunities for more flora and fauna to thrive
- strategic additional tree planting, following advice from the experts, to replenish the stock of native trees within the woodland, as may be required
- very limited use of the woodland for conservation grazing, with close monitoring, oversight and reporting
- sensitive placement of visitor access paths and bilingual education boards
- species monitoring and reporting, to assist with local conservation efforts

The applicants take their land-stewardship responsibilities very seriously and relish the opportunity to engage with and improve the naturally-occurring ecological resources on the site.

4.3.5 The Hedgerows

The Hedgerow along the western boundary follows the line of Offa's Dyke, and is thick and well-established. The applicants have no plans to interfere with this pre-existing wildlife corridor, beyond the careful restoration/conservation grazing of the area of the Dyke inside the Hedgerow boundary, subject to SMC consent.

The goats will be prevented from damaging the Hedgerow by careful use of fencing and close monitoring to ensure that they are not 'over-reaching' and potentially damaging the Hedgerow itself.

[34] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-07/planning-policy-wales-edition-12.pdf s 6.4.43, p.159

The Hedgerow along the eastern boundary is also reasonably thick and fairly well-established, but the applicants believe it would benefit from some expansion of its width and the introduction of a broader range of food-rich hedgerow plants, to support wildlife. There are some areas of near-gap which will also be replanted and enriched. In this way, the wildlife corridor can be expanded and made more secure, such that smaller creatures can migrate under safe cover from predators.

The Hedgerow which almost bisects the holding will also benefit from both widening and gap filling, and again, the emphasis will be on native species which will provide food and/or protective shelter for wildlife and birds. The access track necessarily requires a gap in the Hedgerow to facilitate access between fields 1 and 2, but this gap has been in use for years historically, so there will be no detrimental impact from its continued use.

5. Transport Statement

The applicants are making enquiries with the Chief Officer, Environment & Technical at Wrexham Council, to ensure that their proposals will be in compliance with all the necessary policies and legislation, including the Town and Country Planning Act 1990[35], and will forward any such advice when received.

The applicants note that the proposed development site is located via a private driveway which is on a rural, classified road (Llewelyn Road) which is subject to a 60mph speed limit. However, given the geometry of the road, typical vehicle speeds would be closer to 20mph. The applicants anticipate that further advice will be provided by the Chief Officer, Environment & Technical, concerning the visibility for the site's access. However, since the access to the site is necessarily from the private driveway leading to Vron Farm, rather than directly from Llewelyn Road, the applicants trust that this will not cause a problem.

The applicant's proposal includes a cycle parking area precisely to encourage visitors to the site to use more eco-friendly modes of transport, in line with Wrexham's Local Housing Authority's stated intention to ensure adequate and secure parking facilities in new developments and public spaces. This also aligns with Future Wales Plan 2040[36], with its emphasis on 'active travel'. While the applicant's proposal is modest in scale, and not in a public space but rather on private land, the addition of cycle parking is respectfully requested as a beneficial addition to the site.

The applicants themselves plan to transition to using horse-drawn transport at the earliest possible opportunity, with a view to reducing their carbon footprint still further. It is hoped that it may be possible to provide horse-drawn transport to bring visitors to the site for particular events, where this might be appropriate.

[35] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/336
[36] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf

Nevertheless, if visitors were to visit the site by car, the 3m access track will provide sufficient space for cars to enter the site, and turn round safely, away from the road.

6. Flood Risk Assessment Statement

In accordance with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010[37], and in compliance with TAN 15[38], the applicants have consulted NRW's Flood Risk checking service[39] using the postcode LL11 5TW, which applies to the site's access, and that of Llydiart Fanny Farm, LL11 3LG, to ensure that the majority of the landholding is assessed. The findings are the same for both postcode areas, and are as follows:

Type of flood risk	Risk level	Risk % chance
Flooding from rivers	Very low risk	Less than 0.1% chance each year
Flooding from the sea	Very low risk	Less than 0.1% chance each year
Flooding from surface water and small watercourses	Very low risk	Less than 0.1% chance each year

This area does not benefit from flood defences

On this basis, the applicants respectfully suggest that this proposed development aligns with the requirements of TAN 15 and will not lead to an increased flood risk for the site itself, nor for properties down river of the site.

7. Coal and Development High Risk Area Statement

As part of the applicants' enhanced searches carried out during the process of purchasing the land, a disused mine shaft was identified. In light of this, a Coal Mining Report was sought from the Coal Authority, and is provided herewith as Annex XI: Coal Authority

[37] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/section/3
[38] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2025-03/technical-advice-note-15-development-flooding-and-coastal-erosion.pdf
[39] https://check-your-flood-risk.naturalresources.wales/home/GetRiskLevels?rnd=1753304334376&postcode=ll11%203lg&address=LLIDIART%20FANNY%20FARM%2C%20ADWY%2C%20COEDPOETH%2C%20WREXHAM%2C%20LL11%203LG&latitude=329250&longitude=351624&culture=en-GB#results-view
and
https://check-your-flood-risk.naturalresources.wales/home/GetRiskLevels?rnd=1753304494517&postcode=ll11%205tw&address=THE%20OLD%20MISTAL%2C%20VRON%20FARM%2C%20LLEWELYN%20ROAD%2C%20VRON%2C%20TANYFRON%2C%20WREXHAM%2C%20LL11%205TW&latitude=329244.28&longitude=351941.62&culture=en-GB#results-view

CON29M Coal Mining Report 25 June 2024. The Report identifies "*Known or potential coal mining risks"*, and provides a map identifying the location of the disused mine shaft. The Coal Authority also confirmed that the site is on the coalfield.

The applicants were reassured that, as confirmed in the report (page 3), "[p]roperty owners have the benefit of statutory protection (under the Coal Mining Subsidence Act 1991)", which "contains provision for the making good, to the reasonable satisfaction of the owner, of physical damage caused by disused coal mine workings including disused coal mine entries."

> *"(1) Subject to and in accordance with the provisions of this Part, it shall be the duty of the British Coal Corporation ("the Corporation") to take in respect of subsidence damage to any property remedial action of one or more of the kinds mentioned in subsection (2) below.*
>
> *(2) The kinds of remedial action referred to in subsection (1) above are –*
>
> *(a) the execution of remedial works in accordance with section 7 below;*
> *(b) the making of payments in accordance with section 8 or 9 below in respect of the cost of remedial works executed by some other person; and*
> *(c) the making of a payment in accordance with section 10 or 11 below in respect of the depreciation in the value of the damaged property."*[40]

Advice is provided in the report about future development (page 3), but the applicants do not intend to engage in any development on the site which might require such technical advice, since the proposals are all at surface level. (The only exception is the planned Constructed Wetland, see Annex VI, but this does not form part of this application, and information relating to it is provided merely for information purposes at this stage. When the time comes, advice will be sought from NRW and the Coal Authority to ensure that such development will be carried out safely and in accordance with all relevant policies and legislation.)

The only work which required some minimally-invasive digging was the laying of the drainage trench (previously approved as permitted development – confirmed verbally by Planning Officer Sarah Duckworth, via Planning Consultant Owen Fry of Berrys).

The applicants were further reassured by the Coal Authority report, which confirms within its 'Detailed findings' section:

- "*Any movement in the ground due to coal mining activity associated with these workings should have stopped by now*." (Page 5)
- "*The Coal Authority has not received a damage notice or claim for the subject property, or any property within 50 metres of the enquiry boundary, since 31 October 1994*." (Page 7)
- "*The Coal Authority has no record of a mine gas emission requiring action*." (Page 7)

[40] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/45/section/2

- "*The property is not in an area where a notice to withdraw support has been given*." (Page 7)

The applicants respectfully submit that the site's location on a coal field is not a material consideration for the current full planning application.

8. Location and Block Plan

The Location and Block Plan provided at Annex XII is based on the official Title Plan from HM Land Registry (provided within the Annex), geo-referenced for accuracy, using British National Grid map CRS 277000, and clearly identifies:

- Red areas: Application area (access track, cycle parking area, and static caravan site, each labeled)
- Blue line: Full landholding at Oak Court Farm (approx.. 5.46 ha)
- North arrow and visual scale bar included for reference.
- A frame of the surrounding area provides further context for the position of the site within Wrexham County Borough Council's area.

The positioning of the proposed access track, cycle parking area and rural worker dwelling (static caravan) fall well within the applicant's landholding, with access originating from an existing tarmacadam entrance and crossing Offa's Dyke at a previously disturbed point. The plan illustrates:

- the 3m wide access track from the northwest entrance
- diagonal approach to divert early from Offa's Dyke before straightening across the two fields
- location of cycle parking area within the first field, positioned well beyond the boundary of Offa's Dyke
- location of static caravan (approx. 38ft x 12ft), positioned 4m south of the track and approx. 40m from the eastern boundary
- proximity to field boundaries and clear separation from sensitive heritage and ecological zones.

The plan is drawn to scale with annotations and north arrow.

8.2 Static Caravan

Annex XIII provides a floor plan, together with front and side elevations, of a sample static caravan. The applicants have yet to settle on a particular model, but this is indicative of the type of static caravan being sought.