

NOTES FROM GLYN JONES ON PROPOSALS FOR CONVERSION OF CARTSHED AT BLAEN CWM LLAWENOG.

1. Without grant aid which would necessitate change of use the cart shed is running of risk of total collapse. Without grant input there is no finance available to renovate.
2. The building itself serves no purpose for agriculture due to its shape and size. We no longer have horses and the cart shed would not accommodate tractors therefore making any practical use for the existing building redundant.
3. Due to forthcoming changes in agriculture agri environment schemes e.g. abolishment of Tir Gofal, Tir Mynydd and Organic payments and the introduction of Glastir it is essential that as a family we look to diversification in order to generate the projected £20,000 a year revenue loss.
4. The farm has large borrowing commitments which have to be met therefore this is an excellent proposal for diversification thereby ensure future essential income.
5. The house at present being renovated is going to provide a home for a young farmer and his family which is to be encouraged in the rural environment especially in a farm like Blaen Cwm which is high altitude and bears the brunt of all adverse weather conditions. Due to this a secure sustainable living for the future is essential.
6. I quote Hilary Benn (Defra) on the way forward “the need for the agriculture industry to move away from direct subsidies” this therefore necessitates diversification and on hill farms there are very limited diversification options.
7. Another quote from Elin Jones Rural Affairs Minister, Welsh Assembly “we will make it easier for the farming community to diversify i.e. by easing planning regulations”.
8. There is a proven demand for outdoor activities which are directly working in harmony with agri environmental schemes to promote and educate the general public on how the environment plays a vital role within global climate change whilst providing structured and educational access to areas which might otherwise not be viewed by the public.
9. Following consultation with Farming Connect, ADAS and also expressions of interest from other parties this has the merit of an excellent idea which combines a rural/town element with education.
10. The family have worked closely with the CCW for over 30 years on the Berwyn Mountains through Section 15 agreements and Tir Gofal and are fully conversant with exactly what is required for any open access or changes of use.
11. Unfortunately the CCW would struggle to offer any criticism of the scheme when the Countryside Rights of Way Act actually gives total access to all mountains, heath and moorland for the general public and their dogs to roam at random and would actually probably be quite supportive of an enterprise which structured access.
12. The sheepdog clinics would be held on land which is not in the SSSI and therefore would have no impact on any environmental issues or CCW regulations. Again it must be pointed out that when the general public have total access to SSSI's with their dogs, who are allowed off leads for at least 10 months of the year, they would struggle to impose any restrictions on a sheepdog training clinic.

13. The proposed scheme meets all the requirements for grant funding under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Plan for Wales.

14. The family are very keen to provide a facility which offers disabled access to the countryside which would normally be unavailable to them due to access issues.

15. The environment plays a huge role in global climate changes and this will be an excellent facility which would demonstrate educationally the use of alternative energy and the importance that terrain plays in these changes whilst demonstrating exactly how large a role the farming community has to play in order for changes to be effective.

Highways

There would be a low level of movement to and from Blaen Cwm on a weekly basis. In order for highways to stop this proposal it would have to address the serious issues regarding vehicle movements from the village up the valley. At present every week, more especially at weekends, there is an extremely high volume of 4 x 4 vehicles, scramble or quad bikes which access the tracks over the mountains and certainly pose more of a threat to the area than the few vehicle movements this project would generate.

Since the initial submission of the grant application Allan Forrest has sought clarification as to what was considered appropriate for Axis 3 funding as the main criteria was that it was not to be agricultural based. He has found that sheepdog training does in fact meet the criteria for Axis 3 funding and we would promote the fact that most people who access training are hobby handlers who want to participate in sheepdog trials and not farmers looking to train their sheepdogs for work.

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This is the main basis on the application for funding:

Description of Project

Creation of an outdoor education centre to provide a multi faceted training facility which will provide opportunities for training linked to outdoor pursuits and the environment for all aspects of the community.

Main Project Activities

By providing this training facility it will meet measure code 3.1.1 whose main objective is to increase the income of the farm households in rural Wales through diversification into non agricultural activities. It will provide the opportunities for services activities e.g. education and social activities on the farm. The restoration of the building will take approximately six months following approval of the project.

Sustainable Development

As part of Tir Gofal the farm is currently looking at environmental issues including sustainability also through working closely with Better Woodlands for Wales. This project will assist in providing a sustainability in the area i.e. bed and breakfast, hotels etc. It will also provide a facility for educating and making people more environmentally aware.

Indicate key target groups/beneficiaries the project will support.

Small business i.e. local hotels and bed and breakfast etc.

Welsh speaking communities.

Children through education.

Black and minority ethnic groups through education.

Under employed providing education training opportunities.

The centre will be open to all abled and disabled.

Establishing need and demand for project

Studies have been carried out which identify a lack of training facilities in the area, this included a SWOT analysis looking into a marketing mix, the competition, customers and general market research to highlight the demand and need for a centre in the area.

What steps have been taken to ensure that the project activities applied for do not duplicate main stream support/activities under Axis 1 and 2 of the Rural Development Plan for Wales

We have liaised with Farming Connect Axis 1 and we have understanding of the content of Axis 2 through the agri-environment schemes we are currently running.