

North Cadbury & Yarlington Parish Council

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“Draft” Minutes of Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting

held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 in

North Cadbury Village Hall commencing at 2.00pm

Councillors Present:

Andy Keys Toyer (Chairman)

Caroline Bowen

Malcolm Hunt

Clare Leavold

Richard Rundle

John Whitehead

John Rundle (Vice-Chairman)

Nick Garrett

Chris Jose

Nerissa Northover

Maria Viney

In Attendance: The Clerk and twenty five members of the public.

25/04. Apologies for absence:

To receive any apologies for absence.

RESOLVED: None received

25/05. Declarations of Interests:

Members are reminded of their obligation to declare any Pecuniary or Other interests they may have under the Localism Act 2011 and NALC Model Code of Conduct adopted May 2022. (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

RESOLVED: None received.

❖ **Public Question and Comments:** The Chairman opened the meeting by inviting the four representatives present from Emily Estate (EE) to give a brief presentation on the changes submitted to their original application, following which, members of the public (MOP) would be given the opportunity to speak for up to three minutes each and ask any questions of EE or the Parish Council (PC).

❖ **Paul Rawson, EE and Martin Harradine, Planning Consultant** explained the reasons for the revised application was in response to consultees and engagement with the Somerset Council (SC) Landscape Specialist. There were six amendments and one to a Public Right of Way (PROW). He explained that, although the changes were only small, they had a significant impact, which were summarised in the application letter and hence the volume of documents submitted. A summary of the changes are as follows:

1. Reduction in height of the two main farm buildings by 1.5 and 1.8m to reduce visual effects.
2. Relocation of SUDs basin further east to lower lying ground, in response to SC Landscape Officer, to be accommodated more sensibly.
3. Introduction of additional tree/woodland planting to the west of the proposed replacement farm yard, to provide additional visual mitigation in local views from Hicks Lane.
4. Realignment of access road to be closer to the north boundary and associated hedgerow/woodland to be more discrete.
5. Additional tree and hedge planting to reflect the historic field pattern, as an additional element of landscape restoration at Manor Farm.

6. Omission of previously proposed (offsite) hedgerow along Hicks Lane, to retain views north / north-eastwards towards Yarlington Sleights.
7. There would be a minor change to the PROW to prevent obstruction (move fence back).

Following the summary by EE, questions were invited from councillors and MOP and summarised as follows:

Regenerative farming – A wet winter meant that although direct drill was preferable, EE recently had to plough due to the weather conditions.

Drainage - The demolition/removal of the farmyard at Manor Farm, Pound Lane, Yarlington would effectively improve drainage for Yarlington Sleights. The removal of the roof structure and concrete base, which would be recycled, were effectively 'enhancements'. Returning the farmyard to greenfield was a major net benefit. Groundwater testing carried out identified a low water table as no water was found. The scheme was designed to drain from an attenuation basin no greater than at greenfield rate. Drainage would be away from Galhampton towards Yarlington.

A Cllr asked for clarification on the risk of flooding associated with the application compared to the status quo. The answer was the level of overall run off and the risk of flooding would be less with the application presented.

Local Plan Policies EP4 & EP5 - As 'custodians of the environment' residents questioned how wildlife could move freely with electric fencing installed to retain buffalo/cattle and how it would have an effect on the safety of those using the PROW. Electric fencing did not fit in with EP5. EE responded that they would be restoring the historic field boundaries. Proposed fencing/hedging would be designed to prevent badgers accessing the herd but would not prevent deer, with the exception of the EE orchards.

Traffic movement – EE confirmed that they would run a new agricultural access road from Avalon Farm, Galhampton to the proposed new site in Yarlington for all construction traffic, taking all such traffic away from Yarlington. The A359 was capable of taking aggregate traffic from Avalon Farm.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – MOP believed that an EIA was required and asked that the PC request the application be referred for consideration by SC full committee.

Expansion - The Chairman asked if there would be any further expansion to the proposed farm site. EE confirmed that this was obviously not possible due to the mitigation measures in place.

Cherished Views in a Valued Landscape – A CPRE representative spoke and gave reasons why the 'valued landscape' status of this particular landscape location was a good reason to recommend refusal. To summarise:

The location of an industrial scale farm in a valued landscape in terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Applicant now accepts in the amended Landscape and Visual Assessment that the site is a valued landscape and is proposing more planting and reducing the heights of the buildings to help mitigate the issue.

There would be an adverse visual effect associated with views of the buildings and will reduce the views of Yarlington Sleights and Cadbury Castle from the PROW, which are described within the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan (NCYNP) as cherished views in a valued landscape and which it seeks to protect.

If a replacement farm on this scale is justified, replacement buildings should be built on existing sites across the eleven farms owned by EE. If this was not feasible, an alternative location should be found for it, such as next to Avalon farm due to the detrimental impact on the valued landscape. A MOP quoted from the NCYNP that development should 'protect and enhance views'. The buildings would be reduced in height to 11m, which is still the equivalent of a three-storey building. The proposed hedge planting would be 12-19ft high, which would further degrade the views. She also wished to remind those present that at the previous site meeting in July 2024 for the original

application, upon questioning whether there was a need for the new farm to be in that specific location, the Applicant stated that 'No, we want it there'.

A Cllr asked a supplementary question as to whether EE's statement that the need for the new farm cannot be accommodated within the existing farms on the EE estate was a matter of judgement or fact, to which EE's answer was "it is a fact".

The Cllr also asked about the setting of the new farm in the landscape. EE produced a raft of visuals depicting how the site it would look over time in the landscape for circulation amongst the PC.

Dark Skies – Concerns were raised on light and noise pollution on a dark sky site. Lighting would be required on site for 16 out of 24 hours with up to 100 vehicle movements a day.

Yarlington – A Yarlington resident spoke in favour of the application as it would provide farming in the area 'fit for future'. Another resident spoke that there was possibly a 60/40 split in Yarlington in favour of the application.

The Chairman closed the public session at 3.15pm

25/06. PA 24/01203/FUL - Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and associated yards and landscape restoration of cleared area; replacement farm buildings and yard area with associated new access link to existing farm track, drainage infrastructure, and landscape works at Manor Farm, Pound Lane, Yarlington, BA9 8DG:

To consider amended plans/additional information.

RESOLVED: Following a call for a proposal, it was proposed that the PC recommended refusal due to the loss and overdevelopment of agricultural land, potential drainage issues and that the application did not comply with the NCYNP. The proposal was seconded but not passed.

The Chairman called for a show of hands to recommend **APPROVAL**, which was passed by a majority vote of eight to two.

25/07. Items for Report and Future Business: No items for report.

Next meetings: On site planning meetings (2.00pm) and ordinary meeting (7.00pm) to be held on Wednesday 22nd January 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.30pm.

Signed

DatedChairman