

Design and Access Statement – Installation of Three Polytunnels and a barn on Agricultural Land

Introduction This statement supports the proposal to install three polytunnels and a barn on agricultural land. The development is intended to enhance local food production and support sustainable agricultural practices. The polytunnels and barn will be modest, sensitively sited, and screened by planting two internal native hedgerows, a hedgerow along the southern boundary and planting 14 new trees to ensure minimal visual impact. No permanent materials will be used ie concrete for flooring preferring rammed earth or suspended floorboards.

Purpose of Development The polytunnels will provide controlled growing environments for crops, extending the growing season and improving resilience against adverse weather. This supports diversification of agricultural activity and contributes to local food security. Secure storage for agricultural equipment is needed, we have been gifted a small tractor and implements by the national lottery and have to put them somewhere rather quickly. We need to build a cold store to store the vegetables we produce and we need a place to store hay, grains and dry other vegetables. We also have no mains water supply and the barn is crucial for collecting rain water to water crops.

Design and Layout

- The proposal consists of the erection of three agricultural polytunnels and one agricultural barn to support the ongoing operation of the agricultural holding.
- The layout of the development has been carefully considered to ensure efficient agricultural use while minimising visual impact on the surrounding countryside. The polytunnels will be positioned within the field to maximize solar gain and operational efficiency, while maintaining appropriate separation from boundaries. The barn is positioned to provide practical access for agricultural machinery, storage, and day-to-day farming activities.
- The scale of the proposed structures is appropriate to their agricultural function and reflects development commonly found within rural areas. The polytunnels are lightweight, low-profile structures designed for horticultural use, whilst the barn is of a functional size necessary for the storage of machinery, equipment, produce, and associated agricultural materials.

- In terms of appearance, the polytunnels will comprise translucent polythene coverings over metal frames typical of agricultural installations. The barn will utilise traditional agricultural materials and be clad in a wavy edge wood blending into the rural setting once woodland screening matures. The overall design is functional in nature and reflects the agricultural purpose of the development while remaining sympathetic to the character of the surrounding landscape.

Access Arrangements

- **Mode of Access:** Access to the site will be strictly on foot, by prior arrangement only.
- **Management:** This ensures controlled entry, minimizes disturbance, and maintains the agricultural character of the land.
- **Infrastructure:** No new vehicular access or hardstanding is proposed, preserving the integrity of the field.

Screening and Environmental Considerations

- **Coppice Creation:** A new 1,400 square meter coppice planted with 14 trees is being established at the bottom of the field.
- **Screening Function:** The two internal native hedgerows, hedgerow along the southern boundary and 14 new trees will provide effective visual screening of the polytunnels from surrounding viewpoints, softening their appearance in the landscape.
- **Environmental Benefits:** This will enhance biodiversity, provide habitat for wildlife, and contribute to carbon sequestration, aligning with wider sustainability goals.

Conclusion The proposed polytunnels and barn represent a low-impact, sustainable agricultural development. With controlled pedestrian access and substantial screening, the scheme respects the rural character of the area, enhances biodiversity, and supports local food production.