

PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
10th March 2021
ADDITIONAL PAGES

**AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS ON SCHEDULE ITEMS : Pages 1 - 9		
Item:	Ref No:	Content:
01	20/02374/FUL (Land At Calmsden Estate Calmsden North Cerney)	Supporting Information from Applicant – Please see attached Business Plan dated 14 th April 2020

CALMSDEN CONNECT

Business Plan



Jane Tufnell

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Where

Calmsden is a small hamlet located 2 miles west of the Fosseway, the A429 and a mile east of the A435, above North Cerney. It is in the parish of North Cerney and has a population of about 40 people. It consists of 16 dwellings, and has been owned predominantly by the Tufnell family since 1914. The estate extends to 2,000 acres



with the village in the middle. Cirencester is 5 miles to the south, Swindon is 19 miles to the south east and Cheltenham 14 miles north west. Communications via the A429 and the A435 are extremely good.

1. IDENTIFYING THE NEED

- *Up until the 1970's the occupants of Calmsden were largely involved in the running of the estate. Agricultural workers and gamekeepers occupied the Victorian row of cottages, estate managers and family members the larger houses. In the 1950's there were 40 horses employed on the farm.*
- *Since this time there has been a slow and sometimes dramatic change. Now there are only 3 men, including Mark Tufnell, involved in the running of the farm. The machinery is large and the operation very mechanised. In the 1980's the threat that Calmsden could become a dormitory village for people living in London was resisted strongly by the owners.*

The Tufnell family started to invest in the 1990's in the housing stock to try to attract long term tenants who, although not involved in the estate directly, would live in the village if not all, then most of the time and become involved in the community. This has been a very successful process



with 5 of the village houses let to families who have an average term of occupancy of 11 years so far.

- *The farm is at the forefront of environmental conservation. It believes in harnessing the best practices of modern farming but engage them in a way that maximises the environmental benefits. The farm sponsors and has been the recipient of several environmental awards. This is an example of harnessing the new but maintaining the benefits of the past.*
- *In the last 5 years another change has started to happen. The arrival of broadband and the internet has meant that people can move to Calmsden and be able to work here as well. Perhaps we have come full circle, and there could come a*



time when everyone living in Calmsden works some of their time here. There are 3 village occupants who currently work from home. This project is aimed directly at facilitating the desire to live and work locally in modern, exciting facilities in a beautiful rural community and in harmony with its agrarian activities.

- Calmsden Connect will offer cost effective, quality space with vital access to high speed internet. It will also offer collaborative/social space built into the workspace design. It will be a go-to hub for people living and working in their homes in the surrounding rural villages. It will be a place to host a meeting or an information session or just have an interesting cup of coffee. The Calmsden community will be at its heart bringing together people and expertise, fostering a collaborative, creative and innovative community. It is envisaged that 30-40 people will work in the centre and 4 people from Calmsden will be employed in the running of the project.*

- *The community will encourage the exchange of ideas and collaboration. The vision is that this could blossom out into the area of arts, conservation and innovation. A strong brand identity will be established with the full use of digital marketing.*

Function of buildings and preservation of Farming activity in modern buildings

- *The site was developed as cattle and storage buildings in the 1970's. The access and height of the buildings are no longer optimal for the current agricultural machinery that is used on the estate. The site is too tight and cannot be easily used for modern farming techniques.*
- *The modern steel building to the west of the site has housed cattle for the last 10 years. These animals are put into the Calmsden valleys during the summer and back into the barn during the winter. Apart from the sub optimal heights and angles of the buildings for modern tractors, the main problem that has arisen is complaints from the village about the noise the cattle make when being fed daily and at any time of movement. The estate proposes to build another modern barn to the north of Calmsden Road that is optimal for modern techniques and also further away from the residential houses so that noise pollution will no longer be a problem.*
- *It is very important for the Calmsden Estate to have animals overwintering in buildings and summering in the valleys. This is the optimal way to manage the grasslands and very beneficial for the environment. Complaints from the residents have become stronger over the years and it has reached a point where the Estate has to respond and arrange alternative*

accommodation for the cattle at a greater distance from the houses. The new buildings to the north of Calmsden road will be situated and scoped to deal with all the demands of modern agriculture. It will be next to the Estate's existing agricultural operations and therefore more efficient, safer and economic.

Economic rationale

- *Calmsden Estate currently has two main sources of income. Agriculture and long term Residential letting account for the majority of economic activity.*
- *Agriculture; the financial fortunes of farming have been under pressure for some time and the farm has not been profitable without its subsidy for at least 10 years. This has been intensified by Britain's decision to leave the European Union which has brought agricultural subsidies into focus. Agricultural subsidies are being phased out by 2028 and there is much uncertainty over the replacement scheme.*
- *Residential lettings ; the village is in a conservation area and all the cottages and houses are built of local natural materials. This means that maintenance and upkeep is extremely expensive. The rents that are achievable on the houses have not increased in line with inflation for 20 years. Low levels of interest rates have meant that people prefer to buy houses rather than rent so this has created a cap on rental levels that can be achieved in the market. The combination of high costs of maintenance and slow moving rents means that the houses pay for themselves but do not generate profits. The sense of community is very high in Calmsden and this must be maintained as the estate evolves into the 21st century.*
- *Commercial diversification ; the reason the estate has decided to embark on this project is to try to create a diversified income stream alongside the farm and houses. The*

commercial offices can be build sympathetically to blend in with the landscape. They will be enhanced by their agricultural heritage and surroundings. It is hoped that several of the people living in the village will use these offices as their place of work and that 3/4 people will be employed to run it when fully engaged. The offices need to find the correct balance of maximising the rental income without threatening the character and culture of the farming based estate. The size of the project has been calculated to justify the infrastructure costs of such a project and create a surplus annual income that can ensure the sustainability of the Estate.

Jane Tufnell

14th April 2020