

**Ward** Tale Vale

**Reference** 21/2530/FUL

**Applicant** Mr & Mrs D & G Thorpe

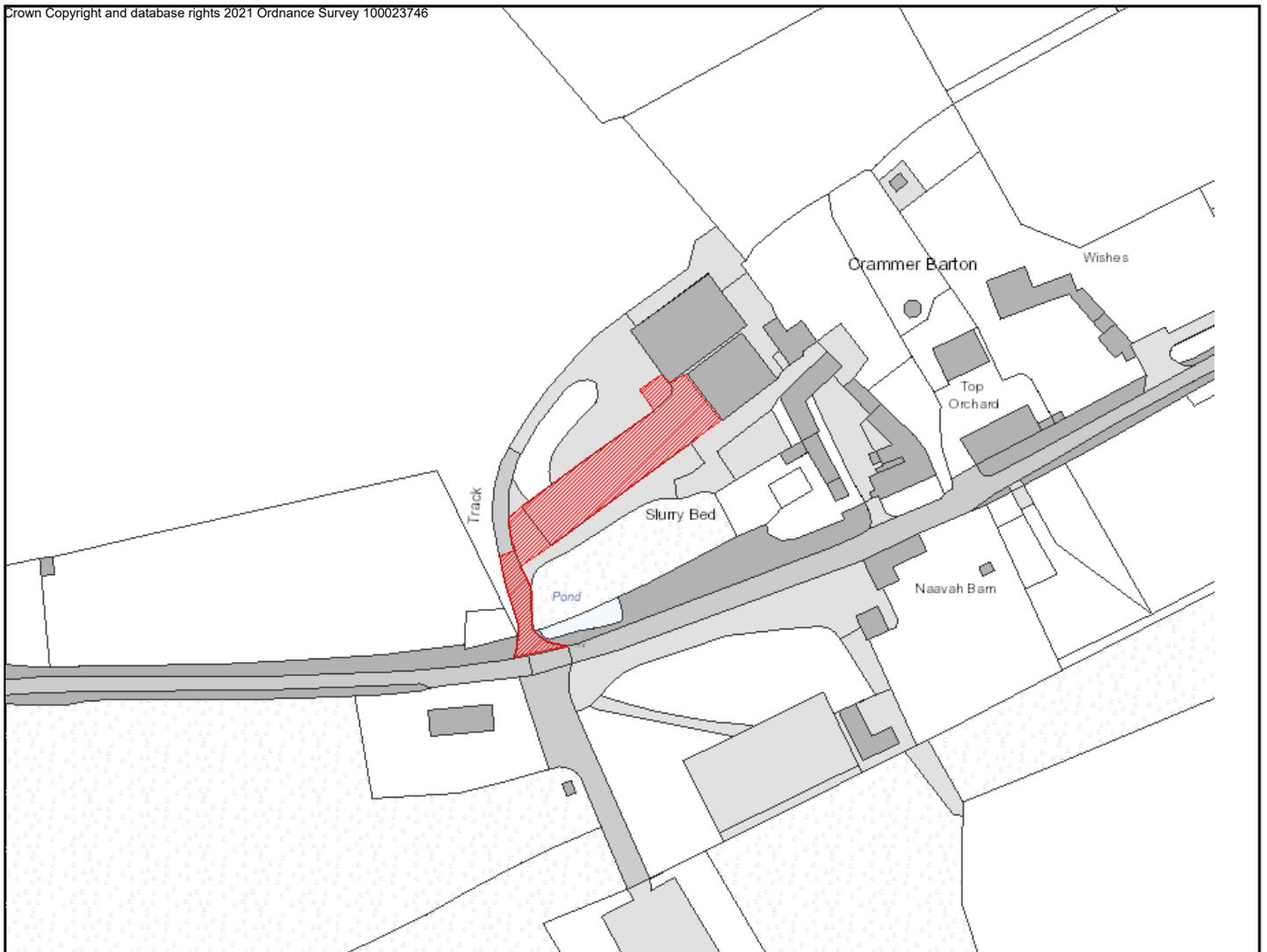
**Location** Bottom Barn Broadhembury Honiton EX14 3LN

**Proposal** Change of use of land for the siting of 15 self-storage units



**RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions**

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		<b>Committee Date: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>
<b>Tale Vale (Broadhembury)</b>	<b>21/2530/FUL</b>	<b>Target Date: 23.11.2021</b>
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Mr &amp; Mrs D &amp; G Thorpe</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Bottom Barn Broadhembury</b>	
<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Change of use of land for the siting of 15 self-storage units</b>	

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**This application is before members as the proposals are considered a departure from the Development Plan.**

**The application seeks permission for the siting of 15 storage containers on land at Bottom Barn. The units would be sited within an existing silage clamp and predominantly be leased out to members of the public for storage purposes.**

**Due to the site's remote rural location the application is subject to restrictive rural policies within the Development Plan. In this case there is general support within the East Devon Local Plan for small scale economic development and expansion of existing sites outside Built-Up Area Boundaries through the provisions of Policies E5 and E7. However, the objectives of Policy E5 steer development towards the re-use of existing buildings or, if new buildings are required, these are constructed on previously developed land. As for Policy E7, the storage units would largely be run as an independent venture from Blue Moon Events that currently operate from the site and as such the proposals are not considered an expansion of an existing site.**

**Despite this, the proposal would cause no harm to the setting of adjacent listing building or the rural character of the immediate area. Furthermore, the low scale nature of the storage business would not lead to unacceptable pressure on the local highway network through the generation of additional traffic to and from the site. Finally with appropriately worded conditions controlling external lighting and operating hours, it is considered that the development would not cause undue harm to the amenity enjoyed at adjacent properties.**

**As such, despite being considered a departure from the Development Plan, in light of the limited harm identified and the economic benefits provided by the proposal it is considered that the development is acceptable and recommended for approval subject to conditions.**

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Local Consultations**

#### **Parish/Town Council**

Minutes of planning meeting held on Friday 8th October:

Present: Cllrs Bradshaw, Howgill and Powell

COMMENT: SUPPORTED

#### **Tale Vale - Cllr Philip Skinner**

Dear Team

I am responding to application number 21/2530/FUL which is for the 15 storage container units.

I understand there was a pre application with officers and a suggestion of reducing the numbers from 20 units to 15 of which this was complied with.

The site sits perfectly on a main road and from the scheme at the moment has no highways issues.

There has been proven a demonstrated need for this type of facility and indeed having smaller, well situated sites only means the likelihood will be predominantly local take creating shorter traffic journeys than some bigger sites that journeys become longer.

From a perspective of reducing 'miles being travelled' then we have a choice....we either have very large facilities that people travel to or we have some smaller sites that can quite easily fit in to the rural areas and create a local facility giving people choice or indeed both.

The both gives people choice and also crates a competitive edge which can only be good in a general sense.

It is in my view that the success of such facilities will not be predicated upon the planning permission but more upon location, location, location.

This site sits well within the applicants ownership and is one I will very much be supportive.

It is on this basis I will SUPPORT this application.

I reserve the right to have a change of opinion if indeed evidence relating to this application were to differ from any previous knowledge that I may have had at the time of writing.

### **Technical Consultations**

#### **Devon County Highway Authority**

Self-storage units tend to incur limited trip generation once the initial construction and movement of goods is in place. The number of storage units being 15 is comparably quite low in comparison to other rural storage settings within East Devon.

The site layout includes visibility which meets our current best practice guidance of Manual for Streets as well as sufficient room for off-carriageway parking and turning.

The site is strategically placed, being just off the county road A373 for network distribution of traffic. This junction and the lane to the access both have no recorded collisions within the last 5 years of our record currently (2016-2020 inclusive).

THE HEAD OF PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT, ON BEHALF OF DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL, AS LOCAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY, HAS NO OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

#### Environmental Health

If any external lighting is to be installed the following condition is recommended - Before the development commences an assessment shall be carried out of the potential impact of any external lighting and a scheme for ensuring that residents do not suffer loss of amenity due to light pollution shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason -To protect the amenity of neighbouring residents and to regulate and control light spillage to protect the character and appearance of the area.

#### Other Representations

One objection comment has been received with concerns over the following;

- Loss of neighbouring amenity.
- Increase in vehicle movements.
- Impact of the shipping containers and any associated signage on the character and appearance of the area.
- Further expansion of the business would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
- Lack of need for the development, more appropriate in larger settlements.

### **POLICIES**

#### Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 Policies

Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside)

D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)

D2 (Landscape Requirements)

Strategy 46 (Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs)

Strategy 48 (Local Distinctiveness in the Built Environment)

Strategy 49 (The Historic Environment)

D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)

E5 (Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Areas)

E7 (Extensions to Existing Employment Sites)

EN14 (Control of Pollution)

TC2 (Accessibility of New Development)

TC9 (Parking Provision in New Development)

#### Broadhembury Neighbourhood Plan (Not made)

## **Site Location and Description**

The site comprises part of a complex of farm buildings located to the north west of Crammer Barton, a Grade II listed farmhouse located approximately 200 metres to the west of the A373 within open countryside. The site is around 2 km. to the west of Broadhembury and 1 km. south of Kerswell.

Access to the buildings is currently available from the adjacent Class C road to the south via a field entrance located almost opposite a residential property known as The Pretties and an unmade track that curves to the north east and to the north of a former silage clamp.

Neither the site nor the surrounding area is the subject of any landscape designations or other material constraints.

## **Proposed Development**

The application seeks planning permission for the siting of 15 storage containers to be operated as a commercial storage business. The containers would be sited within what remains of a silage clamp.

## **ANALYSIS**

Issues with the proposal can be summarised as follows;

- Principle of development
- Impact upon the setting on Crammer Barton.
- Impact upon the character and appearance of the area.
- Impact upon the surrounding highway network.
- Impact upon the amenity of adjoining residents.

Each bullet point in turn shall be discussed below.

## **Principle of Development**

The application site is located outside of any settlement with a development boundary and therefore considered to be, in planning terms, in open countryside. The spatial strategy for development is focused around the seven main towns and larger villages with built up area boundaries, as described by Strategy 27, will form focal points for development. Therefore, for planning purposes, the proposal takes place within the open countryside and therefore subject to restrictive rural policies.

Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside) states that development in the countryside will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan Policy. In this instance Policy E5 (Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Areas) supports development in rural areas designed to provide jobs to local people where various criteria is met. In particular Policy E5 specifies that,

for such uses, the conversion of existing buildings are explored prior to considering the construction of new buildings. If new buildings are considered then development should be steered towards previously developed land. Or if a Greenfield site, the building and its use shall be related in scale and form in sustainability terms to the village and surrounding areas.

In this case the proposals do not involve the conversion of an existing building. The proposed siting of the containers relates to an area of hardstanding immediately forward of an existing barn that previously formed part of a silage clamp. The planning history available to the LPA indicates that the site was last used for agriculture in 2004 and, despite the most northern barn now being occupied by Blue Moon Events, there does not appear to have been any material change in use for southern barn or area of hardstanding upon which the containers would be sited. As such, without any evidence to the contrary, the position is that this barn and land to which this enquiry relates is still considered agricultural.

Consequently, taking into account the Local Plan's definition of Previously Developed Land (see below), the area where the containers are to be sited would be considered as a greenfield site.

*'Previously developed land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. **This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings;** land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.'*

The proposal would therefore be assessed against criteria 3 of Policy E5 which require sites to be well related in scale and form and in sustainability terms to the village and surrounding areas. One of the underlying objectives of E5, which is reflected within the preamble of the policy, is to reduce out commuting. In this case, owing to the site's distance away from the nearest settlements of Kerswell, Broadhembury, Plymtree and Payhembury, there appears to be a degree of conflict with point 3 of policy E5 of the Local Plan.

The Local Plan highlights the importance of developing the district's employment base and, where appropriate, extensions to existing sites should be supported to encourage economic development. This approach is reflected within the provisions of Policy E7 (Extensions to Existing Employment Sites).

However, the development is not an expansion of Blue Moon Events who currently operate from the building immediately to the north. Whilst the council is led to understand that some of the containers would be used by Full Moon Events when needed, the storage containers would form a standalone business available to the public to use.

As such the development does not fit neatly within either policy identified within the Local Plan that supports economic growth in rural areas. As such, the application is considered a departure from the development plan. The National Planning Policy Framework states at paragraph 3 that “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise” Any material considerations will be considered further below.

### **Impact on the Setting of Crammer Barton and Character and Appearance of the Area**

The site sits to the rear of a grade II listed farmhouse known as Crammer Barton and its grade II listed curtilage buildings to the west and East of the house. The proposal site is physically separate from Crammer Barton and accessed separately.

However due to the proximity of the proposed containers to Crammer Barton it is necessary to consider the heritage impact on the setting of the designated heritage assets.

Since initial pre-application discussions took place, the proposed number of shipping containers was reduced from 25 to 15. The 15 containers are located immediately south west of the existing barn. Where there are glimpsed views available of the listed barns to the west along the adjoining highway, these are distant and the shipping containers would be largely screened by the timber sleepers and green verge that encompasses the existing caravan. Views of Crammer Barton and the outbuildings are available directly south of the property’s access, however, the curtilage listed outbuildings and shipping containers would be screened by the existing property.

As such, particularly in light of the reduced number of shipping containers, it is considered that the scheme would cause limited wider visual landscape harm and have no impact upon the setting and therefore significance of the adjoining listed buildings.

Despite this, it is recommended that care should be taken to minimise the amount of signage and external lighting and that the proposed fencing and gates are well considered and are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area. In this case it has been deemed appropriate to attach a condition requiring further details of lighting in order to assess the potential impact of light spill on the amenity of adjacent properties and the character and appearance of the area.

### **Impact upon adjoining residents**

The enquiry site is located near three residential properties to the east that could be affected by the development. The nearest property, Crammer Barton, is located almost immediately south east and is slightly set below the application site. There is an arrangement of outbuildings that form a courtyard relationship. The garden area runs along the north east of the applicants land. In this case, whilst the occupants of Crammer Barton may be able to see the shipping containers and be aware of an increase in comings and goings from the site it is not thought that the proposals would lead to unacceptable loss of amenity. The screening provided by the existing

outbuildings that line the south eastern corner of the site in addition to container 15 (DRWNG 2414 PL-01) will obscure line of sight into adjacent garden areas. Furthermore the separation distance between the containers and the property is approximately 50 metres.

In this case comments from our Environmental Health team have stated that any external lighting shall need to be carefully considered as not to harm the amenity of nearby properties through light spill.

Additionally, it is considered that the hours of operation should be restricted similar to those that have been applied to the motocross management and consultancy business to the north. This will restrict deliveries and collections between the hours of 08:00 until 17:00 Monday to Friday, 08:00 until 13:00 on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

### **Accessibility of Development**

One of the overarching objectives of the Local Plan is to ensure that development is appropriately located and that, where possible, is accessible by sustainable forms of transport. These objectives are most evident within the provisions of Policy TC2 (Accessibility of New Development).

The site is not accessible via public transport and, due to the nature of the business, it is unlikely that users of the storage containers are going to be cycling or walking in order to drop off or collect items. As such, it is anticipated that users are likely to be travelling to the site in private motor vehicles and owing to Bottom Barn's proximity to the M5 (5km) and the A373 it is considered that the business would be accessible to those within the district or further afield who wish to use the storage containers. It is also noted that the applicants and owners of the business live at Navaah Barn across the road therefore reducing the extent of out commuting required for part of the anticipated work force.

Additionally the number of day to day trips is anticipated to be low. The business on offer is anticipated to be a 'drop off and leave' type of set up where users in need of additional storage leave items for long term rather than making regular visits.

### **Impact on Highway Network and Parking Provision**

The County Highway Authority have been consulted. Within their comments it is acknowledged that the scale of development is relatively low. The site is described as having good visibility and sufficient room for off carriageway parking and turning.

### **CONCLUSION**

Concerns have been raised by third parties, if permission were to be granted, over further expansion of commercial activity at the site. However, in terms of the storage container business, the low scale nature of the operation in addition to the screening provided by the existing silage clamp is considered to important factors in leading officers to believe the scheme is acceptable. Further development outside of the silage

clamp could lead to adverse landscape harm to the area and the agricultural character of the site.

Overall, in light of the limited harm identified and economic benefits, it is felt that the support offered by the NPPF at paragraphs 81 and 85 tips the planning balance in favour of the scheme. Furthermore, in light of support offered by the Parish Council and a Local Ward Member, the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions listed below.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission and shall be carried out as approved.  
(Reason - To comply with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed at the end of this decision notice.  
(Reason - For the avoidance of doubt.)
3. Prior to the installation of any external lighting, details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason -To protect the amenity of neighbouring residents and to regulate and control light spillage to protect the character and appearance of the area in accordance with policy D1 - Design and Local Distinctiveness and EN14 - Control of Pollution of the East Devon Local Plan).
4. Storage containers shall not be stacked and shall be stored at ground level only, with no container or any stored items exceeding a height of 4 metres above ground level.  
(Reason - To limit the height of the stored items to protect the character and appearance of the area and to comply with the provisions of Policy D1 - Design and Local Distinctiveness - of the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031.)
5. No deliveries shall be accepted or despatched to or from the site except between the hours of 08:00 until 17:00 Monday to Friday, 08:00 until 13:00 on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays.  
(Reason: In the interests of preserving the amenity of nearby residents in accordance with Policy D1 - Design and Local Distinctiveness of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031).

### NOTE FOR APPLICANT

Informative: Confirmation - No CIL Liability

This Informative confirms that this development is not liable to a CIL charge.

Any queries regarding CIL, please telephone 01395 571585 or email [cil@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:cil@eastdevon.gov.uk).

Plans relating to this application:

2414 (PL-) 01 A	Proposed Site Plan	23.09.21
2414 (S-) 01	Location Plan	23.09.21

List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.