

NYMNP

23/05/2019

From: Fiona Tiplady
Sent: 23 May 2019 11:33
To: Mark Hill
Cc: Planning
Subject: Spaunton Quarry - comments on the agricultural buildings - NYM/2018/0787/FL

Dear Mark,

Agricultural buildings at Spaunton Quarry

Thanks for your email this morning regarding finding an independent agricultural consultant.

In the meantime we have provided further agricultural justifications for the specialist whom is ultimately appointed to assess the agricultural case in the attached letter.

Please note that some of the information in the letter is confidential at this stage (i.e. not to be published on the website or if it is, the confidential sections should be redacted).

Kind regards
Fiona

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Senior Planner

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23rd May 2019

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NYMNP

23/05/2019

Send by email only;

m.hill@northyorkmoors.org.uk; planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Dear Mark,

**AGRICULTURAL USE AT SPAUNTON QUARRY
PLANNING APPLICATION: NYM/2018/0787/FL**

Thank you for your email this morning regarding your search to find an independent agricultural consultant. We hope you are able to find one soon and we remain committed to meeting the appointed consultant on site to ensure that the agricultural need is thoroughly investigated.

In your email of the 20th May you noted that you did not know whether the appointed agricultural consultant would need access to the site. We consider that the NYMNP should require the consultant to visit the site as part of their engagement of the consultant as a site visit will also give your consultant an opportunity to provide the best quality advice.

In the event that the appointed consultant does not visit the site(s) we think it is appropriate to give you further information regarding the agricultural justification for the use so these details can be fully taken account of in his/her assessment of the situation. These details are set out overleaf.

Additional agricultural justification

One of the 11 graziers on Spaunton Moor (which, including Appleton Common, extends to 2808 hectares) put their farm and moor flock on the market in 2013. The moor flock grazed in the middle of the moor, somewhat divorced and separated by other heft areas from the in-bye farmland. The flock contained some 160 ewes which were Beltex cross Swaledale. This was the only place on the North York Moors that we were aware that Beltex breed of sheep were being used to graze the moor and there was some concern about the appropriateness and success of that. It was also clear that the management of the flock had failed to effect the level of tick control and there was a significant problem on that heft area.

The Estate purchased the farm and the flock in October 2013 and has been running the flock ever since. The Beltex breed has been discontinued and the flock changed gradually over to a traditional pure Swaledale flock but it is clear that the lamb progeny from Swaledales are much smaller and grow more slowly and are significantly less valued in the market place. An extensive system of keeping the lambs for longer to achieve their full potential is needed and it is noted that many existing flocks sell their weaned Swaledale lambs (except those they are keeping for breeding) in early September to people who will graze them on and then put them into a building to fatten and finish them before they reach 12 months of age when the market demand for them drops again due to the extra costs of meat processing (requiring the removal of spinal cords from lambs and sheep over 12 months) and because technically they can no longer be sold as lamb.

The Estate have attempted to fatten our Swaledale lambs on grass, even taking them down to the Buttercrambe Estate in the Vale of York and feeding and housing them. But it is clear that by late autumn they need to be brought into a shed and fed concentrates in order to finish them before they are 12 months old. The purpose of this shed is therefore that these lambs will be moved into it in around late October/November time.

The above mentioned farm that was purchased was Bank Farm, Rosedale and the flock has traditionally been kept there when it is off the moor. There is one small enclosed corrugated iron shed there measuring approx. 9.14m x 13.71m with a lean to on the side of 13.71m x 3.05m and another lean-to on the end measuring 12.19m x 6.10m. This building provides for approximately 241 sq. m of space which is used for storage of hay which is fed to all the sheep in winter as well as machinery associated therewith. There is insufficient space in it to house the lambs and the ventilation of it is not designed for housing sheep either.

It is also clear from studying successful moor flock enterprises that both the sheep, the flocks' performance and the moorland environment benefit from less sheep wintering on the moor. It is the intention to use this building to keep some and possibly all of the sheep wintered in the shed through January, February, March and April so that they also lamb in the shed earlier than a traditional moorland flock. Ewes and lambs will be turned out, probably to some in-bye grass in the quarry and then in early/mid-May turned back to the moor for the summer grazing period.

Converting the existing steel structure in Spaunton Quarry into a sheep shed with attractive outside walls (stone and Yorkshire boarding etc.) on the 3 sides that the visitors will see will be an ideal location. It is exceptionally well sheltered and yet easily accessible for all sizes of agricultural lorry and vehicles. The Bank Farm steading can only be accessed (i) down Rosedale Bank (1 in 3 slope) which excludes most commercial vehicles or (ii) from across the bridge in Rosedale Abbey which is narrow and has a difficult 90 degree bend on the west side which also excludes most long vehicles. There is a single access lane which goes through the White Horse Inn car park and then continues on to Bank Farm. This is not an ideal access to encourage farm traffic along as it is a public bridleway and is shared with approximately. 6 dwellings.

The Estate is also mindful that it would be prudent to have some flexibility in how the agricultural building requirement is delivered in order to service the agricultural land that forms part of the Estate. In particular the following situations **which need treating in strict confidence** are relevant to the future plans.

1. Future of Moorland Flocks

It is quite clear that the economic performance of moorland hefted flocks makes a significant loss and is entirely unsustainable without high levels of subsidy particularly from the Higher Level Countryside Stewardship Scheme (HLS). The 10 year HLS agreement on Spaunton Moor finishes on 31st March 2021 and it is not clear whether replacement funding will be in place or whether all the 11 existing graziers will wish to continue and sign up to a further agreement for another 10 years (or even 5 years). It is anticipated that a number of them may not continue due to age, circumstances as well as the financial and practical implications of a moor flock enterprise.

The National Park Authority has recorded a continuing drop in the number of hefted flocks on the North York Moors from c. 150 to c. 100 and further decline is expected. The creation of a sheep housing facility may enable the correct number of moorland sheep to be hefted and grazed on the moor for proper environmental management of that habitat – the majority of which is SSSI, SAC and SPA.

2. Messuage Farm, Spaunton

The Estate has a farm steading at Messuage Farm, Spaunton which is in the middle of the residential village and there are conflicts in using those farm buildings in close proximity to the residential occupiers. The farm tenant, who was widowed in March 2015 and has had both knees replaced has indicated he is not likely to continue farming indefinitely. There may easily be a better solution to move all or some of the agricultural building activities to a location like Spaunton Quarry and out of the heart of the village of Spaunton.

There is a comprehensive set of traditional stone and pantile farm buildings there which no longer lend themselves to modern agriculture and which would be suitable for conversion to new uses within the village envelope. The farm tenant had a dairy herd but they gave this up in 2011.

3. North York Moors Branded Lamb

There is the possibility that with enough sheep shed capacity that an almost continuous supply of finished lambs could be facilitated in order to produce a sustainable North York Moors lamb branded product. At the moment lambs tend to be all finished in a relatively short period of the year which makes continuity of supply to local butchers and catering outlets impossible to achieve. Extensive grazing of Swaledale lambs and bringing batches into a shed to finish would facilitate continuity of supply through perhaps the whole year.

4. Collection Point

In recent years we have been contacted by the National Park who have been concerned about sheep farmers using a collection point on Hutton Common to put lambs onto a large livestock transporter once a fortnight to take them to a market on the west side of the country. The wagon needs to have a place where a number of 4 wheel drive vehicles/tractors and livestock trailers as well as the large wagon itself can park and be manoeuvred. This was causing some mess and damage to the surface of the common,

kerbs and verges. Spaunton Quarry would be a suitable location for this activity and a sheep shed may assist in providing short term layerage for lambs as a collection centre.

We would like you to pass this extra information onto your independent agricultural consultant once they are appointed although, as stated in the introduction of this letter, we firmly believe that the appointed agricultural consultant needs to visit the site(s) to gain first-hand information of the need for the conversion of the buildings into agricultural use.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Tiplady MRTPI
Rural Solutions