



**Little Town Farm
Thornley
PR3 2TB**

Proposed Farm Worker's
Dwelling and Farm Office
over Detached Garage

**AGRICULTURAL
STATEMENT**

November 2022

1 Agricultural Statement

- 1.1 PGB Architectural Services are retained by Mr & M Forshaw ('the applicant') to prepare drawings and documents sufficient for a planning application for:
- Proposed Farm Worker's Dwelling and Farm Office over a Detached Garage
- 1.2 This information is provided to support a planning application for the erection of a permanent farmer workers dwelling on land at Little Town Farm to accommodate a full-time stock person.
- 1.3 The dwelling is required for a worker who is employed fulltime in Agriculture to support the functional requirements to be readily available at all times of day and night to attend to the welfare requirements of livestock at Little Town Farm.
- 1.4 The farm is owned by the Forshaw family (M & E Forshaw) with the 4th generation now actively involved having studied Agriculture at Reaseheath, Crewe.
- 1.5 The proposed site is owned by the family, as is all the surrounding land, and is situated on the western edge of the existing farmstead adjacent to existing farm buildings on the entrance to the farm itself. It would share the existing farm access. There are no increased traffic issues as the existing access is already used for access to the production unit and farm shop.
- 1.6 The proposed dwelling would generate only very little addition traffic (most likely 1 vehicle, a couple of times per day.)
- 1.7 The proposed site is currently a field with no specific ecological or environmental issues. No trees or hedges will be affected by this proposal.
- 1.8 This site would enable quick response times to attend any welfare issues at any time of day whilst also acting as an additional security measure for the premises and business.
- 1.9 There have been numerous thefts and break ins from neighbouring farms, and we have had intruders on site ourselves on more than one occasion.
- 1.10 The application site immediately adjoins the farmyard and, if approved, would be well located to meet the need for the fulltime worker to live at their place of work.
- 1.11 The holding extends to approx. 490 acres and has been farmed by the family for 4 generations, having grown steadily over the last 50 years. We have invested heavily in the future of the business to incorporate the latest in technologies and efficiencies to maximise the potential of the operation and its future success.
- 1.12 All milk produced on the unit is processed on site at our own production facility into yogurt, buttermilk, creme fraiche etc. These are supplied into the foodservice market throughout the UK, clients include major names such as Virgin, P & O, CUNARD cruises amongst others. Additional milk is also purchased from other farms to meet current sales requirements.

- 1.13 All the land is down to grazing and the farming enterprise is a combined dairy and beef operation with approx. 470 dairy cattle and 370 beef stock on the unit.
- 1.14 The cattle need close and effective management and supervision to maintain their health and productivity. The cows calve all year round and frequently require assistance, particularly 1st time calvers. Current figures show approx. 25*30 calving's per month with approx. 60% of these occurring at night. These situations require close monitoring and checking at regular intervals as well as assistance when needed.
- 1.15 New-born calves require immediate attention to ensure suckling to get colostrum within 6 hours of birth.
- 1.16 The dairy herd is milked by 4 "robotic" milking stations which operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. They frequently require attention at any time of the day or night, The system operates by means of alarm calls sent to designated mobile phone numbers alerting staff of the issues.
- 1.17 In terms of investment, over £1m has been spent in recent years to improve and enhance the operation to ensure continuity into the future and to remain competitive and efficient in a volatile market. Processing of our own milk ensures a fair and consistent milk price in what is a fluctuating market, this, in turn, enables us to be able to plan and budget into the future as well as providing long term fixed prices to our customers.
- 1.18 We have calculated the labour requirements of the farm using the 2 usual methods of standard man days and standard labour requirements based on hours per annum as below:
- 250 dairy cows @4days per head per year 1000
 - 590 cattle @1.1 days/head 649
 - Grazing land 81 [ha@0.4days/ha](#) 32.4
 - Meadow land 125ha@2.8 days/ha 2 cuts 350
 - Total 2031.1 days = 7.38 staff (ADAS defines fulltime work as 275 days/year)
 - 250 dairy cows @26 hours/head/annum 6500
 - 590 cattle @ 9hrs/head/annum 5310
 - Grazing land 81 ha @4hrs/annum 324
 - Meadow land 125ha@ 22 hrs/annum 2750
 - Total 14884; equivalent to 1860 days= 6.76 staff
- 1.19 There is a clear labour requirement for almost 7 fulltime staff based on employees working standard hours. The fact that we operate robotic milking systems does not reduce the labour requirement, on the contrary, the cows can present themselves at any hour of day or night and this means that there is a more frequent need for workers to attend out of hours. When faults or issues arise, which can be frequent, these need to be attended to at short notice and with quick response times to prevent harm to either livestock or robotic systems. On average, the alarm call systems are triggered 4 - 5 times a week during night-time hours.
- 1.20 Thornley is a small hamlet with a Public House and restaurant and a scattering of houses.

The average house price in the area is over £300,000 and beyond the budget of an agricultural worker. Rental opportunities are few and far between and, again, well over £1000 per month.