

Plan:8 Town Planning Ltd

PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

RESTAURANT AND CAR PARK AT LOWER GAZEGILL FARM
CROSSHILL LANE, RIMINGTON, CLITHEROE BB7 4EE

Prepared for: Eight at Gazegill Ltd

Date: November 2025



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SUMMARY

- 1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application seeking retrospective approval for the regularisation of a restaurant and car park at Lower Gazegill Farm, Crosshill Lane, Rimington, Clitheroe BB7 4EE. The application seeks to formalise the development that has evolved from an approved farm diversification tearoom into a successful farm-to-table restaurant operation that has become integral to the agricultural viability of this traditional Pennine mixed livestock farm.
- 2 The development comprises a restaurant facility constructed substantially in accordance with the building envelope granted under previous planning permissions, together with associated hardstanding car parking areas. The operation represents a contemporary approach to agricultural diversification that directly supports the continued viability of traditional farming practices on this 250-acre holding while contributing significantly to local employment, rural tourism, and the agricultural economy of the Ribble Valley.
- 3 This statement demonstrates that the development complies with planning policies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, and saved policies from the Ribble Valley Local Plan. It addresses flood risk considerations through reference to the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Unda Consulting Limited (reference 95792-Oreilly-Gazegill, dated June 2025), confirms with reference to the Axis Highways Technical Note that the development poses

no unacceptable highway safety impacts, and establishes that the restaurant operation enhances rather than undermines the agricultural enterprise.

- 4 The applicant respectfully submits that retrospective planning permission should be granted on the basis that the development represents an exemplary model of sustainable rural diversification that secures the long-term future of a working farm while delivering substantial economic, social, and environmental benefits to the local area.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

Site Location and Description

- 5 Lower Gazegill Farm is situated within the rural landscape of Rimington parish, north-east of Clitheroe town centre. The farm extends to approximately 250 acres and represents a traditional Pennine mixed livestock operation that has been in the Robinson family for multiple generations. The property is accessed via Crosshill Lane, a rural road providing adequate vehicular access to the site.
- 6 The restaurant building is located within the existing farmyard complex, integrated amongst other agricultural buildings and structures. The site benefits from an established vehicular access point from Crosshill Lane, with customer parking provided on hardstanding areas within the curtilage of the farm. The surrounding landscape is characterised by agricultural fields, traditional stone boundaries, and the scenic qualities typical of the Ribble Valley working countryside.
- 7 The nearest watercourses to the site are an unnamed watercourse running adjacent to the northern site boundary and the Gazegill or Rimington Beck, which runs adjacent to the southern boundary. Environment Agency LiDAR data indicates that ground topography on site ranges from approximately 124.70m AOD to 126.50m AOD. The bedrock underlying the site comprises Clitheroe Limestone Formation mudstone, with superficial deposits of alluvium consisting of clay, silt, sand and gravel.

Planning History

- 8 The site benefits from a complex planning history reflecting the evolution of the farm diversification scheme:

Planning Permission 3/2004/0213 (approved 16th June 2004) granted consent for "the erection of a building for the parking of cars."

Planning Permission 3/2024/0213 (approved 19th June 2024) granted consent for "the erection of café building at Lower Gazegill Farm." This permission established the principle of farm diversification through the provision of a tearoom facility serving visitors to the working farm.

- 9 Planning Permission 3/2024/0213 provided approval for a building of similar footprint and scale to that which has been constructed. The foundation was poured in October 2018, with excavation having commenced earlier that summer, thereby commencing works in accordance with the approval. However, the build duration was significantly extended due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated cashflow constraints affecting the applicant business.
- 10 During the construction period and subsequent to practical completion, the nature of the food service offering evolved beyond the originally envisaged tearoom operation. This evolution was driven by changing market conditions, the impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality sector, and a fortuitous opportunity to engage a highly skilled chef capable of delivering exceptional farm-to-table dining experiences. The result is a restaurant operation that, while more sophisticated than initially planned, remains fundamentally true to the approved diversification principle of providing refreshment facilities connected to the agricultural enterprise.

Current Use and Operations

- 11 The restaurant currently trades under the name "Eight at Gazegill" and operates four days per week according to the following schedule: Thursday

from 12:00 to 19:00 (early bird service); Friday and Saturday from 10:00 to 23:30 (offering brunch from 10:00-12:00, lunch from 12:00-16:30, and dinner from 18:30-23:30 with last food orders at 20:30); and Sunday from 12:00 to 18:30 (all-day Sunday roast service with last food orders at 16:30). It should be noted that the original planning permission referenced operating hours of Monday to Saturday 09:30-18:00 and Sunday 11:00-17:00, which was understood as an estimate rather than a firm restriction. The current operating pattern reflects the realities of running a quality dining establishment while respecting residential amenity.

- 12 The restaurant operates with a total capacity appropriate to the size of the approved building envelope. Dinner service is deliberately structured with staggered table seating at fifteen-minute intervals commencing at 18:30, with the final table seated at 20:30. Average occupancy duration for dinner service is approximately 2.25 hours, with early-departing tables regularly leaving after late-arriving tables have been seated, demonstrating that the operation generates primarily one-way traffic rather than intensive turnover patterns. This approach prioritises quality of experience and higher per-customer spend over volume, creating a relaxed, unhurried atmosphere consistent with fine dining expectations.
- 13 The restaurant provides employment for twenty-seven full-time local employees and ten part-time or seasonal workers, representing a total workforce of thirty-seven individuals supported by 250 acres of agricultural land. This figure excludes the applicant and their spouse who operate across both the restaurant and farm enterprises. The workforce includes two agricultural apprentices and one employee with Down Syndrome recruited through the Workfit programme, demonstrating the applicant commitment to vocational training and inclusive employment practices. Of the total workforce, all but two employees reside within ten miles of the site, with one of the two exceptions currently in the process of relocating to the Ribble Valley from Greater Manchester.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Physical Development

- 14 The development subject to this retrospective application comprises a restaurant building constructed substantially within the building envelope approved under planning permission 3/2024/0213, together with associated hardstanding areas providing customer car parking and operational access.
- 15 The restaurant building has been constructed using materials sympathetic to the agricultural character of the site, incorporating natural stone, timber cladding, and glazing arranged to take advantage of views across the surrounding farmland. The building envelope, scale, and massing remain consistent with the approved tearoom structure, though internal layouts and finishes reflect the higher specification requirements of restaurant use. The building integrates well with the existing farmyard complex and does not appear incongruous within its agricultural setting.
- 16 Car parking is provided on hardstanding areas within the farmyard curtilage, utilising both previously approved parking areas and additional hardstanding laid to accommodate customer vehicles. The parking arrangement follows an informal layout appropriate to the rural context, with space for approximately thirty to forty vehicles depending on parking configuration. Vehicle movements are accommodated via the established farm access from Crosshill Lane, which has operated successfully without incident since the restaurant commenced trading.
- 17 External amenity spaces have been developed to provide seating areas that allow customers to enjoy the rural setting, with free-ranging farm animals including geese, ducks, hens, and piglets creating an authentic farm atmosphere. These areas have been landscaped using rural-appropriate materials and planting to maintain agricultural character.

Flood Risk Assessment Findings

- 18 The Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Unda Consulting Limited (reference 95792-Oreilly-Gazegill, dated June 2025) confirms that the site is located within Flood Zones 1 (Low Probability) and 2 (Medium Probability) as defined by the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning. The fluvial flood risk originates from the unnamed watercourse adjacent to the northern site boundary and the Gazegill or Rimington Beck adjacent to the southern boundary. Product 4 modelled flood levels and extents were requested from the Environment Agency, which confirmed that the Flood Zones at this location are informed by New National Modelling and there is no detailed modelling available for the site.
- 19 According to the Flood Risk Assessment, there are no Flood Storage Areas located in close proximity to the site, and no formal raised flood defences owned or operated by the Environment Agency protect the site. The Environment Agency Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Map indicates that the site is located within an area at "Very Low" chance of flooding from surface water for both the present day and the 2040-2060 climate change scenario. Risk to the site from groundwater, sewer surcharge, and reservoir flooding is assessed as very low, and the Environment Agency holds no records of historic flooding having affected the site.
- 20 The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that, assuming accordance with the recommended flood risk management measures, Unda Consulting Limited considers the proposed application to be suitable in flood risk terms. The development is classified as "less vulnerable" commercial use, which the National Planning Policy Framework confirms is appropriate in Flood Zones 1 and 2.

Operational Development and Farm Integration

- 21 While the physical building remains substantially as approved, the operational use has evolved from a tearoom to a farm-to-table restaurant offering breakfast, brunch, lunch, and dinner services. This evolution

occurred organically during and following construction as the hospitality market landscape changed, particularly in response to COVID-19 impacts on the sector.

- 22 The current restaurant operation is characterised by several distinctive features that differentiate it from a conventional eatery while maintaining strong connection to the approved diversification principle:

Farm Production and Menu Integration

- 23 The menu is fundamentally and directly connected to farm production. The farm operates as a traditional Pennine mixed livestock enterprise producing pork, lamb, mutton, beef, rose veal, hen and duck eggs, and raw milk. All meat served in the restaurant is produced on the holding. Venison shot on the farm is also utilised. The core ingredient of the dessert menu is the farm own raw milk soft serve ice cream, with the milk also used to produce soft cheeses such as ricotta for service. The seasonal menu, which changes every couple of weeks, features any and all produce grown or raised on the farm.
- 24 Foraging on the farm estate provides additional menu ingredients including wild garlic, mushrooms, and edible flowers. For example, the restaurant foraged chipolatas contain pork reared on site, seasoned with foraged ingredients such as wild garlic and dried hogweed, and glazed with honey from the farm apiary located approximately seventy yards from the restaurant entrance. A polytunnel growing area produces seasonal fruit and vegetables including tomatoes, cucumbers, and strawberries, as well as micro leaf greens and chillies, all of which feature on menus as home-grown produce. This represents genuine farm-to-fork food production and service.

Nose-to-Tail Philosophy

- 25 The menu writing process inverts conventional restaurant practice. Rather than writing a menu and sourcing ingredients from wholesalers, the head chef writes menus based on what is available at any point in time, working

with whole carcasses on a nose-to-tail basis. For instance, rather than placing fifty lamb shank portions requiring twenty-five lambs, dishes are arranged to utilise the whole lamb through varied preparations: confit shoulder, shepherd pie variations, loin cannons on lunch dishes, and pressed lamb legs made into lamb doughnuts. This approach eliminates waste in the kitchen, with any surplus from larger beef carcasses sold through the farm shop.

Local Sourcing and Supply Chain

- 26 Only ingredients that cannot be produced on the farm are sourced externally, with sourcing prioritising local suppliers within approximately twenty miles. The restaurant supports other small and niche businesses including Growing with Grace, The Courtyard Dairy, and Townend Farm Shop Charcuterie. All sourced ingredients follow strict criteria: local, niche, artisan, small enterprise, with UK-grown ingredients favoured when local options are unavailable (such as Isle of Wight tomatoes in season until home-grown crops become available). Even internationally sourced ingredients such as chocolate and cocoa are selected from single producer fair trade sources from small family plantations, demonstrating commitment to ethical sourcing aligned with the farm values.

Economic Integration with Farm Operations

- 27 The restaurant has driven increased demand for farm produce, generating direct farm income of approximately fifteen thousand pounds per month from restaurant supply. Additionally, approximately half of restaurant customers also visit the farm shop, with this crossover having doubled the weekly farm shop turnover on trading days (Thursday through Sunday). This integrated business model has enabled the farm to expand operations, including increasing the dairy herd from sixty-six to eighty cows through retention of fourteen replacement dairy heifers, with increased milk production planned for cheese-making and expanded dessert offerings. The restaurant-driven expansion has created two farm apprentice positions,

demonstrating the applicant commitment to vocational education and creating opportunities for young people in agriculture.

Customer Engagement with Farm Activities

- 28 Customer interaction with the farm is purposely incidental yet meaningful. Free-ranging small farm animals (geese, ducks, hens, piglets) are visible around the restaurant area, and visitors often wander the maternity area in the lower farmyard. The dairy herd is walked to and from grazing on land accessed via the public road, with these movements frequently witnessed by restaurant customers. This sight has become rare as traditional dairy farming has declined and many herds are now housed year-round. The farm maintains traditional farming methods including preservation of rare Pennine hay meadows, with approximately ninety-seven percent of all UK hay meadows now lost. The diversification strategy was explicitly founded on not changing traditional farming methods or sacrificing hay meadows. When milk prices crashed in 2008, the choice was to diversify or face sale of the farm, which would likely have resulted in loss of these valuable habitats and their associated ground-nesting bird populations.

PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework

- 29 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes the government planning policies for England and sets out requirements for the planning system. Several sections are of particular relevance to this application.
- 30 Chapter 2 emphasises that achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social, and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The development delivers clear economic benefits through employment creation and farm income generation, social benefits through provision of high-quality dining experiences and preservation of traditional farming practices, and environmental benefits through support for conservation grazing and maintenance of rare habitats.

- 31 Chapter 6 states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The planning system should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. Paragraph 84 specifically addresses rural economic development, stating that planning policies and decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
- 32 The restaurant operation represents precisely the type of rural economic development and agricultural diversification that the NPPF seeks to support. The business has generated substantial employment (thirty-seven positions), created a viable market for farm produce that strengthens the agricultural enterprise, and demonstrated that diversification can secure the future of traditional farming practices. The development respects countryside character through sympathetic design and integration with the existing farmyard complex.
- 33 Chapter 9 requires that development should give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and facilitate access to high-quality public transport, with appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes maximised taking into account the type of development and its location. However, the Framework acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.
- 34 In response to the Local Highway Authority's concerns regarding the previous application (ref: 3/2024/0213), this application is supported by a comprehensive Highways Technical Note prepared by Axis P.E.D. Ltd (November 2025). The highways assessment demonstrates that the

development can operate safely and in accordance with relevant highway policy requirements.

- 35 Chapter 14 requires that development be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding, but where development is necessary in such areas, making it safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The Flood Risk Assessment submitted with this application demonstrates that the development can be made safe through appropriate mitigation measures and poses no increase in flood risk to other properties. The sequential and exception tests have been appropriately addressed given the site location in Flood Zones 1 and 2 and the "less vulnerable" classification of commercial restaurant use.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

- 36 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy (adopted 2014) provides the strategic planning framework for the Borough. Key policies relevant to this application include:

Policy DMG1: General Considerations

- 37 Policy DMG1 requires development to be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses and the surrounding area in terms of its size, design, and visual impact. Development must protect residential amenity and the character and appearance of the surrounding area, not prejudice highway safety or increase the risk of flooding, and not have an adverse impact on ecological or heritage assets. The development satisfies these criteria through its sympathetic design integrated within the existing farmyard, absence of demonstrable residential amenity impacts, satisfactory highway access arrangements, and appropriate flood risk management as confirmed by the Flood Risk Assessment.

Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations

- 38 Policy DMG2 establishes that proposals must demonstrate that they contribute to the strategy for the spatial location of development within the borough and are consistent with local development needs. The policy supports sustainable development that helps meet the economic needs of the area. The restaurant development contributes to the rural economy

through employment creation, support for agricultural enterprise, and provision of a tourist destination that enhances the visitor economy. The development location within an existing farm complex represents efficient use of previously developed land within the rural area rather than greenfield expansion.

Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection

- 39 Policy DME2 requires that the character and quality of the Ribble Valley landscape and townscape are protected through assessment of development proposals against criteria including scale, design, landscape impact, and visual intrusion. The development has been integrated within the existing farmyard complex using materials and design approaches sympathetic to agricultural character. The building does not protrude above surrounding structures or create inappropriate visual intrusion when viewed from public vantage points. The retention of working farm activities around the restaurant maintains authentic landscape character rather than creating a sanitised or artificial rural environment.

Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

- 40 Policy DMB1 seeks to support proposals that provide for employment growth and business enterprise appropriate to their locality. The policy recognises the importance of supporting a diverse business base including agriculture, tourism, and hospitality sectors. The development directly delivers the policy objectives by creating substantial local employment opportunities, supporting agricultural viability through integrated business operations, and contributing to the tourist economy through provision of a high-quality destination restaurant.

Policy DMB3: Recreation and Tourism Development

- 41 Policy DMB3 supports sustainable tourism proposals including visitor accommodation and attractions where they accord with the scale and character of the locality, are accessible by non-car modes where possible, support the rural economy and local employment, and do not harm residential amenity, landscape character, or other environmental assets. The restaurant development satisfies these criteria by maintaining appropriate scale within the rural context, generating significant local

employment, supporting agricultural activities, and avoiding demonstrable harm to amenity or environmental quality. The development has become an attraction that draws visitors to experience both high-quality dining and authentic working farm environments, contributing to the Ribble Valley established visitor economy.

Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility

- 42 Policy DMG3 requires development to incorporate appropriate parking provision and demonstrate that it can be accessed safely without causing highway safety or capacity problems. The parking arrangements at the site provide adequate space for customer vehicles, and the established access from Crosshill Lane has functioned without incident since opening. The staggered table seating arrangements prevent peak accumulations of traffic and distribute arrivals and departures across extended periods.

Policy DME6: Water Management

- 43 Policy DME6 requires development to incorporate appropriate sustainable drainage systems and avoid increasing flood risk. As confirmed by the Flood Risk Assessment, the development incorporates appropriate flood risk management measures and does not increase flood risk to third parties.

Other Material Considerations

- 44 Ribble Valley Economic Strategy recognises tourism and hospitality as key sectors within the local economy, with the visitor economy worth over two hundred and sixty million pounds annually and employing approximately three thousand five hundred people across the borough. Tourism has experienced seven percent growth in visitor numbers, helping to secure employment in an area where agriculture and tourism represent the two main economic sectors. High-quality dining destinations such as Eight at Gazegill contribute to the borough attractiveness as a visitor destination and support the economic vitality of rural communities.
- 45 Lancashire County Council Visit Lancashire campaign promotes the county tourism offer, with quality farm-to-table dining experiences representing an increasingly important component of rural tourism. The restaurant

operation aligns with strategic tourism objectives at both borough and county levels.

- 46 The Ribble Valley Tourism Association identifies authentic rural experiences and quality food offerings as key targets for developing the visitor economy. Eight at Gazegill delivers both elements through its integrated farm and restaurant operation, representing an exemplar of the type of sustainable rural tourism development that strategic planning seeks to encourage.

PLANNING APPRAISAL

Principle of Development: Agricultural Diversification

- 47 The fundamental principle of developing visitor facilities as part of an agricultural diversification strategy was established through the grant of planning permission 3/2024/0213 for a café building. The question for determination in this retrospective application is not whether farm diversification through provision of refreshment facilities is acceptable in principle (that has been established), but whether the evolution from tearoom to restaurant represents an unacceptable departure from the approved scheme or remains within the scope of acceptable diversified agricultural activity.
- 48 The National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 84 explicitly supports "the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses" and "sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside." The restaurant operation delivers both objectives: it diversifies the agricultural business by creating a market for farm produce and generating income that supports farming activities, while simultaneously providing a tourism and leisure facility offering visitors high-quality dining experiences in an authentic rural setting.
- 49 The key test is whether the restaurant use fundamentally differs in planning terms from the approved tearoom use to such an extent that it should be considered a different form of development requiring fresh assessment of

the principle. The applicant submits that both uses fall within the same general category of visitor refreshment facilities ancillary to a working farm. Both provide food and drink to customers visiting the farm. Both support agricultural viability through generation of income and demand for farm produce. Both attract visitors who contribute to the rural economy. Both operate from the same building envelope and generate similar types and patterns of activity.

- 50 The differences between tearoom and restaurant operations relating to sophistication of food offering, meal types served, operating hours, and price points are matters of degree rather than fundamental changes in planning use. The planning system does not generally distinguish between different standards or styles of food service provision. The critical distinction in planning terms is between facilities that are genuinely ancillary to and supportive of agricultural operations versus facilities that have become divorced from the farm enterprise and represent standalone commercial hospitality businesses that happen to be located on a farm.
- 51 Eight at Gazegill demonstrably remains intrinsically connected to the agricultural operation. The restaurant generates approximately fifteen thousand pounds monthly income for the farm through direct supply of meat, dairy products, eggs, and other produce. This income stream has enabled expansion of farming operations including increase of the dairy herd by fourteen animals and creation of two farm apprentice positions. The restaurant drives approximately half of its customers to the farm shop, doubling shop turnover on trading days. The menu is written around farm production rather than farm production being a minor supplement to externally sourced ingredients. The whole business model is predicated on integration between farming and food service, with each element supporting and enabling the other.
- 52 This is precisely the type of mutually reinforcing diversification that planning policy seeks to encourage. The restaurant has not displaced farming activities; it has strengthened and enabled their continuation. The farm has not become merely a themed backdrop for a restaurant business; it remains a genuine working agricultural operation producing food sold

through multiple direct-to-consumer channels including the restaurant. The diversification has achieved what it set out to achieve: securing the long-term viability of traditional farming practices on a holding that faced existential economic challenges when commodity milk prices collapsed in 2008.

- 53 The applicant therefore submits that the principle of this form of farm diversification has been established through the previous planning permission and remains valid. The evolution from tearoom to restaurant represents refinement of the approved concept rather than fundamental departure from it. The development accords with NPPF paragraph 84, Core Strategy Policy DMB1 and Policy DMB3, and represents sustainable development that should be supported in accordance with the NPPF overarching objectives.

Design, Character, and Visual Impact

- 54 The restaurant building has been constructed substantially within the approved building envelope and using materials sympathetic to the agricultural character of the site. The structure utilises natural stone, timber cladding, and glazing in compositions that reflect both agricultural vernacular and contemporary design quality. The building scale and massing remain consistent with the approved drawings, and the development integrates successfully within the existing farmyard complex without appearing incongruous or out of keeping with rural character.
- 55 The development satisfies Core Strategy Policy DMG1 and Policy DME2 through its sympathetic design approach. The building does not protrude visually above surrounding structures or create inappropriate visual intrusion when viewed from public vantage points. The retention of working farm activities around the restaurant maintains authentic landscape character and reinforces the rural setting rather than sanitising or urbanising the environment.
- 56 External spaces have been developed using rural-appropriate materials and planting. Hardstanding areas necessary for car parking utilise permeable

surfacing where practicable and are laid out in informal configurations appropriate to farmyard contexts. Boundary treatments comprise existing stone walls and hedgerows that have been retained and, where necessary, reinforced. The overall effect is of sympathetic integration of new development within an established agricultural complex rather than imposition of urban design standards inappropriate to rural settings.

Highway Safety, Access, and Parking

- 57 The site is accessed via an established vehicular access from Crosshill Lane, which has operated for agricultural purposes for many years. The access and level of parking have been comprehensively reviewed by Axis in the submitted Highways Technical Note. The access geometry is appropriate for the rural context and has proved adequate for restaurant traffic since opening without incident. The restaurant generates traffic flows distributed across four days per week, with staggered table bookings preventing peak accumulations that might otherwise challenge access capacity or local highway network.

Access and Highway Safety

- 58 The site is accessed via Dancer Lane, a private unlit single-track road approximately 415 meters in length, connecting to Cross Hill Lane. While the Local Highway Authority previously expressed concern about the lane's width, lack of formal passing places, and absence of street lighting, the Highways Technical Note demonstrates that these characteristics are typical of rural farm access roads throughout the Ribble Valley and do not preclude safe operation of the development.
- 59 Crucially, a comprehensive review of Personal Injury Accident data for the five-year period preceding this application reveals no recorded accidents on Dancer Lane, Cross Hill Lane, or the wider local road network serving the site. This demonstrates that the access arrangements have operated safely throughout the restaurant's three years of operation.

Passing Places and Highway Improvements

- 60 The Highways Technical Note identifies five informal passing places along Dancer Lane where vehicles can safely pass one another. Three of these passing places have been recently implemented between the midpoint of Dancer Lane and the farm entrance, including:
- Location A: An approximately 40-meter-long passing area with a maximum width of 7 meters
 - Location B: A widened section at an existing farm access
 - Additional vegetation clearance at the farm entrance to improve visibility and passing capability
- 61 These improvements, illustrated in Axis Drawing 5286-D02 Rev A, provide designated areas where drivers can safely accommodate opposing vehicles. Swept path analysis confirms that standard design vehicles can pass at these locations.

Traffic Generation Analysis

- 62 Automatic Traffic Count surveys were conducted on Dancer Lane during August 2025 to establish existing traffic volumes. The surveys demonstrate that on the busiest weekday (Friday 15th August 2025), the restaurant generated approximately 87 two-way vehicle movements over a 24-hour period, representing 36.7% of total traffic on Dancer Lane. On the busiest weekend day (Saturday 16th August 2025), the restaurant generated 116 two-way vehicle movements, representing 42.8% of total traffic.
- 63 Significantly, peak hour analysis reveals minimal traffic impact during critical periods. During the busiest morning hour (09:00-10:00), only 3 restaurant-related two-way trips were recorded. During the midday peak, restaurant traffic ranged from 3-13 two-way trips. These modest volumes, combined with the restaurant's booking system that staggers arrivals in 15-minute intervals, ensure that vehicle movements are distributed throughout operating hours rather than concentrated at specific times.

Comparison with Previous Permission

- 64 The 2017 planning permission (ref: 3/2016/1159) approved a 310sqm farm tearoom at this location—identical in size and footprint to the current restaurant building. Using industry-standard TRICS database trip rates for comparable developments, the approved tearoom would have generated approximately 3 two-way trips in the morning peak hour, 4 trips in the midday peak hour, and 2 trips in the evening peak hour.
- 65 The current restaurant generates virtually identical peak hour traffic to the previously approved tearoom. The primary difference lies in evening operations: the restaurant remains open later than the tearoom would have, generating additional trips after 18:00 when the tearoom would have closed. However, these evening trips occur during off-peak periods when overall traffic volumes on Dancer Lane are lower.
- 66 This comparison is particularly significant as it establishes a fallback position: the Local Planning Authority previously determined that a 310sqm food and beverage facility at this location, generating comparable peak hour traffic volumes, was acceptable in highway safety terms. The current operation does not materially intensify peak hour traffic movements beyond what was previously deemed acceptable.

Car Parking Provision

- 67 The application proposes comprehensive car parking arrangements in accordance with the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan standards. For the restaurant's 310sqm gross floor area, the maximum parking provision is 39 spaces. The proposed scheme, illustrated in Axis Drawing 5286-D01 Rev A, provides:
- 45 standard parking bays (5.0m x 2.5m)
 - 5 disabled parking bays (4.8m x 2.4m with 1.2m buffer)
 - 5 motorcycle parking bays (2.5m x 1.5m)
 - 2 Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) bays (8.0m x 2.7m)
- 68 The northern section of the car park, including disabled and LGV bays, will be white-lined on the existing tarmac surface. The remainder will be

demarcated using natural materials such as timber to preserve the rural character of the area. This parking provision exceeds the required 39 spaces and accommodates both restaurant patrons and visitors to the adjacent Gazegill Organics Farm Shop.

Servicing Arrangements

- 69 Detailed swept path analysis demonstrates that service vehicles can safely access and egress the site. Refuse collection occurs every Thursday between 10:00-11:00, with bins positioned in designated bays at the northern end of the car park. Axis Drawing 5286-ATR01 Rev A illustrates that refuse vehicles can complete a three-point turn on-site and exit in forward gear.
- 70 Deliveries to the restaurant occur between 05:00-09:00, outside peak traffic periods. Axis Drawing 5286-ATR02 Rev A demonstrates that 7.5-tonne delivery vans can safely maneuver within the site. This early morning delivery schedule ensures minimal interaction with customer traffic and reduces potential conflicts on Dancer Lane.

Lighting Considerations

- 71 The absence of street lighting on Dancer Lane reflects its rural character and is consistent with countless similar lanes throughout the Ribble Valley. The Public Right of Way along Dancer Lane experiences minimal evening use. All restaurant visitors arrive by private vehicle, and vehicle headlights provide adequate illumination for the infrequent occasions when pedestrians might be present during evening hours. Street lighting would be unnecessary, inappropriate to the rural setting, and contrary to dark skies policies.

Road Maintenance

- 72 Dancer Lane is a private road maintained by the landowner, who resurfaced the lane in 2008 and has committed to ongoing regular maintenance and repairs. This arrangement ensures the lane's continued suitability for its intended purpose without placing any maintenance burden on the highway authority.

Compliance with Highway Policy

- 73 The comprehensive highways assessment, by Axis, demonstrates compliance with relevant policy requirements:
- NPPF Paragraph 115(b): Safe and suitable access for the scale and type of development is provided through the proposed mitigation measures, informal passing places, and demonstrated safe operation over three years
 - NPPF Paragraph 116: The residual cumulative impacts on the road network are not severe. Peak hour traffic generation is comparable to the previously approved tearoom, traffic volumes are modest and well-distributed throughout the day, and no accidents have been recorded
 - Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG1: Adequate car parking provision exceeds standards, traffic generation has been thoroughly assessed and found acceptable, and access implications have been appropriately addressed
- 74 In the context of this rural location, opportunities to maximize sustainable transport solutions are inherently limited. The site is accessible by private vehicle via an established farm access that has operated safely without incident for over three years. While public transport options are limited (as is typical for rural areas), the site is accessible by bicycle and on foot for local residents using the Public Right of Way network. The parking arrangements provide adequate space for customer vehicles without causing highway safety concerns.
- 75 The development does not generate exceptional traffic volumes. The staggered table booking system (15-minute intervals) ensures arrivals and departures are distributed throughout operating hours rather than concentrated at specific times. This operational characteristic, combined with the intimate 50-cover capacity, results in manageable customer numbers appropriate for the rural location and access arrangements.

- 76 Dinner service operates with fifteen-minute staggered seating intervals from 18:30 to 20:30, creating a gradual arrival pattern rather than concentrated peak. Average table occupancy of 2.25 hours means early diners leave after late diners arrive, generating single-direction traffic flows during most service periods. This operational pattern minimises potential for conflict between arriving and departing vehicles and avoids pressure on parking capacity.
- 77 Parking provision comprises hardstanding areas within the farmyard curtilage offering space for approximately thirty to forty vehicles depending on configuration. This capacity is appropriate to the restaurant operational scale given that it does not seek to maximise table turnover but rather prioritises quality of experience and appropriate occupancy levels. The development satisfies Core Strategy Policy DMG3 through provision of appropriate access and parking arrangements that do not prejudice highway safety.

Residential Amenity

- 78 The nearest residential properties to the restaurant building are located at sufficient distance that noise, disturbance, light pollution, and overlooking impacts are not material planning concerns. The restaurant operates four days per week with latest finish times at 23:30 on Fridays and Saturdays, which are reasonable hours for hospitality use. The acoustic character of customer arrivals and departures is not significantly different from normal farm traffic, and the staggered seating arrangements prevent concentrated peaks of activity that might otherwise create disturbance.
- 79 The development satisfies Core Strategy Policy DMG1 requirement to protect residential amenity. No representations from residential neighbours objecting to noise, disturbance, or other amenity impacts have been submitted. The applicant operates the business with consideration for the rural context and has demonstrated responsible management of potential amenity effects.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 80 The Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Unda Consulting Limited provides comprehensive analysis of flood risk affecting the site and demonstrates that the development can be made safe through appropriate mitigation measures.
- 81 The site is located within Flood Zones 1 (Low Probability) and 2 (Medium Probability) as defined by the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning. The NPPF at paragraph 163 requires application of Sequential Test to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding. However, the Sequential Test need not be applied for minor development or changes of use. While the restaurant building represents new construction, it was built substantially in accordance with a previous planning permission that established the building envelope. In any case, the applicant is satisfied that the test can be met.
- 82 The Sequential Test requires demonstration that there are no reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with lower probability of flooding. The fundamental nature of the development is farm diversification through provision of refreshment facilities directly connected to an operational agricultural enterprise. This necessitates location within or immediately adjacent to the farm complex to enable the operational integration upon which the business model depends. There is no reasonably available alternative site within Flood Zone 1 that would enable delivery of the farm-to-table concept, as moving the restaurant away from the farm would sever the direct connection between food production and service that defines the business.
- 83 Furthermore, the restaurant use is classified as "less vulnerable" development according to Annex 3 of the NPPF Technical Guidance. The guidance demonstrates that "less vulnerable" development is appropriate in both Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3a. The Exception Test is not required for "less vulnerable" development in Flood Zone 2.
- 84 The Flood Risk Assessment identifies flood risk as fluvial, originating from the unnamed watercourse adjacent to the northern boundary and Gazegill

or Rimington Beck adjacent to the southern boundary. The Environment Agency confirmed that Flood Zones at this location are informed by New National Modelling, with no detailed modelling available. No Flood Storage Areas are located in proximity to the site, and no formal flood defences protect the site. The Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping indicates "Very Low" probability for both present day and 2040-2060 climate change scenarios. Groundwater, sewer, and reservoir flood risks are assessed as very low, and the Environment Agency holds no historic flooding records for the site.

- 85 The Flood Risk Assessment recommends implementation of flood resistance measures including: solid concrete ground floor slab with waterproof membrane; closed-cell foam in wall cavities; waterproof ground floor render and screed; damp proof membranes; external walls rendered resistant to flooding to at least 600mm above ground floor level; raised electrical installations; non-return valves fitted to drains; and use of water-resistant materials throughout. The Assessment confirms that there will be no unacceptable loss of fluvial floodplain storage and that a full Surface Water Drainage Strategy is not required at this planning stage due to the small scale of development. The applicant will register with the Environment Agency Floodline Alert Direct service.
- 86 The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that, assuming accordance with the recommended flood risk management measures, Unda Consulting Limited considers the proposed application suitable in flood risk terms. The development satisfies Core Strategy Policy DME6 and NPPF Chapter 14 requirements regarding flood risk.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 87 The site ecological value derives primarily from its continuation as a working farm maintaining traditional management practices including conservation grazing and preservation of rare Pennine hay meadows. Approximately ninety-seven percent of all UK hay meadows have been lost, with consequent severe impacts on habitat and ground-nesting bird populations. The diversification strategy has enabled continuation of

traditional farming methods that would otherwise have become economically unviable following the 2008 milk price crash.

- 88 The restaurant development itself occupies previously developed land within the farmyard complex and has not resulted in loss of valuable habitats. The continued operation of the farm ensures ongoing management of hay meadows, grazing land, and field margins in ways that support biodiversity. The integration of the restaurant with farming activities creates economic incentive for habitat conservation that might otherwise be lost if the farm were forced to intensify production or cease operation entirely.
- 89 The development delivers biodiversity benefits through enabling continuation of traditional extensive grazing systems, maintenance of hay meadows cut late in the season to allow wildflowers to seed, retention of hedgerows and stone walls, and preservation of small farm features that support wildlife. The development satisfies NPPF paragraph 180 requirements to contribute to and enhance the natural environment through net gains for biodiversity.

Economic Benefits

- 90 The development delivers substantial economic benefits at local, borough, and county levels. Direct employment of thirty-seven individuals on a 250-acre rural holding represents exceptional employment density and provides secure livelihoods for local people. All but two employees reside within ten miles of the site, keeping wages circulating in the local economy. The workforce includes two agricultural apprentices receiving vocational training and one employee with Down Syndrome recruited through the Workfit programme.
- 91 Farm income of approximately fifteen thousand pounds per month from restaurant supply has enabled expansion of agricultural operations including increase in dairy herd by fourteen animals and creation of farm apprentice positions. Farm shop turnover has doubled on trading days as approximately half of restaurant customers also purchase from the shop.

The restaurant supports local supply chain businesses through purchasing from within approximately twenty miles, keeping money circulating within the local economy.

- 92 The development contributes to Ribble Valley visitor economy, which is worth over two hundred and sixty million pounds annually with recent growth of seven percent in visitor numbers. The restaurant has received multiple awards and gained national recognition, raising the profile of Ribble Valley as a visitor destination, this is evident in the positive support the farm and restaurant has received from Marketing Lancashire, a copy of their letter is included in the appendix. The economic benefits satisfy NPPF Chapter 6 requirements to support economic growth and productivity in rural areas and Core Strategy Policy DMB1.

Social Benefits

- 93 Beyond economic impacts, the development delivers social benefits including:
- Preservation of traditional farming practices and rare habitats that would likely have been lost had the farm been forced to sell or intensify in response to economic pressures. The restaurant income has enabled the Robinson family to continue multi-generational farming traditions and maintain the landscape character of the Pennine fringe.
 - Provision of high-quality dining experiences that connect people to food production and agricultural landscapes. The farm-to-table model educates customers about seasonal eating, animal welfare, sustainable farming, and rural life. Customers witness traditional practices such as walking dairy cows to pasture, an increasingly rare sight as many herds are now permanently housed, and encounter free-ranging farm animals, creating authentic rural experiences.
 - Creation of opportunities for young people to enter agriculture through the apprenticeship programme, addressing the sector well-documented recruitment challenges. The expanded operation

provides career pathways that would not exist without the diversified business model.

- Inclusive employment practices through recruitment via the Workfit programme, creating opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities to participate in meaningful employment. This demonstrates social responsibility and challenges stereotypes about who can contribute productively in hospitality and agricultural contexts.
- Contribution to community cohesion and rural vibrancy through provision of a destination that brings people together for shared dining experiences in a working farm environment. The restaurant has become an established part of the local landscape, valued by residents and visitors alike.

- 94 The social benefits align with NPPF paragraph 8 recognition that the planning system should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by fostering well-designed, safe and accessible environments and providing the facilities and services required to support community life.

CONCLUSION

- 95 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the retrospective application for regularisation of the restaurant and car park at Lower Gazegill Farm accords with relevant planning policies and represents sustainable development that delivers substantial economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- 96 The principle of farm diversification through provision of visitor refreshment facilities was established through planning permission 3/2024/0213. While the operational offering has evolved from the originally envisaged tearoom to a more sophisticated farm-to-table restaurant, this evolution represents refinement of the approved concept rather than fundamental departure from it. The restaurant remains intrinsically connected to the agricultural operation, generating significant farm income, creating direct markets for farm produce, and enabling continuation of traditional farming practices that faced existential economic challenges following the 2008 milk price collapse.

- 97 The development satisfies NPPF policy supporting agricultural diversification and sustainable rural tourism. It accords with Ribble Valley Core Strategy policies supporting business growth, rural economy, and tourism development. The design, scale, and materials are sympathetic to rural character and the building integrates successfully within the existing farmyard complex. Highway access and parking arrangements are adequate and safe. Residential amenity is protected through appropriate separation distances and responsible operational management.
- 98 The Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Unda Consulting Limited (reference 95792-Oreilly-Gazegill, dated June 2025) confirms that flood risk can be appropriately managed through recommended mitigation measures and that the development poses no unacceptable risk. The site is located in Flood Zones 1 and 2, with the restaurant classified as "less vulnerable" commercial use which is appropriate in these zones. The Assessment confirms very low risk from surface water, groundwater, sewer, and reservoir flooding, with no historic flooding records held by the Environment Agency for the site.
- 99 The development has created thirty-seven jobs on a 250-acre holding, demonstrating exceptional employment density and providing secure livelihoods for local people. It generates approximately fifteen thousand pounds monthly farm income and has enabled expansion of agricultural operations including increasing the dairy herd by fourteen animals and creating farm apprenticeships. Approximately half of restaurant customers also visit the farm shop, doubling shop turnover. The business supports local supply chains and contributes to the Ribble Valley visitor economy.
- 100 Beyond economic impacts, the development preserves traditional farming practices and rare Pennine hay meadows (of which ninety-seven percent have been lost nationally), provides authentic rural experiences that educate people about food production and agriculture, creates vocational training opportunities for young people entering farming, and demonstrates inclusive employment through the Workfit program. This assists in safeguarding and enhancing the visual and biodiversity landscape quality of the farm holding for the benefit of the wider area.

- 101 The applicant submits that the development represents an exemplary model of sustainable rural diversification that delivers the mutually reinforcing benefits that planning policy seeks to encourage: strengthening agricultural viability while providing rural employment, supporting local economy while preserving landscape and biodiversity, and creating quality visitor experiences while maintaining authentic working farm character.
- 102 The evolution from tearoom to restaurant has occurred organically in response to changing market conditions and opportunities, but the fundamental principle remains unchanged: provision of refreshment facilities that are intrinsically connected to and supportive of a working agricultural operation. This is precisely what planning permission 3/2024/0213 established as acceptable.
- 103 On the basis of the analysis contained within this statement and the supporting Flood Risk Assessment, the applicant respectfully requests that Ribble Valley Borough Council grants retrospective planning permission for the regularisation of the restaurant and car park development at Lower Gazegill Farm. The development accords with the development plan when read as a whole, there are no material considerations indicating that permission should be refused, and the proposal represents sustainable development that should be supported in accordance with the NPPF overarching objectives.
- 104 The applicant remains available to provide any further information the Council may require to determine this application and welcomes the opportunity to discuss any aspects of the proposal with planning officers.

Document prepared for: Eight at Gazegill Ltd

Date: November 2025

Enclosed Marketing Lancashire Letter of Support

Eight at Gazegill
Dancer Lane
Rimington
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 4EE

Dear Ian & Emma,

Extension of operating hours and addition of accommodation at Eight at Gazegill.

I am writing on behalf of Marketing Lancashire to express our support of Eight at Gazegill as a leading food & drink venue, and to support your application for extended operating hours and the addition of new accommodation.

As the official LVEP (Local Visitor Economy Partnership) and official voice of tourism for the county, our role is to ensure that Lancashire's visitor economy thrives, working in partnership with both the public and private sector to champion the county on a national and international stage. We also work to champion and support the delivery of the Lancashire 2050 strategic framework.

Pre-COVID, Lancashire's visitor economy was worth £4.41 billion per year, attracting 68.7 million visitors and supporting over 60,700 jobs, making it one of the largest visitor economies in the North West. The sector was hit hugely during the pandemic with visitor numbers down by 69% and economic impact down by 63%. Visitor numbers have recovered steadily, and the latest 2023 figures showed positive progression in recovery with visitor numbers having grown back to 97% of pre-covid levels with 66.7 million visitors. The sector also supports 57,311 full time equivalent jobs and delivers an of economic impact of £5.4 billion (indexed against inflation). Whilst this improvement is incredibly positive, it is clear that the sector is still impacted by the lasting effects of the Pandemic, the ongoing cost of living crisis, and increasing running costs. It is therefore of critical importance that we continue to support Lancashire's tourism and hospitality businesses to enhance their offer and place the county in the best possible position to welcome even more visitors as we move forwards.

Set against an ever increasingly competitive marketplace, it is recognised that Lancashire's visitor offer must not only meet but exceed the expectations of our visitors through a proactive strategy for sustainable growth. As the designated LVEP for the county, Marketing Lancashire has developed a

tourism growth strategy in partnership with a number of stakeholders from public and private sector from across the county. This strategy positions Lancashire as the UK's first SMART tourism destination (Sustainable, Mutually beneficial, Accessible, Radical and Tech-led), with the keys focus of the strategy being underpinned by sustainability, productivity and product development which aligns with many of Visit England's objectives. The strategy also sets to have grown the Visitor Economy by £1bn by 2027, which would exceed pre-COVID levels. Supporting developments such as yours is fundamental in helping Lancashire achieve these goals.

Our tourism growth strategy also focuses on wellness and discovery as part of our visitor offer. This encompasses both natural Lancashire, and food and drink. Eight's rural location and proximity to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape as well as its commitment to local farming and minimal food miles support this objective in every sense. In addition, fun and entertainment objectives in the tourism growth strategy include celebrations. Eight brings together the great outdoors and food & drink as well as showcasing and championing the unique qualities of Lancashire landscape with both sensational views, local walking routes and a farm to fork approach, which offering exceptional hospitality and memorable experiences. The long list of awards which have been won in such a short period of trading is testament to this.

You have highlighted that your current operating model performs exceptionally well and guest bookings are staggered to allow ease of access on the local roads. With a well-respected holiday park just down the road, you are adding to the product offering for visitor in the area.

You have a commitment to local employment and skills with 36 full time employees and a demonstrable history of employing and supporting individuals with additional needs. This is a huge positive not just within the hospitality sector but also in creating local employment in this rural location.

We would urge planners to consider the rural position of this business and fully understand that with the absence of public transport, road transportation is the main means for employees to get to work as well as guests. Rather than working against this, I would urge planners to work to support this as a clear economic benefit for the area. Eight's location being close to the Yorkshire border as well as surrounding local authorities, means that money is being brought into the local economy which would not otherwise be there.

On average, staying visitors support an economic impact of £343.32 per trip compared to £47.02 per trip for day visitors, (based upon 2023 figures) through their use of wider facilities and services in the

area throughout their stay. Visitors to Lancashire are somewhat seasonal, with the Autumn and Winter months of October to March accounting for just 38.4% of the sector's economic impact. Our tourism growth strategy looks to address this through product development allowing extension of the season. The addition of accommodation to Gazegill combined with your unique location, will attract couples and small companion groups, who tend to travel outside of peak seasons, ensuring that visitors continue to come to Lancashire in the shoulder seasons, and therefore supporting our ambition to extend the economic impact of the sector.

Pre-pandemic, during 2018, the Ribble Valley area welcomed around 4.4 million visitors who generated an economic impact of £260.8 million and supported over 3,454 FTE jobs (Source: STEAM). The area has since been hit hard by the impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. In 2023 visitor numbers in Ribble Valley have returned to just 88% of pre-covid levels, however, economic impact has increased to £305.1 million, demonstrating the value of increased spend from visitors, especially by encouraging nighttime economy and overnight visits. Therefore, it is fundamental that developments such as yours are supported as they encourage the rural nighttime economy as well as offering additional accommodation to support those overnight visits, ultimately supporting sector growth and the goals of Lancashire's Tourism Growth Strategy.

We wish you every success in bringing your plans for the new accommodation to fruition and look forward to hearing of your progress with this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'M. E. Moriarty Eames'.

Maria Moriarty Eames
Head of Partnerships