

Dear All,

Informal concerns were raised at the town council meeting on the 1/2/16 about a perceived lack of community consultation regarding our application for a One Planet Development. I am therefore writing to inform the council that we have now made the planning documents available on our website and advertised this fact beneath the official planning notices. We have also offered to discuss any genuine concerns or constructive criticisms people may have and even to show interested parties around the farm to explain our intentions (an offer which has already been accepted). This is on top of over 3 years working with local businesses and other local customers to work out what products the local community wants.

You may also be wondering why you are getting letters of support from people living outside Newport. There are a couple of reasons for this. Firstly, it cannot be denied that several of the objectors present at the meeting don't live in Newport permanently, with some spending just a few weeks a year here. If they're allowed to claim to be part of the community (and I'm not saying they shouldn't) I don't see why any other temporary residents shouldn't. Secondly, One Planet living is a global issue, not just a local one and the community and the council are not just choosing whether to support a young family who want to live in an environmentally responsible way, but also what sort of reputation Newport wants as a result of its decision. The West Wales Chronicle, Western Telegraph and Pembrokeshire Herald are all reviewing our application with the intention of writing articles and rejecting our application will therefore send a clear message about Newport to the larger community as well as to itself. Perhaps it supports these goals so long as they're not in Newport, but is that really an attitude to be proud of? The world needs examples of this kind of development and the letters from beyond the town show that others are watching to see whether Newport wants to welcome such a place. In rejecting our neighbour's OPD plans the community of Newport may already have revealed it's final position on low impact living, but I cannot see how, in light of all the support we have received locally (not all of which will translate into letters of support and council meeting attendees, granted), that the town of Newport is genuinely committed to excluding potential one planet families like us.

It also seems obvious to us (and many others) that Newport risks becoming, at best, a retirement village and, at worst, a seasonal ghost town if it doesn't start supporting it's young people, particularly with regards to affordable housing and employment, both of which are provided by this application (Newport could even become little more than a picturesque trading floor if its properties continue to be treated as investment vehicles and not homes). We're not just talking about offering young people and families a few "affordable" rabbit hutches in their own poor-people-only-zone in a corner of the Bentinck housing estate; we're talking about giving them the opportunity to work and cherish the land surrounding Newport for the benefit of the whole town. Indeed, this application is about intimately linking one young family who don't have the money to buy an "affordable" property in Newport (never mind a small farm or even, for that matter, a tiny cottage) with almost every aspect of Newport life. We want to dedicate our existence to Newport and should we secure permission we will become inextricably committed to its school, its clubs, its community, its food security, its energy security, its economy, its ecology and even its cultural heritage. In return we'd like Newport to cherish us and our children and, hopefully, give them a reason to want to dedicate themselves to the town long-term as well. They will, of course, be free to choose their own destiny, but wouldn't it be lovely if Newport was a place so inspiring and nurturing that its children wanted to stay and start their own families, no longer excluded by empty holiday homes, astronomical house prices and lack of employment outside the service industry? We definitely don't want our children driven away by the same forces that are driving young people away today, but how does

the community and town council feel? Does Newport cherish commitment and dedication in its young people, or is it going to reject our offer of such things? That is the choice the town faces.

Finally, I would like to point out that the landscape we are proposing to live in was entirely created by people wanting to become small-scale subsistence farmers in response to prevailing economic signals. According to the Countryside Council for Wales, the lower part of the northern slopes of Carningli Mountain is “a mass of small square fields and cottages representing late encroachment on to open moorland in the 1830s and 1840s, a period of distress and land hunger”. According to the Dyfed Archaeological Trust, “it is characterised by a fairly densely packed distribution of cottages and small agricultural holdings set in a landscape of small, irregular fields” and we are, therefore, asking for nothing more than permission to create a low impact smallholding in a landscape created by low impact smallholders. We are asking for permission to live like those who shaped the very landscape we’re trying to live on and, thus, to embrace the history of the site in the spirit of the site.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew, Charis and Elsa Watkinson