PP-11263527: Proposal for a drinking pond for livestock

Barnfield Farm, Bradnop, Leek, ST13 7NQ

1. Background information

The project for which prior approval is being requested involves the creation of a drinking water pond for livestock, which will also support other agricultural requirements and benefits to the environment.

Barnfield Farm is located in Bradnop in Staffordshire Moorlands. The farm is 18 ha and runs a sheep business. There is increasing need for farms to reduce their impact on the environment, whilst being able to remain viable businesses.

The farm is situated in an area which is of medium priority for water quality under Countryside Stewardship, but in a catchment that is failing WFD targets, with the catchment classified as 'Moderate' status due to phosphate levels partly attributed to agriculture. The area is now a Catchment Sensitive Farming area. The proposal outlined in this document will support initiatives for agriculture to play its part in improving the water environment.

The project is being supported through Churnet Valley Farmers, which is a facilitation group made up of over 50 farmers in the area and which is funded through Defra's Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund. Barnfields Farm is a member of Churnet Valley Farmers. The aim of the group is to bring together farmers, land managers and foresters to provide environmental benefits to the local area and reduce the impact of farming on the environment.

The proposal outlined in this document is to create a pond at Barnfield Farm that will provide a natural drinking point for sheep and which will provide additional benefits to the farm and environment. The installation of such features will support the farm's continued development towards greater sustainable farming practices and land management.

2. About Barnfield Farm

Barnfield Farm is a small enterprise with 45 acres (ca. 18 hectares) of land, which has been running as an agricultural business for over 20 years. The farm has a flock of approximately 350 sheep which are typically only housed during the lambing season and kept outside throughout most of the year. The land is permanent grassland.

2.1. Location

Barnfield Farm is located in Bradnop in Staffordshire Moorlands (Grid reference: **SK0143455220**) – see Figure 1.

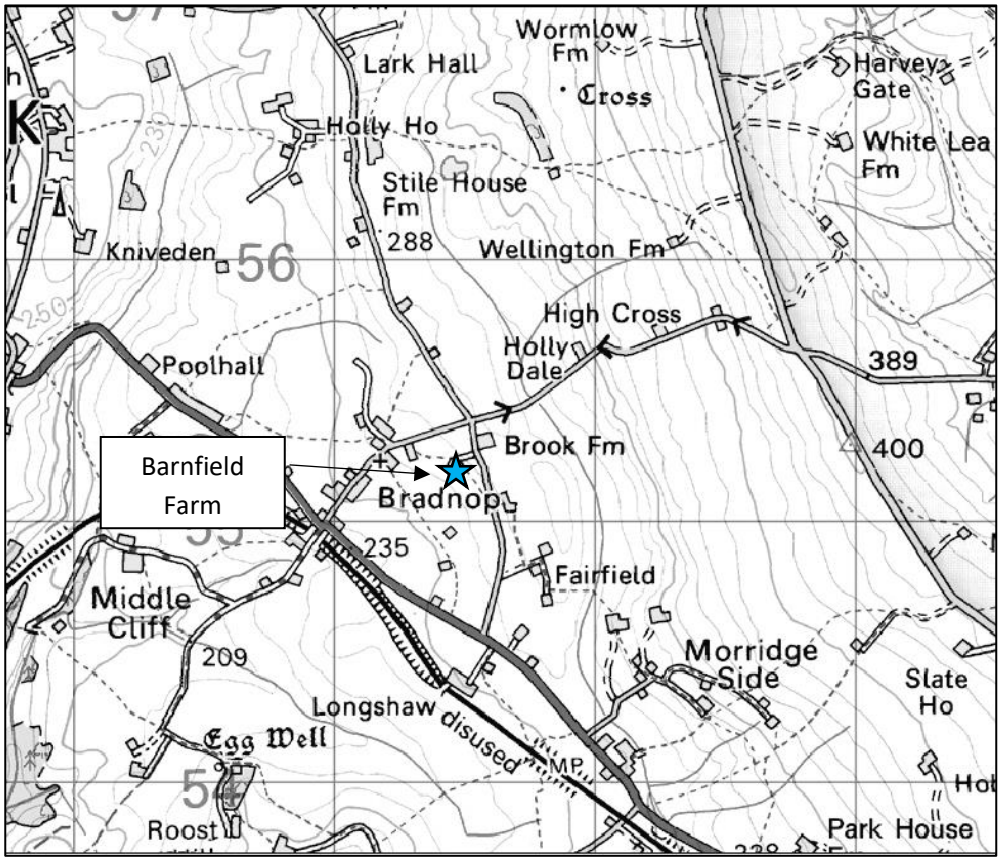

Figure 1. Location map of Barnfield Farm.

3. Description of work & proposal

The proposal involves the creation of a natural pond that will support the agricultural business at Barnfield to be more sustainable, whilst enhancing the environment.

3.1. Location of the proposed pond

The proposal includes creation of a single pond in an existing low lying and seasonally wet (spring fed) area which is species-poor grassland with some rushes, indicating frequent waterlogging of the soil. The pond will be located to the south of the farm yard and is proposed to be 200 m^2 in size. It will be created to provide additional drinking water for livestock and replace a poorly sited and temporary water trough where animals currently drink from and where there is increased risk of erosion and compaction from its use.



Figure 2. Proposed location of pond to south of farm.

4. Details of proposals

The location and design of the system is given in Figures 4 - 6, along with cross sections and a summary of the proposals.

4.1. Drinking water pond

The pond has been designed to be fed by ground and rain water, using the natural wetness of the area and to provide a continual supply of water from a natural spring. The location and design will also contribute to providing environmental benefits, including storing water, trapping sediments, and create habitat for wildlife.

The pond will be excavated to a maximum depth of 100 cm removing soil to reach clay. However, to support environmental objectives the depth will be varied within the pond – see Figure 5 for an example of what this may look like.

The pond will be created with a total area of 200 m^2.

Excavated soil will be used to create bunds and to profile the pond.

5. Construction plan

Construction of the pond will follow best practice to avoid any negative impacts on existing features.

- Work will be carried out in suitable conditions using appropriate machinery. It will also take place at a suitable time of year and outside of the breeding season for birds and other wildlife.
- The pond will be a maximum of 100 cm deep at its centre. However, a 'shelved' pond with shallower areas will be created & average pond depth will be 50 – 60 cm.
- The area of the pond will be approximately 200 m^2.
- Spoil arising from the excavations will be used to create bunds and all spoil will remain on the farm. Using an average depth of 0.6 m, the system is likely to generate 120 m^3. Spoil will be used within the pond to create structures such as bunding.
- Work will not impact negatively on trees or hedgerows and all such features will be retained. Storage of spoil/machinery and access will similarly be undertaken to prevent damage to such features. The pond will be close to the hedge line but work will not take place within the root impact zone.
- The pond will not be connected to existing diches/drains (other than an overflow, if needed). This will ensure that any risk of soil erosion to the watercourses is avoided and the pond is rainwater/ground water fed). Siltation traps will be used if considered necessary while the excavations are taking place.
- No work on existing ditches will take place other than to connect an overflow from the pond (if necessary).
- There are no known archaeological features present.
- There are no Public Rights of Way that will be affected by the work.

6. Maintenance plan

Maintenance of the systems will follow best practice guidance:

- Maintenance will be minimal but any required will be undertaken during the autumn/winter months to minimise impact on wildlife and when ground conditions are suitable.
- Any outlet pipes will be checked for blockages, vegetation build-up and debris and cleared as necessary.
- Repairs will take place of eroded or damaged areas, as required, to maintain the structure.

7. Benefits of the proposals

There will be a number of benefits from the proposals:

- A more sustainable farm and agricultural business at Barnfield Farm that is able to reduce its impact on the environment through use of natural drinking water.
- An improved water environment through habitat creation.
- Benefits to aquatic/amphibious wildlife.
- Contributes to increased water storage for the area & reduced risk of soil erosion/compaction.

8. Context in the planning framework

The purpose for the pond is principally for agricultural use and is similar in scope to other proposals where excavations are undertaken for agricultural purposes and come under General Permitted Development. An example for the excavation of reservoirs, taken from https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-is-permission-required website indicates:

"Full planning permission is not usually required for smaller, on-farm reservoirs, where the waste material excavated to develop a reservoir remains on the farm. These may be developed under existing agricultural permitted development rights, such as Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, which set out the thresholds for excavation and mineral working where reasonably necessary for agricultural purposes. However, prior approval will be required from the local planning authority.

In considering either a prior approval application or a full planning application for the development of on-farm reservoirs, planning authorities should have regard to the increasing need for sustainability, importantly including the careful management of water, the benefits water storage adds in the sustainability of the farming activity and the contribution that it can also make to flood alleviation."

In conclusion, the criteria for permitted development rights are met by the following elements for the pond outlined:

- This is a partnership project which fully involves and supports the farmer.
- There are ecological benefits to be derived within the agricultural unit.
- Sustainable soil management practices will result – reduction in soil erosion and compaction from additional drinking water for livestock.
- It is a development that is consistent with agricultural management activity that will ensure the wellbeing and sustainability of the farm holding.

Based on this guidance we therefore request you to consider if these proposals constitute development, which is permitted by virtue of Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

Barnfield Farm – Location of pond in relation to the farm yard and farm buildings.



Figure 3. Proposed location of pond at Barnfield Farm.

Figure 4. Proposed design and cross section of the pond (10 x 20 m).



Cross section A

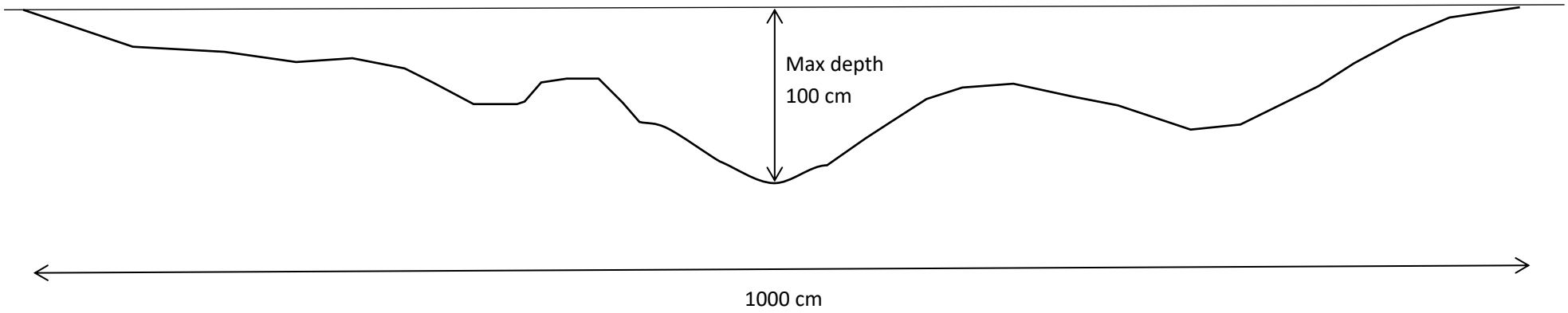

Figure 5. Image of an example design of pond that will act as drinking water but also provide wildlife/environmental benefit.

