

Supporting Document for Extension to operational Duration of Previously Approved Tent camping application at Strong Orchard Farm from 22nd May to 31st August Approved previously to April 1st through to September 14th

Strong Orchard, Pineapple lane, Waytown, Bridport, Dorset

8/11/2020



Location

Strong Orchard Farm is near the West Dorset village of Waytown, approximately 3 miles from Beaminster and Bridport in an AONB area. The Orchard consists of 15 acres of 3,000 cider apple trees; the apples from which we harvest and press and ferment every autumn to apple juice, cider and apple cider vinegar. The Orchard is certified Organic with the Soil Association.

The cider apple orchard is harvested from October 1st until through December and pruned yearly over January, February and March. The remainder of the year the grass is mowed periodically.

As a method of providing additional income/diversification to our primarily agricultural business, we would like to offer the Approved 14 tent camping sites in the cider orchard from April 1st to September 14th. No additional structures will be required for this proposal. We aim to offer a most unique and peaceful experience for adult visitors in the Dorset countryside with a “leave no trace” attitude.

Visual impact

Visual impact is minimal if any. We would like to offer our beautiful orchard for campers during the period from April 1st to September 14th. This is the time when the trees are full of leaves and blossom. The foliage from the apple trees ensure that the tents cannot be seen from Pineapple lane which runs past our gateway, or any public byways. In this way we work with the seasonal changes of the orchard and the tourist season.

Sound impact

The proposed siting of the seasonal tent pitches is purposely at the furthest location to the farm’s closest neighbour at Marles farm and located amongst orchard apple trees and near a thick, mature hedge. The pitches are at a far location from the farm’s closest neighbour and holiday home being Marles Farm. There will be no significant sound impact on the local environment at all.

Physical impact

Minimal; specifically asking for seasonal tent camping means no lasting impact of the tents on the grass lanes of the orchard after the visitors leave. Bins will be made available for them to recycle into. We anticipate minimal impact on local roads as visitors will be encouraged to use walks and footpaths to get to local facilities such as pubs and attractions. Maps and leaflets will be available. Maps and leaflets will be available to tent campers.

Local Amenities

Within the village of Waytown is the excellent Hare and Hounds pub which serves lunch and dinner within easy walking or driving distance of 500 yards. There is also the Anchor pub in Salway Ash a mile

away, the Half Moon in Melplash 1 mile away and the Pymore inn approximately 2 miles away as well.

There are local buses through the villages and the farm is within the free delivery zones of takeaway food businesses in Bridport.

Near us is the Pineapple business park where Baboo Gelato is located where visitors can enjoy some very local ice-cream. This will bring income to local businesses.

ECON 6 4.5.17 "Proposals for new caravan and camping sites where possible should be well located in relation to existing facilities."

ECON 6 4.5.16 "Caravan and camping sites are key components of the area's stock of self catering tourist accommodation."

Amenities on the orchard

We already have in place a hot shower and toilet facilities near our cider farm Tasting Room. Temporary toilet and shower units and washing up basins will be brought in for the tent camping season. Water will be accessible and a fridge to hold spoilable groceries for the campers will also be available to use.

Various maps and leaflets for local attractions and a calendar for events in the local towns will be given to campers so they can enjoy the Jurassic Coast and West Dorset the most during their stay. It is anticipated that this will help to bring income to local businesses.

Toilet, Shower and wash basin facilities will be in line with tent campsite Site license requirements.

I would reiterate the application is for only 14 tent pitch sites as Approved previously.

Further Policy considerations

ENV 15 Efficient and Appropriate Use of Land i)

"Development should optimise the potential of the site and make efficient use of the site, subject to the inherent limitations of the site and impact on local character"

Light use of seasonal camping tents between rows of apple trees out of the season of apple harvesting and orchard maintenance will optimise the financial viability of the site, while not having any harmful impact on the orchard and farming at all.

We already offer cider farm tours on specific days, which allows us to educate visitors about the uniqueness of orchards and the biodiversity of the Dorset Countryside. We also speak about the historical significance of cider and apple farming. All in all the tours are a very informative, educational and enjoyable experience.

ECON 5

4.5.15 "Tourist accommodation provides critical support to tourist attractions and facilities and contributes to the economy through its support of retail, food and drink and travel services." Light, seasonal tourist accommodation in West Dorset will help sustain and grow local existing businesses in the area and benefit other businesses in a trickle-down effect.

ECON 7 i) "Farm diversification projects (for agricultural and other land-based rural businesses) for new caravan and camping sites will be supported, provided they are in keeping with the rural character and the development makes an on going contribution to the business that is diversifying." The proposed seasonal tent pitches will help to provide additional income to our farm and provide an ongoing contribution for the existing farm business through increased farm-gate sales.

ECON 7 4.6.3 "An increasing number of farmers are seeking to diversify in order to supplement their incomes. Policies in this plan are therefore intended to promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, where this will help support the ongoing good management of the land.

We would like to state that the proposed seasonal tent pitches will be an ancillary source of income for the farm on the agricultural land of the orchard and will not have a detrimental impact on the landscape

ECON 7 particularly paragraph 4.5.16 is written as follows;

"Caravan and campingsites are key components of the area`s stock of self catering tourist accommodation"

As a cider farm we offer visitors a unique experience to camp on a working cider apple orchard. Visitors can join one of our cider farm tours which we run 3 times a week where they learn about the history and culture of cider making in the area and the unique environment the orchard is. For the last 5 years of offering cider farm tour & tasting we have received visitors from all across the UK and internationally. By offering this unique camping possibility we aim to attract clientele from uncommon areas for this unique experience and thereby drawing in further economic benefit for the local economy from further afield.

ECON 8 Diversification and land-based rural business

As for farm diversification, the campers will work within the natural timetable of the annual orchard management i.e. pruning and orchard management before and after the campers visit with the main orchard harvest season taking place after we close for campers. Farmgate sales from the sale of apple juice, ciders, honey and vinegars will provide economic benefit for the current farm business and a beneficial trickle down effect on other business in the area.

To conclude, the proposed seasonal/temporary tent pitches have been planned out so as to produce as little impact as possible with no "footprint" and limited or no visual, sound and physical impact on the orchard farm environment whilst offering a diversification that will provide financial benefit to the existing farm business and those in the local area.

The proposal will allow visitors to stay in a unique tent camping setting without impacting the agricultural land, while encouraging tourists to enjoy walks in the Dorset Countryside and to trade at local pubs, restaurants and tourist businesses in the area.

The tent camping will be advertised more poignantly towards cycling groups and magazines so we can attract and encourage and help promote a healthier lifestyle group.

This is an application asking for an extension for the operational duration of the seasonal tent camping from the previously Approved application WD/D/20/307 of May 22nd-August 31st to Beginning on April 1st operating as a seasonal tent only, Adults only campsite until September 14th.

No permanent structures are being asked for.

Whilst going through the Previously Approved tent camping application the application received letters of Support both from our closest neighbours at Marles farm and the Local Parish Council who sent 2 members on a site visit and met with us.

An Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Plan/Report was completed at great time and cost. Even though the Dorset Environment Team regarded it all as a “very low impact” proposal.

Furthermore the previously Approved Application for Seasonal tent camping on the same site for unchanged number of tent pitch sites was deemed no concern by the Dorset Highways Authority in their Report.