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**New Storage Barn and Drive, Marine and Wildlife Rescue, Church Road, Ringsfield, Beccles, NR34 8JY**

**Design and Access Statement**

This is a dual-subject application:

1. A base and machinery storage for the Marine and Wildlife Rescue Charity.
2. A project for animal welfare and conservation.

**Who we are:**

Marine and Wildlife Rescue is a wildlife rescue charity collecting seals, birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl, native reptiles, amphibians and small mammals requiring assistance in Norfolk and North Suffolk. Arranging transfer and rehabilitation and release, in association with organisations such as the CVS Veterinary Group, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Broads Authority and Sealife Hunstanton.

**What we do:**

Marine and Wildlife Rescue was founded in 1990 to rescue both common and grey seals. It has since evolved to cater for all kinds of wildlife. We have specialist vets to attend to the animals that we rescue, and all wildlife, where possible, is returned to the wild. We have directed much investment into the rescue of seals as that is what we were first created to do, and in recent years we have called to assist more seals in Norfolk and Suffolk than any other wildlife. The population of the seals has continued to snowball, and our services have increased to keep up with the surge. We have recently purchased a dedicated vehicle to help facilitate the rescue of larger wildlife, particularly the entangled grey seals that are a regular occurrence. We were fortunate to receive funding towards the purchase of a large custom built livestock trailer by Houghton Porkhouse. This has assisted in the transfer of these large mammals to East Winch Wildlife Centre for onward care by their amazing team. Our members are all voluntary and are dedicated to the cause of helping wildlife.

**A base and machinery storage for the Marine and Wildlife Rescue Charity.**

Currently the equipment used, the livestock trailer, the ATV midsize utility vehicle and the specialist manual handling equipment are stored outside at Great Yarmouth, close to the sea and are suffering corrosion damage, especially to the aluminium frames. There is an importance to provide covered shelter for the equipment, and to maintain the integrity of the assets and apparatus for field maintenance/ care of livestock. The site and storage will be solely for the use of the Charity Trustees and will not be open to the general public. The gate will be realigned to allow vehicles to pull off the highway prior to opening the gate and to achieve improved vision splays and safety.

**A project for animal welfare and conservation.**

1. The erection of a storage barn.
2. Agricultural vehicles.
3. Wildlife conservation
4. Grazing of livestock.
5. Cutting and storage of hay.
6. The removal of non-indigenous sycamore trees and dead elm.
7. Introduction of wild bird nesting boxes.
8. Planting of new hedging, creating a wildlife corridor.
9. Creating a small copse comprising hazel, hornbeam, field maple, oak and sweet chestnut.
10. Site entrance
11. **The erection of a storage barn:**

A new storage barn is to be erected on the site, to be used for machinery and plant for maintaining the field, together with a livestock trailer and other equipment used in connection with wildlife rescue situations. The barn reflects similar buildings erected locally and across the Country. The cladding will be vertical lapped Yorkshire board, the roof will be profiled corrugated cement fibre, with metal roller shutter doors in a powder coated finish. The barn will be erected on a reinforced concrete raft.

1. **Agricultural vehicles:**

In addition to the livestock trailer, the ATV midsize utility vehicle and the specialist manual handling equipment employed by the rescue section, there will be a compact tractor, a towing mower and a tine harrow.

1. **Wildlife conservation:**

The site is to be developed and planted to support the conservation of wildlife, for mammals, insects and birds. A wildflower margin will be planted around the field, together with grasses and bird nesting boxes will be installed.

1. **Grazing of livestock:**

In previous years sheep have been grazed on the site. The intension is to introduce cattle or sheep to the field for grazing. A management programme will be put in place to visit the site a minimum of twice per day for feeding and checking the welfare of the animals. The grazing area will be enclosed with an 800mm high livestock grade fencing, comprising woven-wire steel mesh with a ‘fixed knot’ and wooden posts 2.4 metres apart.

1. **Cutting and storage of hay:**

Grass will be grown to be cut and stored as hay to be used for animal fodder.

1. **The removal of non-indigenous sycamore trees and dead elm:**

Non-indigenous sycamore trees will be removed, together with any identified dead elm. The elm hedge bordering the roadside is slowly dying but will be retained so long as it provides a border to the field. When beyond its life span, the dead elm will be removed, and the area will be planted as a grass verge.

1. **Introduction of bird nesting boxes:**

Nesting boxes will be secured to the trees along the north and east boundaries for small birds, but mainly for owls and bats.

1. **Planting of new hedging, creating a wildlife corridor:**

The Charity has been awarded a Woodland Trust grant under the ‘Morehedges scheme’ to plant ‘native upland hedging’ to create a wildlife corridor. The hedge will comprise a mix of Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), Dog Rose (Rosa canina), Field Maple (Acer campestre), Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa) & intermediate Hornbeam trees approximately 10-12 metre intervals within the new hedge.

1. **Creating a small copse:**

To the northeast end of the site, it is intended to plant a small copse of trees, comprisinghazel, hornbeam, field maple, oak and sweet chestnut.

**10 Site Entrance:**

The current access only allows for small vehicles to clear the highway prior to opening the gate. The gate will be set back to the line of the livestock grade fencing, which will allow a vehicle towing a trailer to clear the highway prior to opening the gate. Splaying the entrance, will also allow for an improved vision splay. The entrance area will be compacted type 1 aggregate with a 20mm stone topping.