

PLANNING STATEMENT

in connection with the
proposed construction of a
water storage reservoir
for agricultural irrigation purposes
Heasley Farm, Arreton, Newport, Isle of Wight

Prepared on behalf of
Barfoot Farms Limited

in
February 2024

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1.0 Background

Barfoot Farms Limited (BFL), is a family-owned company with an enviable profile within the agricultural industry. BFL are an established vegetable farming business based at Sefter Farm, Pagham, currently farming over 9500 acres across West Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

We predominantly farm vegetable crops including sweetcorn, courgettes, asparagus, green beans, pumpkins and tenderstem broccoli as well as assorted cereal crops. The vegetable crops are grown, managed, harvested, packed at our in-house carbon net zero packing plant. Whilst our produce is sold to large national and international retailers any waste by-products is used within our anaerobic digester, producing energy for the site.

The company has multiple accreditations including:

- Assured Produce Standard
- LEAF marque
- TESCO Nurture
- Assured Combinable Crops
- SMETA
- Beacons of Excellence
- Global Gap Accreditation

In addition, BFL own and farm a LEAF Demonstration Farm and have won numerous farming awards including the Specialist Crop Growers category for Farmers Weekly (2016) and most recently the Hampshire Farmers Club Class 1 Award (2023).

2.0 Heasley Farm – General Description

Heasley Farm extends to just over 223 ha (551 acres) as more particularly edged red on the attached plan, of which 0.5 Hectares can best be described as farmstead with a large farm building and farm office.

Heasley Farm is classified as freely draining slightly acid loamy soils on DEFRA's Soilscape which is described as land well suited to spring and autumn-sown cereals and other crops. The majority of the land at Heasley Farm is situated approximately 16.8m above sea level.

The access is directly off the Heasley Lane just to the east of the A3056 south of Arreton. The farmstead is located on the south boundary of the main block of the land. The land slopes upward from the farmstead to the Arreton Down SSSI.

3.0 Reservoir Proposals

Barfoot farms require a reservoir to store water for irrigation of their vegetable crops on Heasley Farm. The reservoir will be filled in winter utilising the natural runoff from winter rainfall which will be pumped into the reservoir from the purpose designed settlement lagoon. This will help to prevent any nutrient leeching into the river Yar below from which Barfoot Farms have the right to abstract water for irrigation.

The proximity of the reservoir to the existing farm tracks allows for minimal disturbance both during construction and thereafter. The settlement lagoon will be maintained periodically allowing and sediment to be removed. The design of this has been created to specifically allow these operations and therefore the longevity of the effectiveness of the reservoir.

Whilst the reservoir can be seen from the bridleway, the view is limited by virtue of the reservoir being hemmed in on three sides by woody vegetation. The fourth side of the reservoir is overlooked by the rest of the farmland but not by any public highway or residences.

The EA encourages the greater use of winter water storage facilities for subsequent summer use rather than depleting already low water supplies during the summer months. In addition, the EA also has a duty to ensure the proper use of water resources and good water efficiency practice as already being carried out at Barfoot Farms Limited elsewhere including monitoring water usage and water requirement with the use of weather stations.

As well as the promotion of these water storage proposals by the EA, the Government is also encouraging the use of winter storage reservoirs through a new grant funding programme recently announced reintroduction of the grant funding programme to be known as the Farming Transformation Fund (FTF). The grant, which is funded through the Rural Development Programme for England includes an initial focus on water management and provides for a Water Management Grant which is dedicated to arable and horticultural businesses and offers grants for capital items that will improve farm productivity through more efficient use of water for irrigation and secure supplies for crop irrigation for example, supporting the construction of farm reservoirs and irrigation equipment.

Once established the reservoir will provide essential water for the growing of spring planted vegetable crops providing food for human consumption. The water consumption and improving the quality of the water used for irrigation will reduce winter flood and soil erosion risk as well as providing vital

habitat for wildlife. The project will not only improve the economic outlook for the business in these current times of austerity but it will be a much more environmentally friendly and sustainable agricultural practice with huge environmental benefits.

The reservoir has been located in conjunction with consultation with Natural England to maximise the benefit for wildlife most notably for Turtle Doves being in one of the only areas on the Isle of Wight where Turtle Doves are present.

4.0 Planning Details

Main reservoir:

Size: Max length: 190m
Width: 114m

Site Area: 2.2ha

Volume: 50,012m²

Depth of Water: 5.0m

Attenuation pond:

Size: Max length: 67m
Width: 100m

Volume: 50,012m²

Depth of Water: 4.0m

Whole development:

Construction: Cut and fill using indigenous material (earth).

Banks to be sown with wildflower/grass mix.

Site Area: 2.2ha

5.0 Reservoir Rationale and Proposed Mitigation

The proposed site shown on the plans accompanying the application has been identified as being the most suitable location for the reservoir, the decision being influenced by the following factors:

- i. The proximity of the reservoir site to:
 - The area where water runoff is most prevalent from the land above
 - Land to be used to vegetable crops
 - Best located for environmental benefit of collar doves
 - Provides minimal visual impact on users of the surrounding area
- ii. The reservoir enables the Applicant to store water for use as and when deemed necessary.
- iii. The use of a private water supply ensures a secure natural, cost-effective supply which is environmentally friendly.

- iv. The reservoir enables the applicant to comply with the government's environmental objectives to achieve sustainable vegetable growth within the UK and in doing so ensures "food miles" are kept to a minimum.
- v. In constructing the reservoir, the applicants will be utilising irrigation systems so as to comply with current EA directives to include the installation of water volume sensors monitoring the moisture, content of the soil together with quantity of water applied.

Dated the 29ⁿ day February of 2024



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