



PLANNING STATEMENT

Removal of Condition 8 and variation of Conditions 4 and 5 relating to Planning Permission 04/00680/FUL to Allow Full Residential Use of Long Meadow Barn, Down St Mary

April 2024

Country Focus



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared in support of an application to Mid Devon District Council for Removal of Condition 8 and variation of Conditions 4 and 5 relating to Planning Permission 04/00680/FUL to Allow Full Residential Use of Long Meadow Barn ('the Barn'). The Statement is prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs C Pluck ('The Applicants').
- 1.2 The application site is located in the village of Down St Mary. The site lies within the Down St Mary Conservation Area but is not Listed. The site is defined as being outside of settlement/in open countryside in the Local Plan.
- 1.3 Planning permission was granted for the conversion of the barn into self-catering holiday accommodation in May 2004. The barn has been converted to a 4-bedroom, 3-bathroom property, which has previously been lawfully in use as holiday accommodation. There is an outside terrace adjoining the barn and a large, enclosed garden. There is independent access to the property and ample parking for more than 2 cars within the curtilage of the barn.
- 1.4 Bookings at the barn have been decreasing year on year with the expansion in popularity of AirBnB and changes in holiday habits (shorter breaks and booking last minute). This current trend combined with the rise in the cost of living has significantly impacted the viability of the business. The rise in costs associated with a fall in bookings means that it is no longer viable to maintain the barn as a holiday let; the accounts summary submitted shows that the business has made only a nominal profit in the last 5 years after running costs, management charge, utilities and repairs.
- 1.5 The application therefore seeks planning permission for the variation of the following conditions applied to the aforementioned consent (04/00680/FUL) to allow full residential use of the dwelling known as Meadow Barn and appropriate access and parking:
- a. Condition 8 The occupation of the holiday units shall be restricted to bona fide holiday makers for individual periods not exceeding 4 weeks in total in any consecutive period of 13 weeks (3 months). A register of holiday makers shall be kept and made available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Council at all reasonable time.
 - b. Condition 4 The area allocated for parking on the submitted plan, and the existing surface track within the site, shall be properly consolidated, surface and drained before use commences or the building is occupied. The car parking areas shall not be used other than for parking of vehicles in connection with the holiday use hereby permitted. Thereafter, these facilities shall be so retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - c. Condition 5 Access to the site shall only be obtained from the existing access point to the immediate north of the units.
- 1.6 The application is made on the basis that the principle of the application to remove the conditions is acceptable, having regard to:

The barn was converted to use for Holiday Accommodation in 2004 as the policy context at that time aimed to prohibit open market residential uses in the Countryside. However, under the current NPPF and GDPO policy, plus Local Policy S14 and DM9, (which explicitly support the residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings in the countryside) this barn would meet all the policy tests and would be supported for open market residential conversion. It is therefore argued that there is no valid reason why the holiday letting restriction could not be removed, particularly when viewed in context of the additional supporting evidence regarding the viability of the business.

It is sufficiently and clearly demonstrated within this application that there is no longer demand for the unit as holiday accommodation and that it is not viable for the unit to remain as holiday accommodation. The average occupancy rate of the barn for the years (excluding covid year) is just 14.7%.

As such, removal of the conditions would be reasonable and appropriate and as applied for would be in alignment with paragraph 84 of the NPPF, and Policies S1, S14 and DM9 of the Mid Devon Local Plan 20133-2033, which allows development in the countryside where it meets the tests (above).

It is also proposed that by creating a new dwelling in this location, it would support the council's requirement to deliver more homes. This application will allow the accommodation to be used in a more responsive way to local housing needs and respond to the changing tourism landscape some 20 years on from the original grant of consent in 2004.

There is a new independent access associated with the barn. The area associated with the barn provides adequate off-street parking for at least two cars. The previous application in 2023 for removal of Condition 8 garnered no objections from Highways or from the Parish Council. The improvements to access and parking approved under planning application 05/02720/FULL now enables separate access to the barn and a large off-street parking area and ancillary domestic space associated solely with Long Meadow Barn.

The proposal will not lead to harm regarding amenity of surrounding properties or on highways, as demonstrated herein.

No external or internal changes to the appearance of the building are proposed as part of this application.

- 1.7 This planning submission clearly demonstrates that there is no longer demand for the unit as holiday accommodation and that it is not viable for the unit to remain as holiday accommodation. As such, removal of the conditions as applied for would be aligned to paragraph 84 of the NPPF and Policies S1, S9, S14, DM9 of the Mid Devon Local Plan 20133-2033.
- 1.8 By virtue of the submitted information and having regard to the curtilages and inter-relationships between holiday unit and the adjoining farmhouse and nearby farm buildings; it has been demonstrated that the proposal would not result in harmful adverse amenity impacts to future or neighbouring occupants in line with policies S1 and DM5 of the Mid Devon Local Plan.
- 1.9 The proposal is supported by national and local planning policy objectives, which promote sustainable development and the reuse of buildings in the countryside. The proposal demonstrates the suitability of the change of use, and that in this way it represents the epitome of the social economic and environmental aims which are the golden thread running through sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.

1.10 There is no reason to withhold planning permission.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Long Meadow Barn (“the barn”) comprises a former barn which was ancillary to a main farmhouse. The barn has been converted and has been lawfully in use as holiday accommodation. Planning permission was granted for the conversion of the barn into self-catering holiday accommodation in May 2004.
- 2.2 The application site is located in the village of Down St Mary within the Down St Mary Conservation Area. The site is defined as being outside of settlement/in open countryside in the Local Plan.
- 2.3 The building retains its traditional rural vernacular appearance. The building is built of stone and brick and stands in its own plot.
- 2.4 The barn benefits from its own access, including an off-street parking area and ancillary domestic space including stables and a large patio and garden area. Access to the barn independently from the main house was consented in application 05/02720/FUL. The associated parking area can accommodate at least two cars.
- 2.5 The barn is of traditional character but is not listed. The adjacent farmhouse is also unlisted.

3. Proposed Development

3.1 This Planning Statement is prepared in support of an application to Mid Devon District Council for Removal of Condition 8 and variation of Conditions 4 and 5 relating to Planning Permission 04/00680/FUL to Allow Full Residential Use of Long Meadow Barn ('the Barn'). The Statement is prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs C Pluck ('The Applicants').

3.2 Bookings at the barn have been decreasing year on year with the expansion in popularity of AirBnB and changes in holiday habits (shorter breaks and booking last minute). This current trend combined with the rise in the cost of living has significantly impacted the viability of the business. The rise in costs associated with a fall in bookings means that it is no longer viable to maintain the barn as a holiday let, given the occupancy levels achieved; the accounts summary submitted shows that the business has made only a nominal profit in the last 5 years after running costs, management charge, utilities and repairs.

3.3 The application seeks planning permission for the variation of the following conditions applied to the aforementioned consent (04/00680/FUL) to allow full residential use of the dwelling known as Meadow Barn:

Condition 8 The occupation of the holiday units shall be restricted to bona fide holiday makers for individual periods not exceeding 4 weeks in total in any consecutive period of 13 weeks (3 months). A register of holiday makers shall be kept and made available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Council at all reasonable times.

Condition 4 The area allocated for parking on the submitted plan, and the existing surface track within the site, shall be properly consolidated, surface and drained before use commences or the building is occupied. The car parking areas shall not be used other than for parking of vehicles in connection with the holiday use hereby permitted. Thereafter, these facilities shall be so retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Condition 5 Access to the site shall only be obtained from the existing access point to the immediate north of the units.

3.4 The following information has been submitted in support of this application:

- Application Form
- Site Location Plan
- Access and parking plan
- Business Justification/ financial assessment of holiday let business
- Assessment of current national and local tourism trends
- Policy Justification

3.5 The application is made on the basis that the principle of the application to remove the conditions is acceptable, having regard to:

The barn was converted to use for Holiday Accommodation in 2004 as the policy context at that time aimed to prohibit open market residential uses in the Countryside. However, under the current NPPF and GDPO policy, plus Local Policy S14 and DM9, (which explicitly support

the residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings in the countryside) this barn would meet all the policy tests and would be supported for open market residential conversion. It is therefore argued that there is no valid reason why the holiday letting restriction could not be removed, particularly when viewed in context of the additional supporting evidence regarding the viability of the business.

It is sufficiently and clearly demonstrated within the application that there is no longer demand for the unit as holiday accommodation and that it is not viable for the unit to remain as holiday accommodation. It is sufficiently and clearly demonstrated within this application that there is no longer demand for the unit as holiday accommodation and that it is not viable for the unit to remain as holiday accommodation. The average occupancy rate of the barn for the years (excluding covid year) is just 14.7%. As such, removal of the conditions would be reasonable and appropriate and as applied for would be in alignment with paragraph 84 of the NPPF, and Policies S1, S14 and DM9 of the Mid Devon Local Plan 20133-2033, which allows development in the countryside where it meets the tests (above).

It is also proposed that by creating a new dwelling in this location, it would support the council's requirement to deliver more homes. This application will allow the accommodation to be used in a more responsive way to local housing needs and respond to the changing tourism landscape some 20 years on from the original grant of consent in 2004.

There is a new independent access associated with the barn. The area associated with the barn provides adequate off-street parking for at least two cars. The previous application in 2023 for removal of Condition 8 garnered no objections from Highways or from the Parish Council. The improvements to access and parking approved under planning application 05/02720/FULL now enables separate access to the barn and a large off-street parking area and ancillary domestic space associated solely with Long Meadow Barn.

The proposal will not lead to harm regarding amenity of surrounding properties or on highways, as demonstrated herein.

No external or internal changes to the appearance of the building are proposed as part of this application.

- 3.6 On this basis, it is proposed that the removal of the restrictive condition would be acceptable and not result in any negative impact.

4. Planning History

Fig 4.1 planning history

99/02014/FULL - WD date 1st March 1999. Conversion of barn to stables, tack room and hay loft
99/02450/FULL - PERMIT date 8th July 1999. Conversion including alterations of barn to stables, tack room and hay loft
03/05684/FULL - REFUSE date 8th March 2004. Conversion of barn into residential annexe
04/00680/FULL - PERMIT date 27th May 2004. Conversion of barn into self-catering holiday accommodation
05/02720/FUL – APPROVE date 16 th December 2005 formation of new access drive
13/01427/FULL - PERMIT date 18th December 2013. Variation of condition (2) of planning permission 04/00680/FULL to allow the substitution of previously approved plans
Ref. No: 23/01892/FULL Status: Application Refused
Removal of Condition 8 (Holiday let use only) of planning permission 04/00680/FULL to allow permanent use as dwelling

5. Planning policy

5.1 Please see below the relevant policy and the support for the application.

Fig 5.1

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	Key relevant criteria
Para 84. Rural Housing	<p>Para 84. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:</p> <p>a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;</p> <p>b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;</p> <p>c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;</p> <p>d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or</p> <p>e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and - would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.
National Legislation, Class Q GDPO 2015	<p>Development consisting of—</p> <p>(a) a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order; and</p> <p>(b) building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.</p>

Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033:	Key Relevant Criteria
S1 Sustainable development priorities	<p>d) Supporting a prosperous rural economy through the conversion of suitable existing buildings and well-designed new buildings in suitable locations</p> <p>g) Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes through a diverse housing mix and by meeting the housing needs of all sectors of the community</p>
S9 Environment	g) The preservation and enhancement of Mid Devon’s cultural and historic environment, and the protection of sites, buildings, areas and features of recognised national and local importance such as listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and local heritage assets.
S14 Countryside	<p>Development outside the settlements defined by Policies S10-S13 will preserve and where possible enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Detailed development management policies will permit agricultural and other appropriate rural uses, subject to the following criteria:</p> <p>a) Affordable and low-cost housing to meet local needs, gypsy and traveller accommodation, residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings, replacement dwellings, housing essential to accommodate a rural worker and accommodation ancillary to a dwelling.</p>
DM3 Transport and air quality	Development must ensure safe access to the transport network.
DM5 Parking	Development must provide an appropriate level of parking.

DM9 Buildings	Redundant	Rural	<p>The conversion of redundant or disused rural buildings of substantial and permanent construction which positively contribute to an area’s rural character for residential, tourism or employment uses will be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A suitable access to the building is in place or can be created without damaging the surrounding area’s rural character and the road network can support the proposed use; b) The building can be converted without significant alteration, extension or rebuilding; c) The design will retain the original character of the building and its surroundings; and d) The development will retain any nature conservation interest associated with the site or building and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible.
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6. Financial Assessment: viability of the holiday let business

6.1 A summary of the key points:

Bookings have been limited and the Barn has been repeatedly vacant during the winter off peak season due to the lack of demand (please refer to Appendix 4).

Over the past years there have been long vacant periods despite the barn being advertised as available all year round.

The average occupancy rate of the barn for the years as summarised in Appendix 4 is 23%, focussed around June- August. However, if you remove the covid year as an anomaly, it reduces to just 14.7%.

The Barn is situated in an area where there is plentiful alternative accommodation with more amenities and which can afford to offer cheaper pricing, and the Barn struggles to compete with this.

The Accounts for the last 5 years show that the business has made only a nominal profit after running costs, management charge, utilities etcetera (please refer to Appendix 2). The figures do not include any drawings or wage, and therefore the business is not sufficiently profitable to support someone making a living.

6.2 The Barn was consented for use as a holiday let in 2004 and lettings ceased in 2024. The barn was listed with luxury lettings company Rural Retreats as the primary marketing agents for the property. The barn was also marketed on the following websites. It was removed from the Rural Retreats website and brochure and from the websites below in early 2024.

<https://www.ruralretreats.co.uk>

<https://holidaycottagesindevonandcornwall.co.uk/devon/exmoor/long-meadow-barn>

<https://big-cottages.com/properties/united-kingdom/england/south-west/devon/mid-devon-district/crediton/exquisite-crediton-cottage-s44810>

<https://www.booking.com/hotel/gb/long-meadow-barn-down-st-mary-crediton.en-gb.html>

<https://www.cottageworld.com/accommodation/devon-sleeps-7-long-meadow-barn-crediton/32195>

<https://www.cottage-choice.co.uk/rural-retreats/Long-Meadow-Barn-Down-St-Mary-Crediton.asp>

<https://www.myfavouriteholidaycottages.co.uk/devon/crediton/long-meadow-barn>

6.3 The property has historically been available to let 52 weeks of the year, for short breaks as well as longer holidays. Despite this, and the high-quality finish of the 4 bedroomed property, lettings have been decreasing steadily over recent years.

6.4 The applicants considered ceasing the business in 2019 due to falling bookings and rising running costs. However, the advent of COVID created a surge in bookings from 2021-2022 which momentarily maintained viability. However, post 2022 bookings have significantly dropped again and have returned to pre-covid levels, despite the barn having been advertised on their website and within their brochures which have a large and wide-reaching distribution list.

6.5 The average occupancy levels (excluding Covid 2021-2022) for the last 4 years has been only 72 days per annum. This equates to an average occupancy level of 19% per annum. Clearly this is not a viable level of occupancy when balanced against the costs (see appended accounts).

- 6.6 The Barn struggles to compete with the ever-expanding range of accommodation in both the immediate and wider area, including:
- Barn Shelly Lodge, Down St Mary
 - The Old Mill, Down St Mary
 - Waterbridge Golf Course, Down St Mary
 - Hayne Farm, Zeal Monochorum
 - Serston Farm
 - Waie Inn, Zeal Monochorum
 - 20+ Airbnb properties/rooms locally
- 6.7 This competition, alongside the expansion in popularity of AirBnB and changes in holiday habits (shorter stays, and more last minute) have significantly impacted upon the business. The current holiday accommodation market has constricted severely in the last 5 years, and it is rising costs associated with a fall in bookings means that it is no longer viable to maintain the barn as a holiday let.
- 6.8 Previous discussions with Rural Retreats have indicated that, based on local knowledge of markets and the particular area within this unit is located, there is unlikely to be an increase in demand at the present time given its size, remoteness from amenities and lack of additional facilities such as a pool/hot tub etcetera. In this instance, the conclusion is drawn that this unit will to some extent always face some disadvantage in comparison to other similar units within the district. In this example such evidence is considered to present a material consideration which needs to be weighed in the planning balance and supports the contention made by the applicants that the business is unviable in this location. It is clear that reasonable efforts have been made since the original permission was granted to try and secure the successful future of the unit for tourism lets but which, have continued to be unsuccessful
- 6.9 The applicants provide evidence (including confidential accounts and financial information) to demonstrate that the holiday cottage is presently unviable, despite efforts by luxury holiday company Rural Retreats at marketing the unit over the past few years. The accounts summary submitted shows that the business has made only a nominal profit in the last 5 years after running costs, management charge, utilities and repairs. It is evident that the trading position in terms of ensuring its future viability has become increasingly difficult; and the figures do not take into consideration mortgage repayments or wages. The unit is in essence making a loss. This has only worsened in the current cost of living crisis and the changes to letting properties proposed by the Government.
- 6.10 The low rate of holiday occupancy (19%) means that the barn is making a limited contribution to the local economy. The financial analysis of the enterprise appended demonstrates that the earning potential of the Barn is limited. Despite marketing the Barn through a specialist agency, the Applicants have been unable to derive a reasonable wage to support themselves from the business. It is therefore considered that not to allow the removal of this condition would create financial hardship. The applicants have appended accounts (including confidential accounts and financial information) to demonstrate that the holiday cottage is unviable as a continuing business.

7. Tourism Assessment: viability of the holiday let business

- 7.1 A Tourism Assessment is submitted in support of this application.
- 7.2 There is no specific Local Plan policy related to the retention or protection of tourist accommodation.
- 7.3 Due to the trends outlined within the Assessment submitted, it is evident that there would be no loss to the local economy if the property is not being used as a holiday cottage.
- 7.4 There is considered to be no shortage of holiday accommodation in the South West, where there exists some market saturation from other, alternative accommodation including Airbnb.
- 7.5 It is recognised that there is a policy relating to the protection of employment land (DM19). It is not considered that this would be relevant to this application as the holiday-let use is one unit, very small scale operation and does not provide any specific employment – management of the barn is carried out by the applicants.
- 7.6 In this instance, the conclusion is drawn that this unit will to some extent always face some disadvantage in comparison to other similar units within the district. In this example such evidence is considered to present a material consideration which needs to be weighed in the planning balance and supports the contention made by the applicants that the business is unviable. It is clear that reasonable efforts have been made since the original permission was granted to try and secure the successful future of the unit for tourism lets but which, have continued to be unsuccessful.
- 7.7 On balance it is considered that the loss of Long Meadow Barn for tourism in this area, would not be damaging to the overall tourism economy of the District.
- 7.8 For further detail on the above, please refer to the Tourism Assessment submitted.

8. Planning Policy Analysis – Principle of Development

Fig 8.1. Summary Policy Table

National Planning Policy	Key relevant criteria
Para 84. Rural Housing	The barn was converted to use for Holiday Accommodation in 2004. The policy context at that time prohibited open market residential uses in the Countryside. However, should the same proposal come forward now, it would now be in alignment with Para 84 as development which re-uses redundant or disused buildings for residential, without restriction on use.
National Legislation, Class Q GDPO 2015	Class Q enables development consisting of— (a) a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order; and (b) building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.
Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033:	Key Relevant Criteria
S1 Sustainable development priorities	The proposal would help to support a prosperous rural economy through enabling the availability of an additional open market home within a suitable existing building and in a suitable location. The proposal enables the delivery of a high-quality home, meeting the housing needs of the community.
S9 Environment	The proposal does not involve any external or internal changes to the appearance and character of the existing barn conversion. It secures the preservation and enhancement of Mid Devon’s cultural and historic environment, and the protection of the character of the Down St Mary Conservation Area.
S14 Countryside	The barn was converted to use for Holiday Accommodation in 2004. The policy context at that time prohibited open market residential uses in the Countryside. However, under the current policy criteria of S14 (which explicitly supports the residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings in the countryside) this barn would meet all the policy tests and

	<p>would be supported for open market residential conversion.</p> <p>The proposal, by its very nature will help to preserve and enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside. The change of use will protect the building in perpetuity, giving it a viable future. The proposal also seeks to protect the visual character of the barn and delivers enhanced access and parking to better benefit the surrounding village and Conservation Area.</p>
DM3 Transport and air quality	The barn has safe and appropriate access which is separate to the adjacent farmhouse and can accommodate off street parking for 4+ cars.
DM5 Parking	The barn has safe and appropriate access which is separate to the adjacent farmhouse and can accommodate off street parking for 4+ cars.
DM9 Redundant Rural Buildings	<p>The barn was converted to use for Holiday Accommodation in 2004. The applicants applied for holiday use because the policy context at that time prohibited open market residential uses in the Countryside. However, under current Local Plan Policy DM9, the conversion of the barn for residential use would be supported, as it meets the following policy tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the barn is of substantial and permanent construction; b) it positively contributes to the area’s rural character c) a suitable access to the building is in place; the road network is already supporting the use for holiday letting; d) the building would have been converted without significant alteration, extension or rebuilding; and e) the conversion retains the original character of the building and its surroundings.

Principle of development – changes in policy [residential conversion]

- 8.1 The barn was converted to use for Holiday Accommodation in 2004 as the policy context at that time aimed to prohibit open market residential uses in the Countryside. However, under the current NPPF and GDPO policy, plus Local Policy S14 and DM9, (which explicitly support the residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings in the countryside) this barn would meet all the policy tests and would be supported for open market residential conversion. It is therefore argued that there is no valid reason why the holiday letting restriction could not be removed, particularly when viewed in context of the additional supporting evidence regarding the viability of the business.
- 8.2 It has been sufficiently and clearly demonstrated via accounts and the Tourism Assessment submitted that there is no longer a viable level of demand for the unit as holiday accommodation. As such, removal of the conditions would be reasonable and appropriate and as applied for would

be in alignment with paragraph 84 of the NPPF, and Policies S1, S14 and DM9 of the Mid Devon Local Plan 20133-2033, which allows development in the countryside where it meets the tests (above).

- 8.3 If approved the property will positively contribute to the overall 'low-cost' market housing provision within the district, for which there is a continuing demand, rather than possibly remaining empty for prolonged periods. It will thereby help meet with the wider housing need objectives of the Council.
- 8.4 Therefore we hope that the Authority is able to agree that the existing condition subject to this application is no-longer necessary for the building in question and that although the condition imposed was relevant to such development at that time, such a condition would not be imposed today.

Principle of development – amenity impacts

- 8.5 There would be no physical alterations to the building so in accordance with Policy DM1 and DM25 of the Local Plan, there would not be any adverse impact upon the character and visual amenity of the area/conservation area.
- 8.6 It is understood that part of the reason for the imposition of condition 8 of planning permission 04/00680/FULL was: 'Having regard to the restricted curtilages and inter-relationships between holiday units and the adjoining farmhouse and nearby farm buildings, the Local Planning Authority consider the conversions are not suitable for use as permanent dwellings and so wish to ensure that the approved accommodation remains available for tourism'.
- 8.7 In this regard the approved red edge for 04/00680/FULL was small and restricted; however, the curtilage now provides ample private external amenity space/garden space for occupants of a permanent dwelling. This can be seen through the submission of a detailed block plans, which have not been submitted and through the subsequent separate access that was consented in 2005. Plans show that the adjoining farmhouse would not be adversely affected by a permanent dwelling gaining consent in this location. It is clear from these plans that the proposal would not result in harmful adverse amenity impacts to future or neighbouring occupants. The application is therefore in alignment with policies S1 and DM1 / DM5 of the Mid Devon Local Plan.
- 8.8 The proposal, by its very nature will help to preserve and enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside. The change of use will protect the building in perpetuity, giving it a viable future. The proposal also seeks to protect the visual character of the barn and delivers enhanced access and parking to better benefit the surrounding village and Conservation Area.

Principle of development – impact upon the tourism economy

- 8.9 It is understood that the Council is generally reluctant to remove holiday occupancy conditions without specific and evidence-based reasoning. This application has therefore sought to clearly and demonstrably give evidence that there is no longer demand for the unit as holiday accommodation and that it is not viable for the unit to remain as holiday accommodation.
- 8.10 The low rate of holiday occupancy (19%) means that the barn is making a limited contribution to the local economy. The barn is no longer a commercially viable agricultural unit. The financial analysis of the enterprise set out at section 5 above demonstrates that the earning potential of the Barn is limited. Despite marketing the Barn through a specialist agency, the Applicant has been unable to

derive a reasonable wage to support himself from the business. It is therefore considered that not to allow the removal of this condition would create financial hardship.

8.11 The application provides an assessment to show that there has been an economic downturn and a lesser uptake in tourists renting out the unit in recent years, and provides marketing information i.e. how and when the barn has been marketed, detailed occupancy rates for the accommodation etcetera. All of this demonstrates that the barn is no longer viable and that the loss of the accommodation will not have a negative impact upon Mid Devon's tourism offer. There is no identified shortfall of holiday accommodation of this type in Mid- Devon.

8.12 It is concluded therefore that the nature of the changing tourism trends across the UK and South West, together with the remaining high volume of tourism accommodation locally, combine in this case to make the proposed removal of the restrictive condition acceptable.

Principle of development - Impact on ecology/biodiversity

8.13 There would be no demolition works to the existing building or the removal of any habitat, so there would be no adverse impact upon ecology/biodiversity in accordance with Policy S9 of the Local Plan.

Principle of development - Highway Impacts

8.14 In respect of highways impact; the information provided (a detailed block plan) demonstrates the proposed access and car parking arrangements.

8.15 2no off-road car parking spaces and access onto the highway were approved under application 04/00680/FULL and now up to 4+ cars can be accommodated on site.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 The barn was converted to use for Holiday Accommodation in 2004 as the policy context at that time aimed to prohibit open market residential uses in the Countryside. However, under the current NPPF and GDPO policy, plus Local Policy S14 and DM9, (which explicitly support the residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings in the countryside) this barn would meet all the policy tests and would be supported for open market residential conversion. It is therefore argued that there is no valid reason why the holiday letting restriction could not be removed, particularly when viewed in context of the additional supporting evidence regarding the viability of the business.
- 9.2 It has been sufficiently and clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a viable level of demand for the unit as holiday accommodation. As such, removal of the conditions would be reasonable and appropriate and as applied for would be in alignment with paragraph 84 of the NPPF, and Policies S1, S14 and DM9 of the Mid Devon Local Plan 20133-2033, which allows development in the countryside where it meets the tests (above).
- 9.3 It is also proposed that by creating a new dwelling in this location, it would support the council's requirement to deliver more homes. This application will allow the accommodation to be used in a more responsive way to local housing needs and respond to the changing tourism landscape some 20 years on from the original grant of consent in 2004.
- 9.4 There is a new independent access associated with the barn. The area associated with the barn provides adequate off-street parking for at least two cars. The previous application in 2023 for removal of Condition 8 garnered no objections from Highways or from the Parish Council. The improvements to access and parking approved under planning application 05/02720/FULL now enables separate access to the barn and a large off-street parking area and ancillary domestic space associated solely with Long Meadow Barn.
- 9.5 The proposal will not lead to harm regarding amenity of surrounding properties or on highways, as demonstrated herein.
- 9.6 No external or internal changes to the appearance of the building are proposed as part of this application.
- 9.7 The proposal is supported by national and local planning policy objectives, which promote sustainable development and the reuse of redundant buildings in the countryside. The proposal demonstrates the importance of reusing old buildings and how sensitive conversion can be used to enable local rural housing, whilst also securing a new use for a historic building (albeit unlisted). In this way, it represents the epitome of the social economic and environmental aims which are the golden thread running through sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.
- 9.8 Given the National and local spatial policy positions outlined above, and the technical information submitted in support of the application, the principle of development is not in doubt and there are no technical reasons to withhold consent.
- 9.9 We respectfully ask the Authority to resolve to approve the application. We will be pleased to discuss the details of the application with Officers during the application process.

APPENDIX 1. WEBSITE LISTING



Long Meadow Barn, Down St Mary, Crediton

Devon | Mid Devon Distri... | Crediton
ID: S44810

Bedrooms: 4 · Sleeps: 7 · Pets: No

Save Share

Selected dates are unavailable

Check in 05/04/2024 Check out 08/04/2024

Start booking

- 85 reviews
- No pets
- 3 Bathrooms
- WiFi
- Open fire

This holiday at a glance

- Sleeps seven guests.
- Four bedrooms, two en-suite shower rooms and one family bathroom.
- Wood burning stove.
- Fully enclosed garden, safe for children.
- Garden furniture and barbecue.
- Cot, travel cot, highchair, stair gate and fireguard are available upon request.
- Sorry, no pets.
- WiFi.
- Ample on-site parking.

Additional Information:

Sorry, no pets.

Cot, travel cot, highchair, stair gate and fireguard are available upon request.

Please be aware of a small step from the sitting room into the hall, from the hall to the kitchen, and on the upstairs landing.

Show less ^

Selected dates are unavailable

Check in 05/04/2024 Check out 08/04/2024

Start booking

Best price guarantee, no one can beat our prices.

Prices can change hourly. Book today to avoid disappointment.

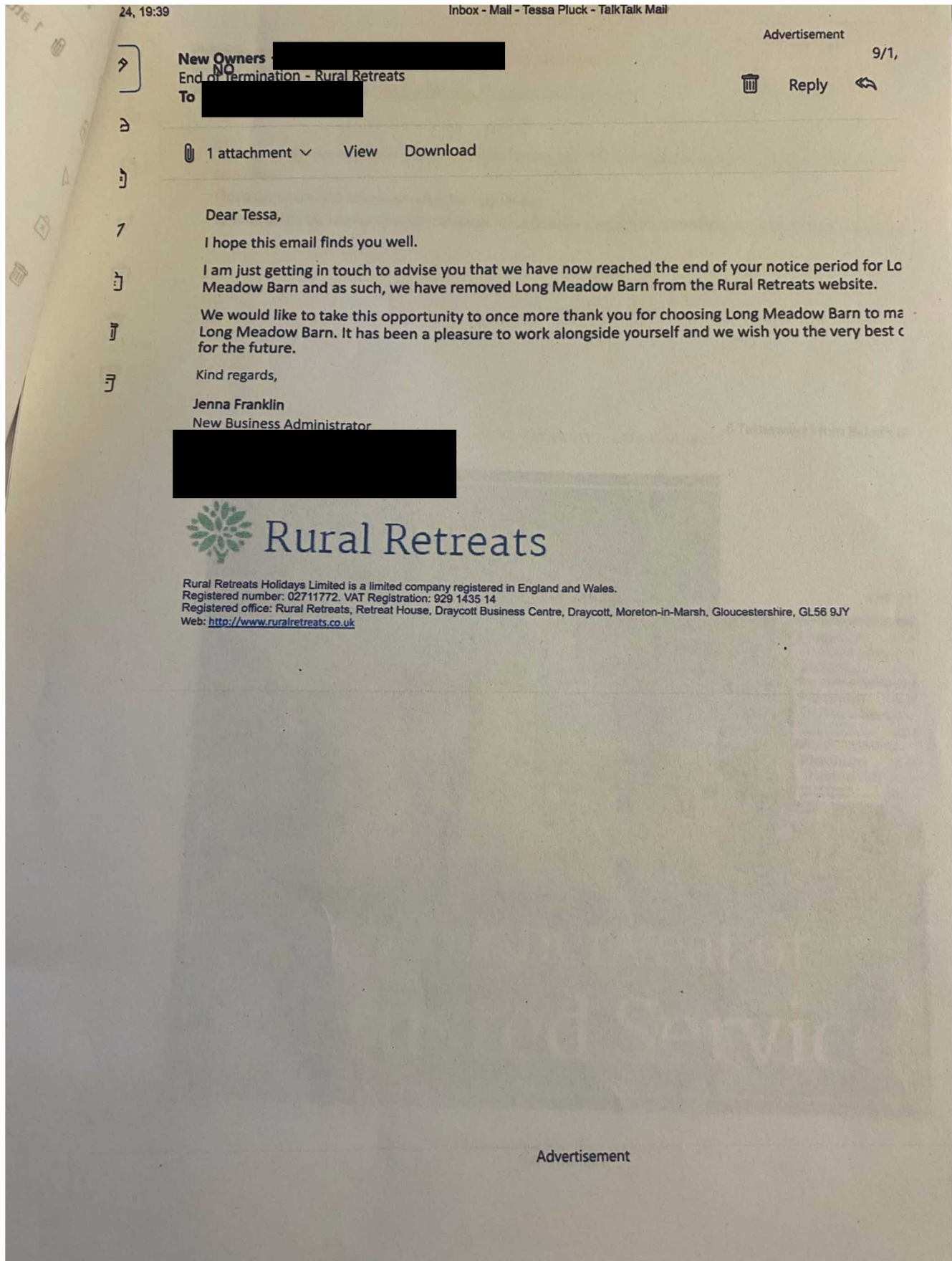


TrustScore 4.5
2,850 reviews

APPENDIX 2. ACCOUNTS (CONFIDENTIAL)

Please see separate sheet.

APPENDIX 3. RURAL RETREATS CORRESPONDENCE



2024, 19:22

20/11, Reply

1 attachment View Download

Good Morning Tessa,

Thank you for your email and I hope you are well.

Whilst I appreciate that the booking levels for your property are currently lower than at this time last year, this is the experience for the majority of holiday let owners so far this year. Unfortunately, the impact of the current cost of living, is that the behaviours of the consumer have changed, and there is far greater caution regarding spend. We suggest that this is not unique to us and is the general experience of the UK holiday let industry so far this year.


The current market analysis is that 2024 will follow similar trends as 2023. Currently Long Meadow Barn availability is closed for 2024, as I believe that you requested to terminate your contract with us in October .

If you were to re-consider opening availability again, it would be remiss of me not to raise the issue of allowing Dogs continue to be one of the highest search criteria on our websites and in the staycation market in general.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further assistance.

Kind Regards,

Isla Murray
Deputy Head of Property Performance
Rural Retreats Holidays Ltd



Rural Retreats Holidays Limited is a limited company registered in England and Wales.
Registered number: 02711772, VAT Registration: 929 1435 54
Registered office: Rural Retreats, Retreat House, Draycott Business Centre, Draycott, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, GL56 9JY

From: Tessa Pluck
Sent: 19 November 2023 18:45
To: Pricing (RR)
Subject: RE: Long Meadow Barn - occupancy

Hi Liz,

Sorry to trouble you again but I just wondered whether the total lack of bookings this year is something

Advertisement

https://apps.talktalk.co.uk/apps/submit?app=io.os/mail&folder=default/INBOX 1/1

APPENDIX 4. BOOKINGS SUMMARY

MONTHS DAYS LET FOR 2019/2020

APRIL	7
MAY	0
JUNE	0
JULY	0
AUGUST	14
SEPTEMBER	3
OCTOBER	4
NOVEMBER	3
DECEMBER	0
JANUARY	0
FEBRUARY	3
MARCH	0
APRIL	0

34 DAYS

MONTHS DAYS LET FOR 2020/2021

APRIL	0
MAY	0
JUNE	0
JULY	21
AUGUST	31
SEPTEMBER	23
OCTOBER	10
NOVEMBER	0
DECEMBER	0
JANUARY	0
FEBRUARY	0
MARCH	0
APRIL	0

85 DAYS

MONTHS DAYS LET FOR 2021/2022

APRIL	8
MAY	3
JUNE	23
JULY	31
AUGUST	31
SEPTEMBER	24
OCTOBER	16
NOVEMBER	3
DECEMBER	1
JANUARY	0
FEBRUARY	3
MARCH	11
APRIL	3

157 DAYS

MONTHS DAYS LET FOR 2022/2023

APRIL	4
MAY	4
JUNE	15
JULY	22
AUGUST	20
SEPTEMBER	0
OCTOBER	15
NOVEMBER	7
DECEMBER	3
JANUARY	0
FEBRUARY	7
MARCH	0
APRIL	3

100 DAYS

MONTHS DAYS LET FOR 2023/2024

APRIL	8
MAY	14
JUNE	0
JULY	10
AUGUST	10
SEPTEMBER	2
OCTOBER	0
NOVEMBER	3
DECEMBER	3
JANUARY	0
FEBRUARY	0
MARCH	0
APRIL	0
	50 DAYS

