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Minister for Economy
Welsh Government
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07.09.2023

Dear Minister,

RE: Gilestone Farm

I am writing on behalf of the board of CPRW: The Welsh Countryside Charity with reference to the future of Gilestone Farm, Talybont-on-Usk, in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.

CPRW members have reported a range of concerns about the Green Man organisation's proposed activities at Gilestone Farm. As you will be aware, the farm is in an area which is important for wildlife, and a number of exceptionally rare and internationally protected species have been sighted regularly in the area over many years. The farm has a Special Area of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest along part of its boundaries.

The Usk Valley is an area of international importance for its lesser horseshoe bat population, and also provides a habitat for otters, kingfishers, little ringed plovers and other rare species. To protect the biodiversity of this site, it is essential future developments do not involve excessive noise, traffic or other activities which are likely to harm or disturb wildlife. Indeed, how the land is farmed is sensitive, with field boundaries needing protection and specialist and knowledgeable expertise clearly preferable.

Safeguarding this site from unsuitable development is essential, not least because of the Welsh Government's commitment to biodiversity and the terms of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

We would also wish to work with the government to help ensure any projects are carried out in a way which preserves the special rural character of Talybont-on-Usk and the surrounding area.



We would request:

- A more detailed explanation of the activities which the Green Man organisation proposes to carry out at Gilestone Farm.
- Information from the Welsh Government which explains all future stages of the decision-making process on Gilestone Farm, with likely dates.
- CPRW be included in any consultation exercise undertaken by the Welsh Government.

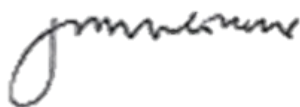
The points above would be extremely helpful to our board in keeping members informed about the plans for the farm. They would also enable us to offer advice on how best to preserve the special character and biodiversity of the site and its surroundings.

A recent survey carried out by the Talybont-on-Usk Community Council indicated there was overwhelming local support for Gilestone Farm being used to develop sustainable and regenerative agriculture. It would be helpful to know if the Welsh Government is considering this sort of use as this would also need expert proactive management.

The survey also demonstrated a large majority of local residents do not support the current Green Man proposals for the farm.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours Sincerely,



Jonty Colchester
Chair
CPRW



YDCW
CPRW

Elusen Cefn Gwlad Cymru

The Welsh Countryside Charity

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