

AGRICULTURAL AND FARM BUSINESS SUPPORTING STATEMENT
BOLNEY PARK FARM, BROXMEAD LANE, BOLNEY, WEST SUSSEX RH17 5RJ

Prepared in support of a Planning Application for the construction of a manure storage facility and slurry lagoon.

Prepared by:
Peter R Setterfield
Larkfield Agriculture Ltd
Farm Business and Environmental Consultancy
3 Hills Green Cottages
Kirdford
Billingshurst
West Sussex
RH14 0JN

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Introduction

This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application relating to Bolney Park Farm, Broxmead Lane, Bolney, West Sussex. The application seeks permission for the construction of a new manure storage facility together with a slurry lagoon in order to comply with current Environment Agency and DEFRA regulations relating to agricultural manure management and storage.

The report outlines the nature of the existing agricultural enterprise, the farming activities undertaken at the holding, the environmental management objectives of the business and the operational requirement for the proposed development.

Background

Over the past 28 years of ownership, Mr and Mrs Rawlins have sought to improve the overall condition and landscape quality of the farm, which was in poor condition when originally purchased.

In addition to the ongoing upgrading and maintenance of the land, substantial environmental improvements have been undertaken throughout the holding. These works have included significant tree planting, the establishment of wetland areas and the creation of wildflower habitats, all with the objective of improving biodiversity and the environmental value of the farm as a whole.

The farm business trades under the name Jester Farm Services and operates under a single Business Identifier Number, SBI 107161730. The holding also operates under County Parish Holding Number CPH 42/335/0146.

The business intends to enter the Sustainable Farming Incentive Scheme in September 2026 as part of its continuing commitment to sustainable farming and environmental land management.

The Location

Bolney Park Farm is situated to the east of the A23 and to the north of Broxmead Lane, approximately three quarters of a mile from the centre of the village of Bolney in West Sussex.

The Land

The holding extends to approximately 49 hectares comprising a mixture of arable land, permanent pasture and woodland.

The agricultural land comprises approximately 22.8 hectares of arable land, of which approximately 5 hectares is utilised annually for cereal production. The remaining 17.8 hectares is managed as temporary grass leys for the production of hay and haylage.

Approximately 6.8 hectares comprises permanent pasture, predominantly located around the main farm buildings.

The remaining 19 hectares comprises woodland together with established wetland and wildflower areas which form an important part of the farm's biodiversity and environmental management programme.

The Farming Enterprise

The farming business consists of a number of integrated agricultural enterprises which together support the viability and sustainability of the holding.

The principal farming activities include the production of hay, haylage and cereal crops, the grazing and management of livestock, stud management associated with the breeding of horses and the production of youngstock for sale, together with a joint venture breeding ewe flock producing approximately 100 lambs annually.

Horse breeding forms a significant part of the business and represents a major enterprise at the holding. The farm also supports grazing and forage production associated with the management of the equestrian enterprise.

Approximately 5 hectares of the arable land is sown to cereals each year. This work is undertaken by an agricultural contractor who stores and markets the grain. Straw produced from the cereal enterprise is retained for livestock bedding purposes.

The remaining arable land is generally sown with temporary grass leys which are managed for the production of hay and haylage. The majority of this forage is utilised on the farm for the feeding of resident horses and livestock, with any surplus material sold externally.

The farm also operates a sheep enterprise, including the grazing of breeding ewes and lamb production. Cross grazing between sheep and horses provides significant benefits in terms of pasture management, grass utilisation and overall land condition.

Historically, surplus forage production has contributed positively towards the overall running costs of the business. However, during the previous two years, adverse weather conditions have resulted in substantially reduced yields, in some instances by as much as 50%, thereby limiting surplus production. This reflects wider agricultural trends experienced across the country.

In order to further diversify and strengthen the long-term viability of the business, the introduction of suckler calves for rearing until approximately 18 months of age is also currently under consideration.

Environmental Management and Stewardship

The business places considerable emphasis on environmental stewardship and sustainable agricultural management.

As part of the proposed entry into the Sustainable Farming Incentive Scheme in September 2026, a proportion of the existing grassland areas will be converted to herbal leys and areas of winter bird food mixes will be established.

Additional environmental enhancement works are also proposed through the subdivision of larger fields by new hedgerow planting, with grant assistance anticipated through the Capital Only Grant Scheme.

The continued use of farmyard manure across the holding forms an important part of the farm's sustainable nutrient management strategy. Manure generated by the livestock enterprises is traditionally stored for approximately 18 months prior to spreading on agricultural land as part of a rolling fertility programme. This reduces reliance on imported artificial fertilisers and supports the long-term sustainability of the agricultural operation.

Requirement for the Proposed Development

The Environment Agency has introduced updated requirements and guidance relating to the storage of manure and agricultural waste arising from farming enterprises.

The existing arrangements at the holding are no longer sufficient to satisfy current regulatory standards and therefore a purpose-built manure storage facility is required in order to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and environmental protection requirements.

The proposed development will comprise a 30 metre by 30 metre impermeable concrete manure storage base enclosed by impermeable retaining banks.

The facility has been specifically designed to capture all manure leachate together with surface water run-off associated with the storage area. A dedicated underground drainage

system will direct all collected run-off to a proposed slurry lagoon measuring approximately 60 metres by 30 metres.

The proposed lagoon will provide a working storage capacity of approximately 2,673 cubic metres and will incorporate a 750 millimetre freeboard in accordance with DEFRA and Environment Agency requirements.

The proposed storage infrastructure has been designed to comply fully with current UK Government guidance and agricultural waste management standards.

Conclusion

Bolney Park Farm is an established and actively managed agricultural holding operating a mixed farming enterprise incorporating forage production, livestock grazing, sheep production and equestrian breeding activities.

The business has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to environmental improvement, biodiversity enhancement and sustainable agricultural land management.

The proposed manure storage facility and slurry lagoon are essential operational requirements for the continued lawful and sustainable operation of the farm. The development is necessary in order to comply with updated Environment Agency and DEFRA regulations governing manure storage and agricultural waste management.

The proposals will support the continued viability of the agricultural enterprise, improve environmental management practices across the holding and enable the business to continue operating in accordance with modern agricultural and environmental standards.

Peter R Setterfield
Larkfield Agriculture Ltd
Farm Business and Environmental Consultancy

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