

## 2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE APPLICATION

### 2.1

The pedigree herd of Jersey cows at Jersey Manor Farm was established by the applicants Great, Great Grandfather in 1904, an eminent Brain Surgeon working in London who believed that the milk from the Jersey Cow was beneficial to the human brain. The herd has prospered under the stewardship of the family eventually passing to Mr Ian Corner and his brother who have farmed at Jersey Manor Farm since 1969. The herd is now one of the few remaining dairy herds in Oxfordshire and one of the highest yielding Jersey herds in the country. It is a 'closed herd' all animals being bred on the farm. No animals are bought in.

### 2.2

In 1991 permission was granted by Cherwell District Council for the construction of an additional dwelling on the holding having been satisfied of the essential and overriding need for a new dwelling/residential accommodation in this location i.e Jersey Manor Farm. (See item 6 of the Decision Notice issued 05/06/1991 copy attached hereto). At that time the farm business occupied some 500 acres, some owned some rented. Herd numbers amounted to some 180 animals in total comprising of milkers, followers and calves.

### 2.3

In 2009 the farming partnership between Mr Ian Corner and his brother was dissolved. Ian Corner became proprietor of the Jersey herd, the farm land and buildings which included a farm workers dwelling referred to in 2.2 above but excluded the original farmhouse. Having previously established the need for two dwellings on the holding the unavoidable loss of the original farmhouse has caused problems in maintaining adequate supervision of the livestock and property.

### 2.4

This application seeks permission to construct an additional dwelling to that permitted by the previous approval granted in 1991 to meet the essential need for additional accommodation on the farm to ensure the proper functioning of an enterprise which has grown by some 50% since the granting of the ninetyone permission.

### 2.5

In addition to the normal domestic requirements the design of the proposed dwelling includes provision of a farm office and accommodation for visiting agricultural students. Finding accommodation for students who spend a number of weeks/months throughout the year, gaining valuable work experience at the farm, is becoming increasingly difficult.

### 3.0 THE FARMING ENTERPRISE

#### 3.1

The farming business occupies some 618 acres of which 300 acres are owned, 183 acres tenanted and a further 143 acres contract farmed. The pedigree herd of Jersey cows forms the core business of the enterprise in addition to which some 370 acres of arable crops are grown to produce sufficient feed, silage and straw to meet the needs of the herd and avoid buying in.

#### 3.2

Currently stock totals some 270 animals comprising of 115 Jersey Cows, 155 Followers including calves. Of the 115 cows in the herd, 100 are milking at any one time. It is intended to increase the herd number to some 140/150 cows milking 120 at any one time with 140/150 Followers. In addition to rearing replacements for the milking herd it is intended to rear some 60 beef calves each year to the age of 12 weeks when they will be sold.

#### 3.3

In addition to the proposed increase in herd numbers plans are being finalised for the installation of a Robotic Milking system.

Robotic milking is acknowledged as the most welfare friendly step forward in dairying in the last 30 years. It allows cows the freedom of choice to choose what they do with their time. To choose when they want milking, when they want to be out in the fields, when they want to be in the building. As long as they turn up for milking at some time during the day or night they are free to do what they want .

#### 3.4

The installation represents a £250,000 investment in the business which will bring improvements to animal welfare and wellbeing combined with higher milk yields due to the data provided by the system.

## 6.0 ESSENTIAL NEED.

( Necessary for the proper functioning of the enterprise - Para 3.152 Local Plan Policy H20 )

### 6.1

The functional need is primarily determined by the nature and scale of the enterprises operated and the agricultural systems employed.

### 6.2

This agricultural business maintains a 270 head dairy herd of pedigree Jersey Cows as well as grassland management and arable cropping which produces all feed and bedding for the livestock.

It is a 'closed' herd with all replacement and additional stock bred on the farm.

### 6.3

With a farm business of this size a high standard of animal husbandry is essential if the business is to continue to be successful and it is considered that there is an essential need for two full-time workers to reside on the holding to provide for the supervision and monitoring requirements. The livestock enterprise alone presents a functional need for an additional worker to reside on the holding

### 6.4

The milking herd, followers and calves require full-time husbandry 365 days of the year. With morning and afternoon feed times, milking, disease testing, working, grading and day to day handling, two persons are required to ensure safety during bedding or interaction with livestock. Attending to field crops and other management needs involves time away from the farm, requiring a second full time worker to be available at the farm.

### 6.5

Calving requires the attention of skilled stockman. Without adequate stockmanship high levels of mortality can occur very quickly. Calving continues throughout the year at the farm and unforeseeable emergencies can occur at any time day or night, attending to down-calving cows, particularly heifers, cows post-parturition, unthrifty calves and trauma all require immediate and continuous attention in order to reduce the risk and loss of livestock.

### 6.6

Young calves are particularly prone to Scours, Pneumonia and Salmonellosis. 75% of young calf fatalities are caused by calf scours or diarrhoea. Infection can strike at any time and only constant monitoring can ensure these problems are identified at the earliest time.

6.7

Being within earshot of livestock buildings provides the close relationship necessary to be aware of these problems and provide the immediate attention necessary to maintain the level of care and provide the treatment required to combat these infections and maintain the well being of the livestock. The proposed site of the dwelling would meet this criteria.

6.8

The availability of supervision is necessary to ensure that the business complies with or exceeds the requirements of the Welfare of Livestock Regulations 1994.

6.9

The introduction of Robotic Milking will bring additional monitoring requirements and responsibilities to the farm while increasing the welfare of the Milking herd by allowing the cows to determine their own daily lifestyle patterns and routines.

6.10

The current twice daily milking sessions require staff attendance at specific periods/times of day. Between milking sessions staff are available for other work on the farm. With the new system each cow will decide when she requires milking which could be at any time during the night or day. While the system improves the animals welfare the farm needs to have the capacity to ensure continuing operation of the system 24hrs a day.

6.11

Manufacturers of these systems state that ;

" Robots should be installed on a farm where monitoring by humans is quickly and easily accessible. It is of paramount importance that someone is there 24/7 to monitor in case of an alarm sounding or an animal needing attention."

6.12

It is unrealistic to expect to achieve this level cover and maintain existing standards of monitoring with only one member of staff living on the farm. It is essential to ensure the proper functioning of the enterprise, that additional accommodation is available on the farm, so that members of staff are available to react at short notice and provide attendance and back-up as necessary and when required.

6.13

The farms veterinary practice have assessed the management requirements and have concluded that an extra stockperson on site is essential to ensure the high level and welfare of the animals are maintained into the future. The practice has expressed their view in an open letter dated 30th August 2012 a copy of which is attached

## PART TWO

### 7.0 SAFETY

There are two aspects of safety to be considered.

Firstly the welfare and safety of the animals and those working with them. There are inherent risks in working with animals with the constant risk of injury particularly when dealing with calving. It is the employers responsibility to minimise these risks by ensuring staff are properly trained and appropriate equipment is available but also that help is at hand to assist or call for support should a worker be injured and require assistance. An additional dwelling on site would provide for help to be available most importantly throughout the night.

Secondly there is the security of livestock and equipment to be considered. As previously stated in this report the pedigree herd at Jersey Manor Farm is a closed herd. The absence of movement of animals or new stock being brought to the farm along with on-site measures regarding the movement of machinery and visitors provides a certain security and barrier to transmitted disease. Such measures are not effective against intruders who are a threat to the livestock as they may unwittingly carry disease, furthermore their presence can spook animals causing stress and possible injury. The purpose of such intrusions is usually theft and despite the presence of CCTV and an alarmed entrance drive thieves have stolen some £12,000 of power tools and vehicles from the farm in one year alone, gaining entry via the farm track running along the boundary of the field proposed as the site for the new dwelling. The track is important for the movement of animals and machinery and whilst gated it would not be practical to permanently block it off. By locating the proposed dwelling at this location it will present a further deterrent and significantly improve farm security and safety of livestock.

## 8.0 EVALUATION

### 8.1

The fact that the pedigree Jersey herd at Jersey Manor Farm is rated as one of the highest yielding herds in the country reflects the high standard of management brought to Jersey Manor Farm by Mr Ian Corner. He has built on the legacy of knowledge accumulated over the last century since the formation of the herd by his Great, Great Grandfather. The substantial investment in the robotic milking system demonstrates the determination of the family to maintain standards of animal welfare and maintain high levels of production.

### 8.2

It is considered that a second dwelling on the site is required in order to provide constant and adequate supervision of the livestock enterprise which has a substantial requirement for labour outside normal working hours and related mechanical and electrical systems to carry out essential emergency repairs at short notice, both within and outside normal working hours.

### 8.3

The established nature and size of this business supports the need for a second permanent agricultural dwelling a fact previously recognised by the district council in ninetyone in respect of a smaller enterprise.

### 8.4

The need for an additional stockperson on site is supported by the farms veterinary practice.

### 8.5

The proposal relates to an essential need , the prime requirement in both National and Local Planning policy when assessing the provision of new dwellings in the countryside

### 8.6

The proposed dwelling relates to the requirements of the enterprise as set out in Policy H20 being essential for the proper functioning of a viable holding. The size of the dwelling relates to the requirements of the enterprise providing accommodation for the additional stockperson and their family, accommodation for visiting Veterinary and Agricultural Students and space for a farm office with associated changing and cleaning rooms. None of the foregoing can be provided by the existing on site accommodation or the conversion of any of the existing farm buildings because of the nature of their construction and the fact that they are fully utilised for animal and feed housing makes them suitable for conversion.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

This farming business has operated since the early part of the 20th Century during which time it has survived two world wars and the European Economic Community which stands testament to the strength of management, commitment and forward thinking of this farming family. The business has proven sustainability, the management has shown financial prudence and foresight which continues today with the investment in robotic milking systems increased dairy herd numbers and the expansion of rearing beef calves.

Operating within the very tight margins of the dairying industry it is essential for farmers to avoid loss of production or livestock. While automation brings benefits for both livestock and management dairying remains a hands-on profession with the need for constant day and night attendance, seven days a week.

With increasing numbers of livestock, particularly very young calves which represent the future lifeblood of Jersey Manor Farm, it is essential that highest levels of care are maintained. While the installation of automatic systems improves the welfare of the animals it is yet another factor requiring constant monitoring to avoid any malfunction that could cause stress or possible injury to livestock.

The logistics of the operation prove it is necessary to have a minimum of two workers living on site, (a fact previously recognised by Cherwell Council) to give adequate cover and support and to meet current working practice Sectoral 13, Health and Safety and animal welfare requirements.

The UK Government has stated its commitment to farming in terms of its importance to rural economics as well as the wider economy including the need to maintain a sustainable base of food production in the UK. The farming enterprise seen at Jersey Manor Farm is essential to the success of such policies and deserves the support of the authority.