
From: info@stopgilestonefarmproject.com
Sent: 12 September 2023 14:10
To: Isherwood, Mark (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd); Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee | Y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus a Gweinyddiaeth Gyhoeddus
Cc: Asghar, Natasha (Swyddfa Natasha Asghar | Office of Natasha Asghar); Hedges, Mike (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd); Passmore, Rhianon (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd); Price, Adam (Swyddfa Adam Price | Office of Adam Price)
Subject: Gilestone Farm: urgent

Open letter to Mark Isherwood MS
Chair, Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee

Dear Mr Isherwood,

I am writing on behalf of [Stop Gilestone Farm Project](#) to urgently draw your attention to a matter due to be considered by your committee on Thursday 14th September 2023.

Among the papers you are considering is a letter from Ms Fiona Stewart, managing director of the Green Man. In the letter, Ms Stewart makes a series of allegations against people who disagree with her proposals for the development of Gilestone Farm.

These allegations have been presented to your committee and the wider public without any context or supporting evidence. It is an extraordinary way for Ms Stewart to make her case for a large investment of taxpayers' money in her business, and it is important your committee treats these comments with caution. None of the claims made in her letter appear to have been properly investigated and they should not be allowed to go unchallenged.

Ms Stewart characterises opponents of her plans as a 'splinter group'. I would argue this misrepresents genuine and very widespread local concern about the Green Man's plans for Gilestone Farm. Earlier this month, the Talybont-on-Usk Community Council conducted a survey of all registered electors to ask their views on the scheme. The overwhelming majority of residents (77%) responded 'No' when asked if Gilestone Farm was a suitable location for the Green Man's proposed activities. A large majority also said they had received insufficient information about the scheme and expressed opposition to commercial developments or large events being held on the site. There was, however, strong local support in the survey for the farm to be used for sustainable and regenerative agriculture. Members of your committee can view the survey on the Community Council's website [here](#). As well as the results, the council has this week uploaded comments both in favour and opposed to the Green Man's scheme from electors who responded to the survey. I hope you agree it is important not to view Ms Stewart's comments in isolation, but to remember there is strong, independent evidence that many in the local community have serious concerns about what is being proposed, the lack of transparency and how the scheme will affect their way of life.

We would urge Ms Stewart to address those concerns properly, rather than making a series of unjustified attacks on members of our community. The allegations in her letter must not be allowed to stifle debate or prevent scrutiny. The [Stop Gilestone Farm Project](#) group was formed by a group of local volunteers in May 2023 in response to the Green Man publishing its outline plans for Gilestone Farm. The group is calling for a proper consultation with the local community before decisions are taken about whether the plans should proceed. We have a number of concerns about what is proposed. Our group believes the additional traffic, pollution and development associated with this scheme is incompatible with a farm which is home to very rare and endangered species of wildlife. There is also little public support for a project which is largely to be funded with public money.

Despite our opposition to the Green Man's proposals, we have conducted our campaign in a courteous and respectful way, and we have repeatedly requested the Green Man organisation does the same. I hope you feel you can support that request and urge all sides to conduct future discussions in a more reasonable way.

The [Stop Gilestone Farm Project](#) group looks forward to our own opportunity to present our case to your committee in due course.

Gareth Davies, on behalf of Stop Gilestone Farm Project