

ACAG

ALLENSMORE & CLEHONGER ACTION GROUP
<http://clehongergroup.btck.co.uk>

NEWSLETTER

Issue 004
5 November 2016



CAMPAIGNING TO STOP Industrial Animal Farming in our Community

2nd PLANNING APPLICATION FOR HUGE CHICKEN FACTORY

Farmer Mr Phillip Whittal of Bowling Green Farm has reapplied for Planning Permission to install a large chicken factory in our neighbourhood. See Herefordshire Council's Planning website, Planning Application No. P163391/F. This is despite the considerable local opposition to his plan last time from residents, businesses, and various organisations, including objections from Allensmore and Clehonger Parish Councils.

It is no surprise that local concerns did not scupper this ill-conceived plan. This is about big business and money-making. Within just a few weeks of withdrawing the first Planning Application on 25 January this year the farmer applied to the Environmental Agency for an Environmental Permit, as these large chicken factories cannot run without one even if Planning Permission is granted. So, our Action Group has remained active and vigilant since our last Newsletter on 15 January by liaising closely with the Environment Agency about our pollution concerns. Farming does not have to be polluting of course. Here is a tale of two very different modern farms to show why farming practices matter to us all and why this vast Chicken Factory is not wanted.

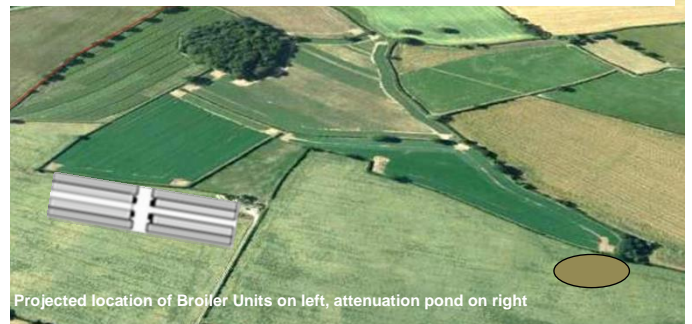
RESTORED AND VALUED



Our first farm (near Kidderminster) was bought by a family in 1973 when it was in a state of semi-dereliction. They planted trees, created a 3-acre lake and built a new farmhouse. Over the years they made a further 11 pools and planted more trees and shrubs, now totalling over 3000 species intersected by 5 miles of paths. The changes to the landscape attracted many forms of wildlife – over 100 species of birds, over 300 species of wild flowers, plants and grasses, and 14 species of dragonfly as well as numerous aquatic species. The farm has won forestry and Countryside Commission awards. They have provided employment for several people in their Visitor Centre and large cafeteria which have also won awards. Their Arboretum is open all year round and they welcome thousands of delighted visitors who pay to explore the farm and Arboretum. It is still a working farm with livestock (ewes, cows, free-range poultry) but the family also believes in preserving

and enhancing the landscape, cultural heritage, sustainability and rural employment. For our second farm we have adapted the title of a well-known TV programme as visitors and locals would most certainly be discouraged from setting foot there.

ESCAPE FROM THE COUNTRY!



Our second farm's vision for the future is an industrial-size chicken factory on its land, taking up 1.5 hectares of arable land (3.7 acres). There will also be 8 feed bins 28.2 feet high. The farm's livestock will increase by 212,000 broiler birds but none of these chickens will see the light of day until the last day of their short lives. After just 38 days they will be stuffed in crates and driven to their deaths at Cargill. The 'lucky' ones in outside crates on the big HGVs will get their one and only glimpse of the countryside. There will be a new pond, not for aquatic species but for dirty water from the factory washdown. A Public Right of Way goes right by this pond but it is not expected that walkers will want to linger. There will be noise and dust from the 72 roof fans, and strong odour from the ammonia. The Planning Application states the habitat of the site has low ecological value. There is evidence from Herefordshire Biological Records and other sources that this is untrue. Some planting of trees and new hedges is proposed but a 2015 Study found that evidence for woodland creation improving water quality was limited on farmland with sediment, pesticides and pathogens from faecal material introduced to the soil. It begs the question:

WHAT ARE FARMS FOR?

The Planning Application speaks about diversity and sustainability, in terms of food production to meet the demand for chicken, to secure the financial future of the farmer's family and to provide employment for **PTO**

BE AT THE PUBLIC MEETING

about the Chicken Factory

Sunday, 20 November 2016

2.15 to 4.15 pm

CLEHONGER VILLAGE HALL

Refreshments available

ACAG Secretary: Ann Pearson, tel 01981-251167
pearsonwe@btinternet.com

associated businesses. ACAG believes these aims overlook something very important about landscapes: the farmer owns the land but doesn't own the landscape. The landscape is a shared resource belonging to us all.

WHY LANDSCAPE MATTERS

- Farmland is green space
- We all rely on it for recreation, enjoyment of scenery, and inspiration
- It can counter the stresses of modern life
- It provides solitude as well as physical activity
- Healthy landscapes with healthy soil contribute to our wellbeing
- Landscape reminds us we are part of the natural world
- It provides wildlife habitats and corridors
- It houses our rivers, brooks and streams whose water is vital for people, economies and nature



Some say one more Chicken Factory won't hurt, but

CHICKEN MANURE IS A MAJOR POLLUTANT

Bowling Green Farm, along with many surrounding farms, is in the River Wye Catchment Area. There is a serious issue of phosphate pollution in our local waters from agriculture (50%) and sewage treatment (50%). Poultry manure is very high in nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous and the amount being generated in Herefordshire is causing considerable concern. Phosphate levels in the River Wye are still rising despite work being done with farmers to address the problems of it finding its way into our water systems.



Bowling Green Farm's broiler units will add another 3816 tons per flock. There will be 8 flocks every year, which means 30,528 tons of chicken manure from just this one farm. When the manure is sold on to other landowners – which is what is being planned – it is almost impossible to control what gets into our water courses and find where the pollution is coming from.

The manure produced per 1000 broilers is 18 tons. The bird places permitted in Herefordshire in 2013 by the Planning Authority and Environment Agency were 13.4 million, producing 240,000 tons, a valuable fertiliser resource but we are 'exporting' too much of it downstream via our streams, brooks and rivers, and causing environmental damage. More Planning Applications for more broiler units are being put in all the time.

HOW MANY CHICKEN FACTORIES ARE TOO MANY?

ACAG believes we have too many in Herefordshire already. We know there are at least 12 within five miles of Bowling Green Farm, and there are 80+ in the County with more being applied for all the time. Farming produces most of our food, but the environment is paying too high a price for intensive farming methods. We know from various research studies that urban river systems are improving but the water quality in rural rivers has worsened. Salmon catches in the Rivers Wye and Usk have shown a sharp decline in the last 30 years, alongside the rapidly increasing number of broiler units and other intensive rearing factories.

WILDLIFE UNDER PRESSURE

It's not just water quality that's affected. There are problems from ammonia and dust too which can affect a range of wildlife species. Habitats are being destroyed, either removed by poor land management or badly affected by pollution. Many formerly common species are now on protected lists, e.g., the Great Crested Newt and Dormouse. Fifty years ago there were twice as many ponds in the countryside than there are today, which is why more farms with pools and an arboretum are so greatly valued by their communities and visitors.



Great Crested Newt (female)



Hazel Dormouse

FACTORY FARMS POLLUTE THE AIR

A new state-funded study in the Netherlands has shown that the biggest contribution to deaths linked to air pollution in Europe comes from large-scale intensive livestock factories, as bad for breathing as that in traffic congestion. The study found that the ammonia released from animal urine and faeces combines with other substances in the air which can affect lung and heart health. People living within 1 km (0.62 of a mile) of 15 or more intensive rearing farms had lung function which was 5% worse than that of people living further away.

SPEAK UP FOR OUR LANDSCAPE!

If, like us, you value your health and a healthy landscape, tell those who make the decisions that you

OBJECT TO THIS CHICKEN FACTORY PLAN

(quote Planning Application No. P163391/F)

Write to Mr Roland Close, Case Planning Officer, Herefordshire County Council, Planning Services, PO Box 230, Hereford, HR1 2ZB or email your objection **by 24 November** to:

planning_enquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk

Please donate to our Fighting Fund. Cheques or cash to ACAG Treasurer Linda Harding, The Acre, Church Road, Clehonger, Herefordshire, HR2 9SE (tel 01432-277281).

We look forward to seeing you at our Public Meeting on 20 November.