



ONE PLANET COUNCIL

Supporting One Planet Developments

Winter Newsletter 2014

The One Planet Council provides a bridge between applicants and local planning authorities, with guidance and tools to support anyone making the transition to this more sustainable way of life. It works also with those who have already made that leap, and with policymakers, academics and landowners.

OPD Success

For this first newsletter we have a Q&A with Ruth and Rob Smith, whose One Planet Development application was recently unanimously approved. Below they explore the ups and downs of the application process and share advice for those thinking about applying for OPD themselves.

When did you make your application?

Pre-planning May 2013. Full application Feb 2014.

How long did it take?

It took 6 months to get a response for the pre-planning application. From November 2013 acting on this until full application.

What preparation did you have for OPD?

Allotment, Volunteered at Lammas. Completed on land August 2012. Were a part of Tir Teg.

What professionals were used?

Leander Wolstenholme for our baseline biodiversity report.
Michael Howlett, Sureline Design Services Ltd for our Code for sustainable Homes report.
Eurofins for our soil testing
The Microbiology Department at Carmarthen Hospital for our spring water sampling.

How much did the extra support cost?

£200 for the Code for Sustainable Homes report.
We owe Leander a big favour.
The soil testing was around £40.
The water testing was around £20.

Any help with the application and legal/supplementary stuff?

We produced our own planning application, designs and drawings.

Any bars you feel the process itself presents?

We think anyone could undertake the planning process. It would become expensive and more time consuming the more consultants and experts you may use.

What would you do differently?

We would have had a face to face meeting with the planners earlier. This would provide both applicants and planners the opportunity to show their personality and convey aims and issues far better than can be portrayed on paper.

How did you find the planners?

Communication was very poor with us phoning many times without acknowledgement. There were no reasons or poor reasons for the very long periods without contact or progress. The last 6 months or so was better with improved communications. Towards the end the communication was at a level you may consider 'normal' for dealings between two parties. It may be that the planners

are extremely busy and have a huge work load but without any evidence being forthcoming or updates on progress you only assume your application has been moved to the bottom of the pile which gets very stressful.

At the Planning Committee meeting we were impressed by the professionalism, fairness and their strict application of the rules, laws and protocol when it came to difficult or contentious applications.

Any advice for future OPD applicants?

Have a face to face meeting with the planners early on and as regularly as possible.
Remain patient and polite.
Follow the guidance documents exactly.
Information is repeated several times but if it is not provided in the format the planners require they will ask for it later anyway.

Can you sum up your proposed small holding in a few sentences?

Our aim is to create a very low impact, completely self-sufficient small holding. Our business plan is based on providing fruit and veg and fruit and veg-based products as well as nuts, honey, plants, cuttings and numerous other small income streams. We will be completely off grid except a telephone line. Electricity, water, energy and most of our food will be sourced on site.

Permaculture principals will be used in combination with conventional growing methods. We will be avoiding the use of any chemical inputs. Our 100 square metre roundhouse home will be built from natural and locally sourced materials (wood/straw bales/lime plaster, etc).

What does the planning decision mean for you and your family?

Rob:
This planning decision means we can now embark on a new life living a far more natural life amongst friends and nature. The modern 'conventional' way of life has become ridiculously consuming, wasteful, polluting and disconnected from nature, the land and the world that



The Smith family

Applications Update

These are the current OPD planning applications that the OPC is aware of:

Pwll Broga: A retrospective application for one timber-craft based holding in Pembrokeshire. Local planning authority has refused planning permission. Applicants are getting appeal together to send to the Planning Inspectorate.

Bryn yr Blodau: A retrospective application for a mixed smallholding in Pems. Currently under consideration by the local planning authority.

Pelen Gwellt: A prospective application in Pembrokeshire. Currently under consideration by the local planning authority.

Cwm Coed Farm: A prospective application in Powys. Currently under consideration by the local planning authority.

Gardd y Gafel: A forest-garden project near Glandwr for one smallholding, Pems.

Rhiw Las: A mixed 4-unit eco-hamlet in Carmarthenshire.

Cornerwood: A retrospective application in Ceredigion. Appeal hearing due Feb.

These are the current projects at pre-application stage, known to the OPC:

OPD Development in Hebron: A mixed smallholding project in Carmarthenshire.

Carningli Sylvan: An OPD proposal in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park specialising in Balwen sheep and lavender produce. Expecting to submit February.

Middle Crwys: A mixed smallholding in Monmouthshire. Awaiting pre-app report from council, following positive site meeting.

These are the applications that have been passed under the One Planet Development Policy (see website for links to management plans):

Parc y Dwr: Application for a low-impact development adjacent to Glandwr, Pembrokeshire (prospective). Approved unanimously by committee November 2014.

Nant y Cwm Farm: A retrospective application in Caerphilly for one livestock-based smallholding. Approved by the local planning authority in April 2014.

Tir Sisial: A prospective application for 5 year temporary permission for a woodland-based holding in Ceredigion, Approved at a local level in November 2011.

If you are working on or planning an OPD application, please get in touch

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supports us all. I am also concerned that all the elements that makes the country run (financial/food/farming/oil/energy/transport/employment/imports/exports/people/families, etc) are all interlinked and very dependent on each other and could easily become unstable with dire consequences.

A One Planet Development like this is not going to be easy. It will be very hard work and people may think we are mad to do this. We have decided it is completely mad to drive to work, sit at a computer all day and drive home to pay the mortgage, pay the supermarket, pay the bills and live in a box of a house. We have the opportunity to stop being at odds with nature and to become a living part of nature.

Ruth:

For the last couple of years we have been living in limbo and wanting to desperately start work on our land. We have taken many risks during this time and not more so than when we decided this summer to move to Pembrokeshire to be nearer our land even though our future was still up in the air and in the hands of the planners. Thankfully the risks and our perseverance with our planning application have finally paid off. We can now begin to enjoy our land and start living instead of existing.

Activities

A long awaited training course – the first of its kind – is taking place in May 2015. 'Open Countryside One Planet Development' is organised by the OPC

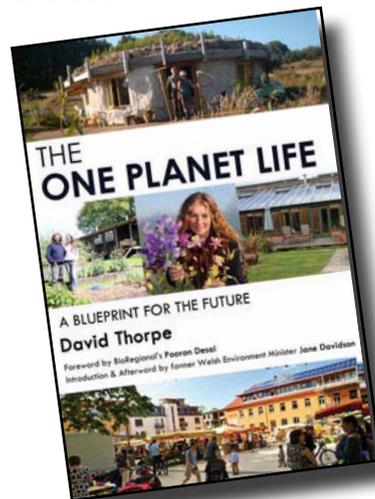
Friday 8 May, is for Local Planning Authority officers and consultants who are involved in assessing applications.
Saturday 9 May, is for OPD applicants.

The team delivering the course includes the principal author of the guidance (James Shorten), and also the Ecological Footprinting expert who put together the footprinting tool which accompanies it (Bill Knight). In addition, Mark Waghorn, an experienced eco-architect based in Wales, will cover Zero Carbon Buildings.

OPC meetings are held each month. Meetings are broadly representative with people from all walks of life, including specialists with knowledge and experience in related areas of planning, building, farming, land-management, climate science, self-employment, economics and well-being.

Please see website or facebook page for more details.

Books



THE ONE PLANET LIFE
A Blueprint for the Future
David Thorpe
Routledge, November 2014
438pp, 382 colour illustrations
Paperback: £26.99

A significant book *The One Planet Life* has been published that is being billed as a successor to John Seymour's 'Self Sufficiency', in that it comprehensively and practically tells people how to reduce their impact upon the environment. At the same time it is an appeal for governments and planners to have a new attitude to development, planning and land management to take into account the full environmental impact of human activities.

Pooran Desai said: "This thought-provoking book summarises some of the approaches which can help us on the journey - so please read, learn, practise and share. There are many already on the journey and we can, together, co-create a better future."

BOOK LAUNCH:
Sunday 14th December 2014, 2pm-3pm
Festive Food Fair, Chapter, Market Road, Canton, Cardiff CF5 1QE

Adverts

SEEKING OTHERS to advance a low impact, land based living project - Mid/North Wales/North England: off-grid, self building, growing/rearing livelihoods. Experience in: business, finance, group process, planning as valued as land based skills.
Gwen Sanderson and Rob Oakey.
tomandbarbara.wix.com/thegoodlife

Cardigan based family looking for minimum 4 acres within 8 miles of Cardigan.
Contact Stefan 01239 682687
layingdownroots@gmail.com

Please contact us with articles, adverts or news: info@oneplanetcouncil.org.uk
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