

Kindling Farm
Green Belt Planning Statement & Statement of Community Involvement

Ref: PP-14614656 22nd January 2026

Although our site is located within the Green Belt, we believe the agricultural purpose of the polytunnel for our farm is appropriate because of its agricultural use. [National Planning Policy Framework (Para &149 150)].

We believe this proposal complies with national Greenbelt policy and complements Knowsley Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, Net Zero Delivery Plan and Flood Risk Management Plan. As well as Knowsley Council Plan 2022-2025 and Knowsley 2030 and the vision for Inclusive growth and skills.

The polytunnel is for agricultural use and would be functionally necessary to increase food production on the farm in line with the UK's farming strategy to shift towards a system that integrates food production, environmental restoration, and commercial profitability. Particularly, to strengthen domestic production, includes a target to increase homegrown produce in the public sector (e.g., schools and hospitals) to 50%.

An essential element of our farming system

The erection of a second 30m x 24m polytunnel is essential to the wider agricultural use of the farm as our business is to produce fruit and vegetables in a wildlife friendly farming system, for as much of the year as possible, increasing access to fresh produce for our local communities.

This polytunnel is essential for the farm to increase its production of local fresh produce, to begin supplying Merseyside Schools, after the creation of a partnership with Liverpool's Food for Thought (a leading not for profit organisation supporting primary schools across the Liverpool Regions).

This application will enable us to double the area of protected food growing space and to crucially extend the growing season and become more resilient against future unseasonal and increasingly unpredictable weather.

We do not believe that this constitutes a change of use as it is for agricultural purposes.

Community Consultation.

Over 200 local people from Tarbock Green and the neighbouring area as well as representatives of local groups, departments of Knowsley Council and a range of organisations (local and national) have visited the farm over the last nearly years.

We have run tours of the farmyard and fields, talked about the history and people's memories and consulted on our future plans and their hopes for Kindling Farm.

We have received an overwhelmingly positive response to our consultation events and plans, with a real excitement about the increase in access to locally produced food.

Statement of Community Involvement

We would be more than happy to open the farm to a visit by neighbours to see the proposed area and our plans for the polytunnel.

Proposed Location

We have carefully considered the impact of this polytunnel on the environment and community and have chosen the location to reduce the negative impacts:

- It is our own fields and farmyard that look onto the proposed site.
- There is no view from the public highway.
- We will plant a new hedge adjacent to our existing hedge to the East of the proposed polytunnel to further shield the view from our nearest neighbour: Ash Lea.
- We planted over 150m of new hedge across the field to the south of the proposed site that will help shield the view of the polytunnel from the south.
- The nearest public footpath to the south is half a kilometre and several fields and hedges away and we don't believe it would be visible from there.

Minimising our Impact.

Preservation of the soil and the ability to return the land to its present state is key to our low impact farming approach.

The polytunnel will be anchored to the ground with minimum impact on the field or soil, by using foundation tubes (one tube every 2.2 metres).

Within the polytunnel we will be using only movable, temporary infrastructure.

Impact on Neighbours.

We have sought advice, designs and quotes from a number of consultants and contractors on the location and design to ensure good quality design and materials.

Landscaping, a new hedge, additional tree planting, gateway location have all been used to minimise the visual impact of the proposed polytunnel.

There is one house ('Ash Lea') close to the site of our proposal, just to the East of the field, Ash Lea is empty at present (and has apparently been so for some time prior to us purchasing the farm).

However, we will work to minimise the impact on our future neighbours.

We have replanted a section of our hedge that was removed in error by the previous owner of the neighbouring property.

We will plant a new hedge adjacent to our existing hedge to the East of the proposed polytunnel to further shield the view from our nearest neighbour: Ash Lea.

We have also positioned the polytunnel as far away from Ash Lea as possible, whilst needing to consider our future farming needs including:

- Maximising the productivity of the land for food production.
- Shading from neighbouring trees.
- Layout for efficient grounds and hedgerow maintenance.
- Soil health and sustainable drainage.
- Proximity to water storage for the most efficient irrigation system.

All work to construct the polytunnel will occur between 9am and 5 pm.

We have planted a new 160m long hedge to the south of this proposed polytunnel location helping to further shield from view.

Water pollution:

Switching from a conventional semi-intensive farming system, to an organic agroforestry system using no synthetic chemical inputs, has resulted in a significant reduction in nitrogen run off into the local brook.

Agroforestry along with extensive use of green manure cover crops, minimising tillage, tree planting, rainwater harvesting and nutrient collection ponds is greatly reducing soil erosion.

All rainwater from the polytunnel will be collected and used in the polytunnel.

Use of a bore hole to extract a maximum of 20,000 litres per day will play a crucial role in our sustainable water management plan during drought periods.

The clearing and reinstatement of a currently silted up and overgrown ditch along the westerly side of the field will result in increased bio-diversity and play a role in sustainable water management of the site.

We have recently dug an additional 50m of new ditch to help deal with potential flooding and reduce soil erosion.

The use of micro dams and nutrient collection ponds will both slow the flow of water into the ditch (and the brook that the ditch flows into) and help retain valuable nutrients on the farm.

Light Pollution:

The development will not generate any light pollution. We have no plans to use artificial lighting in any of the polytunnels – it is not part of organic growing methods.

Air pollution:

We will not generate any additional air pollution, other than that from the use of tractors in their day-to-day standard use. We do not envisage any significant increase in tractor use, from the previous owners of the farm.

Noise Pollution:

During construction of the polytunnel we will work with the contractors to minimise noise pollution.

Construction during early spring with limited daylight will mean noise will not be generated at an unsociable time.

We will not generate any additional noise pollution, other than that from the use of tractors in their day-to-day standard use. It is envisaged that work by staff and machinery will be carried out during daylight hours.

Job Creation:

This is part of the farms renewal and we believe its development will create 7 full time jobs by 2027/28. All new jobs will be advertised locally and the nature of the work will favour individuals who live nearby.

Last year was our first growing season on the farm. Aided by the construction of our first polytunnel and water tank for irrigation we are proud to say we employed 2 full-time and 6 part-time people in farming activities (4 of whom live locally).

To date the majority of the work carried out on the farm has been undertaken by local tradespeople. This will continue where possible. Our preferred supplier selection process is geared to favouring local companies.

Local economic benefits:

Over the next five years we plan to invest over £5 million in the farm, creating a community owned asset that will benefit the area in a range of ways, from training opportunities, to education and community engagement activities, to significantly increasing access to fresh local sustainable food.

Last year, we invested £300,000 in the farm, focused on infrastructure after decades of under investment and making the farm more resilience and climate friendly.

Climate Change:

These plans and Kindling Farm's vision complement Knowsley Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, Net Zero Delivery Plan and Flood Risk Management Plan. As well as Knowsley Council Plan 2022-2025 and Knowsley 2030 and the vision for Inclusive growth and skills.

Kindling Farm has ambitious plans to be a zero carbon farm and generate all its electricity needs on site by 2030.

Biodiversity

Our ongoing biodiversity surveys have indicated that this proposal will have no negative impact on wildlife.

There are no trees within the site in close proximity to the development. Therefore, a Tree Survey is not required to be submitted as trees will be affected by the proposal.

As part of our extensive biodiversity work we have mapped the majority of the trees and hedgerows on the farm. The hedgerow running closest to the proposed polytunnel is relatively diverse with crab apple, damsons etc. This is being extended with the planting of hazel trees.

We have secured Countryside Stewardship for gapping parts of this hedge.

The biodiversity of the adjacent hedgerow has been enhanced by reinstating the old ditch. We are in the process of implementing a hedge management plan for the entire farm, with a five year cycle of coppicing, gapping up and eventual hedge laying.

We have planted a 160m long hedge across this field helping to further shield the polytunnel from view.

We will not be removing, cutting back or damaging any trees to install the polytunnel.

We have planted a significant number of trees so far, including:

- 160m hedge across the field next to the proposed tank location.
- Gapped up the hedge between the farm and our immediate neighbour (Ash Lea)
- Creation of a 100m new hedge between the farm and our most easterly neighbours (this is the continuation of an existing hedge that stopped halfway down the field which our neighbours are very happy about).
- 1200 fruit trees have so far been planted across the farm as part of our agroforestry system.
- Gapping up 30m of existing hedge that runs next to the proposed water tanks.
- Planting hedgerow evergreen trees under the 10 large poplars trees planted as part of the farm's last planning application.

Biodiversity Net Gain.

Completing our Biodiversity Net Gain we concluded that there is no biodiversity impact, in simply constructing a polytunnel in the middle of an arable field. We have however stated that we will be creating a pond near to the proposed polytunnel, plant a hazel hedge and install a barn owl tower.