

Kindling Farm
Additional Information for Planning Permission request for a plant raising polytunnel

Ref: PP-12692048 30th January 2025

The erection of a 8m x 24m plant raising 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 plant raising polytunnel is essential for raising seedlings for planting out across the farm and in the triple span tunnel we have planning permission for.

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

Vehicle Movements during construction:

We envisage 1 medium-sized van delivery with materials in March 2025 and 2 additional vehicle movements each day for 3 days in April (one just before 9am, 2 over lunchtime & 1 just after 5pm). All vehicles entering and leaving the farm will use the larger and safer westerly exit.

Vehicle Movements after construction:

There will be no additional movements after construction, in fact deliveries will be reduced once the plant raising tunnel is in full production, as we will no longer need to buy in large quantities of plug plants.

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 growing in the soil with only movable, temporary infrastructure used.

Impact on Neighbours.

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 hedge that was removed in error by the previous owner of the neighbouring property.

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 just 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, will result 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 will greatly reduce soil erosion.

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

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.

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 polytunnels we will work with the contractors to minimise noise pollution.

Construction during winter/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 jobs by 2027/28. All new jobs will be advertised locally and the nature of the work will favour individuals who live nearby.

To date all 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 £3 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.

Climate Change.

These plans and Kindling Farm 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.

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

Biodiversity Net Gain.

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

