

Miss Lucy Langdon
82 Shakespeare Avenue
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FAO the Inspector
APPEAL REF: APP/L3245/A/10/2129856/NWF

6th July 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm writing to register my support for the agro-forestry permaculture project Karuna and to express my extreme dismay at the planning problems the project is facing with its Tool Shed and Polytunnel applications.

I am a freelance writer based in London and Bath. I also volunteer with two environmental organisations: Transition Town Brixton (one of the most influential Transition Towns in the country) and Project Dirt (a thriving online community of green projects in London). I am not an expert on environmental matters (unlike many others who have and will be writing to you in support of Karuna), but I do have a very keen awareness of the current state of 'green' thinking in this country. On the worldwide stage, London is leading the way as a sustainable and resilient city. In part, this is a result of the partnerships built between borough councils and grass roots projects; rather than delay or restrict the positive action offered by these projects, facilitation and support are given wherever and whenever possible.

I have just arrived back in London after a month volunteering with the organisation WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms). The second half of my month was spent living and working at Karuna. I am therefore speaking from personal experience when I say that the work the Wheelhouse family is doing is not only inspirational, it is absolutely vital. This country is at a critical crossroads: our food security is becoming more and more unstable, while, at the same time, our knowledge and understanding of how to cultivate the land in a sustainable way is in danger of being lost to history.

Having spoken at length with Janta and Merav Wheelhouse about this planning application appeal and the grounds for refusal, I am deeply concerned about the unnecessary levels of bureaucracy that are blocking their every move, often at the cost of common sense (not to mention the *actual* financial cost). For example, although the tool shed may, on paper, be of "inappropriate [...] design & materials", it is, in reality, beautifully blended into the natural vista and appropriately dry and secure (a quick visit would confirm this for even the most cynical surveyor). Surely this sensitivity to the spirit of the law, rather than just a nod to the letter of it, deserves praise instead of the foot-dragging legislative pedantry currently taking place?

Similarly, the grounds for refusal for the polytunnel application beggars belief in a county that this country will look to for agricultural guidance in the years to come. The local council has a responsibility to start thinking and acting in a way that befits such an agriculturally important area. To stand in the way of progress is not an action this country will tolerate for much longer.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Langdon