

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

FOR

CHANGE OF USE OF THE LAND (RETROSPECTIVE)

ERECTION OF KEDER POLYTUNNEL AND YURT (PROPOSED)

AT

211, WOODROW ROAD, MELKSHAM, WILTSHIRE, SN12 7RD

FOR

MEADOWBROOK (WILTSHIRE) CIC

DOLMAN

Tel: 01380 729456

Email: info@dolmansurveyors.co.uk

June 2025

Amended April 2026

Contents Page

Introduction	Page 3
Site Analysis	Page 3
Retrospective Planning Permission	Page 3
Proposal (Polytunnel and Yurt)	Page 3
Justification	Page 4
Access	Page 4
Design and Appearance	Page 5
Riparian Responsibilities	Page 5
Impact on Neighbourhood Amenity	Page 5
Impact on Landscape	Page 5
Conclusion	Page 6
Appendix 1	Page 7
Appendix 2	Page 10
Appendix 3	Page 13
Appendix 4	Page 16

Introduction

Meadowbrook is a not-for-profit social enterprise located in Wiltshire. As a Community Interest Company (CIC), they provide a nurturing outdoor space for therapeutic activities such as gardening, creative workshops, and yoga. Their mission is to support individuals experiencing mental and physical health challenges, as well as those struggling with social isolation. The funds for the Sequential test and Flood Risk Assessment Report included in this application were raised in a crowdfunder campaign by 60 supporters.

Site Analysis

The site, approximately three-quarters of a hectare, is located on the southern side of Woodrow Road, northeast of Melksham. It is accessed via a 50m track from the highway. The site contains a barn, several outbuildings, and areas designated for growing activities.

Retrospective Planning Permission for the Change of Use to Sui Generis - Community

Garden and modest site structures

We are seeking retrospective permission to change the use of the land, from Agricultural use to Sui generis Community Garden, ensuring the site is fit for purpose to accommodate community-based activities and therapeutic workshops. Moreover, retrospective permission is sought for a compostable loo, a small polytunnel, a modest refreshments bar and two small metal garden sheds. These are modest in size, temporary and movable structures.

Proposal – Polytunnel and Yurt

Additionally, as part of this Application, we are proposing to install a Keder polytunnel (6m x 12m) and a yurt (9-10 meters in diameter). The polytunnel will be situated along the eastern boundary, and the yurt will be located in the southeast corner of the site (refer to Drawing Nos. 4405-01B, 02 & 03). These structures will provide year-round support for vulnerable groups and facilitate outdoor therapies, with a sheltered space for activities during adverse weather conditions.

The site will primarily be used on weekdays between 10:00am and 5:00pm, with occasional evening and weekend activities. Regular programming will include three supported sessions per week, each lasting two to three hours and accommodating up to 15 people, focused mainly on gardening alongside small-scale creative activities such as sketching and crafts. In addition, two to three weekly yoga sessions will be for similar group sizes. The proposed yurt space will also be made available for hire to local creative arts and yoga practitioners approximately twice per week, typically between 10:00am and 6:00pm, with attendance of 10–15 people.

Twice monthly, Saturday volunteer drop-in sessions will take place between 11:00am and 4:00pm for around 10 people. The site will also host approximately three annual yoga day retreats for up to 20 people, generally scheduled on Saturdays between 10:00am and 4:00pm, as well as two yearly support network gatherings of a similar size, focused on discussion-based workshops for founders of local charitable ventures.

In addition to these regular and scheduled activities, the site will accommodate occasional larger, ad hoc events. These include an annual summer “Big Lunch” community event held on a Sunday afternoon (12:00pm–4:00pm), which typically attracts 100–150 attendees and features stalls, raffles, and refreshments, as well as smaller supporter events such as afternoon or early evening firepit suppers for approximately 40 people.

Justification

The proposed change of use and proposed site structures are necessary to meet the growing demand for accessible, sheltered spaces. The current facilities are insufficient for larger groups or individuals with mobility issues, and weather conditions often disrupt sessions. The Keder polytunnel is durable, low-maintenance, and well-suited to the exposed site, offering long-term resilience. The yurt will provide a flexible indoor space for workshops, events, and group activities, enhancing community engagement and inclusion.

Both structures align with Meadowbrook’s commitment to sustainability and accessibility, improving the quality and scope of their services.

A Pre-Application was submitted (refer to Pre-Application Advice Letter attached to this Application). After consideration the Council determined that the principal of the proposed works is acceptable and would accord with the Development Plan Policies.

Access

The polytunnel and yurt are designed with accessibility in mind. The polytunnel will feature a wide sliding door, ensuring easy access for wheelchair users and individuals with mobility aids. The yurt will have wheelchair-accessible entry. Both structures will create an inclusive environment for people of all abilities.

Design and Appearance

Both the polytunnel and yurt are functional and appropriate for the site's use. The polytunnel, at 2.9m high, will not be prominently visible above the existing hedgerows that border the site. The yurt, at 4.5m high, will be neutral in colour, blending with the landscape. While the yurt may be visible above the hedgerows, it is not expected to have a significant impact on the visual amenity of the area, especially with the planting on-site that will provide further screening.

The existing temporary timber structures (refer to Drawing No. 4405 – 04) for photos are modest in scale and perfectly fitting in a rural area.

Riparian Responsibilities

Meadowbrook acknowledge their riparian responsibilities. They agree to report any problems that arise, do what is in their power to allow the water to flow naturally and prevent pollution into the watercourse. Meadowbrook commit to protecting wildlife that uses the water and/ or is located nearby. They commit to being mindful of introducing suitable planting in or near the watercourse and will seek appropriate permissions and/or licences prior to undertaking any work on the watercourse.

The EA have previously visited site (at Meadowbrook's request) to get their input as to suitable improvements that could be made and have also had several consultations with BART (Bristol and Avon Rivers Trust charity) as to where they might improve the watercourse and increase biodiversity.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

The proposed development will not adversely affect neighbouring properties. The polytunnel will be located approximately 88m from the nearest dwellings on New Road and 84m from those on Woodrow Road. The yurt will be positioned further from any residential properties. While the development will increase activity on the site, especially during wetter conditions, it is not expected to cause any significant impact on the amenity of the neighbouring dwellings. The structures are temporary and moveable.

Impact on Landscape

The proposed structures are considered appropriate for the existing site use, and the landscape will not be negatively impacted. The polytunnel, at a height of 2.9m, will remain below the height of the surrounding hedgerows. The yurt, while taller at 4.5m, will be a neutral colour and will not detract from the overall landscape character. The recent and substantial planting on-site, including the planting of over 40 trees, that include an apple orchard as well as a number of specimen trees, as well as existing extensive native hedgerow will help screen the development and integrate it into the landscape. The development will not

cause harm to the landscape, and the site's use will continue to align with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Policy 17 of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan.

Conclusion

Formalising the Change of Use, along with the proposed polytunnel and yurt are integral to the ongoing development of Meadowbrook as a community hub for therapeutic and outdoor activities. The proposal is consistent with the local planning policies and will provide much-needed, accessible spaces for a wide range of community groups. It is considered that the development will not have a negative impact on the landscape, neighbouring properties, or visual amenity, and that the principle of the works is acceptable.

Appendix 1

20th October 2025

My name is Melanie Watt and I have been a local resident for over 50 years and I work as Manager of a local pet supply retailer.

I am aware of Meadowbrook CIC based in Melksham and their work serving and supporting various groups locally. I am aware they have a particular focus on helping those locally who experience health challenges and loneliness. I am aware of Meadowbrook's need to change the use class on their land and also of the pressing need to put in place some shelter for participants.

I am writing to acknowledge concerns that have been raised with regards to seasonal flooding that affects an area of the project land. Anyone living in Melksham will be fully aware that certain areas of the town are prone to winter floods.

I have been volunteering regularly at the town's Parkrun since it began in 2017. The location is King George V park, and part of the course runs alongside the River Avon. During the wetter months, the river regularly bursts its banks along that stretch. The run gets cancelled if the course is unsafe or unavailable (i.e. if there is another event on in the park) and this follows guidance from Parkrun HQ. Each individual event has its own risk assessment and the run director for the day will act in accordance with that risk assessment. It would be absurd to say we couldn't hold Parkrun there, because the course may flood four or five Saturdays of the year.

If the flooding that occurs at Meadowbrook is deemed a reason for them not to be able to operate, then this would be equally absurd. The flooding of Bezzles Brook adjacent to their barn typically happens anywhere between two and six times between November and February. Obviously it can occur slightly earlier or later if there's unusually severe rainfall. The flooding recedes very quickly each time and has never caused them any major difficulties.

The flood zone at Meadowbrook only affects the front field and immediate area around the barn. The barn is only used for storage purposes, and none of these affected areas are used for activities, nor are there any plans to do so.

In the same way as Parkrun cancels when it is, or in danger of being flooded, I understand Meadowbrook would do so too if any sessions or events were scheduled that day. I understand they've already had a site visit from the Environment Agency regarding the seasonal flooding, and no concerns were raised.

In my opinion, as a resident who cares about our local community being one that caters for all (including the more vulnerable residents,) the proposed use of this site for their current and proposed therapeutic activities will be of great benefit to many, and I strongly support the application.



Melanie Watt

Appendix 2



Meadowbrook (Wiltshire) CIC is a Not for Profit Company
Company no.13545123

www.meadowbrookwiltshire.org

[Instagram@meadowbrook_wiltshire/](https://www.instagram.com/meadowbrook_wiltshire/)



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **The Farm Cookery School** [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2025, 08:48

Subject: Submission

To: Ja & Grace Dalglish [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

My name is Gretchen Winter and I own The Farm Cookery School in Bromham where we work with a lot of children who, for various reasons, struggle with mainstream school. I started my business in 2014 and worked in schools with children who benefited from learning in a different way. I was lucky enough to be able to create my own facility and we are now an accredited Wiltshire alternative provider. We also work with Melksham Oak and their inclusion unit on a weekly basis. As well as this I teach online GCSE classes to children for whom mainstream school is not viable.

I am aware of Meadowbrook and their important work within the community, also supporting those with mental health needs in a supportive and caring environment. We use cooking to improve self esteem and self confidence, as well as work on specific challenges that each student may have and Meadowbrook do the same except they use gardening instead of cooking.

It is well known that gardening is a therapeutic activity and to be able to undertake this activity in a supportive environment may well be a lifeline for people who are struggling to cope with day to day life.

We see first hand how important facilities like Meadowbrook are, there is simply not enough support out there for people that find life challenging and it is rare to find a place that is so suited to help, with founders that are so committed to their cause.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Gretchen
Owner / Teacher
BA Hons Hotel and Catering Management



The Farm Cookery School

01380 859 478 | enquiries@thefarmcookeryschool.co.uk

Netherstreet Farm
Bromham, Wiltshire
SN15 2DS

www.thefarmcookeryschool.co.uk

Appendix 3



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Imogen Jackson** [REDACTED]

Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2025, 10:29

Subject: HTH

To: Ja & Grace Dalglish [REDACTED]

I am writing in support of Meadowbrook CIC's planning application for change of use to Sui Generis Community Garden.

My name is Imogen Jackson, and I am Head of Adult Wellbeing at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. I oversee a range of programmes across the county that support adults to improve their mental health, build community connection, and develop confidence through engagement with nature.

Meadowbrook's work, and the ethos that underpins it - nurturing both people and the land so that both can thrive, is a hugely valuable asset for the local community. The CIC provides a valuable local space where people who may be struggling with isolation, stress, or low mood can find meaning, connection, and belonging through gentle outdoor activity and contact with nature.

There is clear evidence, both from national research and our own experience at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, that time spent in nature-rich, community settings contributes significantly to improvements in mental and physical wellbeing. Activities such as therapeutic gardening, nature-based social connection, and outdoor creativity have been shown to reduce anxiety and depression, increase physical activity, and build resilience and social connection.

There is a strong and growing local demand for community-based green spaces offering this kind of support. Provision remains limited, and Meadowbrook offers something distinctive and complementary to existing opportunities. Their approach aligns closely with wider local and national priorities around prevention, community wellbeing, and connection to nature. We have been pleased to be able to signpost people to Meadowbrook, both those who have completed our wellbeing programmes and those we are unable to support directly, and it is very disappointing to no longer be able to do so. It now feels that some people are falling through a gap in local provision.

The temporary pause in activity while this planning matter is resolved is already being felt by those who benefit most from their sessions, and by partner organisations like ourselves who would like to collaborate and who signpost people to this. Granting the change of use would enable Meadowbrook to continue its positive work, supporting both individual and community wellbeing while caring for the land itself.

In my professional opinion, the proposed use of this site as a community garden and therapeutic space will bring clear mental health and social benefits to participants and to the wider community. I therefore strongly support this application.

Imogen Jackson BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIHort

Adult Wellbeing Manager

Education and Wellbeing

Email: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Please note: I generally work Mondays to Thursdays

I am an advocate of flexible working and while it suits me now to send this email, there is no expectation that it will be actioned outside of your own core working hours.



Plant-Based Health Professionals
MEMBER

I'm a
Numeracy Champion
Let's talk numbers



Celebrating the everyday connections that change people's lives

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust | Elm Tree Court | Long Street | Devizes | Wiltshire | SN10 1NJ



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Appendix 4

Meadowbrook – Supporting Statement.

1. Professional Credibility

Sindy Uttley, Social Prescriber, BA (Hons), P.G.C.E, Diploma Licentiate TESOL Level 7. Currently working at Giffords Surgery, Melksham, Wiltshire.

2. I am aware of the work by this not-for-profit organisation, and the type of clients it supports. I understand that Meadowbrook is hoping to have a larger polytunnel and yurt on site as shelters and space for the supported sessions.
3. To my understanding, Meadowbrook is open to supporting all people, who are willing to engage, giving people the choice and chance to work with other individuals, but understanding that some people may prefer to work on their own at times. I, myself, have made referrals to Meadowbrook and attended the site, to ascertain how the project will work and to discuss the role volunteers/attendees will undertake whilst there.

4. In my role, as a Social Prescriber, and with clear evidence from other outdoor projects and health professionals, it has been proven that being in nature is a prominent factor for reducing a range of poor mental health such as anxiety, depression, daily stress, poor sleep hygiene

At a time when individuals are constantly being presented with an influx of negative items in the media, and harmful pressure from Social Media, the rising costs and pressures of daily living and so forth, there is a real need for individuals to find other positive focusses in their lives, focusses where they can be mindful in a safe space where they can be supported, nurtured and flourish.

Being outdoors with supportive professionals, who have experience with supporting individuals with such needs, is a real asset, especially at a time when mental health services are reducing, and numbers of individuals with poor mental health is increasing.

Supporting patients, who have poor mental health, it has become evident that there is less and less provision to support them in the local area, alongside medication. There is a gap in opportunities to allow for holistic treatment and support.

5. Attending a venue like Meadowbrook would potentially offer individuals the chance to 'breathe', to be away from pressures, to smile/laugh and be with others, to reduce social isolation, to work on their positive characteristics and traits as a person, to confirm their worth, to identify their skills and talents, and to develop new ones.
6. Summary Support

It is my understanding from discussions I have had with the owners of Meadowbrook, that the site and opportunities they are aiming to offer, can only contribute to a healthier community, helping people to thrive, recover, build and evolve as individuals. The benefits of Meadowbrook may potentially support the reduction of the need for medical appointments, thus reducing the cost to NHS services.

When so many aspects of our society is steeped in funding cuts, Meadowbrook could be the antithesis of this, demonstrating to people that "it's not all about money, this is about caring about you"