

The new road to Honeypot farm â?? another unlawful development in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park

Description

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Aerial shot of new road. Conachra/Honeypot farm is top right on the far side of the Catter burn. The

At the start of this year I was alerted to the construction of the new access road to what was until recently called Conachra farm. The new road, which is west of Croftamie, lies within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and is their responsibility for planning purposes. The farm itself lies within the Stirling Council planning area, the boundary between the two planning authorities running along the Catter burn.

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Raised in this meeting

Residents in the vicinity of Mavie Mill brought to our attention the creation of a new bell mouth and access road leading to Connachra Farm.

The new bell mouth and first part of the access road is within the NP boundary but outside Kilmarnock. The concerned residents have notified the NP planning authority of the development and are seeking clarity over whether planning permission is needed (allowing them to make formal representations). Croftamie CC are also aware of the situation.

KCC to clarify with LLTNPA if they are responsible for all or any aspect of the project location.

There is also an application for a Goods Vehicle Operators Licence for 8 new vehicles for the same premises. It is believed that the new entrance is intended for the new fleet of goods vehicles. This is of concern for the immediate residents, some of whom have made representations to the Traffic Commissioner.

There were also questions raised as to whether an application for a change of use would be required for Connachra Farm.

Minute of the Kilmarnock Community Council 19th January

The new road had not had planning permission. Instead of using their powers to stop the development until they had investigated what was going on, the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) allowed the developer to complete the works:



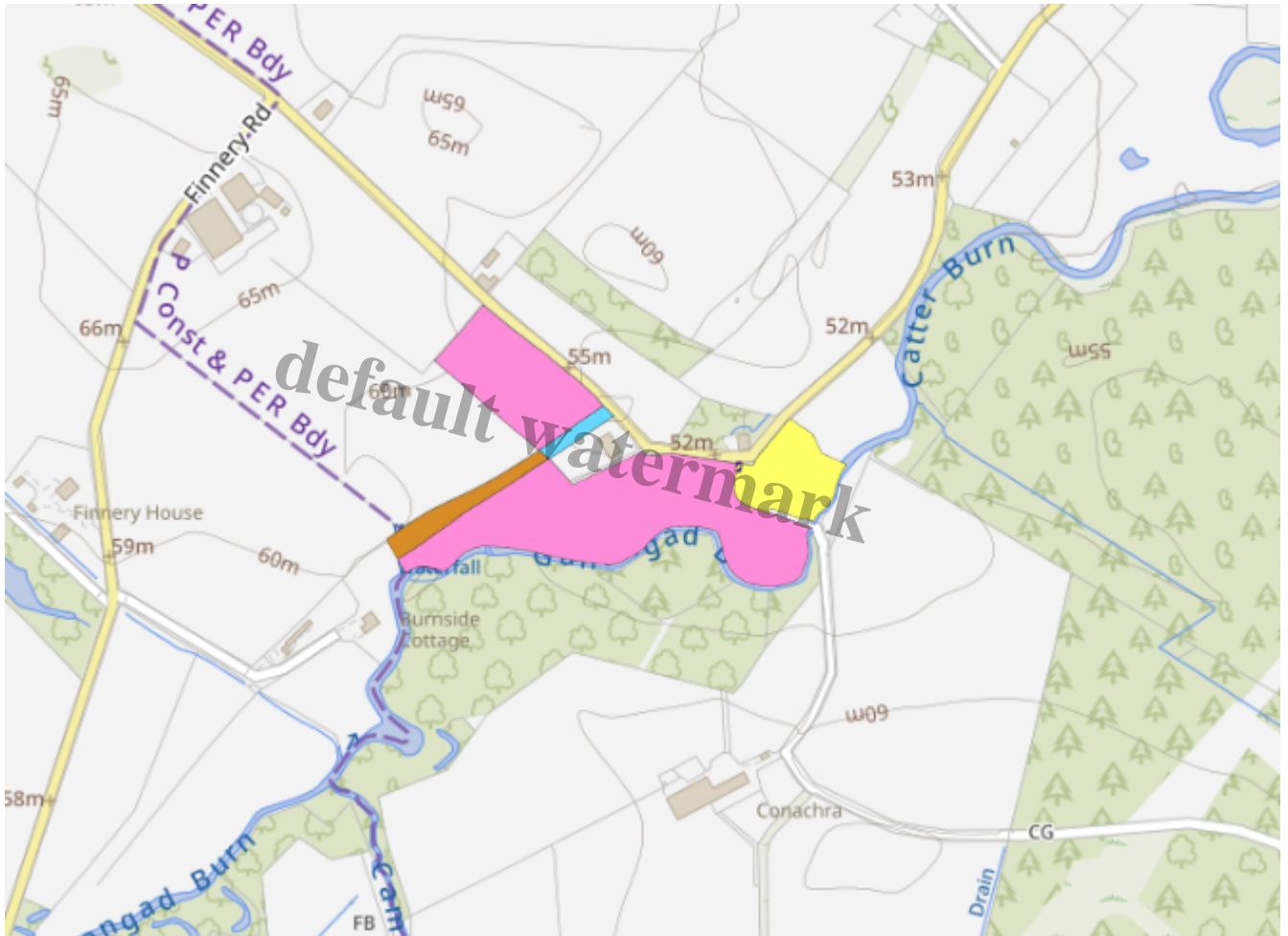
The entrance to the new section of road soon after construction was completed in early March. The new entrance has removed a section of hedge and what was previously a passing place.

While new agricultural roads don't require full planning permission if notified to the planning authority beforehand, where a farm fails to do this a full planning application is required. The LLTNPA therefore had every reason to intervene. It has taken a lot of pressure from local residents before a retrospective planning application ([see here](#)) was submitted to the LLTNPA after the works were completed:

Please state date of completion, or if not completed, the start date (dd/mm/yyyy): *	<input type="text" value="01/03/2026"/>
Please explain why work has taken place in advance of making this application: * (Max 500 characters)	
<input type="text" value="Not known"/>	

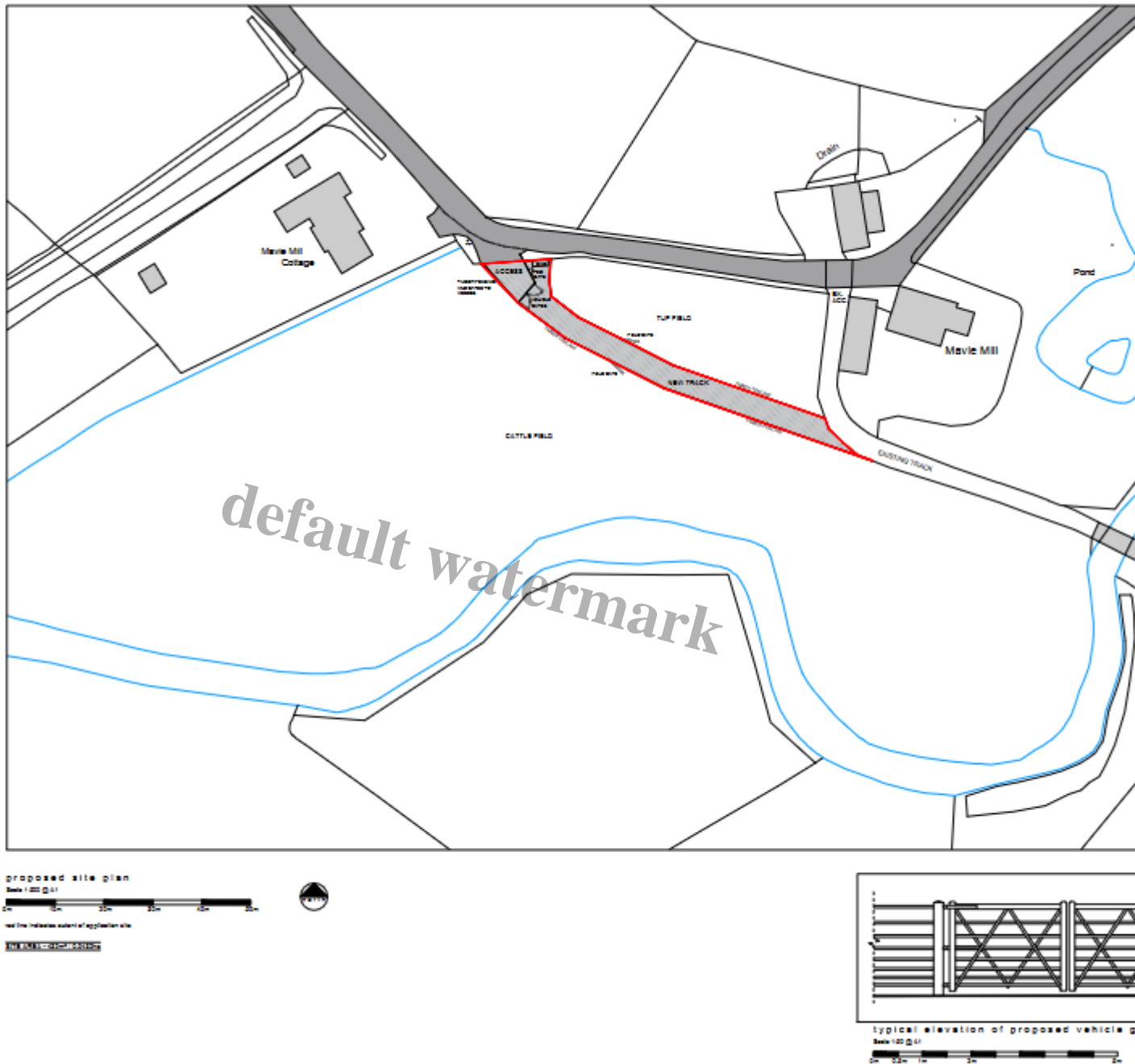
The claim that the reason why the work took place in advance of the application is "not known" is ridiculous.

The application was on behalf of a Mr Sam Newall for "Land at Honeypot Farm (was Conachra Farm)". The Registers of Scotland shows the previous owners of Conachra Farm had bought the land on which the new road has been built in December for £62,500



The area of pink in the centre formed LOT 3, MAVIE MILL FARM and is shown as recorded on the Registers of Scotland. Conachra Farm is also shown below.

They then put Conachra Farm, the land at Mavie Mill and another property called Collalis on the market last summer at offers over £1,375,000 or in two lots ([see here](#)). It appears that Sam Newall bought Lot 2, which included Conachra Farm and the land at Mavie Mill, but details of the sale have yet to be published on the Registers of Scotland.



Plan showing location of new access road and gates

Apart from the application form, the only documentation submitted by the applicant to date are three general plans, all of which show more or less the same thing except one wrongly shows suggests that there had previously been a gate into the field at the site of the new entrance. The agent acting on behalf of Mr Newall claimed on the application form that no further information was required:

Provide copies of the following documents if applicable:

A copy of an Environmental Statement. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
A Design Statement or Design and Access Statement. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
A Flood Risk Assessment. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
A Drainage Impact Assessment (including proposals for Sustainable Drainage Systems). *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
Drainage/SUDS layout. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
A Transport Assessment or Travel Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
Contaminated Land Assessment. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
Habitat Survey. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
A Processing Agreement. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA

Other Statements (please specify). (Max 500 characters)

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Extract from planning application form

The LLTNPA's planning staff must know this is wrong. There are, for example, rules about creating new access points off public roads which would normally be addressed through a Design and Access Statement. And among the constraints listed on the LLTNPA's planning portal for the land at Mavie Mill is that it is at "medium risk of flooding".

The planning application therefore is not fit for purpose. Despite this the LLTNPA validated it on the 26th March giving the public three weeks to respond.



Flooding by the bridge over the Catter burn to Conachra farm. I have footage showing much of the field where the new access road has been created under water.

The Stirling Council Flood Prevention Team responded almost by return on 30th March saying they had no records of flooding at this site. Their response was “based on the accuracy and completeness of information supplied by the applicant or those working on their behalf”. That information was clearly incomplete as the screenshot above and video ([see here](#)) shows. SEPA’s Flood Risk Planning Advice to Planning Authorities advised that “Applicants should demonstrate they understand the flood risk at the site to an appropriate level of detail relative to the proposed development” and that a Flood Risk Assessment may be required. To date it does not appear that the LLTNPA has required the applicant to do any of that.

The wider issues at stake here are that neither the purpose of this new road has been explained and none of the potential issues surrounding it have been considered.



The entrance to the new road had been further landscaped with the installation of a flower box, hardly mitigation for the hedge which was here previously.

I visited the site on 20th March before before the planning application had appeared on the planning portal to see for myself what had been going on. The road from Croftamie, the C118 known as the Back Road, is very narrow, lacks parking places, is a designated national cycle route (NCR7) and clearly unsuitable for regular use by lorries. It was also surprisingly busy.

A major concern is whether this new access is safe and meets the required standards for junctions onto public roads including visibility splays. Local residents have produced an excellent video ([see here](#)) showing how a hump in the road over the former railway means that horses, cyclists and vehicles all disappear out of sight within 40 metres of the entrance, contrary to current standards.



The long established entrance would be difficult to use for anything larger than a farm vehicle with a left hand bend beyond the building. The new entrance is to the right of this photo and the new road is to the right of the old one just beyond this farm buildings

The original entrance to Conachra Farm was by Mavie Mill and appears to have served its purpose for many years. . That begs the questions why change it and what are the implications?

The purpose of the new road

On acquiring Conachra Farm, Sam Newall apparently applied for three separate licenses to operate goods vehicles from the site which were withdrawn after objections were lodged â?? that is referred to in the Kilmarnock Community Council minutes.

Mr Newall is sole director and has significant control of a company called NWL Honeywagon Ltd ([see here](#)). Its registered address is 90-96 North Street, Alexandria and passers by will know it is used to store mobile toilets. The companyâ??s website ([see here](#)) suggests it provides a range of other services:

â?• Our extensive fleet includes dining buses, tech trucks, costume trailers, make-up trailers, production offices, artist trailers of various sizes, changing rooms, combi-trailers, Honeywagonâ??s for base and remote locations, and Gen-Tug trucks. Not limited to and including a huge diverse range of solar powered and electrically powered honeywagonâ??s, shower units, plastic toilets, a range of accessible toilets and tanker services.â?•

The Company's most recent accounts also show it invested £2,382,014 in new plant and machinery in the financial year until 31st October 2025. It seems possible that Mr Newall needed somewhere to store that plant and machinery and the renaming of Conachra Farm as Honeypot Farm may be significant. This would not be the first connection between the company and local farms in the Gartocharn area. A previous director of the company was a John Mark Nicholas Newall, who resigned in 2019 but whose address was given as Spittal Farm, Gartocharn.

There is strong evidence to suggest therefore that Mr Newall constructed this new access road with a view to facilitating access to the farm by goods vehicles. Whatever the road safety issues with the new entrance to the farm, these are likely to increase significantly if it is being used by larger vehicles.

As important, however, are the implications for local residents and other users, including those on the National Cycle Route, if large vehicles were to start regularly using a minor road which was never intended for that purpose. Given the issues, it seems extraordinary that the LLTNPA has not asked the Walk/Wheel/Cycle Trust (the new name for Sustrans), which is responsible for National Cycle Routes, to respond to the planning application.

The intended purpose of the new road should have a significant bearing on how the LLTNPA approaches this planning application. Unfortunately, the LLTNPA's record on dealing with unlawful new access points to public roads is not good, as is shown by how they handled a similar case at Tarbet ([see here](#)).

The LLTNPA's conflicts of interest in this case and what next?

Among those using NWL Honeywagon Ltd's services is the LLTNPA. In June 2023 they awarded the company a £134,248 contract for mobile toilets ([see here](#)). While it is good that the LLTNPA is hiring local contractors, because those contractors may also have other dealings with the National Park, in particular through the planning system, it is important they are squeaky clean. The LLTNPA's handling of the application to date raises concerns about this.

In financial terms, by asking for a retrospective planning application rather than taking enforcement action, the LLTNPA has spared NWL Honeywagon Ltd significant one-off costs. If it approves the application it could also open up the possibility of the farm being used for cheap storage. Both potentially would help reduce the cost of any services the LLTNPA purchases from Honeywagon in future. There are therefore financial conflicts of interest in this case.

Those conflicts, the failures of planning staff to respond appropriately to the unlawful construction work and the lax way the retrospective planning application has been handled to date provide every reason why this planning application should be determined by the Planning Committee rather than by staff, as is usually the case.

Normally, the LLTNPA's Planning Committee only decides applications when sufficient numbers of people object. Thankfully the objection from the Croftamie Community Council, a statutory consultee, and the fifteen individual objections to date should be sufficient to force them to do this.

If you wish to comment on this retrospective planning application you can do so [here](#).

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Governance
2. LLTNPA
3. planning

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