

Agrivillages - new sustainable land-based communities - the first steps

Planning – the challenge

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Fundamentals of the planning system (1947-)

- urban containment
 - protection of countryside / landscape
- protection / exemption of agriculture
 - excluded from the definition of development
 - extensive 'permitted development rights' (for larger holdings)
 - agricultural workers' dwellings
- focusing of development in existing larger places
 - 'sustainable development'
 - 'reducing the need to travel'

Concurrent agricultural trends

- farms broken up / consolidated / gentrified
- pressure to lift agricultural ties from dwellings
- smaller farms disproportionately disadvantaged
- ageing farmers
- lack of new entrants

Planning 'responses'

- **schizophrenic**
 - double edge of agricultural 'permitted development rights'
 - engrained suspicion of new holdings
 - agricultural / rural diversification
 - new 'permitted development rights' to convert farm buildings to other uses, including houses
- **no vision for what the countryside is for, and therefore what the place of agriculture is in it**

Where we are / are heading / drifting

- **relic countryside**
 - the form of the countryside no longer reflects its functions
 - (tacitly supported by planning)
- **disconnected countryside**
 - most people living and working in the countryside have no connection with the land (i.e. the countryside)
 - towns and villages used to be directly connected to their surrounding countryside and substantially land-based themselves
- **vestigial leisure / recreation**

A functional / systems approach

- imagine that the planning system was interested in how the countryside works
 - seeking the greatest overall sustainability
 - engaging with all land use
 - supporting **positive** development
- for agriculture
 - directly supporting the forms of agriculture most able to deliver through consents for new farms (including production and management regimes)
 - ELC, Welsh OPD, CSA
 - small farms
 - new dwellings...

Agrivillage

- **land based**
 - mixed land use and income streams but land base is the *raison d'être*
- **designed / managed / coherent**
- **positive**
- **collective**
- **housing**
 - enables new farms / infrastructure
 - but housing is also integral – *new blood*
 - no second / holiday homes

Positive development

- food positive
- energy positive
- water positive
- carbon positive
- landscape positive
- biodiversity and biocapacity positive
- soil positive
- knowledge positive
- people positive

Agrivillage

- a sustainable system
 - authentic – needs a rural location
 - function gives form
 - *these are the planning arguments*
- reflects both old and new thinking about what the countryside is for
- needs and opportunities...
- different scales, locations, characters