

Lower Farm, Chettle, nr. Blandford Forum, Dorset

An Opportunity to Establish an Ethical Micro Dairy



Background

Following the closure of a large intensive dairy farm on the Chettle Estate, Alice Favre, the owner, is offering an opportunity for a forward-thinking and passionate farmer to establish a micro dairy to produce milk and dairy products for the village and local area.

The Chettle Estate is nearly 900 acres of arable and pasture land including 60 acres of woodland. It has a thriving village shop, a well-respected restaurant with 8 rooms (the Castleman Hotel) and 33 dwellings which, unusually, are all owned by Alice. Alice inherited Chettle from her amazing and unconventional mother. Susan was a great custodian and took the estate into the 21st century (with the help of her visionary brother, Teddy, a well-known raconteur), whilst continuing the feeling that it was still bumbling along in the 1970s, when community was still at the heart of any village.

This strong sense of community has been lost in many places, especially amongst the villages in Dorset where many cottages are just second homes. Susan instilled in Alice many different values, the most important ones being a love of the village and the land it is nestled within, a strong work-ethic and not to be interested in money and the trappings of it.

The environment is one of Alice's main passions. So it's essential that through her work on the Estate and for the future of the Chettle community any new projects must address the environment, social and economic issues together through rethinking our food systems, giving opportunities to those who are passionate and educating the next generation on the importance on all of these issues.

Have a [look here](#) on our Instagram page to get a flavour of Chettle.

Market Opportunities

Chettle Store currently sells 50 litres a week of refillable milk in the shop at £1.20 a litre for non-organic milk (from Meggy Moo's Dairy). We also sell another 100-150 litres of milk per week in plastic bottles (some organic, some not). The Castleman Hotel & Restaurant could also buy milk

direct from the dairy, it sells 200-250 dinners a week plus 50-ish breakfasts. This is a great opportunity with a direct route to market.

The Land

The land available extends to around 55 acres. It is Grade 3 with free draining, shallow, lime rich soils over chalk, gently sloping mostly from North to South.

The fields are arranged in seven parcels ranging from 3 acres to 22 acres, mainly to the North and West of the farm buildings. The grassland is a mix of permanent pasture and grass leys and some of the fields are in need of recovery, following over-intensive use in the recent past. The fields are largely enclosed by mature hedges, but associated fencing and gates require repair in some places and re-instating in others. Water can be made available in all the fields, some via a working well (and pump) and when this dries out in a hot summer, there is a metered mains system that can be turned on.

The Buildings

The whole of the former dairy farmstead is currently vacant and a summary of the buildings is shown in the attached plan and schedule.

The buildings and yards require regeneration. The estate is in the process of disposing of the rubbish and waste the previous tenant left and is willing to contribute to the transformation of the buildings and yard, depending on the requirements of the successful proposal.

The buildings are served by mains electricity and water, although these will require some replumbing and rewiring. Existing arrangements for dirty water / slurry handling are inadequate and it is envisaged that new provision would need to be made depending on the scale and nature of any new livestock enterprise.

We envisage that only a small proportion of these buildings would be required for a micro dairy and some would not be suitable in scale and type. Surplus buildings would be re-let in due course for other purposes.

Accommodation

The Estate includes all of the houses and cottage in the village so it will be possible to provide accommodation close to the farm depending on the requirements of the successful applicant.



The Proposition

The Estate would like to invite proposals for how the land and buildings could be used to produce milk and dairy products for local markets.

Broad criteria for the micro-dairy business include:

- It should be based on organic or regenerative farming techniques with a high standard of animal welfare
- It should make use of the existing buildings as far as possible (as opposed to new build)
- It should not use any more building space or land than necessary
- It should work as a self-contained coherent unit, but could have synergies with adjoining arable and livestock farms
- It should be capable of working alongside other potential users of buildings on site
- It needs to be compliant with pollution control regulations and should minimise the need for dirty water handling infrastructure
- It should sell as much produce as possible through Chettle Stores and The Castleman

The Invitation

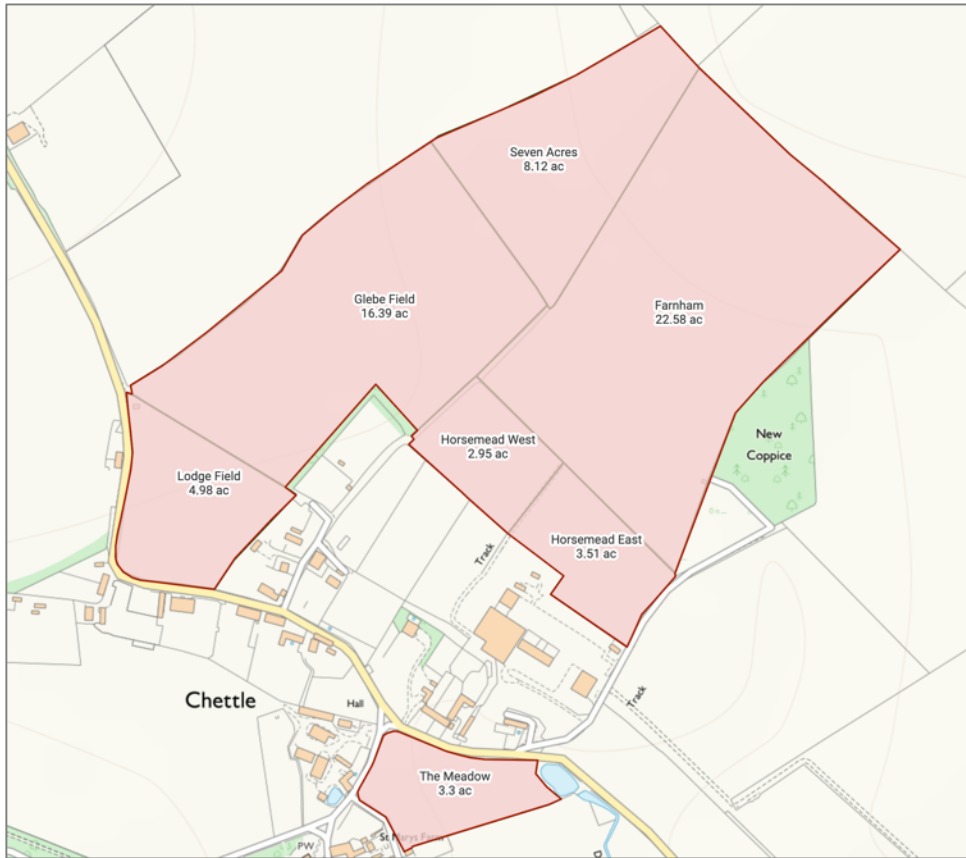
We would like to invite interested people to submit their ideas and proposals and would be particularly interested to know:

- A brief introduction/summary of who you are and why are you looking to set up a micro dairy in Chettle
- What scale and type of system you would propose e.g. animal types and numbers, meat production and anticipated age profile of the herd
- Which buildings you would want to use and what alterations or improvements would be required
- Your proposed bedding/feeding system and space requirements including anticipated housing period
- Slurry/dirty water output and storage requirements, if any
- How you would ensure the highest standards of animal welfare
- How you would avoid or minimise the use of artificial inputs
- How you would restore/manage pastures to optimise nutrition and soil health
- How you would manage the land to benefit wildlife
- Improvements you would propose to minimise carbon emissions and/or increase sequestration
- What you would produce from the milk and how you would market and sell it

Expressions of interest should be sent directly to Alice via email (alice@chettleestate.com) or call on 07976 554848 for an informal chat.

We would like to receive formal proposals by 1st July 2020.

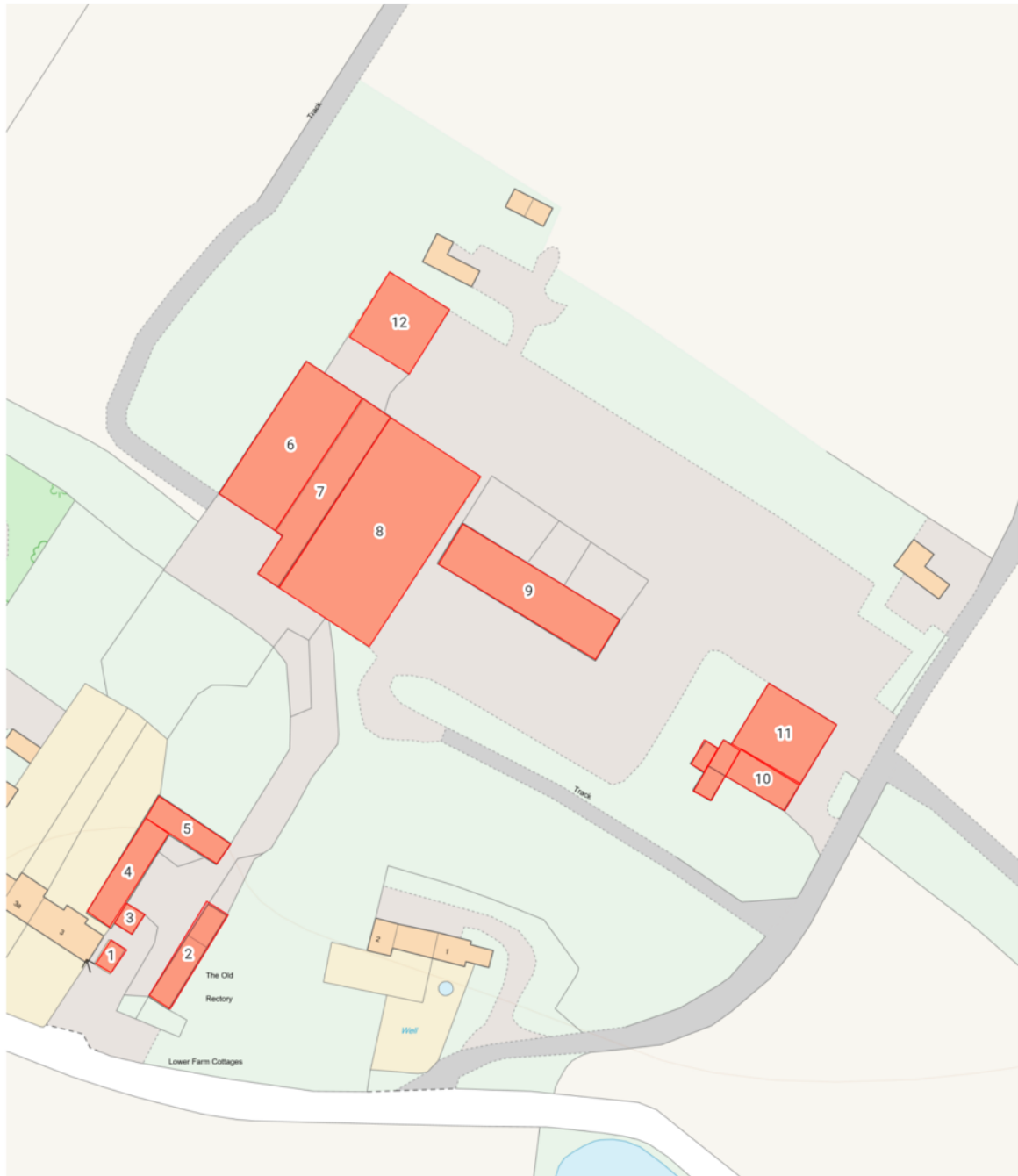




Lower Farm, Chettle - Schedule of Buildings

No.	Description	Approximate Dimensions (meters)	Area sq. m	Notes
1	Former Farm Office	5.6 x 3.6	20	Timber framed, weather-boarded, on staddle stones corrugated iron roof. May be demolished.
2	Cart shed	22 x 5	110	Brick-built, square section corrugated iron roof
3	Dairy	4.4 x 4.5	17	Brick-built, square section corrugated iron roof
4	Old Parlour and Dairy	22 x 5.5	55	Brick, flint and cob construction slate roof. Hay loft above. Rear cob wall needs reconstruction.
5	Old barn	17 x 5	44	Timber construction on brick and flint dwarf walls with weather boarding above, slate roof
6	Cattle Shed	32 x 13	425	Modern open sided, portal frame, steel construction, mainly corrugated asbestos roof, part clad to W
7	Covered yard	40 x 6	264	Covered yard/passage between buildings. Corrugated metal roof
8	Cattle Shed	40 x 22	880	Modern open, part clad portal frame, steel construction, corrugated metal roof. 8 bays
9	Cattle Shed	36 x 9.5	342	Modern open sided portal frame, steel construction, corrugated asbestos roof
10	Machinery store	6.5 x 6.3	40	Timber-framed corrugated iron enclosed building. Needs re-roofing
11	Machinery store	16 x 14	224	Steel framed, enclosed, corrugated square section clad and roofed. Needs repair.
12	Cattle Shed	15 x 14	210	Steel framed open portal frame with lean-to, corrugated asbestos roof.





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20 m

Scale 1:1000 (at A4)

