



THE
NATIONAL
TRUST OF
GUERNSEY

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CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO DOMESTIC CURTILAGE

The National Trust of Guernsey does maintain concerns about the extent to which the policy has been used to allow the spread of suburban development in predominantly rural agricultural areas. We were pleased to see the Development and Planning Authority announced new means of assessing applications for change of use of agricultural land to domestic curtilage in August this year. We are yet to see any applications determined under the new criteria, which relate to improvements in biodiversity and sustainability, but we are hopeful it will put the brakes on a process that has seen a clear departure from the intention of the original policy, which was identified as a route for owners of isolated, non-viable, low-grade ex-horticultural land with limited access and no prospect of re-use to 'tidy up' their property for the benefit of the island with little impact on the stock of agricultural land available for future use.

The National Trust of Guernsey would encourage all owners and tenants of domestic gardens to ensure that their land supports and enhances biodiversity and the environment as far as possible as a matter of course. Whether the requirement for evidence of the biodiversity benefits of change of use will be sufficient to put a stop to those applications that seek to convert viable or potentially viable farmland remains to be seen, and as our purpose is to preserve and enhance Guernsey's heritage and its natural beauty, including its historic buildings, open spaces and plant and animal life, the National Trust of Guernsey will continue to monitor and comment on applications where relevant.

The National Trust of Guernsey would prefer to see the States of Guernsey encourage sustainable enterprise that makes economic activity in the rural industries more viable and therefore establishes value in agricultural land relative to its original use than watch viable land be turned over for use as domestic gardens, which may open routes to other forms of development that would irreversibly change the nature of the land.

October 2021

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