



Simon McEwan
| editor
editorial.csh@
archant.co.uk



Getting to grips with being a smallholder – Adam Henson, page 6

INSIDE YOUR FREE POULTRY

- **Ruffled Feathers** – comment from Andy Cawthray
- **The National Poultry Show** – Grant Brereton reports
- **Breed Focus** – The elegant Yokohama
- **Just the Business** – Rachel Wall set up a poultry business on her smallholding in the Peak District
- **Vet's Forum** – Health questions answered by Victoria Roberts



BRING THE PLANNING SYSTEM UP TO DATE

Many people get disheartened when they try to obtain planning permission for a development which will enable them to lead 'the good life'.

A common scenario is for the aspiring smallholder, often with limited financial resources, to buy a piece of land and then seek to establish a low impact dwelling.

At this point they can become ensnared in a labyrinthine planning process that leaves them angry and disillusioned.

This month we report on an exciting and imaginative project to provide would-be smallholders with affordable land and low-impact dwellings (page 11).

The application was supported by planning officers and the parish council... then rejected by the district planning committee. Now it is due to be decided by an inspector on appeal.

Planning consultant Clive Miller, who writes for this magazine, said it is time the planning system is changed at a national level to recognise that setting up such projects makes good economic and environmental sense.

We strongly agree. As climate change becomes more severe, as food security becomes more tenuous, and as many more millions feel the economic squeeze, it makes perfect sense to encourage more people to develop viable smallholdings where they can become self-sufficient and produce their own food and energy.

5 News

A round-up of news on the rural scene

6 Adam Henson

Getting to grips with being a smallholder

8 Ask the Experts

Your questions answered

11 The Land Battle

Problems with our planning process are highlighted by a smallholding project

16 Husbandry

Tim Tyne's step-by-step guide to testing cattle for bTB

19 Lighten up

Winter is a great time to make candles, says Jules Moore

20 New year, new pigs!

Liz Shankland advice on buying your foundations stock

24 Lambing

Alan Beat continues his series on keeping sheep on a few acres

29 Mutton and nettles

James Strawbridge explains how to make the most of these two smallholding staples

32 A Tree Tragedy

Ash dieback disease, and how to recognise the symptoms

36 Growing

Advice on vegetables for all areas

39 Recipes

Mrs Simkins' tips for cooking with beetroot

SPECIAL SECTION: ALPACAS, FEEDING AND PEST CONTROL

43 Advice on caring for alpacas in the winter months

46 Advice on feeds and feeding

48 Advice on dealing with vermin

51 Classic tractors

Case studies from our readers

56 Property

Small holdings with space for arts and crafts

66 Smallholder's World

Comment on the smallholding scene with Liz Shankland

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The Land Battle – the problems with our planning process: page 11

EDITOR
Simon McEwan
Tel: 01392 888481
editorial.csh@archant.co.uk

PUBLISHER
Anna Atkinson
anna.atkinson@archant.co.uk

SUB-EDITOR
Dawne Daly
dawne.daly@archant.co.uk

ADVERTISING
Enquiries – 01392 888555
Sales executive
Kay Priestley – 01392 888559
kay.priestley@archant.co.uk
Classified sales executive
Elaine Beed – 01392 888561
elaine.beed@archant.co.uk

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GET IN TOUCH

Write to us: Country Smallholding, Archant SW, Fair Oak Close, Exeter Airport Business Park, Clyst Honiton, Exeter, Devon EX5 2UL

Email - editorial.csh@archant.co.uk

Tel - 01392 888555

Interact with fellow smallholders:

Online..... www.countrysmallholding.com

Facebook... www.facebook.com/countrysmallholding

Twitter..... www.twitter.com/ctysmallholding