

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I ROBERT MATTHEW BUTLER of Waltham Nursery, The Green, Millom, Cumbria
LA18 5JD **DO HEREBY STATE** as follows:

1. I am 33 years old. My parents owned Waltham Nursery, The Green, Millom LA18 5JD ("Waltham Nursery"). My parents operated a plant nursery and timber business from the property and operated a small farming enterprise. The property is shown edged red on the plan marked "RMB1". We lived in a house to the front of the property. This is a distinct and separate residential property.
2. Since early childhood I have also had an interest in farming and began working on farms as a teenager. Since leaving school I have been employed either as a farm worker or agricultural and forestry contractor. I have also established a farming business at the property. For reasons of animal husbandry and welfare it is essential that I am present at the property.
3. In approximately 2005 a static caravan was brought onto the property and sited in the location where our house is now built. Photographs of the caravan are attached as "RMB 2". The photographs include aerial photographs showing the location of the caravan in 2010. Initially, the caravan housed contractors employed in the timber business. The caravan became vacant shortly after I started work at 16 years old. I began staying the caravan on temporary basis which developed into full time occupation probably around 2010.

4. I met my now wife Bethan Jay Butler and we began living in the caravan together. We lived in a caravan due to the fact that we needed to be on hand for reasons of animal husbandry welfare. We began jointly developing the farming business with a particular interest in rare breeds. Also, we could not afford to buy or rent a suitable property in the locality.

5. In early 2013 my wife was expecting our first child Peter. It was clear to us that living in the caravan during the winter months with a new born baby or young family would not be acceptable. However, it was essential that we remained at the property due to agricultural enterprise. At this time I took the pragmatic decision to provide a form of dwelling at the property which would afford us a greater degree of comfort and shelter for our family thus ensuring our family's welfare and the ability to continue to provide satisfactory levels of animal husbandry and welfare.

6. We decided that the cheapest method of achieving our objectives was for me to use my own skills as a contractor to provide a form of dwelling. Also, I am fortunate in having contacts within the building trade and with suppliers. The most logical location for the house was the site of the caravan. The house would occupy the same footprint and would be near existing services which served the caravan, particularly the septic tank.

7. This required the static caravan to be removed from the site of the house and could no longer be used as our accommodation. We used a touring caravan which was brought onto the property on a temporary basis while we built the house. Photographs showing the removal of the static caravan and touring caravan are attached as "RMB 3".

7. A local builder was used to construct the concrete floor and cavity walls. To the best of my knowledge and belief all of this work was carried out to a standard which would be compliant with building regulations suitable for a dwelling. I used profile sheeting to externally cover the building for the following reasons:

- (a) It represented a cheap and easy method of weatherproofing
- (b) The fixing of profile sheeting is a skill which I can undertake myself. This saved me costs and it also avoided the delays in employing a plasterer and having rendering work delayed during the winter months.

8. A friend who is a qualified joiner undertook the joinery work and another family member fitted the kitchen. I provided labour to assist both. All electrical and gas fitting work was undertaken by qualified electricians and gas fitters and to the best of my knowledge and belief work has been undertaken in accordance with current standards and in compliance with the building regulations.

9. The dwelling was completed by myself and other local tradesman and provides a functional, comfortable home which meets our family's needs and our ability to be located at the property. The house includes a full bathroom, kitchen, living room on the ground floor and two bedrooms at first floor. It meets my family's needs in terms of accommodation and allows us to remain on site to manage the farming business.

10. Towards the end of Bethan's pregnancy living in the touring caravan as winter approached was difficult and for the final month Bethan moved in with my parents. I

continued to work to complete the house in time for Peter's birth. Peter was born on 14th November 2013, we moved into the house on the 16th November 2013 when Bethan and Peter came home from hospital.

11. Whilst I accept that our home is unconventional it does incorporate many domestic features and I believe that it appears as a home to any reasonable observant visitor to the property. The front window is domestic in design and children's toys and play equipment are regularly located outside and the activities around the property are that which one would normally associate with a home occupied by a young family. We have an external Sky TV satellite dish, wood burner flue and domestic refuse bins. Photographs are attached as "RMB 4" showing the external and internal features of the house.

12. In terms of services the property is connected to mains electricity and water and we pay the appropriate charges. Foul drainage is connected to a shared septic tank. The services were present from the time the static caravan was located on the site. There is no mains gas supply to the property and typical with other properties in the locality we use bottled gas.

13. At all times since the 16th November 2013 we have lived permanently and continuously in the house which is an entirely self-contained dwelling. We have lived in the house openly and without secrecy.

14. The farm complex at Waltham Nursery on which our home is located is entirely separate from the bungalow formerly occupied by my parents. My parents had used the

correspondence address Waltham Nursery when they operated their business. Following their retirement it was decided by ourselves and the new occupants to name the bungalow Bluebell Cottage. This was formalised by an application to Copeland Borough Council street naming and numbering.

15. Due to my father's declining health I took over all responsibility for livestock and management of the farming activities in 2015. We currently farm cattle including Belted Galloways and Riggitt Galloways, Gloucester Old Spot pigs and sheep. We also have four horses and a donkey.

16. In November 2022 I submitted a planning application for a steel frame agricultural building. The purpose of this building was to provide cattle housing. As part of the planning application process a planning officer visited the site. The planning officer's report gives some details as the arrangements at the property and it refers to the closest neighbouring properties as being Bluebell Cottage and Derryelvin.

17. Also, around this time my parents decided that they wished to make arrangements for their retirement. This included moving to a location which was closer to services and would meet their requirements in their retirement. I had no control over this move.

18. I have been able to purchase the farm buildings including our home and the adjoining farmland on which my agricultural building is located. My parent's bungalow was sold to a third party.

19. At no time have I ever sought to conceal the existence of the dwelling. Earlier in this statement I have explained the reasons for the dwellings existence and its design and

external finish. The house has at all times been occupied as our family home. Our existence at the property is far from concealed. Our occupation has always been open and well known locally. As a young family we play a significant role within the local community both socially and due to our farming interests. We have the usual domestic visitors to our home but due to my work we have other visitors such as deliveries, contractors and Vets.

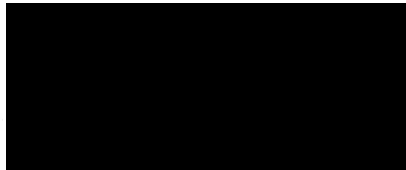
20. Our son George was born in 2017. Unfortunately, following a childhood illness George was registered disabled. Due to these circumstances our home has been regularly visited by healthcare professionals and people concerned with my son's condition and care. Nurses visited our home every three days for a three month period. No concerns were ever raised regarding our occupation of our home and it was in no way concealed.

21. At the time of building the dwelling I had no meaningful knowledge of the planning system, and whilst I accept that I did not seek advice, my knowledge was never sufficiently sophisticated to deliberately conceal a dwelling. Indeed, it is only since I have been contacted by the Council and had discussions with a planning consultant and solicitor that I have been advised regarding matters such as lawful development certificates and immunity from planning.

22. The house was purpose built to meet our specific needs in 2013, it is basic and functional. It was not built for financial reasons, its sole purpose is a site specific as a family home.

23. I have not hidden the matter from the Council. I have contacted on various occasions the Council including the street naming and numbering and planning applications.

AND I BELIEVE that the facts and matters contained in this Statement are true

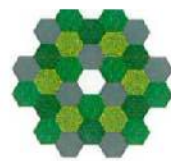
A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Robert Matthew Butler.

ROBERT MATTHEW BUTLER

DATED

17th January

2025



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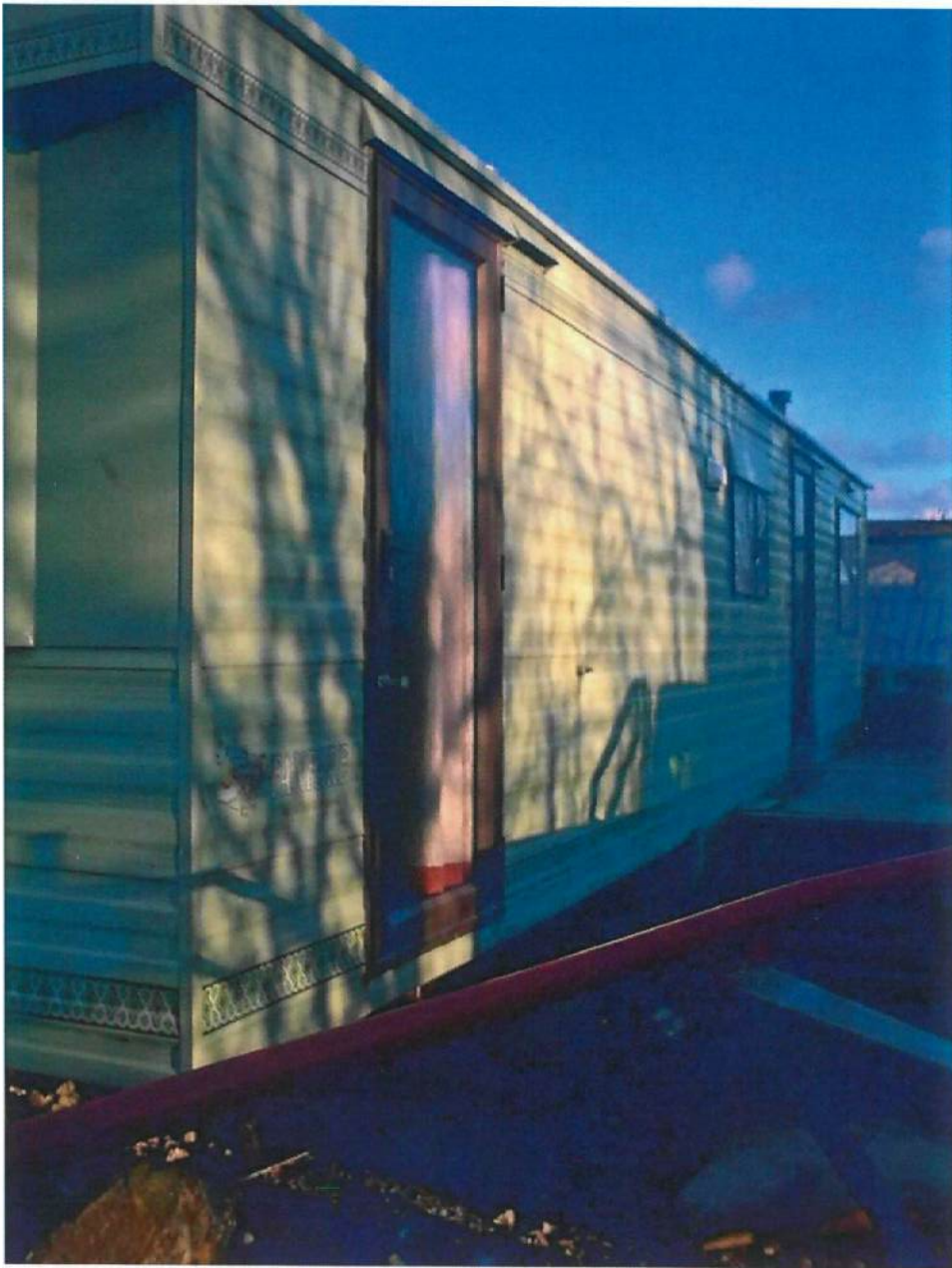


"RMB2



The caravan that was in the same location as the house. Before it was moved to build house. It was in this position since around 2005/2006. The aerial photos attached show the caravan in this position in 2010.

"RMB 2"



2:04

4G+ 59%



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32



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2010 (25.0cm)

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Sample

"RH03"





'RMB4'



"2MB4"







"0184"

