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Uproar at council chief's beauty-spot home

Ben Webster Environment Editor

Building a dream home with a wrap-around balcony affording stunning views of a gorgeous beach is not normally allowed in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

But Chris Wilton has managed to secure planning permission by arguing that he needs to build an "agricultural worker's dwelling" overlooking Whitsand Bay on Rame Head in Cornwall.

His position as chairman of the local parish council may also have helped, claim conservation campaigners bringing a High Court challenge to try to overturn the decision. They say a home with 27 windows, potentially six bedrooms, three bathrooms and detached double garage is "certainly not a normal agricultural dwelling".

More than 250 people who want to protect the wild beauty of the area, including a visitor from Canada, have donated a total of £11,000 to fund a legal challenge against Cornwall county council's approval of the home.

A High Court judge ruled this week that there were grounds for a judicial review hearing into claims by the Rame Protection Group that the council had breached its duty to give adequate reasons for its decision and failed to demonstrate that the home accorded with its development plan.

County councillors voted seven to six to approve the home despite the officer for Rame Head Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the council's principal planning officer recommending refusal because of the negative impact on the protected landscape. New



homes in open countryside in Cornwall are only permitted in "special circumstances", including when a farm worker has to live in a particular location.

Rame Protection Group said Rame Head was "hugely valued for its breathtaking scenery and tranquillity".

It added: "If this development is allowed to proceed, there will be nothing to stop any farmer who owns a plot of land in a beauty spot using this case as a precedent to secure permission to build in any of Cornwall's most breathtakingly beautiful locations."

The group claimed that Maker-



Chris Wilton said his new home at Rame Head would be an "agricultural worker's dwelling"

with-Rame parish council had shown "favouritism" to Mr Wilton, its chairman, by not holding a public meeting before expressing support for his plans.

Mr Wilton, 46, said the campaigners were motivated partly by envy. He argues that the development is properly

classified as an agricultural worker's dwelling as he lives and farms locally.

He said neither he nor his father, also a parish councillor, were involved in the parish council's decision. He said the council "weren't allowed" to consult the public due to coronavirus restrictions.

The parish council said it had "reached an unbiased decision on this application as the councillors felt the impact to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was minimal".

Cornwall county council said the decision to grant planning permission would be "robustly defended".

Worker in crush recycling

Will Humphries Southwest Correspondent

A recycling centre crushed to death a Victorian factory worker.

Dale McClelland was killed when he was inside a machine that accidentally turned on while he was inside. He was in a recycling centre in Cornwall, yesterday after a manslaughter.

Judge Neil O'Connell's sentence, said that the cause of death was health and safety failure at a Victorian factory on Victorian factory.

"They would be expected to be eminently foreseeable injury was inevitable.

Mr McClelland was killed when colleagues were on the phone ringing in.

Plymouth Crown Court. Mr McClelland, 46, was not properly trained. Harvey, who had been with the company, how the compactor in November.

Mr McClelland was killed when Mr Harvey was on the control panel and the machine was not switched off. Paramedics were called to the land, who was about 100m from the "catastrophic crush" and declared dead at the scene.