

Trouble at t'mill for Bluestone

BLUESTONE'S plans for the future of Blackpool Mill will have to go back to the drawing board after the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority refused an application to develop the site.

Plans for the grade-2 listed building included restoration of the mill, a narrow gauge railway, a 792sqm events barn, a 150 space car park, cycle parking, drainage works, and landscaping.

The application was originally due to be discussed in December, but was brought before the park's development management committee - a month earlier than the company expected.

Robin Williams, agent for Bluestone, said it was a "total surprise" that the application had been brought to the committee so soon.

Committee member Ted Sangster proposed deferring the application so members could visit Blackpool Mill before making a decision on the application.

"I am disappointed that the relationship with the applicant and the discussions with officers appears to have not been as co-operative as perhaps it could have been.

"As the applicant has told us it was a surprise when it was decided to bring this to this meeting," he said.

But the development manage-

ment committee refused the application, agreeing that a fresh application by Bluestone would be welcomed.

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Bluestone will now have an opportunity to submit a new application to the national park in 12 months without any cost.

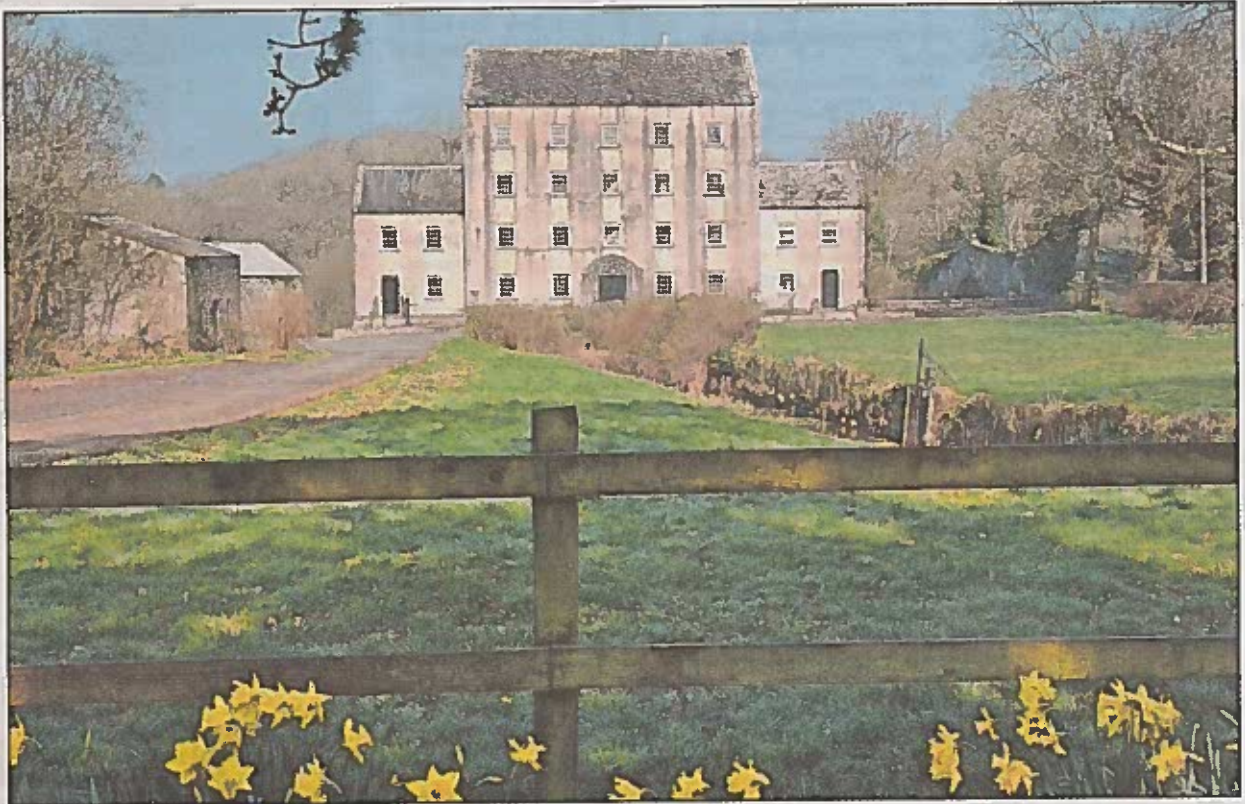
Valerie Bradley, a resident living near the mill, criticised the effects on wildlife in the conservation area surrounding the mill.

National Park case officer Nicola Gandy said the £2.5m development expected to make more than £300,000 revenue a year, and would provide 45 full-time equivalent jobs in Pembrokeshire.

But there were concerns raised about the 150 space car park, as the single track road leading to the site could become congested.

A second application for a land train route between Bluestone and Blackpool Mill was also refused.

Following the meeting, Liz Weedon, Bluestone's Head of Projects said: "We had been in regular contact with officers since May, thus it was a total



Bluestone wants to develop the historic Blackpool Mill. PICTURE: Gareth Davies Photography.

surprise to us when without forewarning the application was scheduled for today's meeting.

"We are confident that had the com-

mittee date not been brought forward, we would have been able to submit the responses that would have dealt with the draft reasons for refusal by offic-

ers.

"Decisions to approve or refuse any planning application should not be made without all of the facts."