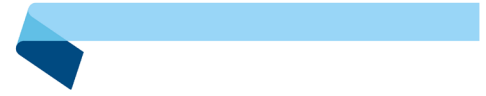


Batcheller Monkhouse



PLANNING STATEMENT

Retrospective Change of Use of Land to a Seasonal
Campsite, comprising 30 pitches and associated facility
blocks and covered seating area

at

Cattlestone Farm
Harbolets Road
West Chiltington
West Sussex

On behalf of

Mr A Dougharty

Prepared by

Charlotte Catton-Giltinane AssocRTPI
c.catton-giltinane@batchellermonkhouse.com

Tel: 01798 877555

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1 INTRODUCTION

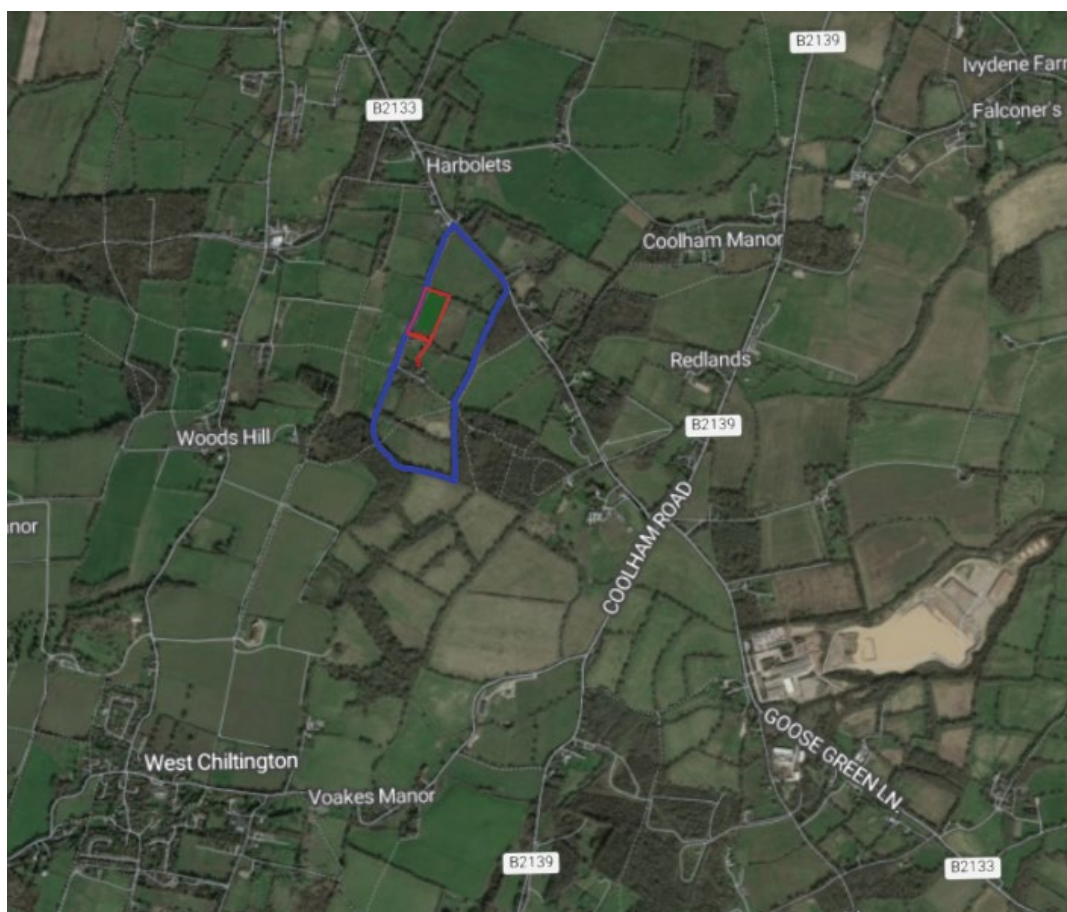
- 1.1 This statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective planning application for the change of use of land to a seasonal campsite, comprising 30 pitches, facility blocks and covered seating area. The site is located at Cattlestone Farm, Harbolets Road, West Chiltington, West Sussex.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement sets out the relevant background to assist Horsham District Council in its determination of the planning application. The statement includes a description of the site and its surroundings, relevant planning history, details of the proposed development, a summary of the planning policy context, and an appraisal of the scheme against all relevant planning considerations.
- 1.3 The application is supported by the following documents and plans:
- Application form
 - CIL form
 - Site Location Plan
 - Existing Site Block Plan
 - Proposed Floor Plans (Facility Blocks and Covered Seating Area)
 - Proposed Elevation Plans (Facility Blocks and Covered Seating Area)
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

2 SITE AND CONTEXT

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The application site forms part of Cattlestone Farm, which lies to the south of Harbolets Road, West Chiltington, as shown in **Figure 2.1** below. Cattlestone Farm is a holding of circa 23 hectares which has been owned and farmed by the Dougharty family for around 60 years. The land is currently used for arable farming and the grazing of cattle and sheep.
- 2.1.2 Having lived and worked on the farm his entire life, the applicant recognises the tranquillity of the holding and in exploring opportunities to diversify income he felt that visitor accommodation was the most appropriate way to promote the enjoyment of the locality. In the summer of 2021, he made use of temporary permitted development rights which allowed the farm to operate a pop-up campsite on the field in the centre of the holding and for the last three years has been using the certificate route via Wonderlust. The campsite has proved to be of great success and attracted significant interest.

Figure 2.1 – Site Plan



2.2 Site Context

2.2.1 The site is bounded by agricultural fields to the north and east which are owned and used by the applicant for livestock and arable farming. Immediately south of the application site is the main farmyard. The wider area is characterised by farmland, equestrian facilities, vineyards and small-scale commercial businesses include a wedding venue (Downsview).

2.2.2 The village of West Chiltington lies approximately 1.5km to the south which can be accessed via a network of footpaths which run through and around the site. The right of way network also provides access to local attractions including the Nyetimber Vineyard and The Queens Head pub.

2.2.3 The site is also well located in proximity to local visitor attractions and facilities including:

PLACE OF INTEREST	TYPE	TRAVEL TIME
Warren Hill (National Trust)	Wildlife / Nature	12-minute drive
Chanctonbury Ring	Historic Landmark	12-minute drive
West Sussex Golf Club	Sports / Leisure	13-minute drive
Southwater Country Park	Wildlife / Nature	13-minute drive
South Downs	Wildlife / Nature	13-minute drive
RSPB Pulborough Brooks	Wildlife / Nature	15-minute drive

PLACE OF INTEREST	TYPE	TRAVEL TIME
Storrington and Steyning	Historic Towns	15-18 minute drive
Bramber Castle	Historic Landmark	18-minute drive
St Mary's House and Gardens, Bramber	Historic House	18-minute drive
Amberley Museum	Museum	20-minute drive
Horsham	Historic Town	20-minute drive
Golding Barn Raceway	Sports / Leisure	22-minute drive
Passies Pond	Sports / Leisure	25-minute drive
Arundel	Historic Town	27-minute drive

2.3 Environmental Designations

2.3.1 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low risk of flooding in accordance with the Environment Agency's flood maps for planning. There are no designated habitats covering the site and no heritage assets in the vicinity. The Hurston Warren SSSI lies 3.8km to the south west and the site lies within its Impact Risk Zone.

2.4 Planning History

- 2.4.1 There is no planning history of relevant to the application site however within the wide site ownership the following application is of note:

DC/22/1915

Change of Use of Land for the siting of 2 shepherds huts to be used as holiday lets, associated ecological enhancements and creation of new ponds.

Approved 26th May 2023

2.5 Site Access

- 2.5.1 The application site is accessed directly off Harbolets Road via a private access track that is used to serve Cattlestone Farm.

Figure 2.2 – Site Access



- 2.5.2 Access to the application site is located directly off the private access that is used to only by the applicants Cattlestone Farm as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 – Application Site Access



3. PROPOSAL

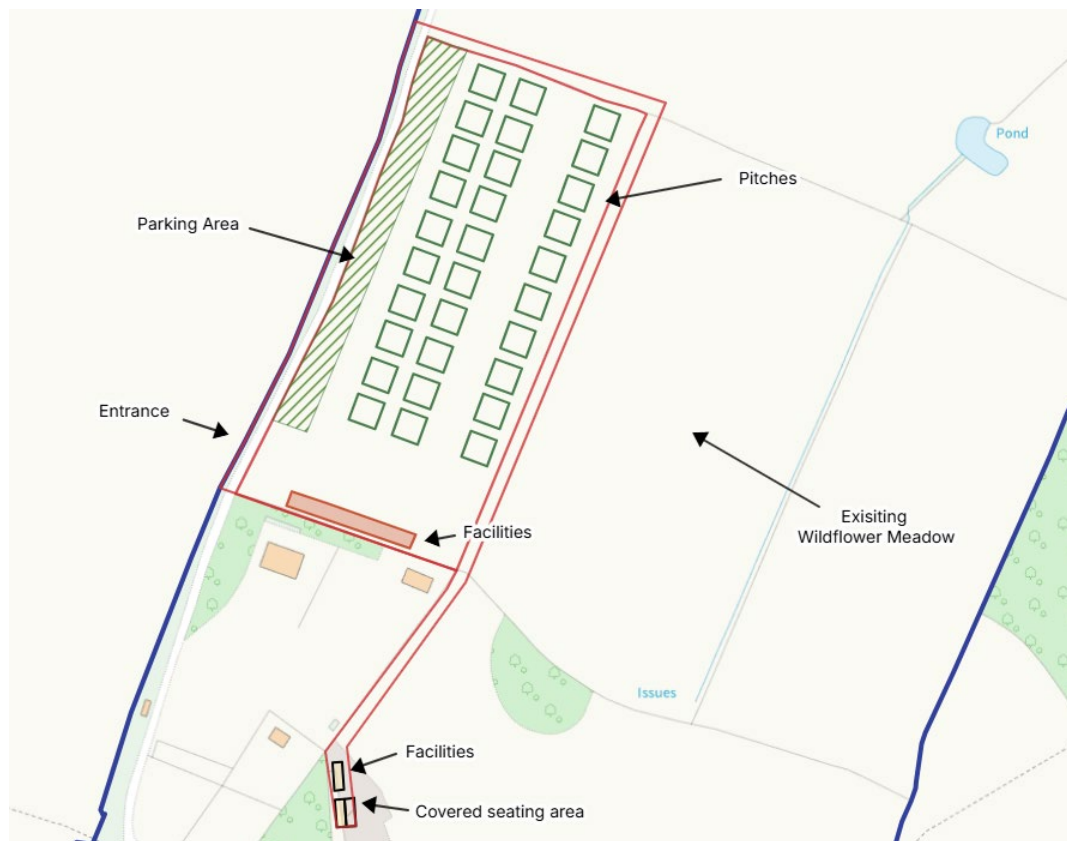
3.1 Use

- 3.1.1 The applicant has successfully been running via an exemption certificate for the past five years season camping but now seeks to formalise this arrangement via a retrospective planning application.
- 3.1.2 The applicant seeks planning permission for the use of the central field on the holding as a 30-pitch seasonal campsite, operating between the month of May to October inclusive, together with the associated facilities already installed on site. Outside of the camping season, the field will continue to be farmed with the rest of the holding under an agricultural use.

3.2 Layout

- 3.2.1 The main camping area is located on the western part of the central field, and which allocates 30 camping pitches measuring 10m x 10m with a 3.5m buffer in between each pitch. No electrical hook ups are provided, nor any hard surfacing, and each pitch is merely the existing grassland within the field.
- 3.2.2 The camping pitches will overlook the existing wildflower meadow that has been planted by the applicant overlooking the farmland beyond.
- 3.2.3 Parking is located within the entrance of the field with no parking allowed within the pitches to ensuring the tranquillity of the setting is preserved.
- 3.2.4 Pedestrian access is available from the parking area to the pitches, as well as to the WC and shower facilities within the campsite, via a field gate. Additional facilities in the southern field comprising four shower rooms and toilets, along with a covered seating area and kitchenette are also accessible from the campsite through an existing field gate. Outside of the camping season, the covered seating area may be used for storing sundries and other farm-related equipment.

Figure 3.1 – Existing Site Layout



3.3 Design and Appearance

- 3.3.1 The camping field has no electrical hook ups installed and will merely be an open field with wooden stakes used to mark out each individual plot. The plots measure 10m x 10m with a 3.5m buffer provided in between each pitch.

Figure 3.2 – Photo of Camping Field



- 3.3.2 The campsite sits above a wildflower meadow, with farmland stretching across the surrounding landscape, creating a peaceful setting that allows visitors to fully take in the view, thoughtfully designed to suit its rural surroundings.

Figure 3.3 – Photo from the Meadow Field Towards Camping Field



- 3.3.2 Parking for visitors will be provided within the designated parking area located at the entrance of the camping field with no parking allowed within the individual pitches.
- 3.3.3 Located to the south of the pitches are 4 no. WC's, 4 no. shower huts and a washing up station which are movable structures that have no foundations and are connected to the existing package treatment plant and mains water already located on site.
- 3.3.4 Each hut measures 1.5m x 2.5m and are constructed with a simple timber frame and corrugate sheet roofing to the walls and ceiling and are in keeping with the materials found on buildings within the wider holding.

Figure 3.4 – Shower and WC Huts



3.3.5 To the south, accessed via an existing field gate, there is a covered outdoor seating area and an additional facilities building. This structure provides sheltered seating and a kitchenette for guests to use during inclement weather, along with supplementary shower and washroom facilities.

3.3.6 The covered seating area measures 12m by 12m and is positioned in the corner of the field near the farmyard, consolidating built development within a single area of the farm. It has a simple design and uses a neutral palette of materials, consisting of a timber frame with a corrugated roof. The sloped, flat roof reaches 2.7m in height at the front and 2.1m at the rear. The structure is raised above ground level and does not require foundations.

- 3.3.7 The additional washroom facility takes the form of a movable shepherd's hut, constructed with a timber frame and a corrugated sheet roof. It is fully mobile, with no foundations, and sits above ground level on a wheeled base. The structure is illustrated in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 – Additional Facilities Structure



- 3.3.8 It is connected to an existing package treatment plant and is connected to the existing water connection within the field

3.4 Access

- 3.4.1 Access into the site is taken via the farm track leading from Harbolets Road to the north with no alterations required.

3.5 Waste

- 3.5.1 Foul waste from the showers and toilet blocks will be drained into an existing package treatment place on site and collected in a slurry tanker by a waste disposal company.

- 3.5.2 Water supply and recycling facilities will be located outside the camping area within a designated zone. Waste bins will be provided in each toilet and shower cubicle. Waste will be collected daily by the applicant, checked, and sorted into recyclable and non-recyclable materials where it has not been correctly separated by guests.

3.6 Management Plan

- 3.6.1 A management plan is submitted with the application which sets out the rules that will be put in place on the site for all guests to adhere to. The campsite will be managed by the applicant who is on hand 24 hours a day to deal with any unforeseen issues.

5 PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the provisions of the statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 Currently the Development Plan for the site comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). There is no made (adopted) Neighbourhood Plan for West Chiltington Parish.

5.3 Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Horsham District Council Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study (2016).

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2025)

5.4.1 The NPPF places a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the planning system. Paragraph 8 clarifies that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 8 also states that the planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

5.4.2 It is submitted that this application conforms to Section 2, paragraph 8, of the NPPF, and constitutes 'sustainable development', fulfilling the three overarching objectives, as follows:

- i. An economic objective - The application is economically viable and sustainable and will ensure the continued longevity of Cattlestone Farm. The proposal will assist in supporting economic activity in the local area.
- ii. A social objective - The business will contribute to the local rural economy which in turn provides social benefits improving social sustainability. The proposal will indeed assist in the provision of a service that will then be able to continue and be passed onto the next generation.
- iii. An environmental objective – The scheme provides a low impact campsite that does not require any changes to the land in order to function and has been sensitively designed as evidenced in the attached preliminary ecological appraisal.

5.4.3 Of particular relevance to this submission, is paragraph 88, 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy', which considers that that 'planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses...'

5.5 Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

5.5.1 HDPF is in the process of being reviewed and a new Horsham District Local Plan 2023 - 2040 is currently at Regulation 19 stage. It is not sufficiently advanced to be a material consideration. The site is located within an area outside built up area boundaries and will therefore be subject to countryside policies, specifically Policy 10 and 26.

5.5.2 Policy 10 relates to rural economic development and states that sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the district will be encouraged in order to provide economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. Development that maintains the quality and character of the area whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle.

5.5.3 Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and must contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in and the enjoyment of the countryside. New buildings in the rural area will be acceptable, provided that it supports sustainable economic growth and has considered the use of existing buildings beforehand.

- 5.5.4 Policy 26 states that outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location and (among others) enable the sustainable development of rural areas. Proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its character and location and does not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside. It should also protect, conserve and/or enhance the key features and characteristics of the local landscape character.
- 5.5.5 Another key policy of relevance to this application is Policy 11, which relates to tourism and cultural facilities. It states that measures that promote tourism will be encouraged. Any development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the location and should increase the range or improve the quality of accommodation.
- 5.5.6 Support will particularly be given to proposals that develop opportunities associated with rural diversification and rural development initiatives.
- 5.5.7 Other policies of relevance to the proposal include:

POLICY	SUMMARY
Policy 1 Sustainable Development	Reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
Policy 7 Economic Growth	Sustainable employment development in the district will be achieved by (inter alia) the promotion of the district as an attractive place to stay and visit to increase the value of the tourism economy.
Policy 24 Environmental Protection	The high quality of the district's environment will be protected.

POLICY	SUMMARY
Policy 25 District Character and the Natural Environment	The council will support development that protects, conserves and enhances landscape character; and maintains and enhances the green infrastructure network and provides a net biodiversity gain where possible.
Policy 32 Quality of New Development	Development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment.
Policy 33 Development Principles	Development will be required to ensure that there is not unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers / users of nearby property and land. The scale, massing and appearance of the development should be at a high standard of design and layout and relates sympathetically to surrounding development. Building materials should also be of a high standard. Developments should include safe and visually attractive areas for parking vehicles and cycles and the storage of bins / recycling.

5.6 Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study (2016)

- 5.6.1 The Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study was published in July 2016 and sets out the supply and demand for different types of accommodation in the district. The tourism strengths of rural West Sussex are related to the natural environment (walking, cycling, horse riding, golf).

- 5.6.2 The study revealed a strong weekend demand between May and September, with most sites often filling and turning business away at these times, particularly on Bank Holiday weekends. There was also strong midweek demand for camping sites during the summer school holiday, with some sites frequently filling throughout the week during this period. Weekend demand was reasonably strong in April and October, if the weather is good, although midweek in these months is lower.

6 APPRAISAL

6.1 The issues of relevance in the determination of the application are as follows:

- Principle of the proposed use
- Design and landscape
- Ecology and trees
- Amenity
- Access and parking

6.2 These matters are considered in further detail below.

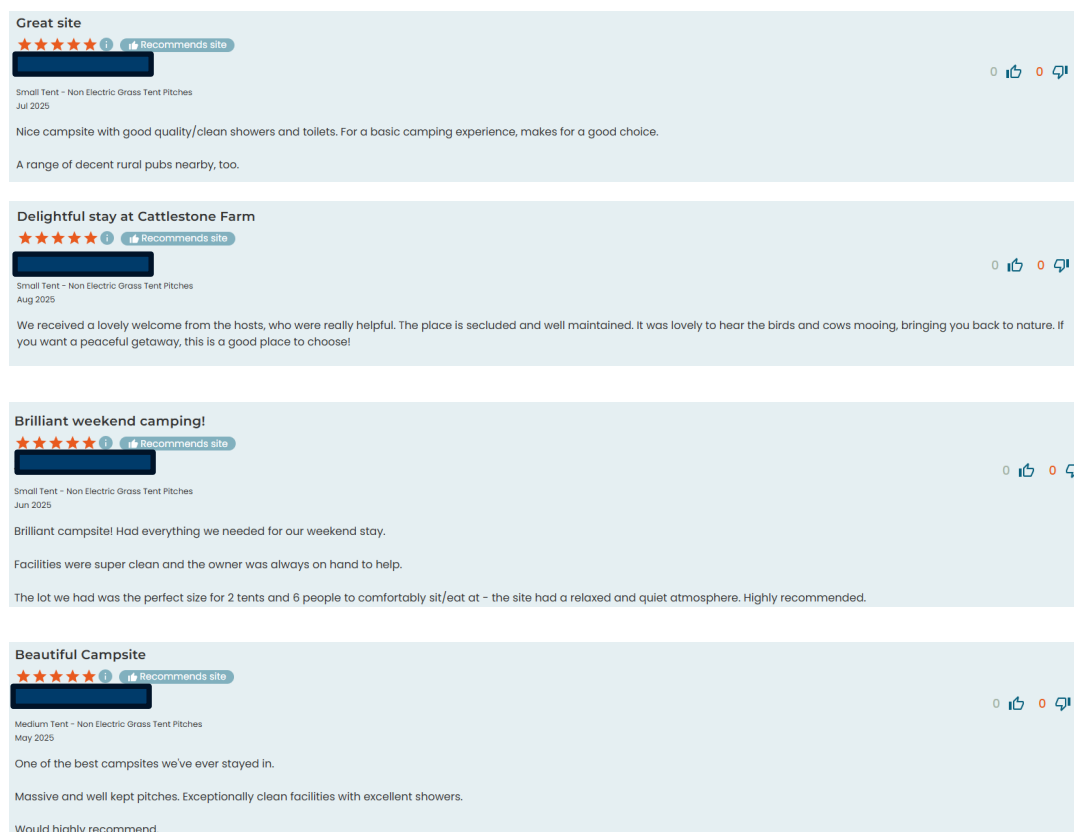
6.3 Principle of the Proposed Use

6.3.1 The campsite which has been running under an exemption certificate for the past five years is now seeking permission via a full planning application for a seasonal change of use of land from agriculture to a 30-pitch campsite, which is offered to guests as a form of diversification in line with Policy 10 of the HDPF. It will provide a modest but important uplift in revenue for Cattlestone Farm during the summer months, without compromising the running of the agricultural business. The camping area accommodates a small part of the holding and will allow the remainder to be farmed as it is currently.

6.3.2 In reflection of the NPPF, tourist accommodation is supported in principle under Policy 11 which states that measures to promote the enjoyment of the countryside and contribute to the local economy will be encouraged. The applicants seeks to provide a quiet rural experience where guests can connect with nature and livestock in the vicinity of the site, including his herd of highland cattle which have been a particular draw for guests.

6.3.3 The campsite has already attracted positive reviews which demonstrates the quality of the accommodation proposed and attraction of the local area. Extracts of the reviews are listed below:

Figure 6.1 – Campsite Reviews



6.3.4 The seasonal permission would allow the campsite to operate for a longer period than is currently permitted under permitted development rights, while also removing the need for the applicant to obtain an annual exemption certificate through a third party. This would help increase the availability of tourist accommodation in the local area and support greater visitor spending at nearby facilities and attractions, many of which are accessible via the extensive public rights of way network. The applicant already provides guest hampers containing produce and other goods sourced from local businesses and intends to continue this practice.

6.3.5 Due to the type of accommodation proposed, it would not be possible for the huts to be contained within an existing building on the farm, although the structures will be temporary in nature – being positioned above ground without foundation – and could be removed from the site should the use cease in the future.

- 6.3.6 Overall, the application represents rural diversification and rural tourism and will contribute to the local economy by increasing visitor spending at local businesses and services, including pubs, shops and attractions. This will be a quiet and low-key use which will help to promote the enjoyment of the countryside in line with the HDPF and NPPF.

6.4 Design and Landscape

- 6.4.1 The Horsham Tourism Study and the NPPF acknowledge a need for new buildings in the countryside associate with sustainable rural development and visitor accommodation.
- 6.4.2 The structures for which retrospective planning permission is sought are placed onto site as required for the camping season and will match the design of the buildings already located within the wider holding and are of an agricultural appearance as well as the two approved holiday huts located further north.
- 6.4.3 The existing covered seating area will provide the necessary cooking and sitting space for guests to use as required, particularly during periods of unforeseen adverse weather. The structure has been designed to be multi-functional which means that outside of camping season it can be used for farm storage. The larger structures have been carefully positioned in the corner of the field so as to not affect the ability to farm the surrounding land. It has been designed to appear as a modest farm building for this reason, similar to those found in the adjacent farmyard.
- 6.4.4 The design approach for the two structures is considered to be appropriate for its rural location and will not appear as out of place in the landscape in line with Policy 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

6.5 Ecology and Trees

- 6.5.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) site visit was undertaken by Abrehart Ecology (Sussex) Ltd which confirmed that the application site comprises other neutral grassland, together with existing movable welfare facilities and a modest seating area associated with the current seasonal use. No priority habitats are present within the application site. The landowner has confirmed that skylarks are breeding within the adjacent field, indicating suitable habitat in the wider area. No active nests were recorded on site during the survey. The proposals will not result in the loss or permanent degradation of habitats, and the ecological baseline of the site will remain unchanged. Subject to precautionary pre-mowing checks for active skylark nests during the breeding season (March–August inclusive), no significant ecological effects are anticipated.
- 6.5.2 No external lighting is proposed as part of this application nor has been installed. Should any lighting be required in the future it is asked that this is agreed via a planning condition attached to this decision.
- 6.5.3 The outdoor seating area and shepherds hut facility building is located on the edge of an agricultural field in a location that is separated from the nearest vegetation by a deep field ditch. The ditch has hindered root growth into the field with the structure requiring no below ground digging due to its moveable nature.

6.6 Amenity

- 6.6.1 The camping field is located more than 240 metres from the nearest residential property, while the facilities building and covered seating area are situated over 480 metres away. Given the nature of the proposal, it is considered highly unlikely that any noise disturbance will arise. In addition, the campsite has operated successfully over the past five years without any reported noise complaints.
- 6.6.2 The campsite operates in accordance with a management plan (submitted with this application), which sets out rules that all guests must adhere to. These include a prohibition on amplified music, designated quiet hours between 10:30pm and 7:00am, and restrictions on external visitors and large groups.

6.7 Access and Parking

- 6.7.1 The site benefits from an existing access and entrance gate, which will be used by guests to reach their pitches. An informal parking area is provided at the front of the camping field, allowing the land to be easily reinstated to agricultural use once the camping season has ended.
- 6.7.2 Due to the scale of the proposal, there is not expected to be any tangible difference to the number of vehicles accessing the site given it is a working farm.
- 6.7.3 Visitors will be encouraged to use the public right of way network wherever possible through the provision of local PROW maps to reduce vehicle trips to and from the site.

7 SUMMARY

- 7.1 This planning application seeks retrospective planning permission for the change of use of land to a 30-pitch campsite with associated moveable facility structures.
- 7.2 The proposal represents a form of farm diversification which will support a long-running farming business that has been operated by the applicant's family for many years. The proposal will provide a small but important uplift in the farm's revenue as it moves through uncertain times in farming, as well as increase visitor spending in the locality.
- 7.3 The pitches occupy only a small part of the holding and will allow the remainder of the land to be farmed as it does currently. It has been designed and arranged to easily revert back to an agricultural use when the season completes. This includes the avoidance of hard surfacing in both the camping area and siting of the structures so they can easily be removed from site or used for agricultural purposes during the winter months.
- 7.4 The site is set with a network of public right of ways which will encourage exploration of the area and the use of local facilities in West Chiltington.
- 7.5 The campsite has already been operating successfully for the past 5 years under an exemption certificate with no noise complaints being received.
- 7.6 The application is in line with both national and local planning policies which encourage farm diversification; proposals that support the tourism industry; and those which encourage the use and enjoyment of the local countryside.
- 7.7 It is therefore hoped that Horsham District Council can support and recommend the application for approval.