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SENT BY EMAIL VIA PLANNING PORTAL

Email: [REDACTED]

Objection to Planning Application DC/25/2057 – Land North of Little Slaughterford by Miller Homes – 68 Dwellings

Dear HDC Planning, any other committee or person who views this,

Introduction

I am writing as a member of the public to formally submit my **objection** to the planned development by Miller Homes under application DC/2025/2057.

I have lived in Barns Green for 28 years and over the years have seen a gradual change from a small rural village to a place that has kept it's ruralness but have taken new developments and as a result an increase in vehicles on the surrounding roads have caused more potholes and broken roads which need resurfacing amongst other issues which is irrelevant to planning considerations. Whilst I accept some development is required to meet housing needs, I do not accept this current application that is proposed by Miller Homes.

The application was released to villagers and concerned parties in early January, with only four weeks provided to review numerous in-depth documents amounting to hundreds of pages. This short timeline is inadequate. The refusal to grant an extension, as requested by the Parish Council and the steering committee, raises concerns about the fairness of the process and suggests a rushed approach to decision-making in the

hope that the villagers are blind-sided to accept the development. I sincerely hope this is not the case.

Having read some of the documents and being informed I have a deep concern about the documentation that is being presented to planning from Miller Homes and the various parties they have engaged with to justify their plan.

Key Areas of Concern

- Planning
- Electricity
- Water and Sewage
- Flooding
- Traffic, Safety, and Parking
- Infrastructure
- Effect on Listed Buildings
- Ancient Woodland and Hedgerow Damage
- Inaccurate Supporting Documents
- Common Sense

Planning

In 2025, the Neighbourhood Village Plan was adopted after extensive consultations, identifying 28 potential development sites and prioritizing the top two that were suitable sites. The field targeted by Miller Homes was not among these and was specifically deemed unsuitable for development due to its central location and potential to damage the rural character of Barns Green. HDC previously agreed with this assessment but have now turned against their decision has been an undeliverable option to considering the field as suitable. What is the reasoning behind this and when was this decision made? Where is the evidence/documents to support this u-turn?

Furthermore, as the HDC plan is not yet finalized, only the Neighbourhood Plan should be enforced, and the consideration of this field for development contradicts the parishioners' decision.

If HDC decide to follow their own draft plan, then why is Miller homes putting in a request for 68 homes when the site was only allocated 50 dwellings. This is an increase of 36% and unjustifiable overdevelopment. A thorough review should be undertaken as to why it is necessary to increase to this number.

With the plans drawn by Miller Homes the Countryside Policy must be considered by HDC. The proposed development site is outside the Built-up Area Boundary (BUAB) and

classified as 'Countryside'. Under Policy 26 of the HDC Local Plan, only location-essential development is allowed in the countryside. This speculative housing proposal does not meet that criterion.

Electricity

Barns Green's electricity supply is currently inadequate for additional development. The recent Sumners Ponds development relies on back-up generators due to lack of stability from the grid connection and has hampered home sales. Power outages have historically been frequent in Barns Green, and although less common now, electrical problems persist, sometimes leaving residents without power for hours a few times a year. The infrastructure cannot support another 68 homes.

Water and Sewage

The village sewage plant is over capacity, resulting in frequent leaks of raw sewage and pollution of Parsons Brook, a tributary of the river Adur which flows into Knepp Estate—a significant rewilding reserve. Current water quality is poor, harming local wildlife and ecosystems. Adding more homes would worsen the situation.

The Council's own committee reports have documented that in 2022 Barns Green experienced 43 sewage overflow events totalling 411 hours which equates to more than 17 days of raw sewage discharge. Overflows in 2022 are not an isolated case. Local residents confirmed that the discharge of sewage from the treatment works is a regular and continuing issue. (See picture of sewage overflow taken this week) (Pic 8 -10)

Pollution from our sewage system ultimately ends up in the estuary of the Adur which is a saltmarsh habitat and classified as an SSSI. In fact along this waterway there are 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. None of these have been reviewed or reported on in any water reports concerning this development. HDC own commissioned document produced by experts AECOM titled Horsham Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment dated November 2023 is factually inaccurate as it is stating BG links into the river Arun and assessments were considered on the SSSI's that relate to this river. This document should not be taken into consideration when reviewing the application, and on this alone the application should be stopped until a new report is produced detailing the impact on the River Adur and it's SSSI sites.

Sumners Ponds new properties are on a cesspit system due to inadequate sewage infrastructure, and the same may apply to Miller Homes, making the properties less attractive. Sumners Ponds housing developers are struggling to sell the homes, this questions why is it necessary to have a further 68 homes in the village. Southern Water has yet to provide a required report for the proposed development.

Flooding

Barns Green often faces flooding during heavy rain or storms. The existing culverts are insufficient, leading to frequent flooding on village roads, at the shop, Heron's Reach (listed home attached to the shop), the pub, and nearby homes. The field slated for development consists of clay, siltstone, sandstone, and limestone, which aid drainage and water absorption. Replacing this natural system with impermeable surfaces i.e. the homes, driveways, roads will exacerbate flooding. The proposed drainage pond is inadequate for the volume of water the village receives and the run-off from the fields. The water needs to go somewhere and there is a real risk that homes will be flooded even more and should be considered by HDC as whether the proposed drainage solution is adequate to stop future flooding.

The shop, Heron's Reach and the pub opposite the proposed development, gardens and homes in Six Acres Close and 39/37 the Hordens have all been flooded with significant damage and insurance claims in the past years, this development will only add to the fear that this could happen again, because of the inadequate drainage proposals. (See pictures of flooding at outside Heron's Reach and The Queen's Head Pub) (Pics 2 – 7 & 19-31)

Traffic, Parking, and Safety

The planned entrance to the development is directly opposite the shop and pub, threatening both businesses and disrupting current traffic patterns. The road is narrow and often single lane due to parked vehicles. Many people driving through the village stop at the shop to grab groceries, locals stop off, and people park along the road to visit the pub. The application includes traffic calming measures and pedestrian safety features that will create pinch points and significantly reduce on-road parking. This reduction will adversely affect residents, customers of the pub and shop, and complicate deliveries to both businesses. (Pic 11 -18)

Loss of parking will negatively affect the shop and pub, which are vital village amenities. Reduced parking may lead to business closures, harming the community which would be unacceptable. The elderly and non-driving residents depend on the shop, and the pub relies on parking for events and everyday business.

Any suggestion to put in parking solutions within the development are impractical, as spaces will be used by residents as if they are their own. This issue of where will vehicles park to access the village amenities is a great concern.

Furthermore, the safety of schoolchildren waiting for buses near the shop also need careful consideration. Is the school bus going to be allowed to stop morning and evening if the development is agreed at the corner/junction to The Hordens. If yes then

this will cause issues for those residents trying to get into and off the development as traffic back ups.

In general, the roads around Barns Green are used not just by vehicle owners but horse riders and cyclists including large groups of club road cyclists who use the roads around Barns Green as practice routes. This shows that Barns Green is a rural settlement and should be kept rural. Putting another 68 homes and a further 50+ cars/vehicles will make our roads even more congested and damage the surfaces quicker.

Infrastructure

Barns Green has minimal infrastructure: no GP, no viable access to the train station, (the nearest is Christ Hospital station 3.7km away, accessible only via busy, unpathed roads not suitable for walkers and cyclists), a nearly non-existent bus service which operates at obscure times, poor road surfaces through small roads and narrow lanes, poor maintenance by WSCC Highways of the ever appearing potholes, of the culverts and ditches, maintenance of grass verges which in the parish is only a few times a year, and an unstable electrical supply and a struggling sewage treatment works.

College students struggle to commute as the bus timetable is very restrictive and does not accommodate the times students need to get a bus to get to college on time. They rely on car rides from parents and friends.

Road surfaces are constantly deteriorating due to increased traffic with potholes frequently appearing, edges of roads breaking up and reducing the road width for vehicles, cyclists, horse riders, runners, walkers, farm tractors to manoeuvre on. This will only get worse as the development will naturally have more people with vehicles using these rural roads and lanes.

In winter when snow arrives there is only a small amount of road that is gritted by the Highways team and that is the bus route into Horsham, so from the village, up over the hill, through to CH, Tower Hill, and into Horsham. The effect for the village is that all other roads become an ice rink and to get to Coolham, Southwater, Billingshurst and to the A264 from Weston's Farm is a risk for all car drivers to get to any of these areas. In the past we have found ourselves snowed in because it has been too dangerous to drive out, unless you have a 4x4, and kids have been unable to go to school or college. The farmers locally have helped some of us get to the mains roads by using their tractors as snow ploughs or to help tow vehicles out of ditches.

This shows the ruralness of our village, a village that is not fortunate to have all the perks of a village built around a main road such as Southwater, Billingshurst, Broadbridge Heath/Wickhurst Green. They have maintained gritted roads in winter, better surfaced roads in general, frequent buses, GP surgeries, bigger shopping centre, libraries etc

Barns Green is a village that truly is rural with lack of amenities and servicing but has a strong community.

Effect on Listed Buildings

The proposed 68 modern-style homes will overshadow surrounding listed buildings including the Queen's Head pub, Blacksmiths Cottage, Heron's Reach, the shop, and Bennetts. These historic buildings are central to the village's character. The new development's urban design, with roof heights proposed at 2.5 meters above the average of existing homes, is inconsistent with the rural environment and risks eroding the village's identity. (Pictures attached from my back garden shows the village shop, Heron's Reach and the pub and gives you an idea of how out of keeping the profile and style of homes will be with the heart of the village) (Pic 11 – 18)

Keep it Rural and provide homes in keeping with the local area and not homes designed for an urban area.

Ancient Woodland and Hedgerows

Barns Green is surrounded by ancient woodlands, hedgerows, and historic footpaths, which are vital for wildlife and the local ecosystem. Dormice have been found in this area and other species will be hiding away. Destroying ancient hedgerow for site access cannot be mitigated by replanting, as the ecological and historical value cannot be replaced. Such actions threaten the rural landscape and community heritage. (Pic 18)

68 homes with approximately 160+ residents would cause further damage to this woodland area which we should be protecting for future generations to appreciate. Nature is important to our ecology and climate; and the rural footpaths surrounding this development. These should not be destroyed to the detriment of meeting housing targets.

Keep it rural and as it should be a haven for grazing animals, wildlife, birds and humans to appreciate.

Inaccurate Supporting Reports

Several reports provided by Miller Homes, HDC and other Regulatory bodies to support their application contain inaccuracies and do not comply with legal requirements. These discrepancies should be thoroughly investigated, and new, accurate reports should be obtained before any further consideration of the application can go ahead. A suitable and feasible time period would need to be given for the parishioners to review the new reports and put in further comments to the proposed application.

The following are examples of what has been found, and the list is growing:

- 1) Draft HDC plan – this has not been finalised. The Neighbourhood Village plan takes precedent and does not accept this site as being suitable for development.
- 2) Water Report – Southern Water ‘s report does not mention the sewage pollution and likely impact on the correct rivers and waterways supplied by the Adur.(Pic 8 -10)
- 3) Water Report – Southern Water has mentioned a manhole reference TQ12265901 – when investigated further this relates to a map reference in Stoke D’Abernon in Surrey and not based in Barns Green!!! (Pic 1)
- 4) Water Report – Southern Water has not mentioned how the additional capacity from the homes would affect the capacity downstream and whether the local sewage treatment works would be able to cope, when it is proven it cannot currently cope and discharges occur frequently. (Pic 8 -10)
- 5) Miller Homes report – No mention of flooding or evidence. Provided are photos of flooding of the pub and Heron’s Reach/shop. Water in downpours come down the hill as the culverts and drains cannot cope and gathers around the shop and pub until it follows the natural water path to the brook. A proper flood risk assessment is required. (Pic 2-17 & 19 – 31)
- 6) HDC report - The expert report by AECOM titled Horsham Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment dated November 2023 is factually inaccurate as it is stating BG links into the river Arun and assessments were considered on the SSSI’s that relate to this river. Barns Green water course goes into the river Adur and affects all SSSI’s along the Adur. No report currently exists.
- 7) Miller Homes report – states the site is on the outskirts of the village’. This statement is inaccurate, as the site is in fact located at the central community hub of the village. (Pic 11 -18)
- 8) Miller Homes report – proposes a buffer zone of 15m (minimum standard) to protect the western boundary of the site adjoining an Ancient Semi Natural Woodland. This woodland is recorded on the Ancient Woodland Inventory as reference ANCWOO122269. This is an irreplaceable habitat protected under NPPF paragraph 186(c), which states:
‘Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists’.

Miller homes proposal does not meet the requirement to provide a larger buffer zone where protected species have been found. In this case Miller have identified that the hazel dormice is a European Protected Species in the hedgerows to the woodland, and further dormice are in the woodlands.

- 9) UK Power Networks – A report should be sought to establish if the electricity network can take a further 68 homes on air source heat pumps and this should have been sought by Miller Homes as part of their application.
- 10) Miller Homes report – Regarding the traffic calming measures and the parking allocation, the report states space for 10 cars in the commentary BUT only shows 9 spaces on the plans. (Pic 10 -18)

When viewed with the NPPF paragraph 116 requires assessment of ‘residual cumulative impacts’ on the road network. The applicant has limited their modelling to the site access junction, characterizing wider impacts as ‘negligible’ without adequate justification. This assessment does not account for the 32 new homes at Sumners Fields, over 50 additional homes designated in the Neighbourhood Plan, or the cumulative effect on the Chapel Road/Two Mile Ash Road junction.

The cumulative traffic impact has not been assessed by Miller Homes correctly and have overstated the transport links to the village which are not true.

Common Sense Considerations

The field proposed for development is still used as a village green space, hosting annual events like the car show and fireworks, which foster community spirit and support local businesses. Losing this space would impact both social activities and business income as well as a significant loss to local charities. The annual car show has raised over [REDACTED] for St Catherine’s Hospice and has been going for over 12 years. Run Barns Green half marathon has used this area in the past and raises money for St Catherine’s Hospice. It would be a shame if these community events are lost through this development forever and the charities lose out on significant funds.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposed development is unsuitable for Barns Green.

The development does not meet the Neighbourhood Plan that is currently in place and what the parishioners voted for. The site is the 28th on the list and not the top two that was agreed as part of the plan.

Barns Green has taken a chunk of development with the building of Ashmiles and Sumners Ponds. Further developments in the heart of Barns Green on a rural field surrounded by ancient woodlands and listed buildings is not sustainable and acceptable. Miller Homes is speculating with this housing development and pushing this through without fact finding and producing correct accurate information to HDC as valid evidence.

The supporting reports provided by Miller Homes and other statutory bodies are factually inaccurate and should not influence the decision-making process. HDC should seek further guidance, request accurate documentation and reports to be provided by all parties including the developer to enable a complete review of what is proposed or reject the application for not meeting the required legislation and for providing mis-leading and inappropriate information to try and influence HDC and their planning committees.

I wish the Planning Committee to take this letter as an objection and put it on file and the HDC planning portal for all to read and to be considered and discussed at any meeting for this proposed development.

Yours sincerely

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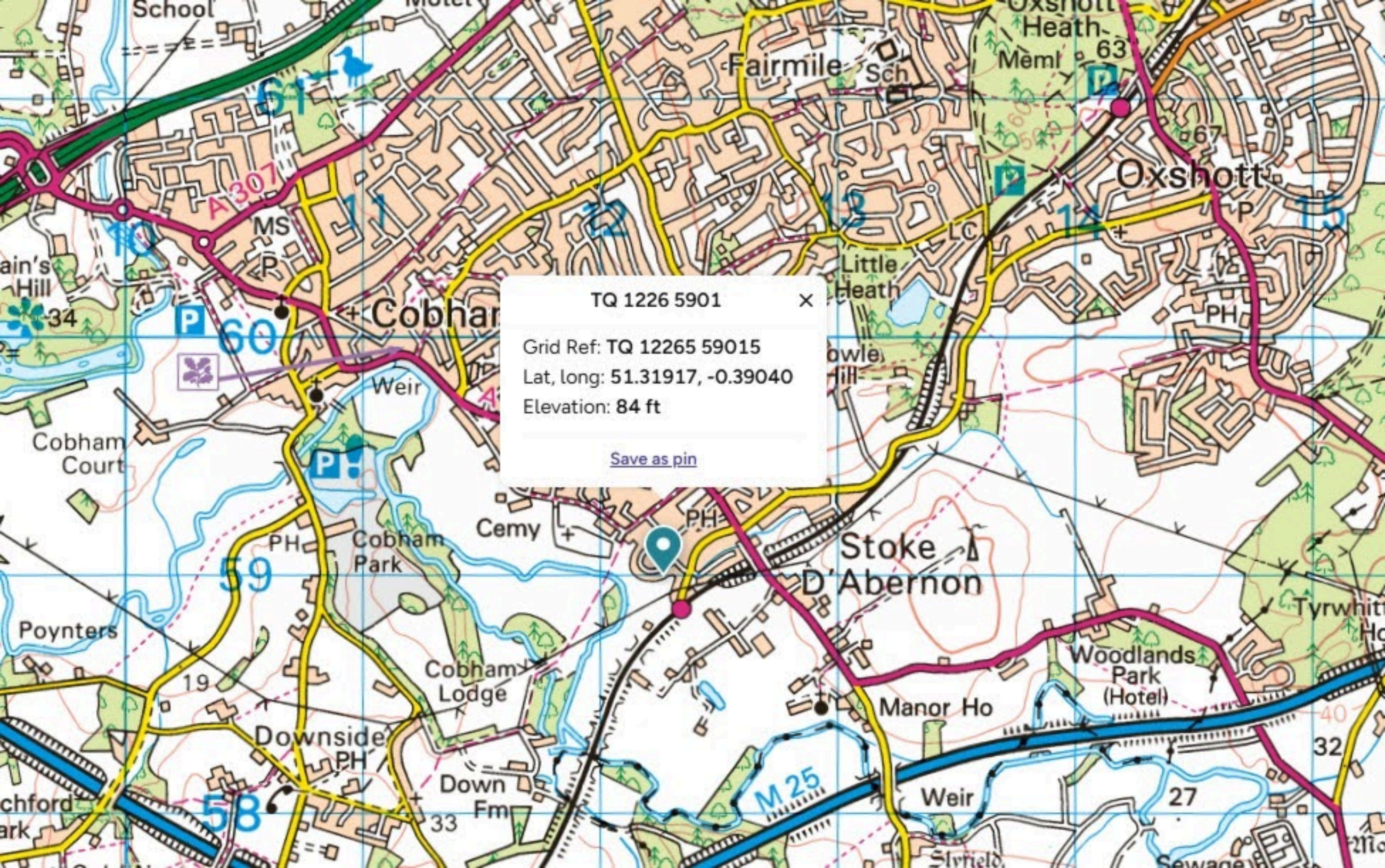












TQ 1226 5901



Grid Ref: TQ 12265 59015

Lat, long: 51.31917, -0.39040

Elevation: 84 ft

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