ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

33 Smugglers Way
Barns Green
Near Horsham
West Sussex

30th May 2024

Development Control Committee – Area North
Horsham District Council
Park side,
Chart Way
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Dear Planning Officer

Following the Parish Council Meeting on 20th May 2024, this is to confirm that Itchingfield Parish Council would like to make the following representation to be put before Planning Committee (North) on Tuesday 4th June 2024:

DC/24/0587 - Mr Simon Smith, Sumners Ponds Fishery and Campsite, Chapel Road, Barns Green. Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed Use or Development: The stationing of up to 29 static or touring caravans for an unlimited period occupied for holiday purposes only.

Itchingfield Parish Council would like to make the following comments on this planning application:
Sumners Ponds Fishery and Camping Site, has been and still is a highly regarded enterprise which has and hopefully will continue to bring many benefits to Itchingfield Parish in general and to the Barns Green Sports and Social Club, The Queens Head pub and the Village shop in particular. The site has also provided many part time and seasonal jobs to local people, particularly the many young persons taken on during the summer season, enabling them to have a first job experience to quote when applying for future posts.
The Bluebell Field has been a site for up to 34 touring caravans since 2005, ref DC/05/0060. The current application for Lawful Use was originally refused on appeal APP/Z3825/X/22/3299073. However, the Government Inspector suggested that a new application for a Certificate of Lawful Use could be made. The proposed application seeks to have no more than 34 "caravans" for holiday use only on the site at any one time, with 5 of the "caravans" as seasonal and on the site continuously for 6 months between April and September. Therefore, only up to 29 more "caravans" will be allowed on the site during this time with none of them occupied for more than 28 days at a time. The concern is that this will result in all the "caravans" becoming in effect fixed dwellings as there is no difference in law between a touring caravan and one fixed on a site. However, the design of a touring caravan is fundamentally different to that of a fixed caravan which except for its token wheels is s fixed cabin. The use of fixed "Caravans" would completely change the ambiance of Bluebell Field and would in essence be contrary to HDC's stated commitment to encourage tourism by allowing the use of touring caravans in policy TM9 in the HDC Local Plan of 1997, which formed the basis of the original Camping and Fishing site. The administration of the site would need to be very robust and in default the response of HDC's Compliance Department would need to be similarly robust. The Itchingfield Parish Council is very concerned that creeping urbanisation does not take place as we have seen locally (Emms Lane), over several years where holiday touring caravan sites become fixed "caravan" sites and eventually become permanent "Park Homes"/dwellings/market housing units all of which are classified in law as caravans. Itchingfield Parish Council therefore seeks that strict conditions are imposed and enforced if needed to ensure that this does not happen, while at the same time ensuring that this valuable local enterprise can flourish.
So, in summary: Itchingfield Parish Council does not object to this application subject to sufficient safeguards being put in place to ensure that there is no creeping urbanisation of this site.

DC/24/0694 - Mr Eric Mariani, Stable House, Marlands Park, Barns Green - Extension of existing residential property to create a subterranean swimming pool complex for family use.

Itchingfield Parish Council recommend this planning application for approval.

DC/24/0601 - Richard Oram, The Limes, 1 Muntham Drive, Barns Green - Front porch erection.

Itchingfield Parish Council recommend this planning application for approval.

Kind regards

Alan Strudley
Chairman to Itchingfield Parish Council