

Pulborough Parish Council Objection: DC/26/0010 – Land North of Girder Bridge, Gay Street Lane

Summary of Objection

Pulborough Parish Council objects to the application for the stationing of six static caravans for residential use by Gypsies and Travellers at Land North of Girder Bridge, on the following principal planning grounds:

1. Access and Highways

- The proposed access is via a narrow, rutted public footpath (PROW 1998), not designed for regular vehicular use. There is no clear evidence of lawful private vehicular access for the applicant or future residents.
- The entrance is on a sharp bend with poor visibility and a history of near-misses and accidents, raising significant highway safety concerns.
- The anticipated increase in vehicle movements (potentially over 9,600 annually) would create conflict with pedestrians and exacerbate existing hazards, especially given the lack of passing places or mitigation measures.
- West Sussex County Council's Public Rights of Way team objects due to unresolved access rights and the risk of encouraging unlawful use of a public footpath by vehicles.

2. Flooding and Drainage

- The site and access track are prone to severe flooding and waterlogging, making access difficult for emergency vehicles and unsuitable for residential occupation, particularly for vulnerable groups.
- There is insufficient information on foul and surface water drainage. The proposed sewage treatment plant appears undersized for six caravans, and no robust drainage strategy has been provided.
- Southern Water and HDC Environmental Health require further details to ensure compliance with Building Regulations and environmental protection.

3. Environmental and Landscape Impact

- The proposal would require removal of a mature oak tree and risks harm to veteran trees and the rural landscape, contrary to local and national policy.
- The ecological assessment is incomplete, with surveys for protected species (e.g. Great Crested Newts) conducted at the wrong time of year and not covering all relevant ponds.

- The site is adjacent to the railway, with noise levels from train horns exceeding World Health Organisation guidelines, making it unsuitable for residential use, especially for children.

4. Policy and Site Allocation

- The site was identified in the draft Local Plan for five pitches, not six as proposed. The application exceeds the draft allocation and is therefore contrary to the emerging policy.
- National policy (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, PPTS) requires that new sites in open countryside be strictly limited and not dominate the nearest settled community or place undue pressure on local infrastructure. The proposal fails these tests due to its scale, location, and access constraints.
- The application does not demonstrate that it meets the sustainability criteria set out in PPTS and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), including safe access, flood risk, and integration with the local community.

5. Outstanding Enforcement and Unresolved Issues

- There is an outstanding enforcement notice (EN/25/0159) relating to unauthorised clearance and engineering works on the site.
- Key issues remain unresolved, including lawful access, drainage, ecological impact, and the adequacy of supporting infrastructure.

Conclusion

Pulborough Parish Council urges Horsham District Council to refuse this application on the grounds of unsafe and unlawful access, flood risk, inadequate drainage, harm to the landscape and biodiversity, excessive scale relative to policy allocation, and failure to meet national and local planning policy requirements for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Further information and robust mitigation would be required before any reconsideration.