

[REDACTED]
South Cottage, Chapel Road, Barns Green, RH13 0PR
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DC/25/2057 Land North of Little Slaughterford, Chapel Road

Commenter type: member of the public

Stance: object

I am a resident of Barns Green and live along Chapel Road and have already experienced over 2 years of disruption due to the building of Sumners Fields, which is still not complete nor many of the houses sold. Those houses that have sold are predominantly family homes at a cost way above most people in the local area's budgets. I know as a teacher I would not be able to afford one. Affordable housing is also a misnomer. For the vast majority of people this is still not an option, which includes my three children who are in their twenties and still live at home. As I presently view a new housing area that is not even half sold (at time of writing only 6 are sold and 5 reserved) and almost completed, I do not understand the building of a further 68 houses the village does not require and at great cost to the rural nature of the village and the local biodiversity.

Flooding

I am also concerned about the impact of flooding in the village. I moved to the village in 2013 and that year the village shop flooded. Other houses were at risk. We are presently experiencing a very wet January into February which has seen the road run like a river and Parson's Brooke almost breached its banks. With climate change likely to increase compound flooding (medium confidence), and increased rain-generated flooding is likely (Lee and Romero IPCC p7 2023).

The field opposite the pub is likely to act as a sponge.

This works two fold:

Firstly the soil will absorb some of the rain. This is a clay soil and infiltration rates are likely to be slow, but during the summer the clay cracks and allows water when it does rain to sit in and slowly infiltrate the soil and underlying rock. With the Wealden clay there are also situated sandstone lens. These were written about in the documentation for Sumners Fields as they were considering them as sources of water from boreholes. These are likely to be deeper than the five metres measured by the company sited for the Miller development. However in Gallois and Worssam (p. 83 1993) whose work is used to map the Geology of Horsham for the British Geological Survey (BGS) show some evidence of limited Paludina limestone. 1 km south of Barns Green 3 boreholes were drilled to a depth of 45 metres showing clay overlying sand stones, sandy clays, (Gallois and Worssam p. 82 1993). The clay itself is a mixture of mudstones and siltstones.

Secondly the field is surrounded by ancient woodland and hedgerows that may be hundreds of years old. These will have extensive root systems that uptake water and help alleviate flooding. The trees and hedgerows also enable the interception of precipitation and

therefore slowing down the flow of water. The grass also will uptake water and as this has not been cultivated for arable crops the grass will also have a mature network of roots.

I am neither a hydrogeologist or hydrologist, but I feel a full and detailed survey of this site is required so that the hydrogeology and hydrology of the site is fully understood. Removal of the hedge as proposed alone could impact the flow of water onto the road and into housing.

Impacts to biodiversity by removal of the hedge on Chapel Road.

This hedge is at least 200 years old. It might be much older. It is a mixture of plants and is of type common to the local area. During the Spring and Summer it is full of a variety of bird species and is home to a variety of flora and fauna. To properly review the biodiversity of the hedge would require a survey from all seasons and to state it is of low biodiversity and can be easily replaced with a more diverse planting is I believe, inaccurate. Any new hedging will require maintenance in its early years to prevent plants from dying in dry summers. The new plants will also require protection from deer and humans. It will take many years for a new hedge to mature and its root system will not provide the same uptake of water that the present hedge does now. Any alternative planting may also not be in keeping with local hedges seen around farmland in the vicinity.

Housing proposed for the site

The housing is high in profile and although shown to be red brick with tiles as seen locally, the tiles are only shown to the front and part of the sides. This design is of no function other than to be for show. They look uninteresting and out of keeping with the mixture of housing seen in the village. Some of which are grade 2 listed buildings of which 5 are close to the site. These will be imposing on the rest of the village and I would add boring boxes. The density of housing is not in keeping with the rural environment and suggests a feel more suited to urban areas. I am also concerned that the parking will be inadequate. If people do move there with families it is likely that they will eventually reach a point where there could be 2 cars for the parents and a car each for their children. With the majority of families having children living at home until their late twenties, this is highly likely. Where will the excess cars park? This might not be an impact for some time but it will at some point be an issue. I presently have three grown up children living with me and we have four cars in our household. We are not unusual. The lack of proper public transport means that you cannot live in the village with out access to a car, you take taxis (£20 on average per trip to Horsham), you cycle on roads where the speed limit is 60 mph and are narrow, use a horse, a horse and cart, a tank (yes people do drive these in the village), rely on family and friends to take you, or walk on fast roads with no pavements. There is the option of using local footpaths for walking which are safer, but due to the clay soil, this is a bit messy in winter.

Present amenities

The village is well supported by having a village shop with PO and a pub. Both are well respected and used by the local people and passers by. I feel that the building work opposite these amenities will cause them to lose trade and unfortunately close. Even when work is finally completed, which will likely exceed the 3 years suggested, the parking for the shop

alone will be greatly reduced. At present parking can be full from the pub right up to near the corner of the Hordens. Having an entrance almost opposite the shop will also impact parking and I cannot see the proposed parking area being legal. The pub is in a countryside position and at present you can have a view of a field, which often containing cows and sometimes sheep. Having high profiled redbrick boxes more in keeping with an urban area, will detract the view from the pub and it is likely that if the pub survives the building work, it will not survive the aftermath.

Smugglers Lane

This is a rather interesting footpath that borders the proposed site. Apparently it is mentioned in the Domesday book and it is certainly represented in maps I have seen of the area covering 200 years. It has an interesting history and may well be part of smuggling routes in the area historically and can be linked with the now dilapidated hanging barn nearby on the way to Bashurst Hill. The hedgerow here is diverse and is useful for autumn foraging of Haws, Sloes and Elderberries. Although it can be muddy in winter it is still a well used path and fondly thought of by locals. Housing in the plan appears to be very close to this hedge and I worry that gardens may encroach onto it and damage the hedges. Being that this lane is of historical importance, surely there should be an appropriate buffer between it and housing.

Entrance to site and transport issues.

Presently along this section on Chapel Road there is an entrance to the Hordens on the left. Having another entrance staggered just before on the right could create a hazard to pedestrians, horse riders, and cyclists as well as other road users. Widening the road may alleviate some of these issues, but it must be pointed out that the road is narrow before the planned site and afterwards. The road has become more busy in the last 8 years and there has been at least one accident involving a cyclist in the last year.

Whilst the site is being built, increased heavy goods vehicles will be visiting the village. The village struggled to cope with this during the building of Sumners Fields and damage was seen on the roads from Five Oaks Road to the village and may have caused the collapse of the road near Westons Farm. Cracking to the sides of the roads is apparent along several sections. The roads were not built to be two lanes and therefore the edges do not have adequate foundations and often collapse when heavy goods vehicles use them frequently as also seen along Two Mile Ash Road. These roads also should not cope with any further increase in traffic that it is already suffering as this alters the tranquil feel of a rural village. Sadly already being eroded by building at Southwater and Billingshurst as traffic uses the village as a cut through.

Infrastructure

Though not a consideration of planning, though it should be, we do not have enough schools, GPs, Dentists, etc in the area. A lack of a local hospital is also an issue and we presently have to travel to East Surrey, Worthing and Haywards Heath for minor injuries and A&E and this is a painful experience mentally. Our nearest hospitals are overloaded already.

Our sewage treatment works are not fit for purpose and there are many pollution events seen. Others in the village will have sent you more detailed examples of these events. The Adur is therefore experiencing poor quality water that may impact sites such as Knepp.

Sumners Fields is not fully connected to the electricity grid and I am not confident that HDC really does know that this will be okay for the planned site as Sigma did not realise they had a problem until they attempted to gain a connection. All seemed fine through planning for this site. It is also important to note that we often as a village have intermittent electricity presently.

Conclusion

I therefore strongly object to this proposed housing site as it is not fit for the rural nature of the village and will lead to the degradation of this wonderful village that I call home. Although I am not averse to housing being built in the local area, it should not be at this site. Any proposed housing should be built for the needs of the local people and not to fill the pockets of developers who have no connection to Sussex or Barns Green.

References

Gallois, R.W., Worssam, B.C., (1993) *Geology of the country around Horsham*. British Geological Survey

Lee, H., Romero, J., (2023) CLIMATE CHANGE 2023 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers, *IPCC*

https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf