WARNHAM PARISH COUNCIL CONSULTATION COMMENTS

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
SITE ADDRESS:	*Janland Farm, Marches Road*
PROPOSAL:	*Prior Notification for the erection of an agricultural machine and hay store*
REFERENCE:	DC/25/1115
RECOMMENDATION:	Strongly Object

The Parish Council wishes to formally object to the above planning application on the following grounds:

1. Disputed Land Ownership and Agricultural Use

The Planning and Agricultural Statements submitted by the applicant claim that Joanland Farm owns and farms 11.2 hectares, as shown on the Land Registry map. However, this area includes 4.5 hectares belonging to Fox Wood House, land which is in separate ownership and is used by the owners for grazing and stabling horses. The owners of Fox Wood House were not made aware of this application and have not granted Joanland Farm permission to use their land for hay cropping. Therefore, the actual land available to Joanland Farm is limited to 6.7 hectares.

2. Agricultural Viability of the Site

The land in question is of limited agricultural value. It comprises heavy clay soil and was previously used for banger racing in the late 1980s, an activity that disrupted the topsoil. As a result, the field is poorly suited to either productive grazing or viable hay production without significant and costly improvement. Evidence provided by a local farmer with extensive experience suggests that such a small and poor-quality area cannot support a financially viable haymaking operation. The applicant has not demonstrated that the scale of activity justifies the need for a new agricultural barn.

3. Lack of Supporting Evidence for Genuine Farming Activity

If Joanland Farm is operating a legitimate agricultural enterprise as claimed, then appropriate supporting documentation should be available and submitted. This would typically include:

- **Active farm business accounts**
- **A valid County Parish Holding (CPH) number**
- **Records of machinery ownership or hire**
- **Invoices for seed, fertiliser, or other inputs**
- **Evidence of participation in farm payment schemes or rural grants**

No such evidence has been provided to substantiate the agricultural need for the proposed barn.

4. Concern Over Intent and Link to Marches Road Development

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that this application may be serving a different purpose than stated. Specifically, it appears the proposed barn may be intended as part of a strategy to provide water neutrality offsetting for a separate development on Marches Road—a site that has already been refused planning permission three times, including due to insufficient evidence of water neutrality.

The Marches Road site adjoins existing farmland in the parish and lies in a sensitive water abstraction zone. Any attempt to facilitate development through indirect means raises serious concerns about transparency and the integrity of the planning system.

5. Water Neutrality and Environmental Policy Conflict

Natural England's Position Statement (September 2021) and subsequent guidance require all developments in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone to demonstrate no increase in water abstraction. This requirement is also reflected in:

- **Policy CWS1 of the Chichester Local Plan**
- **The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)**
- **Paragraphs 15, 174, and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- **The Environment Act 2021, specifically the principles of biodiversity net gain**

The Parish Council is concerned that this application is being used to technically circumvent the water neutrality requirements that previously blocked development at Marches Road.

6. Risk of Precedent and Planning Policy Undermining

Granting permission in this instance could set a dangerous precedent where applications are submitted under the guise of agricultural development but are, in practice, used to facilitate unrelated residential or commercial schemes. This undermines public confidence in the planning process and the environmental protections it is meant to uphold.

7. Cumulative Environmental Impact and Local Farming

Any disruption to hydrology, drainage, or land use could negatively affect local soil quality, biodiversity, and farming operations. The Council is particularly concerned about the impact on groundwater catchments and the risk to both domestic and agricultural water supply.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, the Parish Council strongly objects to this planning application. We urge the Local Planning Authority to:

- **Investigate the discrepancy in land ownership and usage**
- **Require the applicant to provide robust evidence of agricultural need**
- **Assess the proposal in the context of potential water neutrality offsetting for unrelated developments**
- **Consider the wider implications for planning integrity, environmental stewardship, and local community trust**

We respectfully request that this application be refused in its current form.

NAME:	OPTIONAL
DATE:	30th July 2025