

Agricultural Justification Statement
Temporary sitting of a static caravan for a Rural Workers Dwelling
and to allow the keeping and breeding of horses, goats and various farm animals

AT

Pinkhurst Stud,
Pinkhurst Lane,
Slinfold, Nr. Horsham,
West Sussex, RH13 0QR.



The objective for rural business is to sustain a balanced outcome, a delicate relationship between productive activity which includes farming and rural enterprise and the conservation of the environment both historic and landscape needs to be maintained. The rural economy is a constantly changing paradigm and should be nurtured, supported and promoted because it forms the core of the nation.

Prepared For:
Mr and Mrs Richard Bell,

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Proposed Temporary Rural Worker Dwelling

1.0 Introduction

This Statement accompanies a planning application submitted on behalf of Mr and Mrs Richard Bell, the new owners of the agricultural holding known Pinkhurst Stud, Pinkhurst Lane, Slinfold, Nr. Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0QR

The proposal seeks consent for the siting of an existing a temporary rural worker dwelling (static caravan), to allow the applicants to reside on-site in support of the essential day-to-day management of the brood mares, goats and various animals.

The applicants have recently consolidated several parcels of land into this holding. Mr and Mrs Bell have sold a previous parcel of land and the couple have reinvested in Pinkhurst Stud to establish a more viable and cohesive small holding. The current livestock within their operation comprises:

- **Equines:** 3 brood mares (all in foal), In additional horses as part of breeding and training 3 foals
- **Small livestock:** 20 goats,
- **10 poultry**

The holding currently has no residential accommodation, The lack of on-site residency restricts the applicants' ability to manage livestock welfare, respond to emergencies, and expand the business sustainably. This application therefore seeks a temporary period of three years during which a modest static caravan can be occupied, ensuring animal welfare obligations are met.

Farming is central to the applicants' background and livelihood. Mr and Mrs Bell have an extensive lifelong experience in livestock management. Mrs Bell has developed substantial knowledge of equine breeding, husbandry, holistic welfare, and land stewardship. Together, they aim to create a sustainable small holding, incorporating high-quality equine breeding, livestock management, and regenerative land practices.

The nature of the enterprise—particularly the management of brood mares, foals, youngstock, goats and chickens —creates a clear and ongoing requirement for a permanent on-site presence, supported by national and local planning policy for rural worker accommodation.

This Statement demonstrates that the proposal meets the criteria of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Horsham planning frameworks, and that on-site accommodation is functionally essential.

The temporary dwelling will:

- Provide essential on-site accommodation for the applicants;
- Safeguard the welfare and security of livestock, including equines, cattle, goats, sheep, water buffalo, and poultry;
- Support the business's ability to grow and remain financially viable;
- Reduce risks of theft, vandalism, or animal welfare emergencies;

- Be modest, reversible, and proportionate to the functional need.

2.0 Location and Access

From the A24 West of Horsham take the A264 towards Guildford and Billingshurst and then at the roundabout near Newbridge Garden Centre continue on the A264 towards Billingshurst. After approximately a third of a mile turn right into Lyons Road towards Slinfold and then continue for approximately 0.25 of a mile on this road turning left into the private Pinkhurst Lane. The stud will be found almost at the end of the lane on the left hand side after about 0.25 of a mile.

3.0 Planning Background

The site and surrounding land benefit from a detailed planning history, including:

Planning Applications (2)

- Application for provision of private stables and exercise school for four horses and retrospective permission for a new field entrance

Ref. No: DC/12/1176 | Status: Application Permitted

- Discharge of Conditions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 on DC/12/1176

Ref. No: DISC/15/0360 | Status: Application Permitted

4.0 Proposal

The proposal seeks consent for the positioning of a static caravan for an initial three-year period.

The dwelling will enable the applicants to:

- Establish a viable central base for the agricultural and equestrian business;
- Provide essential continuous care to livestock, particularly pregnant mares, foals, calves, and vulnerable stock;
- Respond rapidly to animal emergencies;
- Improve long-term viability of the enterprise.

As with many agricultural livelihoods, on-site living is essential both practically and economically. The scale of the operation and the welfare requirements of the animals necessitate a consistent on-site presence.

5.0 Previously Developed Land, Green Belt and Grey Belt Context

The site lies in the country whilst Horsham has no Greenbelt it does have Article 3 directions primary just for fencing and boundary treatment. The site would now be previously developed land classified within the emerging Grey Belt designation introduced in the December 2024 amendments to the NPPF.

Government policy now recognises that certain areas within the Green Belt—particularly those already containing permanent structures or making limited contribution to Green Belt purposes—fall under the Grey Belt category, suitable for prioritised development where appropriate.

Key policy considerations include:

- **Annex 2 of the NPPF (2023)** defines Previously Developed Land (PDL) as land occupied by permanent structures and associated fixed infrastructure.
- The site contains multiple agricultural buildings which required planning permission and therefore qualifies as **PDL**.
- Case law (e.g., *Dartford BC v SSCLG*) clarifies that PDL definitions apply differently inside built-up areas versus rural settings.
- **Green Belt policy** if applicable in this instance also confirms that agricultural buildings are *not* inappropriate development and are not harmful to openness.
- **Paragraph 155 (2024 draft revisions)** sets out “Golden Rules” for assessing Grey Belt land, prioritising previously developed or low-value parcels that contribute little to Green Belt purposes.

Given the site’s existing built form and established agricultural use, the proposed temporary dwelling is considered appropriate development and complies with both Green Belt and Grey Belt policy.

6.0 Functional Need

6.1 National Policy Context

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF requires rural worker dwellings to demonstrate an **essential functional need**, particularly where animal welfare or 24-hour supervision is required. Isolated dwellings policy allows such dwellings under “very special circumstances”, which arise where essential agricultural need is proven.

6.2 Livestock Welfare and Legal Requirements

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007, keepers have a legal duty of care to ensure:

- freedom from pain, injury, suffering, hunger, fear;
- appropriate housing, feeding and monitoring;
- rapid response to emergencies, illness or birthing complications.

Failure to provide adequate supervision can result in serious welfare breaches and financial loss.

6.3 Stock Management Requirements

The holding includes:

- 20 goats
- 10 poultry
- 6 equines during peak periods, including in-foal mares and youngstock potential more if following on or training up to two years olds

Equine management in particular requires continuous overnight monitoring, especially during foaling season. Immediate assistance is often required to prevent loss of mare or foal.

6.4 Labour Requirements

Using recognised agricultural labour standards (SGRPID and Andersons Equine Business Guide), the enterprise generates:

Potentially the applicant could have six horses on site during the summer months. By reference to Andersons Equine Business Guide and data from Warrick University, we calculate the standards man day requirements for labour on this units as follows:

3 brood mares:

3 X 605 Hours = 1,812
Less 25% = 453.75
Total Hours = 1,358.25 divided by 2,225 = 0.61 Full time

3 other horses in residence

3 X 920 Hours = 2,760
Less 30% = 828
Total Hours = 1,932 divided by 2,225 = 0.868 Full time

Based on the above calculation for labour requirement on a six horse basis the actual full-time worker positions is 1.478 full time. This figure does not take into consideration the labour requirements of running and maintaining the fields, or looking after the other animals on the holding.

The rural business requires the owner to live on site at all times for the welfare of the stock, which includes the feeding, watering and checking the health of the animals and exercise. Much of this work could be at any time especially in an emergency.

6.5 Summary of Need

On-site residence is essential for:

- Foaling supervision and high-risk equine management
- Calving and livestock emergencies

- Protection from theft and predation
- Night-time checks, feeding, watering and sheltering in adverse weather
- Meeting legally-required welfare standards
- Ensuring safety of youngstock and breeding animals

The functional need is clear, unavoidable and supported by national planning policy.

7.0 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

The proposal aligns with multiple NPPF objectives:

Economic Objective

Supports rural employment, diversification, and a sustainable agricultural enterprise.

Social Objective

Enables a family to maintain a viable rural livelihood while supporting the vitality of the wider community.

Environmental Objective

Makes effective use of previously developed land and supports land-based rural activity with minimal environmental impact.

The proposal meets NPPF guidance supporting:

- Rural worker dwellings where essential need is demonstrated
- Diversification of agricultural businesses
- Sustainable growth of rural enterprises
- Development on PDL land where appropriate

The dwelling is temporary, proportionate, and consistent with national policy.

The proposed temporary dwelling accords with these principles. No visual or environmental harm will arise, and the site already benefits from established infrastructure and agricultural buildings.

The Essential Need for On Site Accommodation

The functional need for a dwelling is principally determined by the scale and type of enterprises operated and the systems employed. A functional need is more likely to exist where circumstances requiring the prompt attention of a skilled worker could occur outside normal working hours and where they do not typically fall within a pre-determined routine.

The keeping, breeding and rearing of horses does in principle generate a functional need for the on-site residential presence of a skilled equine worker for an enterprise of this nature. The applicant has owned and worked with a significant number of horses over the years. Experience has proven that many emergency situations can occur which require immediate attention.

The NPPF is clear in terms of encouraging the development and diversification of land based businesses but cautions that in order to justify a new isolated dwelling the need for it must be essential and permanent. No guidance is provided within the NPPF as to the meaning or interpretation of 'permanent', however it is considered that for there to be a permanent need, the business enterprise which generates that need should be capable of being viable and have a reasonable prospect of being sustainable in the long term.

The primary test set out in the NPPF and Local Plan Policy 20 is an assessment as to whether it is essential for a rural worker to live at, or near, their place of work. In this case, the applicant considers it essential to live on site in order to provide for the management of the equine business and meet the welfare needs of the horses and other livestock on site.

There is a legal responsibility under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to ensure that all animals are kept in a manner which accords them freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter, the prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment of injury, disease or infestation; freedom from fear; and freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour.

The issue of security is also now acknowledged to be an increasing problem in rural areas especially where third party horses or livestock are at risk from fire, trespass and vandalism – and such risks can only adequately be managed with on-site supervision.

The Animal Welfare Act also contains a Duty to Care to animals which means that anyone responsible for an animal must take reasonable steps to make sure the animal's needs and its welfare are met. This overall responsibility for Duty of Care for animal welfare for the horses stabled or at grass at Trickles Barn Farm lies with the applicant.

In 2005 the equestrian industry and welfare organisations produced revised guidelines on the welfare of all horses, ponies and donkeys (The Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium for Horse, Ponies and Donkeys produced by the National Equine Welfare Council). This refers to the availability of staff and states that: "Sufficient staff must be provided at all times to ensure proper, regular and timely attention to all horses held". This document has been updated with the Third Edition 2009 and with regard to 'Duty of Care' this notes:

"The most significant single influence on the welfare of the horse is the care and management given by the owner or keeper of that horse. They should be able to meet the welfare needs of their horse and be capable of safeguarding them under all foreseeable circumstances."

It has been demonstrated that there is an essential need for a resident equine worker to be onsite to ensure that the welfare of the horses on the holding is not compromised and to add to the security of the site which would also include the secure storage building used for the storage of forestry equipment.

8.0 Horsham Planning Framework 2015

The Role of Rural Accommodation in Sustaining the Industry

Housing for rural workers has traditionally been part of the agricultural and land-based economy. However, rising rural housing costs and the lack of availability now threaten the viability of smaller operations. The Horsham District Housing Strategy acknowledges the acute shortage of affordable housing in rural areas and the need to support those who live and work on the land. Providing a modest, temporary, and purpose-specific dwelling on the holding:

Policy 10: Rural Economic Development

This policy encourages development that:

- Contributes to the diverse and sustainable rural economy;
- Supports land-based enterprise;
- Demonstrates minimal environmental impact and a high standard of design.

The proposed dwelling directly supports an equestrian business which contributes to local employment, land use, and economic diversification.

Policy 20: Rural Workers Accommodation

Policy 20 supports new accommodation in the countryside for rural workers where a functional need is demonstrated and the business is viable. This application meets both criteria:

- **Functional Need:** The nature of equine breeding and foaling requires 24/7 monitoring.
- **Viability:** The enterprise has been established and is expanding, with evidence of investment, income, and potential for growth.

This application is for temporary accommodation and stables, in line with policy preferences for new rural worker dwellings.

- Ensures the continuity of animal care;
- Enables the business to scale up responsibly;
- Addresses a recognised housing shortfall in the district;
- Supports sustainable, home-based employment and self-sufficiency.

This application should be viewed in the context of rural resilience, local economic development, and animal welfare best practice.

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8.0 UK Equine Industry – Key Facts and Insights

- The UK is globally recognised as a leader in the equine sector, with a reputation for excellence and expertise. The industry supports exports worth over £500 million, with particularly strong growth in Far Eastern markets.
- Contributing around £8 billion annually to the national economy, the UK equine sector is one of the largest rural industries—second only to agriculture. It encompasses approximately 1 million horses and generates £4.3 billion in gross output.
- 374,000 UK households currently own horses—a decline from 446,000 in 2015.
- British horse racing alone accounts for £3.45 billion in economic activity and contributes £276 million in tax revenue (2012 data).
- In 2010–2011, around 3.5 million people participated in horse riding, a figure likely enhanced by the London 2012 Olympics, which boosted interest in equestrian sports.

- Equestrian activities are among the most inclusive sports in the UK, with high participation from women, older adults (45+), and people with disabilities. Notably, nearly 40% of equestrian participants are not involved in any other form of physical activity. It is also one of the few Olympic sports where men and women compete equally, with elite riders aged between 18 and 70.
- Horse racing is the UK's second most attended sport, surpassed only by football.

Strategic Significance of the European Equine Industry

Economic Impact and Employment

The European equine industry encompasses racing, sport, breeding, and leisure. It contributes over €100 billion (£86.7 billion) in economic activity annually and sustains approximately 400,000 full-time equivalent jobs, with significantly more roles when including part-time and related occupations.

As a capital- and labour-intensive sector, it supports a wide range of professions, including breeders, trainers, veterinarians, farriers, transporters, and event organisers. In the UK alone, up to 270,000 jobs are linked to equine activity. Key regional hubs like Newmarket (UK) and Normandy (France) depend heavily on the industry for economic vitality. Governments benefit significantly from tax revenues tied to the sector—at least €5 billion (£4.34 billion) is collected annually through betting, taxation, and related expenditure.

Industry Segments and Rural Development

The equine sector is composed of four interconnected segments:

1. Racing

- Over 78,000 races take place across Europe each year.
- Major spectator attendance and betting revenue (e.g., €4 billion in Ireland).
- Drives bloodstock sales and attracts international investment.

2. Equestrian Sports

- Over 10,000 FEI-approved events annually span Olympic and non-Olympic disciplines.
- In the UK, 3.2 million people engage in recreational riding, supporting demand for equipment, training, and competitions.

3. Breeding

- Europe is a global leader in Thoroughbred and sport horse breeding.
- Countries like Ireland, Germany, France, and the Netherlands house world-class breeding operations and studbooks (e.g., KWPN, Hanoverian, Selle Français).

4. Leisure and Tourism

- Leisure riding is the largest ownership segment (e.g., 66% in the UK).
- Riding schools, bridleways, and equestrian tourism bolster rural economies and encourage land-based diversification.

Infrastructure and International Trade

Europe hosts premier auction venues including Tattersalls (UK), Goffs (Ireland), and Arqana (France). Annual sales regularly reach into the hundreds of millions—e.g., the Tattersalls October Yearling Sale 2024 generated over €240 million (£208 million).

Digital platforms have expanded global access to European horses, particularly since the pandemic. Buyers from North America, Asia, and the Middle East routinely invest in European stock, reinforcing the continent's global standing in breeding and training.

Policy Integration and Public Support

The equine sector aligns closely with broader policy goals in rural development, environmental management, cultural preservation, and employment generation:

- Equine grazing and breeding are recognised under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for supporting sustainable land use.
- Betting levies in countries like France and the UK are reinvested into the racing industry.
- Ireland offers targeted tax reliefs and strategic investments for equine infrastructure and breeding initiatives.

In 2017, the European Parliament formally acknowledged the equine industry's socio-economic value, calling for improved support in regulation, welfare, and environmental sustainability.

Planning Rationale for Equine Development

The economic, social, and environmental contributions of the equine industry offer a strong justification for planning approval and investment in equine infrastructure—including stud farms, training facilities, competition venues, and riding centres.

Such developments deliver:

- Job creation, particularly in rural communities.
- Tourism and leisure revenue, stimulating local businesses.
- Export and trade opportunities, bolstering national and regional economies.
- Sustainability benefits, through responsible land use and animal care.

Investing in the equine sector safeguards a key element of Europe's cultural heritage and rural economy while delivering tangible, long-term returns—making it a valuable focus for strategic development

9.0 Conclusion

The Mr and Mrs Bell are committed to developing a sustainable, high-quality farming and equestrian enterprise. The breeding, rearing and management of horses, cattle, water buffalo, goats, sheep and poultry is a long-term investment with significant contribution to the rural economy, supporting local suppliers, veterinary services, feed merchants and associated rural businesses.

The evidence clearly demonstrates:

- A strong functional need for 24-hour on-site supervision
- A compliance with national and local policy for temporary rural worker dwellings
- That the site constitutes previously developed land within the new Grey Belt
- That the proposal is reversible, modest, and proportionate
- That the business is viable, expanding and connected to the rural economy

Accordingly, the proposed temporary rural worker dwelling is both necessary and justified, and planning permission should be granted