

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 September 2026 21:35:45 UTC+01:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0933
Categories: Comments Received

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 10/09/2026 9:35 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land Between Muntham Drive and Smugglers' Lane Chapel Road Barns Green West Sussex
Proposal:	Erection of 31 dwellings with access from Chapel Road including roads, parking and open space.
Case Officer:	Alice Johnson

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: Queens Head Chapel Road, Barns Green Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Highway Access and Parking - Loss of General Amenity - Other - Overdevelopment - Privacy Light and Noise - Trees and Landscaping
Comments:	Dear Planning Officer and Members of the Planning Committee, I am writing as a local resident and landlord of the village pub to

object to planning application DC/26/0933 for 31 houses on land south of Muntham Drive.

I want to start by saying that I am not against new houses or new people coming to live in Barns Green. Villages have to change and grow, and families need somewhere to live. I also understand that Barns Green has to take its fair share of new housing.

What worries me is the amount of development being proposed around the village, and particularly whether this application is simply trying to put too much onto this site.

I spend a large part of my working life talking to people who live here. I hear their concerns about traffic, drainage, development and how quickly the village is changing. These aren't people saying "no more houses". What I hear far more often is: how much can a small village reasonably take before it stops being the village we know?

That is where my concern about this application starts.

Why has 25 become 31?

The Council's emerging allocation for this site is for 25 houses. Even Shanly's own Planning Statement acknowledges that.

So why are we now being asked to accept 31?

Six houses might not sound like much, but it is nearly a quarter more development than the number the Council has been working with.

And those extra houses don't just mean six more front doors. They mean more cars, more parking, more road, more hardstanding, more pressure on drainage and sewage and less room for trees, hedges and wildlife.

The plans show 88 parking spaces for 31 houses. Shanly's own biodiversity assessment says around 0.8 hectares of the site will become buildings and hardstanding.

To me, that starts to look like an awful lot being squeezed onto a piece of land on the edge of a rural village.

If 25 houses have been considered appropriate for this site, then I think Shanly should have to make a very convincing case for why we suddenly need 31.

I haven't seen that case made.

Wildlife and biodiversity

The biodiversity figures concern me enormously.

According to Shanly's own assessment, the site currently has 7.52 area-habitat biodiversity units. After the development it would have 4.57.

That is a 39.23% loss of biodiversity value on the site itself.

I understand that developers can make up some of this loss by creating habitat somewhere else or buying biodiversity units. I am sure there are rules and calculations which allow that.

But as somebody who actually lives here, I find the basic idea rather difficult to accept.

Why destroy good habitat here and then pay to replace it somewhere else if some of that destruction could be avoided by simply putting fewer houses on the site?

Why hasn't anyone shown us what happens to those biodiversity figures if 31 houses becomes the 25 originally identified for the site?

Would we lose less hedgerow? Could more habitat remain? Could houses be moved further from trees? Could there be less hardstanding and more space for wildlife?

Those seem like perfectly reasonable questions.

The ecology work isn't even finished

What concerns me even more is that the ecological work appears still to be ongoing.

Shanly's own Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies the hedgerows and tree lines as being of high interest to commuting and foraging bats.

Barbastelle bats have been recorded on land immediately next to the site and their own ecologists identify a possible relationship with The Mens Special Area of Conservation.

Their report says further bat surveys are needed between April and September 2026 before the Ecological Impact Assessment can be completed.

We haven't even reached the end of September yet.

I genuinely don't understand why we would make a permanent decision about developing this land before the surveys Shanly's own ecologists say are needed have actually been finished.

Surely we find out what is there before granting permission to build on it.

Trees, hedges and the countryside around us

One of the things that makes Barns Green what it is is the countryside running through and around the village.

The hedges, trees, fields, footpaths and bridleways aren't just bits of green on a planning map. They are part of the place we live.

The development requires around 15 metres of good-quality native hedgerow to be removed just to create the access. There are also tree groups being partly removed, pruning works and hard surfacing proposed within the Root Protection Areas of retained trees.

Again, each individual thing can probably be explained away.

But put them all together and you start to get the impression that the development is being squeezed very tightly around what is already there.

And once again I come back to the same question.

Would we need to make all these compromises if this was 25 houses rather than 31?

What is actually happening with our sewage?

This is probably the issue I find most frustrating.

Southern Water have said there is capacity in the local foul sewer network.

But when Horsham District Council questioned them about it, Southern Water acknowledged that testing at Barns Green Wastewater Treatment Works was still being carried out.

I am not an engineer, but that seems fairly straightforward to me.

It isn't much good telling us that the pipe can carry the sewage away from the houses if we don't yet know whether the treatment works at the other end can cope with everything being proposed for Barns Green.

This is particularly difficult to understand after the Council recently refused another large development in the village, DC/25/2057, where the lack of proven foul sewerage capacity was one of the concerns.

Residents should be able to expect some consistency.

If sewage capacity needed to be proved before that development could go ahead, surely it needs to be proved before this one does as well.

Why can't we simply wait for the Barns Green Wastewater Treatment Works results and then make the decision based on facts rather than assumptions?

Are these actually the houses local people need?

I am also concerned by the affordable housing situation.

There are 163 households with a local connection to Itchingfield/Barns Green on the Housing Register.

That should be a very good reason for building homes here.

But HDC's own Housing Officers have responded to this application with "More information needed". They have raised questions about the mix of affordable homes, their tenure and whether a Registered Provider has even been identified.

If we are going to permanently give up countryside around Barns Green for new housing, then I want to see houses that actually help the people who need them.

I would find it much easier to support sensible development if I could see that young people from the village, local families and people who need to downsize were actually going to benefit from it.

We shouldn't simply build more houses. We should build the right houses.

Our bridleways and rural character matter too

West Sussex County Council's Public Rights of Way response also concerns me.

They haven't formally objected, but they do say the development is likely to have a detrimental impact on the safety, convenience or enjoyment of people using the path.

Anyone who lives here knows the difference between walking along a rural path beside fields and hedges and walking down a corridor between the backs of houses and close-boarded fences.

That might sound like a small thing when looking at a site plan in an office.

It doesn't feel small when it is part of the countryside you walk

through every day.

Once it has gone, it has gone.

There are still too many unanswered questions

This is probably what bothers me most about the application.

The bat surveys aren't finished.

The Ecological Impact Assessment appears to depend on those surveys.

There is a substantial biodiversity shortfall which still needs to be dealt with somewhere else.

The Habitat Management Plan is still a draft.

HDC has asked for more contaminated-land investigation.

HDC's Housing Team wants more information.

Testing at Barns Green Wastewater Treatment Works is still outstanding.

And in the middle of all of this, we are being asked to approve 31 houses on a site the Council has been assessing for 25.

Why?

What is the harm in getting the answers first?

Please look at Barns Green as a whole

This is my biggest concern as somebody who lives and works in this village.

The planning system looks at applications one reference number at a time.

We don't experience them like that.

We experience all of them together.

We see the extra cars. We see what happens on the roads at busy times. We know where water sits after heavy rain. We use the footpaths. We know the fields and hedges. We talk to the people who live here.

Another 31 houses may not look enormous on a planning officer's spreadsheet.

But then there is another development, and another allocation, and another application.

Piece by piece it changes the village.

Barns Green isn't an extension of Horsham. It is a rural village with its own community and its own limitations.

That doesn't mean pulling up the drawbridge.

New families should be welcomed here. They help keep the school, pub, shop and village organisations alive.

But development needs to fit the village rather than the village constantly having to adapt to whatever development is proposed.

Conclusion

I therefore ask Horsham District Council to refuse DC/26/0933 in its present form.

At the very least, please don't make the decision until the ecological surveys are finished, we know whether Barns Green Wastewater Treatment Works can actually cope, the biodiversity shortfall has been properly addressed and the Housing Team's questions about affordable housing have been answered.

And above all, I would ask one very simple question:

Why 31?

If the Council has assessed this land for 25 houses, show us why another six are necessary and show us that they don't come at the expense of our wildlife, countryside, drainage, infrastructure and the character of Barns Green.

I don't want Barns Green preserved in aspic. I want it to remain a living village.

That means new people, new families and some new homes.

But it also means knowing when enough is enough and making sure that the development we do accept is right for the village.

Once these fields are built on, we don't get another chance to make the decision.

Please make sure we get this one right.

Kind regards

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