

Tanglewood
5 Muntham Drive
Barns Green
West Sussex
RH13 0PT

9th September 2026

Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Parkside
Chart Way
Horsham
RH12 1RL

Dear Sirs

Your ref: DC/26/0933, Land between Muntham Drive and Smugglers Lane, Chapel Road, Barns Green.

I object to the development of the field south of Muntham Drive on the following grounds:

- Following lengthy consultation, in the referendum on the Itchingfield and Barns Green Neighbourhood Development Plan held on 4th September 2025, less than a year ago, residents voted by an overwhelming majority (92.05%) for Horsham District Council to *'use the Neighbourhood Plan for Itchingfield Parish to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area'*. This proposed site was expressly rejected through the Made Itchingfield and Barns Green Neighbourhood Development Plan, which carries full statutory weight under NPPF30. The Plan does propose other sites, such as the former Itchingfield School site, now vacant brownfield land. Barns Green has already absorbed substantial growth in recent years (Ashmiles, Sumners Fields, and other smaller developments). Significantly, the Government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill guidance states that what should be built and where *'should be shaped by local communities'*.
- The proposed area lies outside the current 'built up area boundary' (BUAB) and is defined as 'countryside'. To build on this would contravene Policy 26 of the HDC Local Plan. In the *draft* Local Plan (2025-2040), Horsham District Council has arbitrarily redrawn the BUAB of Barns Green to include this field without consulting the local community, in contravention of National Planning Policy Framework 15, which requires planning authorities to shape places *'in a way that reflects local needs and community preferences.'* A 'built up area boundary' is defined as the line that separates the built-up area from the countryside. Currently Chapel Lane provides an *'existing defensible boundary'* to the village (as does the Sumners Ponds campsite for the new Sumners Ponds development). The fields west of that line, including this field, are countryside, and no applications have been approved to build on them. **There would no longer be an 'existing defensible boundary' to the west of the village if this development were permitted.**

- **There is no evidence of local demand for more of this type of housing in Barns Green.** For the almost-complete Sumners Fields site in the village, Sigma Homes' own website shows only 20 of its 32 houses sold, and even local housing associations were unable to afford the 'affordable housing', which now lies vacant. There is no agreed provider identified for the Shanly Homes 'affordable homes', so they are likely to suffer the same fate. Furthermore, the draft HDC Local Plan allocates only 25 homes to the BRG2 site; Shanly Homes' proposed 31 homes is an unjustified 24% increase. Of these 31 homes, 72% are one- and two-bedroomed units, although the housing register shows 61% of listed demand is for three- and four-bedroomed homes. The 'need' generated by the Standard Method is thus producing development that is destructive, unwanted, and out of character with its surroundings.
- **Flooding.** Contrary to the GPA3 Assessment, the proposed site is not 'broadly flat' as stated. It sits on a slope of clay-based soil that does not drain easily. Already, in periods of heavy rain, substantial surface water runs down the fields north of Smugglers Lane onto Chapel Lane. The village shop was badly damaged by flood water a few years ago, and the drains cannot cope with current surface run-off during heavy rainfall (see attached photograph showing water gushing from the field onto Chapel Road). Building on the proposed field would increase the flood risk to adjacent housing, including the local shop and the following listed buildings: Bennetts, Blacksmith's Cottage, The Queen's Head, and Heron's Reach (at the village shop). The IAWPA flood risk assessment shows that on 9.2.26, Well 2 was full (water at 0.00m, i.e. ground level), meaning all rainwater was running off the surface and onto Chapel Road. This already discharges into the existing, overwhelmed and inadequate foul sewage network. Covering the area with buildings and roads will plainly make this worse.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure Provision.**
- There are already issues with the **management of waste water**, with sewage regularly leaking onto roadside verges in Barns Green during periods of high rainfall — i.e. there is not sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet current requirements, let alone an additional 31 dwellings in Barns Green and a further possible 1,000 homes in Southwater. To add insult to injury, Southern Water is now proposing to close its Itchingfield Wastewater Treatment Works and transfer additional sewage to the already overwhelmed Barns Green Wastewater Treatment Works. Southern Water has been unable to confirm capacity even for current usage. This situation is untenable and should be fully assessed before any planning decision is reached, so that wastewater management at Barns Green can be increased to meet both current and future needs.
- **Inadequate Electrical Infrastructure.** The nearby development under construction (Sumners Fields) has had to put a number of houses onto a backup diesel generator. This indicates insufficient capacity to meet current demand, let alone an additional 31 houses.
- **Access to the site would increase congestion and the risk of accidents.** From the only possible access on Chapel Road, sight lines are poor and the road is narrow. For the viability of local businesses, it is vital that customers can park on the road at the Queen's Head and the Village Shop, directly opposite the proposed entrance to the development. At peak times (school drop-off and pick-up), there are many taxis carrying the 120 pupils to and from Muntham House School, as well as cars transporting some of the 130 pupils at the village school and children at the local playgroup. This development would increase traffic levels further, with associated risks and congestion.
- The Shanly Homes application relies on a significant shift away from private car use. **Barns Green has almost non-existent public transport.** The nearest train station (Christ's Hospital) is 3.7km away, and the bus service is minimal — for example, only two buses on a Tuesday, at 07.00 and 16.57. This is inadequate and unreliable provision for access to work, services such as GPs, hospitals, libraries and larger shops. There are no evening services at all, and nothing at weekends. Every house in the village therefore requires access to at least one car, so from the perspective of both parking provision and the local road network, this development would have detrimental, cumulative impacts on our already fragile roads.
- **Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment.**
- We need to preserve and enhance our historic environment through positive management of development affecting designated heritage assets and their settings. The listed buildings Bennetts, Blacksmith's Cottage, The Queen's Head and Heron's Reach currently enjoy rural outlooks, which the proposed development would negatively affect. Bennetts is surrounded by fields on two sides, with

long gardens and trees separating it from the housing on the Muntham Drive side. In addition, as it has no foundations, Bennetts (Grade 2, UID: 1286000) is at high risk of serious structural damage from heavy site traffic associated with the proposed Shanly Homes development. Building two-storey housing to the west of Bennetts would be very intrusive, sited uphill from this historic building, dominating the skyline and ruining its rural outlook.

- HDC's Planning Framework Policy 34 states that '*development should reinforce the special character*' of the village. Any modern, urban-style housing would be out of character with the listed buildings that surround the site and form the hub of the community — the pub and the shop.
- The southern boundary of the proposed site is Smugglers Way, a **historic footpath** used by smugglers hundreds of years ago and edged by **ancient hedgerow**. The National Planning Policy Framework states that development causing loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats '*should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons*'. There are sensitive species present (dormice), drainage sensitivities (see the flooding point above), and increased recreational pressure is anticipated (Natural England's Standing Advice). Site access construction indicates removal of ancient hedgerow, destroying natural habitat.

This development would irretrievably damage this historic environment.

- Barns Green is a 'medium village' with 'a moderate level of services, facilities and community networks.' **Significantly increasing the population of the village would put strain on these. Conversely, increasing the level of services would change the nature of the village.**

In conclusion, this application should be refused because:

- The site is not included in the Made Itchingfield and Barns Green Neighbourhood Development Plan, which was supported by 92.05% of residents in September 2025.
- It would destroy the 'existing defensible boundary' on the west of the village.
- There is no evidence of local demand for more housing.
- The area is susceptible to flooding, impacting adjacent buildings.
- There is inadequate waste water, electricity, road safety and public transport infrastructure to support this development.
- This development would cause irretrievable damage to heritage assets, listed buildings — particularly Bennetts — and ancient hedgerow.
- The development would cause unacceptable change to the historical character of the village centre.

Yours faithfully

