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Your Ref: DC/26/1171

Our Ref: 11216-kt

29 September 2026

For the attention Kate Turner

Horsham District Council

Albery House

Springfield Road

Horsham

West Sussex

RH12 2GB

Dear Ms Turner,

Site: Land at Knowe Top Farm, Broadford Bridge Road, West Chiltington, West Sussex.

Application: DC/26/1171

Proposal: Construction of a pressing centre building including associated access, hardstanding and landscaping

Thank you for your instruction dated 8 September 2026 requesting Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd (RAC) comments on the above planning application.

In preparing this desk-top response I have had regard to:

- the application form and associated plans; and
- a Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) (dated July 2026) produced by ECE Planning (the applicant's agent).

I have not visited the site or discussed the application with the applicant or the agent.

Background

1. Nyetimber Ltd operates vineyards over 300 hectares across West Sussex, Kent and Hampshire with the site at West Chiltington extending to approximately 198 hectares comprising Knowe Top Farm (the application site) and Nyetimber Manor used for viticulture, wine production and ancillary land management.
2. The application site at Knowe Top Farm comprises an existing pressing centre building (approved under DC/14/2741 and amended under DC/16/2052) and two rural worker dwellings (approved under DC/19/1540).



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3. The application proposes the erection of an additional pressing centre to meet the requirements of Nyetimber vineyards across Sussex, Hampshire and Kent.
4. Currently the applicant rents a pressing centre at Tillington, Petworth in Hampshire however the lease period is due to end soon and the applicant has identified an opportunity to provide the centre at the application site which would centralise all operational works at Knowe Top Farm.
5. The PDAS details that the building at Tillington will not be available for a lease renewal as the landlord is taking the building back in hand for their own agricultural operations.
6. The proposed building will accommodate six presses which would ensure that juice from subgroups of grapes grown by the applicant is not mixed during the pressing process, 29 settling tanks and a further 14 tanks for pressed juice to settle for 24 hours prior to being removed from site by tankers.
7. The tanks are loaded from the top and therefore the building requires walking access around the tanks so they can be monitored by staff.
8. The PDAS details that the pressing centre will operate for approximately six weeks each year during the harvesting of grapes (September/October) followed by cleaning and servicing.
9. The proposed building will also provide a staff welfare area, an office and maintenance and storage areas.
10. The PDAS detailed that the tonnage of grapes requiring pressing across the Nyetimber Ltd vineyards over a 10 year period will increase from 3,070mT in 2026 to 4,082mT in 2027 onwards.
11. The current pressing capacity at Knowe Top Farm and the rented facility at Tillington currently allows the applicant to press 2,668 to 3,283mT and therefore the applicant considers the proposed building would provide sufficient increased capacity for the future harvests.

Proposal

12. The application proposes the erection of a pressing centre building measuring 63m x 22.5m (1,417.5m²) with an eaves height of 7m and a ridge height of 8.2m.
13. The building will be constructed with dark grey profile metal sheeting walls and dark red roof. It will be clad on all sides and accessed via roller shutter doors on the western, eastern and southern elevations and a pedestrian door on the western elevation.

Relevant Planning Policies

14. National planning policy guidance for development in the countryside is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated in August 2026.
15. The National Planning Policy Framework places a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the planning system. Policy S3 - Presumption in Favour of

Sustainable Development provides that decisions on development proposals should apply this presumption. This means that:

- development proposals within settlements should be considered against Policy S4;
- development proposals outside settlements should be considered against Policy S5; and
- in all locations, proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan and the national decision-making policies in the Framework should be approved without delay.

16. Policy DM3 - Determining Development Proposals requires local planning authorities to work with applicants in a positive and proactive manner, seeking solutions to problems arising from initial proposals where necessary, taking a proportionate approach to the planning matters raised, considering whether otherwise unacceptable proposals can be made acceptable through planning conditions or obligations, and not refusing applications which should clearly be approved having regard to the development plan, the Framework and other material considerations.
17. The objective of Chapter 4 of the Framework is to promote sustainable patterns of development, including enabling development which supports the rural economy and rural communities while safeguarding the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
18. Within this context, Policy S5 - Principle of Development Outside Settlements recognises that certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements where the benefits are not substantially outweighed by adverse effects. These include development for rural businesses and services where a countryside location is necessary, the reuse, extension or replacement of existing buildings, the redevelopment of previously developed land, and limited infilling within groups of houses.
19. Chapter 7 - Building a Strong, Effective Economy seeks to ensure that planning decisions support economic growth.
20. Policy E1 - Supporting Economic Growth requires planning policies and decisions to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, and confirms that significant weight should be given to supporting economic growth and productivity, taking account of local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
21. Policy E2 - Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy states that planning policies and decisions should enable:
- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, including through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
 - b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; and
 - c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside and contribute to local prosperity.
22. Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) deals with countryside protection and enhancement and states:
- “Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must*

be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria:

- 1. support the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- 2. enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;*
- 3. provide for quiet informal recreational use; or,*
- 4. enable the sustainable development of rural areas.*

In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including:

- 1. the development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;*
- 2. the pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and*
- 3. the landform of the area.”*

Appraisal

23. It is accepted that the loss of the leased pressing centre at Tillington, Petworth and the increase grape harvest yields from 2027 onwards will leave Nyetimber with a deficit in its pressing facilities.
24. It is considered that the proposed building will provide the appropriate required facilities on a single site for the pressing of grapes across the whole Nyetimber Ltd estate (West Sussex, Hampshire and Kent) along with the settling tanks.
25. The space around the tanks is considered appropriate for safe handling and manoeuvring of machinery and pallets around the building.
26. RAC considers the building height has been appropriately designed to allow the tanks to be loaded from the top without risking damage to the building structure or machinery.
27. Overall, RAC considers the applicant's proposal is compliant with national and local planning policy.

I trust these comments are helpful in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

Olivia Wojniak