

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 August 2026 10:33
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Ref DC/26/0933 - Land Between Muntham Drive and Smugglers' Lane
Chapel Road Barns Green West Sussex

Categories: Comments Received



5 Six Acres Close, Barns Green, Horsham
West Sussex RH13 0PL

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing as a concerned local resident of Barns Green.

Objection to Unsustainable and Inappropriate Development:

I passionately believe that any future planning application for development in this area would be unnecessary, inappropriate, and unsustainable. Such proposals would extend beyond the established limits of our village, encroaching into the surrounding countryside of Barns Green. This type of expansion risks undermining the very character and rural setting that make Barns Green a unique and cherished place to live. The community's concerns are rooted in the preservation of our village's identity and the protection of its picturesque environment from development that does not respect its boundaries or established qualities.

Local Development Planning History:

In 2016, the Parish Council was presented with a total of twenty-eight site applications for potential development within the parish. To assess the suitability of these sites, the Council employed a matrix provided by the government, which is specifically designed to determine site viability. This rigorous evaluation process resulted in the identification of two preferred locations for future development.

Subsequently, in September 2025, the residents of Barns Green formally adopted the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan. This plan, developed through local consultation and participation, officially recognised Sumners Ponds and Itchingfield Old School GR3 in the Horsham District Plan was accepted by Horsham District Council in November 2025. As a result, these sites are now incorporated into the Horsham District Council Local Plan, guiding future planning and development decisions for Barns Green and its surrounding areas. Although I notice that this site seems to have disappeared out of the revised Local Plan 2025-2040.

Impact on Local Character and Landscape:

Future development in any form will fail to respond appropriately to the established local character, the distinctive landscape, and the unique surroundings of Barns Green. The introduction of new development would therefore be detrimental, causing harm to both the visual and rural amenities of the area. As such, these proposals should be refused to protect the village's special qualities and preserve the integrity of its environment.

Impact on Local Amenities:

Horsham District Council and developers may perceive Barns Green as a picturesque Sussex village, complete with a charming country pub and a well-supported village shop. However, granting planning permission for development on these fields would place these cherished amenities at serious risk. The viability of both the Queens Head Public House and the village shop is closely tied to the village's unique rural character and the support of the local community. Any significant development could jeopardise their continued existence, undermining the social fabric and communal spirit that define Barns Green.

Current Development Threats:

The village is currently facing significant risks from development activities. Planning permission has already been granted for thirty-four plots at Sumners Ponds. However, it is understood that these plots have not yet been sold, and the development has had to be referred back for further planning approval. This is due to proposed changes in the original application, specifically the shift from 34% affordable homes to shared ownership arrangements.

Additionally, the Itchingfield Old School site, which has been identified as a potential location for development, has not yet received formal planning permission. The uncertainty surrounding these sites adds to the concern regarding the future of Barns Green and its surrounding countryside.

Unrestricted Development Concerns:

Permitting developers unrestricted access to pursue their own interests poses a significant threat to the rural character, historical charm, and visual appeal of Barns Green and its picturesque surroundings. Such unchecked development activity undermines the village's distinctive identity, diminishes its attractive features, and risks irreversible damage to the landscape and community fabric that make the area unique.

The proposal is opposed because it would:

- Conflict with the Local Plan
- Be unsustainable.
- Increase traffic on unsuitable roads.
- Damage the landscape.
- Detrimental effect on the environment
- Negatively impact the community
- Place more pressure on a already over capacity WwTW

The Neighbourhood Plan:

The parish engaged constructively with Horsham District Council during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and accepted the initial brief to accommodate 50 additional homes. This figure was based on the Council's own guidance at the time and was considered both proportionate and sustainable for a rural parish with limited infrastructure.

Through extensive consultation, evidence gathering, and community engagement, two sites were identified as appropriate for development:

- **Sumners Fields** (complete less than 50% occupancy)
- **Itchingfield Old School site**

These sites were selected with the clear support of local residents and were subsequently adopted by Horsham District Council within the Local Plan. This represented a shared understanding between the parish and the District Council regarding the scale and location of future growth.

The current proposal to increase the housing allocation by an additional 95 homes represents a significant and unjustified departure from the agreed position. No clear evidence has been provided to demonstrate why the parish's housing requirement has more than doubled, nor why this increase cannot be accommodated through the existing Neighbourhood Plan framework.

Horsham District Council should not be required to absorb large volumes of unmet housing need from Crawley, Adur or Worthing when doing so directly contradicts the spatial strategy and community-endorsed policies set out in the Itchingfield & Barns Green Neighbourhood Plan. That plan formally adopted and supported by residents identified only two appropriate sites for development in the parish, one of which is already being delivered. Yet the emerging Horsham Local Plan now proposes to allocate additional housing to Barns Green, including sites around Chapel Road, the Queen's Head, and Two Mile Ash Road, solely because neighbouring authorities cannot meet their own

targets. This approach is neither justified nor sustainable: Barns Green lacks the infrastructure capacity, wastewater resilience, highway safety provision and landscape tolerance to accommodate development beyond what the Neighbourhood Plan assessed as appropriate. The National Planning Policy Framework requires redistribution of unmet need only where it can be delivered sustainably, and the evidence shows that further allocations in Barns Green would undermine rural character, exceed local environmental constraints, and breach the principle of plan-led growth. Horsham should not be treated as the default “overflow” for other districts’ shortfalls, particularly where doing so would impose disproportionate harm on a single rural village that has already fulfilled its democratically agreed housing contribution.

Unsustainable Development:

The Queens Head Public House stands as the heart of our community. It serves not only as a popular gathering place for local residents but also attracts visitors from outside the village who come seeking the authentic country pub experience. The pub plays a vital role in village life, with a range of activities including monthly quizzes, coffee mornings, music events, and the annual car show: ironically, held in the very field now under threat of development. These events are significant not just for fostering community spirit, but also for raising substantial amounts for both local and national charities.

As a country pub, its appeal lies in its unique atmosphere and its reputation for excellent food. Many locals, including myself, would not choose to dine in a town pub, preferring instead the distinct character offered by a village establishment. However, should the pub become surrounded by a housing estate, this cherished country feel would undoubtedly be lost, undermining the very qualities that make it special.

Barns Green Village Stores is another essential part of community life. The new owners have seamlessly become part of the village, and the shop is supported by residents of all ages. Despite perceptions that it is mainly the elderly villagers who drive to the shop, in reality, the road outside is frequently busy with people coming and going throughout the day. If access to a new development were to be placed directly opposite the shop or the pub, it would severely disrupt the flow of customers and potentially threaten the survival of both businesses. The loss of these vital amenities would have a profound and negative impact on the social and economic wellbeing of the village.

The introduction of a new junction almost opposite the Queens Head car park would significantly intensify existing parking and access pressures in this part of the village. Parking in front of the shop and pub is already limited, informal, and essential to the viability of both businesses. As seen with the Miller Homes application, developers frequently claim to “alleviate” parking issues while omitting critical details — in this case, Miller Homes’ drawings **fail** to show the new drive associated with the future redevelopment of the shop, which would in fact remove further parking spaces. The Shanly Homes proposal would compound these losses by restricting parking and manoeuvring space on the opposite side of the road, creating a cumulative impact that neither developer has assessed. This pressure would be felt most acutely during construction, when access, visibility, and customer parking are likely to be disrupted. The combined effect risks undermining the operation and long-term viability of both the shop and the Queens Head, which are central to village life and relied upon by residents.

Increased Traffic on Unsuitable Roads:

The community’s dependence on private vehicles is considerable, with the majority of households owning at least two cars. Despite this, the country roads in and around the village are ill-equipped to manage additional traffic. At present, there is already significant congestion caused by frequent taxi movements servicing Munthum House School, which account for over 150 journeys during peak periods. This is compounded by the daily drop-off and pick-up activity at the primary school, creating persistent bottlenecks and further strain on the road infrastructure.

While a daily bus service operates in the area providing an important link for elderly residents, its effectiveness is regularly undermined by irresponsible parking, particularly in the Hordens. Parked cars often obstruct the route, resulting in traffic bottlenecks that impede the bus’s passage. On occasion, the bus is forced to bypass certain stops altogether by travelling directly down Chapel Road, leaving residents without access to public transport.

A self-funded community transport service is operated by registered volunteer drivers, helping local residents travel to appointments.

Impact on the Village Shop:

The village shop serves as a vital lifeline for our local community, providing essential goods and services to residents and visitors alike. Many people rely on their cars to access the shop, whether they are commuters from outside the village such as those travelling from Brooks Green Park, the early morning commuter on their way to catch trains at

Christ's Hospital Station or local workers who stop by to collect their lunches. Throughout the day, there is a constant flow of vehicles, often resulting in a queue of cars along the road outside the shop. Introducing a new junction in the vicinity of this facility would disrupt this steady flow, risking serious negative consequences.

For these reasons, the proposed development site is unsuitable. Any new development would lead to increased reliance on private vehicles, generating more traffic on already stretched roads and causing further environmental harm.

Impact on the Landscape:

The proposed development would result in a dense concentration of new buildings on what is currently greenfield, agricultural land. This area lies beyond the established physical boundaries of Barns Green and outside the recognised limits of residential development. By extending built structures into this space, the proposal would encroach upon the picturesque countryside that forms the setting for our village.

Such encroachment would have a negative visual impact on the surrounding landscape. Any future development on this site would inevitably alter the rural character and scenic beauty of the area. There is a real concern that permitting this proposal could set a precedent, making it difficult to prevent further building and gradual expansion towards Fulford Hill.

It is important to note that the fields in question are divided by Smugglers Lane, which is believed to be an ancient right of way. Preserving this feature is essential both for its historical significance and for maintaining the rural landscape that is so highly valued by the community.

The proposed access would destroy or sever a hedgerow adjacent to Chapel Road containing Service Trees, a recognised indicator of ancient and long-established woodland. Their loss cannot be mitigated through standard planting, and hedgerows with Service Trees are protected due to their ecological and heritage value. Removing or cutting through this feature to create an access would cause irreversible harm to habitat continuity and landscape character, meaning the proposal fails basic environmental safeguarding tests and should not proceed.

Effect on the Community:

The irreversible loss of green belt land is a significant concern for the community. Once this land is built upon, it cannot be restored to its original state. Although developers may attempt to compensate for this by adding small patches of greenery, these measures offer little consolation when compared to what currently exists.

From the perspective of local residents, there appears to be a lack of coordinated planning when it comes to new developments. While increased development may result in additional revenue for the council, potentially alleviating pressure on council taxes, other important considerations are overlooked.

One of the most pressing issues is the strain on health services. Securing medical appointments is already challenging, and there is a shortage of qualified doctors to support the creation of new surgery facilities. Access to hospital care is also problematic, as the community is located at least 45 minutes from the nearest hospital.

Community Sporting Events:

Run Barns Green

Barns Green is renowned for its annual running event, which brings together the entire community in various supportive roles. The Barns Green Half Marathon, first held in 1982, has grown significantly over the years and now operates under the banner of Run Barns Green. This highly rated event features four separate races catering to all age groups, from young children aged 4 to adults up to 80 years old. The event raises substantial amounts for both local and national charities.

Event Parking and Logistics:

Sumners Ponds serves as one of the main parking areas for the event, providing convenient access and egress for participants and spectators alike. Until a couple of years ago, the field now under consideration for development had been used regularly for parking, as it offered direct access to the adjacent field near Betty's Lake. However, logistical challenges were present: the narrow gate limited the flow of vehicles, and the field itself is prone to flooding, making maintenance and use difficult during wetter periods.

Kind Regards 

