



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0222

New April Cottage, Furze View, Slinfold, West Sussex, RH13 0RH

DESCRIPTION:

Change of use part of residential dwelling for use as acupuncture clinic

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/21/1087	Erection of a detached garden outbuilding (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed).	Application 03.11.2021	Permitted on
DC/21/1868	Installation of 2no new rooflights to the rear (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed).	Application 06.10.2021	Permitted on

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

New April Cottage is located along Furze View, a private single-track rural lane serving a small number of residential properties on the outskirts of Slinfold. The dwelling is a detached cottage set within a generous plot, characterised by mature planting, private garden space, and a set-back position from the lane. The surrounding area is residential and low-density, with properties typically accessed individually from Furze View rather than through-traffic. Access to the site is via the lane's junction with the A264 (Horsham Road). The property currently functions solely as a private dwelling.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application seeks consent to change the use of an existing bedroom, in the front elevation, to operate as a home-based acupuncture clinic. The proposal would utilise an existing room within the property for treatment sessions, apart from the installation of a door, there are no other external building works, structural changes, or alterations to the appearance of the dwelling. The business would be operated by the homeowner on an appointment-only basis. All activity would remain contained within the existing footprint of the house, and the remainder of the property would continue in residential use.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 7 - Economic Growth
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 41 - Parking

Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031

Policy Bill 1 - Billingshurst built-up area boundary

Parish Design Statement:

Design Statement for the Parish of Billingshurst

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality

Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

Policy 25: Parking

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Planning Advice Notes:

Facilitating Appropriate Development

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection

WSCC Highways: no objection

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

X3 letters of Objection have been received from 2 addresses, objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Highways concerns: Furze View is a narrow single-track lane with no proper passing places, and the proposed business hours (7 a.m.–8.30 p.m. plus Saturdays) would generate significant extra traffic, noise and disturbance in a quiet residential road. The increased vehicle movements would worsen existing congestion and safety risks at the already hazardous junction with the A264.
- A second business operating from the lane would further intensify these problems.
- The proposed hours are unreasonable for this location and should be reconsidered.

X2 letters of Support have been received from 2 addresses, supporting the application on the following grounds:

- Visited the property many times and never had any difficulty using the lane or passing others. Families with neurodiverse children benefit from flexible appointment times and that a quiet, home-based setting is far more suitable for them than busy clinical environments.
- The small acupuncture clinic would benefit the community and fill a gap in local services. Any traffic increase would be negligible compared with existing delivery vehicles, and note that previous home-based businesses caused no issues. With ample off-lane parking available, they feel the clinic would not impact the lane and that small local businesses should be encouraged.

Parish Comments:

Billingshurst Parish Council: Comment

At the Planning and Environment Committee meeting of 3 March 2026, the committee resolved to a NEUTRAL response to this application, in that they saw no cause for objection to the plans as submitted.

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT**Principle of the Development:**

Policy 7 (3) of the HDPF seek to ensure that the formation and development of small, start-up and move-on businesses, as well as home working and home-based businesses, by encouraging provision of small units through development proposals.

Policy 26 of the HDPF seeks to protect countryside developments. 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.

The proposal involves the internal use of an existing room as an acupuncture clinic, with the installation of an access door. The proposed materials are to match those of the existing dwelling. As such, the development has no visual impact on the dwelling or the character of Furze View. The use is entirely contained within the existing footprint of the property and operates without any signage, external lighting, or structural changes, ensuring that the cottage continues to read as a private residential dwelling within the rural lane.

The proposed conversion of an internal room to a clinic accords with HDPF Policy 7(3), as it supports the establishment of a small-scale, home-based business that contributes to local economic activity while utilising an existing building with only minimal external alteration. The replacement of an existing window with a door is a modest and unobtrusive change that does not alter the building's overall form or rural appearance, and with sufficient on-site parking already available, the proposal avoids any additional physical development or operational impact.

In relation to HDPF Policy 26, the proposal represents only a modest intensification of an existing residential use and continues to allow for quiet, informal recreational enjoyment of the countryside. The use remains small in scale, contained within the existing structure, and does not generate a significant increase in activity that would detract from the area's characteristic rural pattern.

The development therefore respects the countryside setting and supports the sustainable functioning of rural areas in a manner fully consistent with Policy 26, whilst supporting policy 7 (3) of small units through home-based working.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

Externally, the only visual change in the proposal is the replacement of window to a door to the front elevation. This provides separate access to the clinic. The proposal therefore preserves the established appearance of the property and is fully in keeping with the surrounding residential context.

The proposal would be a clearly subservient change of use and is considered to be of a design, form and scale which is appropriate to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and which would not harm the character or appearance of the wider area. It is therefore considered that the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable and would accord with the above policies.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

The objections received raise concerns about early-morning noise, disturbance, and the quiet residential character of Furze View. These concerns are acknowledged; however, the proposed use remains low-intensity and domestic in scale. The proposed acupuncture clinic will operate on a strictly one-client-at-a-time, pre-booked basis within an existing room of the dwelling, ensuring very low levels of comings and goings.

All activity is contained internally within an existing room of the dwelling, and the nature of acupuncture treatments, particularly those designed for neurodiverse children, is inherently quiet, calm, and therapeutic. Appointments typically involve minimal comings and goings, comparable to ordinary household visitors, and therefore do not materially affect neighbouring privacy, noise levels, or residential amenity. In this context, the modest and controlled nature of activity is considered compatible with the residential setting.

Although the proposed opening times could be perceived as spanning a long working day, the operational nature of the clinic significantly limits its impact: it will be run by a single practitioner and will accommodate clients strictly one at a time. This ensures very limited comings and goings, limited noise levels, and no cumulative activity that would adversely affect neighbours. As a result, the proposal remains compatible with its residential context and does not materially harm the amenity, privacy, or quiet enjoyment of nearby occupants.

The internal use will not generate noise, odour, or activity beyond what is typical for a residential property. Appointments are spaced to avoid overlap, meaning that only one additional vehicle is present at any given time. The scale and nature of the use are therefore modest, quiet, and compatible with the residential character of Furze View. The supporting statement also confirms that some appointments will be held via Zoom, meaning there would be no residential impact.

As such, the proposal will not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the privacy, noise environment, or general amenity of neighbouring properties.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 41 of the HDPF states that development which involves the loss of existing parking spaces will only be allowed if suitable alternative provision has been secured elsewhere, or the need for the development overrides the loss of parking and where necessary measures are in place to mitigate against the impact.

Objectors have expressed concerns regarding traffic generation, the single-track nature of Furze View, and safety at the A264 junction. These comments are fully acknowledged. However, the proposal would generate very low levels of traffic relative to both existing and seasonal activity within the lane. Appointments are spaced, pre-booked, and limited to one vehicle at any given time, resulting in significantly fewer movements than typical small businesses or even daily residential patterns such as school-runs or deliveries. No physical changes are proposed to the access, driveway, or highway. The intensity of vehicle movements from the clinic is markedly lower than traffic already accommodated during peak seasonal use at nearby Furze Firs, and substantially less frequent than high-volume rural enterprises in the wider area. Given this controlled operational model, the proposal is not expected to give rise to harmful highway safety, capacity, or access impacts.

WSCC Highways have made no objection to the application. Confirming that access to the highway network is from the north via the Five Oaks Road junction and based on the submitted trip generation of around 20 appointments per week, they do not consider the proposal to result in a material intensification of use, particularly as appointments will be staggered to avoid overlap. They also commented on collision data from the past five years show no recorded incidents at the Five Oaks Road junction, indicating it operates safely, and the proposal is unlikely to affect this.

It is considered that the minimal highways impact of the proposal is acceptable and would accord with the above policy. It is noted that there is considerable off-street parking to support the proposal, in any case, an additional car per appointment at any given time would fit comfortably on the existing driveway.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water

abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG as it qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Other matters:

Additional Information – Operating Hours Clarification:

The applicant wishes to clarify that although the clinic's operating window extends from 07:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday and 07:00 to 14:00 on Saturdays, these hours do not represent continuous in-person working. The earliest weekday appointment would begin at 07:00, with the final appointment starting at 19:00 and finishing by 20:00; on Saturdays, the last appointment begins at 13:00 and concludes by 14:00. These times provide necessary flexibility for families, shift-workers and clients with limited availability, but the applicant does not anticipate working the full span of these hours. In addition, some appointments will be conducted via Zoom, which further reduces the number of vehicle movements to and from the property.

Objections:

While the objection raises a wide range of concerns, many fall into categories that are not material considerations in planning decisions for a minor change of use. These include general fears about traffic volumes based on speculative calculations, seasonal congestion caused by an unrelated Christmas tree business, worries about disturbance to families and their pets, early-morning inconvenience, personal perceptions of safety, and assumptions about potential future expansion. Additional points such as pollution, odours, privacy, wildlife impacts, residential enjoyment, and environmental disruption are expressed in very broad and unsubstantiated terms that do not relate directly to the conversion of one small room into a low-intensity clinic with pre-booked appointments. As such, although these concerns are acknowledged, they are not considered relevant material planning matters for this specific proposal.

Conclusions:

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Regulatory Condition:** The materials and finishes of all new external walls, windows and roofs of the development hereby permitted shall match in type, colour and texture those of the existing building.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Regulatory Condition:** The premises shall not be open for business except between the hours of 07:00 and 20:00 Monday to Friday; 09:00 and 14:00 on Saturdays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5 **Regulatory Condition:** The room identified for clinical use shall be used solely for the provision of acupuncture treatments only unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved plans (received 09.02.2026) and Supporting Statement (received 09.03.2026).

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/26/0222

Schedule of plans/documents **approved:**

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Elevation plan	Existing and Proposed	185/2025/3	09.02.2026
Floor plan	Existing and Proposed	185/2025/2	09.02.2026
Location & Site plan		185/2025/1	09.02.2026
Supporting Statement	Planning	185/2025	09.02.2026
Supporting Statement		NONE	09.03.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Meg Bayliss Date: 01/04/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 02.04.2026