Itchingfield Parish Council

9th September 2026

Dear Planning Team

Subject: DC/26/0933
Land between Muntham Drive and Smugglers Lane, Chapel Road, Barns Green, West Sussex
Erection of 31 dwellings with access from Chapel Road, including roads, parking, landscaping and associated works

Itchingfield Parish Council wishes to record its strong and unequivocal objection to planning application DC/26/0933.

This representation provides additional local context and highlights concerns which the Parish Council considers particularly relevant to the determination of this application.

The Parish Council considers that the proposal represents an unacceptable and unsustainable extension of Barns Green into the surrounding countryside and should be refused.

The proposal should not be assessed in isolation. It forms part of a rapidly changing pattern of development around Barns Green, including the existing Sumners Fields development and the proposed 68-dwelling development at Land North of Little Slaughterford, Chapel Road, Barns Green.

The site is greenfield land outside the established settlement
The proposal involves the development of greenfield land which contributes to the rural setting and character of Barns Green.

The Parish Council strongly objects to the continued erosion of the countryside around the settlement.

Development should be directed towards previously developed and brownfield land wherever suitable and deliverable sites are available before additional greenfield land is released.

Once undeveloped countryside is built upon, the loss is effectively permanent. The consequences extend beyond the physical footprint of the development and include

the gradual urbanisation of the village's rural setting, loss of openness, landscape change and pressure for further development.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that allowing this application could establish a precedent for further development of land between and beyond the existing built-up areas.

Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB)
The Parish Council has serious concerns regarding the relationship between this proposal and the Built-Up Area Boundary of Barns Green.

The Council considers that the boundary exists for an important planning purpose: to distinguish the established settlement from the surrounding countryside.

The approval of successive developments should not become a mechanism by which the Built-Up Area Boundary is effectively extended incrementally through planning decisions.

The Parish Council is concerned that this application represents another step in the outward expansion of Barns Green and could contribute to the gradual erosion of the distinction between the village and the countryside.

The Council should therefore carefully consider whether permitting this proposal would effectively create a precedent for further development beyond the established settlement.

Cumulative impact of development
This application cannot reasonably be considered in isolation.

The surrounding area has already experienced significant development, including the Sumners Fields development under DC/21/2697, which has delivered residential and commercial development (which remains largely unsold and uninhabited), and the proposed 68 dwellings at Land North of Little Slaughterford, Chapel Road.

The addition of a further 31 dwellings would intensify these cumulative effects.

The Parish Council therefore asks the Council to assess the combined effect of:

- the existing Sumners Fields residential development;
- the associated commercial development;
- the adjoining proposed development of 68 dwellings
- the proposed 31 dwellings under DC/26/0933

The cumulative effect on traffic, infrastructure, landscape, drainage, biodiversity, services and the character of the village must be considered rather than each application being treated as though it were unrelated to the others.

Highway Safety and Traffic – Chapel Road

The Parish Council has serious concerns regarding the highway implications of the proposed development and, in particular, the additional traffic that would be generated on Chapel Road.

Chapel Road is fundamentally a rural road serving Barns Green and the surrounding countryside, rather than an urban distributor road designed to accommodate significant volumes of additional residential traffic. Its character, width, alignment, junctions, visibility and relationship with surrounding properties are all reflective of its rural function.

The Parish Council considers that the impact of adding a further 31 dwellings to this road network must be assessed in the context of the existing and proposed development in the immediate area. The additional traffic cannot reasonably be considered in isolation from the existing Sumners Fields development and the proposed development ref BGR1 Land South of Smugglers Lane identified under strategic policy HA6 of Horsham District Council's emerging Local Plan on the adjoining site.

The cumulative effect could therefore be a substantial increase in vehicle movements along a road which already serves existing residential properties, agricultural uses, businesses and recreational facilities. The impact on our local pub and Village Shop will be significant.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that the character of Chapel Road means that vehicle movements can have a greater impact than might be apparent from traffic numbers alone. Rural roads often have limited opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to separate themselves from vehicular traffic, and drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and agricultural vehicles will all need to share the same road environment.

The Parish Council is also concerned about the cumulative impact of construction traffic. If DC/26/0933 proceeds alongside other developments in the area, there could be a prolonged period during which heavy goods vehicles, construction vehicles and contractor traffic use Chapel Road. This would be particularly inappropriate on a rural road serving an established village community, traffic could not flow freely and safely.

The Council therefore considers that the highway assessment should look beyond the theoretical number of vehicle movements generated by 31 homes and properly assess how those movements will interact with the existing rural highway environment and the additional traffic arising from other development proposals.

Particular consideration should be given to:

- the Chapel Road junctions;
- pedestrian movements;
- existing footways and footpaths;
- increased vehicle movements;

- construction traffic;
- parking pressure
- impact on the Village Shop
- impact on the Queen's Head public house

Infrastructure and services
The Parish Council is also concerned about the ability of local infrastructure and services to accommodate further development.

The proposal would place additional demand on schools, healthcare, roads, drainage, utilities and other local services.

It is not sufficient to consider the infrastructure requirements of 31 homes in isolation when the surrounding area is simultaneously subject to substantial additional development.

Wastewater Treatment Capacity
The Parish Council has serious concerns regarding the capacity of the Barns Green wastewater treatment infrastructure to accommodate the additional demand that would arise from the proposed development.

The proposal for 31 additional dwellings would place further pressure on the existing wastewater network and treatment facilities serving the area.

The Parish Council understands that there are already concerns regarding the capacity of the Barns Green Wastewater Treatment Works and considers that these must be fully investigated before any further residential development is permitted.

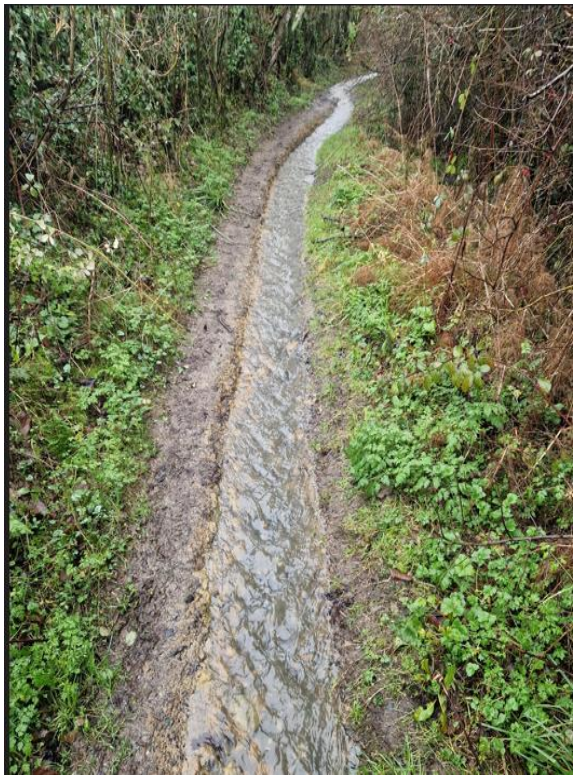
It would be inappropriate for planning permission to be granted on the assumption that sufficient wastewater capacity will become available at a later date, particularly where there is evidence of existing pressure on the system.

Existing Surface Water and Flooding – Smugglers Lane/Chapel Road
The Parish Council also wishes to draw attention to an existing localised flooding and surface-water problem associated with the field, Smugglers Lane and Chapel Road.

During periods of significant rainfall, surface water currently runs from the field towards Smugglers Lane, resulting in water accumulating on the road and subsequently affecting the area around the Queen's Head Pub. This is an existing problem which is experienced by local residents and road users and should not be overlooked when assessing the drainage implications of the proposed development.

The Parish Council is concerned that developing this greenfield site, together with the associated roads, driveways, roofs and other impermeable surfaces, could alter existing drainage patterns and increase the volume and rate of surface-water runoff reaching Smugglers Lane which will make an already dire situation, significantly worse.

These photos show flooding of the field in December 2025, this is an annual occurrence and is a problem that is not going away and will be exacberated by the proposed development.





The Parish Council considers that the drainage assessment should take proper account of the existing conditions on the ground, rather than relying solely on theoretical modelling of the proposed development.





Given that there is already evidence of surface water leaving the field and affecting Smugglers Lane and Chapel Road, the Parish Council considers that the burden should be on the applicant to demonstrate convincingly that the development will not worsen this situation.

Landscape and rural character
The development would result in the permanent urbanisation of an area which currently contributes to the rural landscape and setting of Barns Green.

The Parish Council considers that the cumulative expansion of the settlement is beginning to change the character of the area.

The landscape impact cannot simply be assessed by considering whether individual buildings can be screened by planting. The wider issue is the loss of countryside and the gradual transformation of the settlement's rural setting.

The proposal would contribute to this incremental urbanisation and should therefore be resisted.

Wild Service Trees and Hedgerow
The Parish Council has also identified the presence of potentially 3 wild service trees (Sorbus Torminalis) associated with the site.

The Parish Council understands that the presence of a wild service tree can be an indicator of long-established woodland and may be associated with ancient or species-rich habitats. The Parish Council is not suggesting that the individual tree itself has

automatic statutory protection, and it understands that the tree is not currently listed within the Sussex Wildlife Data Base purchased by the Parish Council earlier this year.

However, the Parish Council considers that its presence is nevertheless worthy of further investigation as part of the ecological assessment of the site.

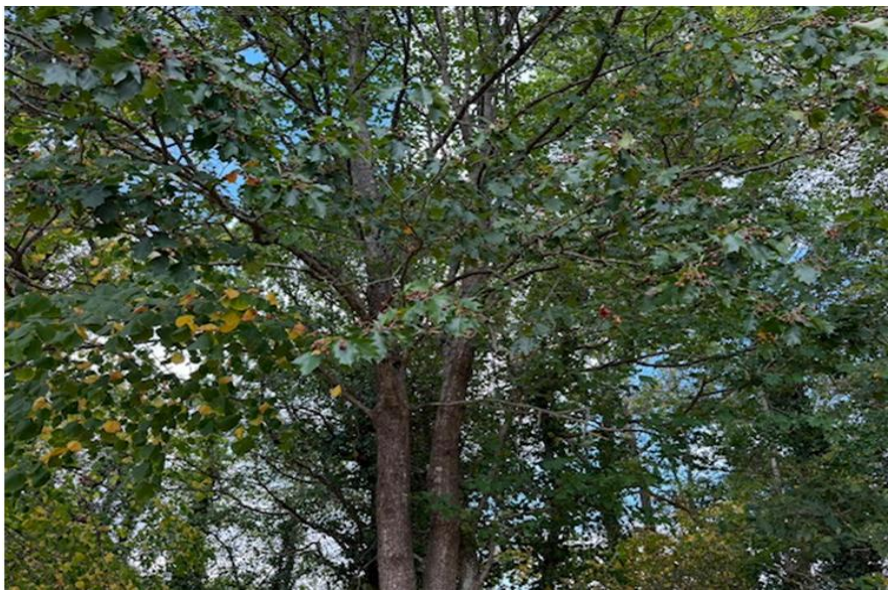
In particular, the Parish Council asks that consideration is given to whether the tree forms part of an established hedgerow and whether that hedgerow meets the relevant criteria for an important hedgerow under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

The Parish Council is concerned that the ecological significance of the existing hedgerow and associated vegetation may not be fully understood if individual trees are considered in isolation. The age, continuity and ecological value of the hedgerow and surrounding habitat should therefore be properly assessed before any works are undertaken.

The Parish Council requests that a suitably qualified ecologist considers:

- the wild service tree and its condition and significance;
- the hedgerow in which it is situated;
- whether the hedgerow meets the relevant criteria for an important hedgerow;
- the age, continuity and ecological value of the hedgerow;
- any relationship with other potentially historic or species-rich habitat on the site; and
- the potential impacts of site clearance, earthworks, construction and landscaping on these features.

The Parish Council is not seeking to assert that the presence of the wild service tree, by itself, prevents development. Rather, it considers that its presence raises a legitimate ecological question which should be properly investigated and addressed before the application is determined.



Established Anthills
The Parish Council is also concerned about the apparent presence of established anthills across the application site. We have been unable to identify any reference to these features within the information currently available in support of the application. If the anthills have not been surveyed or recorded, the Parish Council considers that this represents a potential gap in the ecological assessment of the site.

We request that the applicant's ecological assessment is reviewed and, if necessary, supplemented by a suitably qualified ecologist to establish the nature and ecological significance of the anthills and associated grassland habitat. The Council should be satisfied that any potential impacts arising from site clearance, earthworks, construction and changes to the grassland habitat have been properly assessed before the application is determined.





Ground Conditions and Impact on Neighbouring Properties
The Parish Council has concerns regarding the potential impact of the development's groundworks and foundation requirements on neighbouring properties and existing buildings.

The site is surrounded by established properties, including historic buildings and Grade II listed buildings, some of which may have relatively shallow foundations and may be particularly sensitive to ground movement and vibration.

The underlying clay soils, together with the presence of mature trees around the site, raise concerns regarding changes in soil moisture, soil movement and potential ground heave. Tree removal and substantial excavation could alter existing ground conditions and potentially affect the stability of neighbouring land and buildings.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that, depending on the foundation solution required, substantial piling or other deep groundworks may be necessary. Such works

could generate vibration and ground disturbance which may have an impact on nearby properties, particularly older and listed buildings.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the potential effects of excavation, piling, ground movement, changes in soil conditions and vibration on neighbouring properties should be fully assessed.

Particular consideration should be given to the potential impact on nearby historic and listed buildings, including The Bennets, as well as other surrounding properties.

Planning balance
The Parish Council recognises that Horsham District Council has a significant housing requirement and that the Council must consider the provision of housing.

However, housing need does not automatically make every greenfield site an appropriate location for development.

The planning system requires development to be directed towards sustainable locations and to take account of environmental, social and infrastructure considerations.

The Parish Council considers that the cumulative level of development already proposed and delivered around Barns Green fundamentally changes the planning balance.

The Council must consider whether additional development in this location remains appropriate when the cumulative impacts on the village, countryside, infrastructure and local community are taken into account.

Conclusion
For the reasons set out above, Itchingfield Parish Council objects in the strongest possible terms to planning application DC/26/0933.

The Parish Council considers that the proposal:

- represents an unacceptable loss of greenfield countryside;
- would contribute to the incremental outward expansion of Barns Green;
- undermines the spatial strategy and objectives of the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan;
- risks further eroding the distinction between the established settlement and surrounding countryside;
- fails to give sufficient weight to the significant development already accommodated within the parish;
- gives rise to serious cumulative concerns when considered alongside Sumners Fields and the site at Land North of Little Slaughterford Chapel Road Barns Green West Sussex (BGR1);
- places additional pressure on local infrastructure and services;
- raises concerns regarding highway safety and traffic;

- raises concerns regarding drainage and flood risk

The Parish Council requests that all representations and objections previously submitted in relation to the proposed adjoining development are read and considered in conjunction with this representation in respect of DC/26/0933.

The two proposals must not be considered in isolation, given their proximity and the significant cumulative impact they would have on the local area. In particular, the Parish Council asks Horsham District Council to consider the combined effects of both developments in relation to infrastructure capacity, ecology and biodiversity, surface-water drainage and flooding, wastewater and sewage capacity, highways and traffic, and the wider impact on the character and sustainability of the rural community.

The fact that these matters may have been raised separately in representations relating to DC/25/2057 (BGR1) should not result in them being considered only in the context of that application. The additional 31 dwellings proposed under DC/26/0933 would add further pressure to the same infrastructure, drainage systems, highway network, ecological environment and community facilities.

The Parish Council therefore considers that a proper assessment of DC/26/0933 requires the cumulative impact of both applications, together with existing and committed development in the area, to be fully understood before either application is determined.

The Parish Council strongly objects to any approach which assesses these applications as individual developments without properly considering their combined and cumulative impact on Barns Green, Itchingfield Parish and the surrounding rural community.

The Parish Council wishes to make clear that it is not opposed to development in principle. It recognises that appropriate and sustainable development has an important role to play in meeting local housing needs and supporting the future of the community.

However, the Parish Council strongly objects to development which is contrary to, or undermines, the policies, objectives and spatial strategy of the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan, which has been made following extensive consultation and engagement with the local community.

The Parish Council is concerned that a number of the issues identified in this representation, particularly those relating to wastewater capacity, surface-water drainage, highway safety and supporting infrastructure, should not simply be left to be resolved after planning permission has been granted.

Where the Council considers that an identified issue can appropriately be addressed through a planning condition, the Parish Council asks that consideration is given to the use of an appropriate Grampian condition, where necessary.

The Parish Council therefore respectfully but firmly requests that planning permission is refused.

Yours faithfully

Itchingfield Parish Council