

The Old Clergy House
Church Platt
Cuckfield
West Sussex
RH17 5LA

9 January 2024

Stephen Ashdown, Esq
Department of Planning
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands, Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath, West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Dear Mr Ashdown

Application No. DM/23/2867
Change of use of farmland and woodland to parkland reserve &c
Land east of Ansty Way Cuckfield Bypass Cuckfield West Sussex

I wish please to register an **OBJECTION** to the grant of this planning application. My grounds for this objection are as follows:

1. The application has been separated from but is clearly related to the proposals for a 'garden village' of 1,600 dwellings &c on the eastern side of the A272. I submit, however, that whether related or not the arguments for refusal of this application stand.
2. The majority of the land the subject of the application (save for the northern sports fields) has been isolated from development for centuries, almost certainly from mediaeval times. There has been limited pastoral farming use. As a result flora and fauna have developed to create a rare quality of biodiversity which the Council has a duty to protect.
3. The applicant's proposals display an ignorant disregard for this special status of the land. It argues that building more footpaths, creating cycle tracks, building observation towers, creating hides, re-wilding and creating a 'recreational resource' will be of benefit. The detail within the application reinforces this ignorant disregard. For example, ancient woodland is now particularly rare and precious yet the applicant proposes to drive a cycleway through it. It does not take a primary school nature study fan to see that the proposals will actually degrade and arguably destroy the very thing that the applicant would have the Council believe will benefit to the community (and perhaps new 'garden village' dwellers.) Why not a funfair too? (For the avoidance of doubt, lest the applicant regards this as another good idea, that last point is a joke.)
4. The Council will be aware of the current national debate with respect to re-wilding, in which it is suggested that it may not always be of benefit. I submit that the current land in question falls into that category – how will re-wilding actually improve what is already wilded? It won't, it will help destroy it.
5. Some of the proposals – e.g. the proposed lakeside footpath/cycleway and observation towers - will have an undesirable impact on the privacy and security of neighbouring properties such as the nationally-important 16th century Cuckfield Park which, whilst privately owned, is of great value to the community..

It is not unnoticed that the Council has been favourably disposed towards other developments by this particular applicant but it is recommended that the Council rejects this (and the other garden village) application.

