

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 July 2026 20:00:55 UTC+01:00
To: "Rachel Richardson" <rachel.richardson@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application
DM/26/1306

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 24/07/2026 8:00 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Pascotts Farm Snowdrop Lane Lindfield Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 2QE
Proposal:	Proposed erection of two detached two storey dwellings with detached double garages. Associated hard and soft landscaping works, to include highway crossovers to both plots.
Case Officer:	Rachel Richardson

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Customer Details

Address:	Silver Ridge Lyoth Lane Lindfield
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	**RE: Planning Application DM/26/1306 - Objection** Dear Planning Officer, We wish to register a strong objection to planning application DM/26/1306. The proposal for two large residential dwellings on actively farmed

agricultural land would cause significant, permanent harm to the countryside, landscape character and biodiversity, and to the Strategic Gap between Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Scaynes Hill. It is also contrary to the development plan and would open the door to further, much larger development on adjoining land. For the reasons set out below, we respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

****1. Conflict with the Development Plan****

The site is designated as agricultural land and is in active agricultural use. It is not allocated for housing, or any other form of development, in the current local plan. The proposal is therefore contrary to the plan-led approach to growth that underpins the planning system, and no material considerations have been demonstrated that would justify a departure from it.

****2. Conflict with the Purpose of the Strategic Gap****

The site lies within the Strategic Gap separating Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Scaynes Hill. This designation exists to prevent the erosion of open countryside and to maintain the separate identity, character and setting of these settlements.

Two substantial dwellings, together with domestic gardens, gated driveways, parking areas, lighting, fencing and associated infrastructure, would urbanise a currently open agricultural landscape. Although the proposal involves only two dwellings, the impact on the Strategic Gap would be permanent and would undermine its core purpose. Approval would also set a harmful precedent for further incremental development within the gap.

****3. Loss of Agricultural Land****

The application would result in the permanent, irreversible loss of actively farmed agricultural land. At a time when national and local planning policy seeks to protect the countryside from unnecessary development, there is no evident overriding justification for replacing productive farmland with market housing in an unsustainable countryside location.

****4. Harm to Landscape Character, Visual Amenity and Light Pollution****

The site occupies a prominent, raised hilltop position and is highly sensitive in landscape terms. Development on elevated land is particularly visible within the wider countryside, and the resulting structures would be visible from a considerable distance, altering the existing skyline and eroding the rural character of the area.

Dwellings of this type typically bring security lighting, and this lighting would be visible across the valley at night, well beyond the

site itself. This light pollution, together with associated domestic features such as access roads, parked vehicles, outbuildings and boundary treatments, would compound the visual harm to what is currently an open, dark, rural landscape.

****5. Threat to Ancient Oak Trees and Hedgerows****

The site contains, or is immediately adjacent to, ancient oak trees and mature hedgerows that are important landscape and ecological assets. Ancient and veteran trees are recognised as irreplaceable habitats, and development in close proximity risks damage through excavation, root disturbance, soil compaction, installation of services, changes to drainage, and future pressure for pruning or removal.

The submitted Tree Survey identifies nine ancient oaks that would need to be removed to accommodate this scheme - in our view an unacceptable price, equating to roughly one ancient oak for every resident of the proposed properties. The survey also proposes further pruning of trees to enable construction, and it is notable how many are assessed as having only 20-40 years of remaining life expectancy (or less) despite standing for centuries. Current understanding of root systems shows that trees communicate with one another and help each other respond to disease threats; the submitted assessment does not adequately address this and should be expanded to include a full evaluation of root structures and how they would be affected.

Separately, the proposed access arrangements for both dwellings are gated and wider than the existing lane, and would require visibility splays that necessitate further removal of hedgerow. Mature hedgerows provide valuable wildlife corridors and contribute significantly to the rural character of the lane; their loss, on top of the loss of ancient oaks, would compound the ecological and landscape harm rather than being a separate, incidental impact.

We ask that a second, independent opinion be obtained from a suitably qualified arboriculturist and ecologist with no financial relationship to the developer or its associates, covering both the trees to be removed for the dwellings themselves and those to be removed for visibility splays, and the combined impact on wildlife.

****6. Biodiversity Impact****

The combination of ancient trees, mature hedgerows and a natural pond within a few metres of the proposed development forms a valuable ecological network that may support protected and priority species, including bats, breeding birds, amphibians and invertebrates.

The proximity of development to the pond raises particular

concerns regarding habitat disturbance, lighting impacts, changes in hydrology, and long-term degradation of ecological value. The Local Planning Authority should be satisfied that robust ecological surveys have been carried out and that biodiversity enhancement requirements can genuinely be delivered. In the absence of convincing evidence, the precautionary principle should apply.

****7. Highway Safety Concerns****

The site is served by Snowdrop Lane, a narrow, single-track rural lane with no passing places, and the only practical way to reach Lindfield or Haywards Heath from the site is by car via Snowdrop Lane and Lyoth Lane. Both lanes already suffer from degraded verges caused by vehicles passing one another, and local residents regard sections of Lyoth Lane as too dangerous to use, with at least one reported incident of property damage caused by a delivery vehicle reversing to avoid an oncoming car.

The additional traffic generated by two large dwellings - from residents, visitors, deliveries, contractors and service vehicles - would add to a road network that local councillors and West Sussex County Council are already aware is under strain, particularly given the knock-on congestion that occurs whenever the Lewes Road routes are disrupted. The lane is also used by pedestrians, including young children, and its limited width and restricted visibility raise legitimate highway safety concerns that would be intensified further during construction.

****8. Surface Water Drainage and Impact on the Natural Pond****

The site sits on elevated land close to natural ponds. Replacing permeable agricultural land with buildings, driveways and hardstanding has the potential to increase surface water runoff and alter natural drainage patterns. Given the site's topography, there is a real risk that runoff could adversely affect the pond and surrounding habitats. Any drainage strategy must demonstrate, beyond doubt, that there would be no increase in flood risk or ecological harm.

****9. Precedent for Further, Larger-Scale Development****

We understand that the landowner and developers are separately lobbying for the local plan to be revised to allow around 30 further houses on the remainder of this site, and around 50 houses on the site opposite. Both of those developments would also rely on Snowdrop Lane as their only access, which would then need to be widened and provided with footways to accommodate them.

Granting permission for this application, on land not currently allocated for development, would materially weaken the Council's position in resisting that much larger scheme, and would set a precedent that erodes both the Strategic Gap designation and

confidence in the plan-led system. The cumulative impact of this wider ambition - on traffic, on the lane itself, on the Strategic Gap and on local infrastructure - is a material consideration that should be weighed now, not treated as a matter for a future application.

****10. Impact on Local Services and Infrastructure****

Any increase in dwellings in this location, particularly if it becomes a foothold for the larger schemes described above, would place additional pressure on local services and infrastructure - including roads, schools, healthcare and drainage - that have not been planned or funded on that basis.

****11. Unsustainable Countryside Development****

This proposal represents isolated residential development in the countryside with no evident functional need to be sited on this agricultural land. Permitting it would undermine the plan-led approach to growth and erode confidence in countryside protection policies.

****Conclusion****

The proposal would:

- Conflict with the development plan, on land not allocated for housing;
- Harm the openness and purpose of the Strategic Gap between Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Scaynes Hill;
- Result in the unnecessary loss of productive agricultural land;
- Damage the character and appearance of the countryside, including through light pollution visible across the valley;
- Threaten ancient oak trees and established hedgerows, both directly and through access sightline requirements;
- Risk harm to biodiversity and nearby natural ponds;
- Increase traffic and further compromise safety on an already dangerous single-track lane network;
- Set a precedent that would materially assist a much larger, cumulative development of up to 80 further houses reliant on the same access;
- Place unplanned additional pressure on local services and infrastructure;
- Introduce unsustainable residential development into a sensitive rural location.

Given that the site lies within the Strategic Gap, is not allocated for development, comprises actively farmed agricultural land, and contains mature hedgerows, ancient oak trees and a nearby natural pond, we request that the officer's report specifically addresses:

(a) compliance with the development plan and Strategic Gap

policy;
(b) the effect on settlement separation and countryside character, including light pollution;
(c) impacts on irreplaceable habitats and protected species, including the combined effect of tree and hedgerow loss for both the dwellings and their access;
(d) highway safety implications of increased traffic on Snowdrop Lane and Lyoth Lane;
(e) the cumulative and precedent-setting effect of this application on the wider, larger schemes reportedly being promoted for adjoining land;
(f) whether the proposal represents sustainable development in this countryside location.

For the reasons set out above, we respectfully request that Mid Sussex District Council refuses planning permission for application DM/26/1306.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Kind regards