

Dear Ms Fisher,

Re: DM/22/2416

We are writing to object to the planning application for 120 new dwellings adjacent to Albourne CofE Primary School on behalf of Albourne School's Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Our small school is based in the heart of Albourne village and is attended by children aged 4-11, from the local area. The school has just under 200 children attending with one class per year group – a typical rural primary school. The PTA work very hard to enhance the lives and learning opportunities of the children that attend our school.

We are disappointed to read about the planned building work on the site adjacent to our school for a number of reasons, set out below.

Loss of valuable learning

The school regularly walks through the field along the footpath for 'welly walks'. On these walks the children learn about the natural habitats of the animals that live in the area, such as deer, moles, voles, insects, butterflies, adders, birds and many more. The children also learn about the variety of trees and shrubs that surround the walk. The proposal will result in a loss of this visual amenity on walks and also from the school site itself.

We understand from the plan that the footpath will remain, however, it will not be the same rural nature walkway that it is today and will be lined with houses, roads and pavements instead of trees, grasses and hedgerow. This will result in a significantly impaired learning experience for the children. In order to get the same experience of a nature walk they will need to get on a bus and drive elsewhere. This is undesirable given the children are supposed to be learning how to protect our planet – not pollute it further.

The footpath is also used for the children to walk to the village church for special occasions, an experience cherished by the children, parents and teaching staff as a chance to enjoy the natural surroundings with only the sounds and sights of nature. This would also be compromised with 120 houses to walk past.

Inappropriate school expansion

It is inevitable given the number of houses proposed, that the school would need to expand to accommodate a significant number of new children in the catchment area.

The school is currently a size that permits one class per year group which is ideal and very much suits certain children that would be intimidated by a larger school at the age of 4. The nearest alternative primary school, St Lawrence's in Hurstpierpoint, is almost triple the size and is usually totally full.

Expanding the school building would mean that the school playing field will likely need to be reduced in size in order to accommodate more buildings. This would be a disappointing consequence as the playing field is a lovely size that is hugely valued for PE, sports day, learning through playing, summer fairs and many more activities.

We are not clear how expansion of the school would be funded as the school does not have the funds to be able to pay for any additional land/building work.

Significant safety concerns

The Henfield Road (B2116) is a busy, fast and often dangerous road. The entrance to the proposed housing will be located off of a sharp bend in this road which will add to the dangers already posed.

Children cross this road in order to get to and from the school, every morning and afternoon, facing the risks that come with it.

Additional traffic will result from the proposed 120 new houses as residents will need to drive in order to do basic tasks such as a food shop, a trip to the doctors, or attend work. There are no amenities within Albourne to support these residents. The additional traffic will add to the dangers faced by young children in the area on a daily basis. We believe this to be unacceptable.

Disruption to children's learning and play

During the construction of the proposed 120 houses, the children will have to suffer noise and air pollution for many months. This means they may not be able to hear instructions from teachers, forcing them to participate in activities inside rather than outside. This will be detrimental to children's learning and play times. This will compound the disruption already faced by these children as a result of the pandemic.

The field where the housing is proposed is used by the school for the annual summer fair for either tractor or pony rides – this will no longer be an option for us which is another disappointing consequence.

Overall, we hope that a decision is made that prioritises the education and care of the children at Albourne Primary School above the profits to be made by building on this much-loved land.

Regards,

[Redacted Signature]