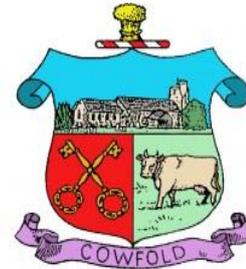




WEST GRINSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL



West Grinstead Parish Council, The Parish Office Village Hall, High Street, Partridge Green, West Sussex. RH13 8HX

Shipley Parish Council, Dawtreys, Bracken Lane, Storrington, RH20 3HR

Nuthurst Parish Council, 107 Morris Drive, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9ST

Cowfold Parish Council, 117 Acorn Avenue, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8RT

17 May 2021

Dear

Proposed development at Buck Barn (Wealdcross) and the developer's recent proposal for an eco-bridge over the A24

The four Parish Councils of West Grinstead, Cowfold, Shipley and Nuthurst represent some 8,000 people. We want to ensure that HDC Officers and District Councillors are left in no doubt about our communities' huge opposition to Buck Barn becoming part of the District's Local Plan, even with an expensive eco-bridge tacked on to the scheme at this late stage.

It is considered that this late proposal of an eco-bridge smacks of a knee-jerk reaction by the developer to widespread criticism about the damage that would be inevitably caused to wildlife if the Buck Barn development of 3,500 houses went ahead.

Councillors and Officers need to remember that work to build these 3,500 houses at Buck Barn will span some 15 years, or maybe more if there are delays. What will happen to wildlife and Knepp Castle's innovative work during those 15 plus years? It is highly likely that faced with movement, atmospheric and light pollution and noise from dumper trucks, lorries, cranes and so forth, bats, birds, insects and mammals will flee or die. Acres upon acres of Low

Weald land will become like a desert. And please note that this land is currently designated by HDC in its “Wilder Horsham” document as having a “high nature value”.

To allow this destruction to happen would be utterly contrary to the thinking that lay behind HDC’s own “Wilder Horsham” initiative, its partnership with the Sussex Wildlife Trust and to other HDC schemes that award grants in order to save and encourage wildlife in the District.

Furthermore, the notion of a nature corridor from Knepp Castle towards a new town is ill thought out. It would be providing wildlife with a direct route to a hostile environment which would include noise and pollution from some 10,000 vehicles travelling around this huge Buck Barn site, plus perhaps residents’ drones, and certainly their cats and dogs. It would be an irresponsible act to propose that wildlife take this route, as suggested by the developer.

It is heartening that so many conservation agencies including the RSPB, CPRE, WWF and Wildlife Trusts have joined together to oppose proposals for this eco-bridge and nature corridor, plus the construction of a new town in open Weald countryside. We add our voices to those agencies and trust that HDC will never become renowned as a destroyer of the precious environment at Buck Barn and Knepp Castle. Rather, HDC should remove Buck Barn from its proposed Local Plan, preserve the countryside and wildlife in this piece of the Low Weald and conserve the internationally acclaimed decades of work at Knepp Castle.

Yours sincerely

West Grinstead, Cowfold, Shipley and Nuthurst Parish Councils

Sent to:

Andrew Griffiths, MP

Jeremy Quinn, MP

Glen Chipp, Chief Executive, HDC

Barbara Childs, Director of Place, HDC

Catherine Howe, Head of Strategic Planning, HDC

All HDC District Councillors

The Owners of Knepp Castle

Sussex Wildlife Trust