

Dear Mr Chipp

HDC's draft Local Plan

Many local people in the Parish appear very concerned that Buck Barn is still included in the draft Local Plan and by the headlong action HDC is embarked upon.

Thanks to local media and a public meeting in Horsham recently, local people have become very aware of the emerging Environment Act and its requirements for District Councils to have environmental plans for nature recovery. They are also very aware that HDC has already produced plans in order to comply.

These plans show that Knepp Castle has been chosen by HDC as its central hub for nature recovery in the district and local people know full well that Buck Barn is next door to Knepp Castle. The Buck Barn site is crossed from east to west by a nature corridor radiating outwards from Knepp Castle, whilst the two nature-rich tributaries of the Adur run north to south across the Buck Barn site. Local people also know that the whole of the Buck Barn site has been designated by HDC as having "very high" environmental value and is therefore crucial to the environmental well-being of the whole district.

It then seems illogical to people that HDC is even considering keeping Buck Barn in the draft Local Plan when it so clearly conflicts with the requirements of this emerging Environment Act, HDC's own environmental plans for nature recovery and risks rejection by the Independent Examiner?

Surely it would be far better if HDC did the same as the Government and paused its work on housing development until the exact requirements of the Environment and Planning Acts are known.

A slower, measured consideration of emerging information from government by HDC seems vital, rather than rushing headlong into permanently destroying acre upon acre of open countryside at Buck Barn.

“The world is in crisis and we all have a part to play” said Sir David Attenborough in “Earthshot”, recently beamed on BBC1 and fronted by no less than Prince William. The programme then went on to feature the successful and crucial role of Knepp Castle to nature recovery.

There is thus a heavy onus on HDC’s politicians and planners to take their time and get things right, thereby earning the respect of local people they serve. They should not add to the crisis the world is already in by rushing through a very wrong Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,

Owen Hydes, OBE

Chair, Nuthurst Parish Council