

Land at Colwell Farm, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 7TB

Appeal reference AP/26/0023

Planning Inspectorate reference 6005786.

1. My name is Harriet Martin. I am Chair of Wivelsfield Parish Council. The parish of Wivelsfield borders the site of the proposed development.
2. Whilst there will be no actual building on the Parish's land, there will be an impact on the residents of Wivelsfield, particularly in terms of an increase in traffic and further pressure on services. In addition the development is eating up more countryside and further eroding the settlement gap between Haywards Heath and Wivelsfield Green, following significant building to the south of Haywards Heath and planning permission having been granted for 345 houses just north of the proposed Colwell Farm development. A few of these houses, a cemetery and curated green space will fall within the Wivelsfield Parish boundary.
3. One of our greatest concerns is a further increase in traffic in an already congested network of roads. In order to go south to Brighton and other coastal towns a resident of the proposed development would either have to join the B2112 Ditchling Road or cut through on Slugwash Lane coming out on Green Road in the centre of Wivelsfield Green. The Lewes Local Plan 2020-2040 Forecasting Report shows the B2112 as carrying 789 cars per hour – more than most other roads in the Lewes district network except for the A22, A272, A27 and part of the A275. It also indicates that rural Green Road, running through the village, already has more traffic than most other roads in the Low Weald. Surveys undertaken on Green Road in 2009 and 2021 by East Sussex County Council Highways demonstrate that traffic volume through the village during this period has risen from 14,567 traffic movements per week, to nearly 41,544, an increase of 185%. This rose again to 57,127 traffic movements per week in 2025, a further rise of 37%. This will no doubt increase still further with the completion of 147 houses currently under construction in Wivelsfield Green. The Ditchling Road is already too dangerous for all but the most experienced cyclists and even they are now giving up. Slugwash Lane is a narrow country lane, used by walkers, runners, horse riders and cyclists. It is totally unsuitable for any further increase in traffic.
4. In addition to the 147 houses nearing completion, planning applications are in for a further 487 houses in Wivelsfield. This is unsustainable development and will put

huge strain on already inadequate infrastructure and services. South East Water is struggling to maintain a constant supply of water to its existing customers. As you know even Gatwick Airport lost its supply in the last few days. There is insufficient reservoir capacity and the pumping system has not been updated and cannot cope. Even if a plan to update is put in place it will be many years before the situation is improved. I attach a list of serious issues that have occurred in the last two months alone to a hard copy of this speech.

5. I am also aware that concern has been raised about potential insufficient school places for the proposed Colwell Farm development. It seems to me that West Sussex County Council has not taken into account what is happening just over the border in Wivelsfield. The Wivelsfield Green primary school is full and over-subscribed. Any children in the new developments in Wivelsfield are likely to be redirected to Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill, their nearest other schools despite being in West Sussex, thus making the problem for these schools even more acute.
6. Before I finish I would like to make some general points which are significant for planning applications in Wivelsfield Green and are relevant here.
 - Development in this area of Sussex, such as that proposed at Colwell Farm, on green field sites, outside settlement boundaries are usually unsustainable. There is limited transport so the development will be car dependent. Roads and paths may fulfil distance requirements for cycling and walking but in reality they are often unsafe and unsuitable, particularly for children, the elderly and the disabled. Services and infrastructure in this area are also currently insufficient.
 - Much is often made by developers of affordable housing. However, given the price of housing in this area, affordable i.e. 80% market cost is not affordable for those people who are most in need of housing, for example on local authority housing lists.
 - Young trees and hedges cannot replace ancient hedgerows or woodlands, which have evolved over centuries and once a habitat has been changed it has gone forever.

Thank you.