

# MSDC Ansty Farms Planning Appeal

## *Interested Party* submission by Brad Williams

My name is Brad Williams, Co-Founder of the Stop Cuck-stye Action Group (SCAG) and former long-time Chair of Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council. And a retired TV journalist.

Exactly four years ago tomorrow -- June 10<sup>th</sup> 2022 – on a boiling hot Saturday, well over a hundred people from the villages of Cuckfield and Ansty packed into the Queen’s Hall for a televised Question Time event.

On the panel were our local Tory MP, our prospective Lib Dem MP and the Leader of the MSDC.

Also the chair of Cuckfield Parish Council Andy Burton and CPRE’s Michael Brown, who we have already had some valuable evidence-based input from, earlier today.

The very loud and determined message from the audience was that the proposed Ansty Farms site – soon labelled Cuck-stye – was a speculative, unsustainable site.

Very quickly the politicians got that message...and the Fairfax plan was soon dropped from the draft District Plan.

The mountain of objections were not the voice of so-called Nimbys – Ansty parish did not object to over 3,000 houses being build a stone’s throw away from the Cuck-stye Site.

Our children obviously need somewhere to live...we need more low cost housing...who can object to a GP surgery or a SEND school?

But the key issues on the doorstep, Then and Now were are follows:-

If you build 1,450 – that’s a minimum of two vehicle movements a day, how can you wish away 3,000 extra cars per day on our already congested road network?

How can you claim it is sustainable when its accepted that less than 5% of people will use alternative modes of transport and bus companies agree a service will not be profitable?

And what about the timeless setting in the High Weald surely that cannot be wished away or modified?

Clearly we have more than enough evidence to prove this is Not a sustainable site?

The so called Cuck-stye Co-alition, that's the parish councils plus the Cuckfield Society plus SCAG have gained huge traction as a genuine voice of the community over the last four years.

Clearly at every turn our objections to the misplaced Garden Village – which CPRE evidence proves are almost always in the wrong places -- needed to be evidence-based on planning grounds.

And by raising thousands of pounds with countless local fundraising events, here we are with our legal team and a range of top consultants still fighting the case. But for all these years its been a David & Goliath fight and some have given up hope a while ago.

It was a big step forward in October, with local democracy in action, when local district councillors, who make decisions based on officer advice, decided on balance that the Ansty farms site was not sustainable.

Luckily one of the key drivers for many members of the public is what many would say is the injustices of the current planning system where a well-resourced private company – Fairfax – can seek to present itself as a public plan maker whilst making a huge profit as a site promoter....if they win the day.

Ultimately it's a fine balance of planning arguments which the community in line with a responsive Local Planning Authority, hopes the Inspector will come down in our favour.

It is surely no co-incidence that its has taken a *sustained* – not to say unprecedented -- long running and highly successful community campaign to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt, that Cuck-stye is NOT a *sustainable* development.

**BRW.9.6.26**