



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Planning Committee South

BY: Head of Development and Building Control

DATE: 21st September 2021

DEVELOPMENT: Change of use of land to a wellness glamping / campsite, with formation of new access, parking area, and toilet / shower block

SITE: Zephyr, 158 Sinnocks, West Chiltington RH20 2JX

WARD: West Chiltington, Thakeham and Ashington

APPLICATION: DC/21/0911

APPLICANT: **Name:** Miss Gemma Hunter **Address:** Zephyr 158 Sinnocks West Chiltington RH20 2JX

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: More than eight persons in different households have made written representations within the consultation period raising material planning considerations that are inconsistent with the recommendation of the Head of Development and Building Control.

By request of Councillor Circus

RECOMMENDATION: To approve planning permission subject to appropriate conditions

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 To consider the planning application.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

- 1.2 The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the land to a glamping campsite, which would include the siting of 4no. geodomes along the western boundary of the field. A new access is proposed to the north-western corner of the site, along with the creation of a parking area. An existing stable building is to be used as a toilet and shower block, and this has been completed. The toilet/shower block is therefore retrospective.
- 1.3 The proposed geodomes would be located along the western field boundary and would comprise 2no. domes at a diameter of 5.1m and overall height of 3.3m, with 2no. domes at a diameter of 6m and overall height of 3.6m. Each dome would be sited on a pad and would comprise an outer forest green fabric with bamboo flooring. A wood-burning stove and chimney would be located in each dome, with a solar-fan provided for ventilation.
- 1.4 A stable building is located to the southern portion of the site and has been subject of conversion to provide 2no, composting toilets, 2no. shower rooms, and 2no. washbasins.

The building measures to a length of 6m and a depth of 3m, with an additional overhang to accommodate an outside sink.

- 1.5 The proposed car park would be located to the north-western corner of the site, with the accompanying details suggesting that space would be made available for 15no. car parking spaces, 7no. motorcycle spaces, and 6no. cycle spaces.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.6 The application site is located to the east of Sinnocks, outside of any defined built-up area. The site is therefore within a countryside location in policy terms.
- 1.7 The site comprises a parcel of agricultural and undeveloped land to the west of the dwelling known as 158 Sinnocks, with the land bound by mature vegetation. The site is relatively flat and includes a number of detached outbuildings, with the land comprising grassland and wildflowers. The site is accessed via an access track which adjoins Sinnocks to the west, with this track also adopted as a public footpath.
- 1.8 The nearest residential property is located 60m to the west and separated by a parcel of paddock land which includes various field trees. The wider surroundings are characterised by agricultural fields enclosed by hedging and woodland, with sporadic residential development fronting the lanes. The built-up area of West Chiltington is located 0.5km to the west.

2. INTRODUCTION

STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 2.2 The following Policies are considered to be relevant to the assessment of this application:

2.3 **National Planning Policy Framework**

2.4 **Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015)**

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development

Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy

Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion

Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth

Policy 9 - Employment Development

Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development

Policy 11 - Tourism and Cultural Facilities

Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change

Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use

Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction

Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding

Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport

Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2.5 The West Chiltington Parish Neighbourhood Plan is at Regulation 14 stage and therefore the following relevant policies carry only limited weight in decision making:

Policy H2 – Quality of Design
Policy H8 – Attention to Detail
Policy EH1 – Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB)
Policy EH3 – Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services
Policy EH4 – Surface Water Management
Policy EH5 – Protection of Trees and Hedgerows
Policy EH6 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
Policy GA1 – Promoting Sustainable Movement
Policy GA2 – Footpath, Bridleways and Cycle Path Network
Policy GA3 – Parking and New Development
Policy EE5 – Sustainable Recreational and Tourism Activities
Policy EE6 – Rural Buildings

PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

2.6 No relevant planning history

3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

3.2 **HDC Environmental Health:** No objection

There is potential for noise nuisance to the close neighbours of this proposed glamping site. I would recommend conditions to control noise as the permission, if granted, would remain with the property and a future occupier may not have the intentions for a quiet retreat stated in this application. I would also recommend conditions to ensure suitable treatment of foul waste and surface water

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

3.3 **WSCC Highways:** No Objection

Access is via privately maintained drive which serves three properties and is also Public Right of Way footpath no. 2405. Sinnocks is unclassified highway subject to 30mph speed restriction. Due to restricted width and geometry of the road it is anticipated that vehicles would not be exceeding the posted limit.

No changes to the existing access are proposed. The level of use at the site is not anticipated to 'severely' increase the level of vehicle movements already supported by the access on to Sinnocks. Furthermore, the LHA has reviewed data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period of the last five years. There have been no recorded injury accidents at the access with Sinnocks. There is no evidence to suggest that the access is operating unsafely, or that the proposed change of use would exacerbate an existing safety concern.

The Application Form states 15 car spaces, 7 motorcycle spaces and 6 cycle spaces are proposed. The plan does not show this in detail and thus the Local Planning Authority may wish to secure conditions for these details.

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

3.4 **WSCC Public Rights of Way: Comment**

Initial response:

Proposed access to the site also carries Public Right of Way Footpath 2405. The existence of a Public Right of Way (PROW) is a material consideration. Should planning consent be granted, the impact of development upon the public use, enjoyment and amenity of the PROW must be considered by the planning authority.

Safe and convenient public access is to be available at all times across the full width of the PROW, which may be wider than the available and used route – advice on the legal width can be provided by the WSCC PROW Team.

No new structures, such as gates and stiles, are to be installed within the width of the PROW without the prior consent of the WSCC PROW Team. These will constitute an offence of obstruction under the Highways Act 1980.

The Applicant is advised that a public access right has precedence over a private access right. Where a PROW runs along a route also used for private access purposes, usually for private vehicle access, this shared use has the potential for accident or injury – the applicant must consider how access is managed so the public is not endangered or inconvenienced.

The development proposes shared use of a PROW with vehicles, which increases the risk of accident or injury to a PROW user. The applicant is encouraged to introduce signage to advise vehicle drivers of the hazard and to act responsibly.

(Subsequent Response):

Whilst the access is naturally narrow there are options for users, and given the residential properties along the lane, a pre-existing shared usage exists which has not raised concerns to our department previously. Further recommendations to include the cutting back of side vegetation on the access road, which in its present form could limit options for pedestrians to avoid vehicles, is suggested. Whilst public access takes precedence over private access rights the reality is that users of the footpath will move to the side and limited verge areas to allow vehicles to pass. Not all the vegetation affecting the stretch will likely fall within the ownership of the Applicant so it is for them to determine how this can be addressed in order to mitigate risks to the public use of the highway.

3.5 **Ecology Consultant**

(Initial Response):

The Preliminary Ecological Assessment states that "Natural England's 'Rapid Risk Assessment' tool indicates that the development may result in a breach in legislation if breeding great crested newts are present within the on-site pond" and therefore recommends that further surveys for Great Crested Newts (GCN) are undertaken.

The results of this survey are necessary, prior to determination, as paragraph 99 of the ODPM Circular 2005 highlights that: *"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision."*

(Subsequent Response):

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (David Archer Associates, February 2021) and the Great Crested Newt eDNA Results (May 2021) relating to the likely impacts of development on designate sites, protected species and Priority species & habitats. Now satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination.

The mitigation measures identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (David Archer Associates, February 2021) and the Great Crested Newt eDNA Results (May 2021) should be secured and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority Species. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (David Archer Associates, February 2021) details that this will include a pre-commencement check for badgers and barn owls. We recommend that the mitigation measures are collated in a Biodiversity Method Statement and secured as a condition of any consent. Also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements, which have been recommended to secure measurable net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 174d of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be outlined within a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy and should be secured prior to slab level.

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. In terms of biodiversity net gain, the enhancements proposed will contribute to this aim.

3.6 **Southern Water:** No response received

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

3.7 **West Chiltington Parish Council:** The emerging Neighbourhood Plan has strong policies around Employment and Enterprise, as well as Leisure and Recreation, but the Council considers that whilst the proposed development could contribute positively to these ambitions, it would have disproportionately adverse impacts on other important aspects.

The emerging NP's policies on Environment and Heritage would be particularly negatively impacted as the proposed development would cause significant issues: generating increased traffic, light pollution, noise pollution and severe disruption to the biodiversity of the site and that general area of the village where there should be an endeavour to protect agricultural land, prevent development in the countryside and maintain this rural setting. It is also felt that the access onto and from a narrow PRow of this proposed commercial venture is inappropriate and could compromise the safety of walkers, riders, and cyclists.

There are also concerns about access for emergency vehicles in the event of an accident or incident. Neighbour amenity is also an important consideration in this agricultural setting.

3.8 23 letters of support were received from 21 separate households, and these can be summarised as follows:

- Much needed facility that would provide for mental health and well-being
- Eco-friendly
- Sustainable rural economic enterprise
- Improved rural setting
- Low impact
- Minimal impact on neighbours
- Modest scale of development
- Minimal traffic impact
- Economic benefit to rural economy
- Positive environmental benefits

- Connection with South Downs National Park
- Bring more tourism to the area
- Increase local employment

3.9 13 letters of objection were received from 10 separate households, and these can be summarised as follows:

- Narrow roads that are difficult to pass
- Additional vehicles would exacerbate the existing traffic
- Scale of geodomes
- Increased noise impact
- Impact on amenities of nearby residents
- Impact on ambience of countryside location
- Impact on users of the public right of way
- Proximity of domes to shared boundary
- Noise from car park
- Unauthorised development of geodome, renovation of existing stable, and installation of waste supply
- Design of geodomes is unreflective of the area
- Smoke from BBQs, fire pits and wood burners will produce smoke to the detriment of the neighbouring properties
- Increase in air pollution
- Light pollution
- No need for the development
- Impact on wildlife
- Impact on access track
- Use of permitted development rights for additional camping pitches
- Outstanding ecology issues

4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

4.1 Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application, Consideration of Human rights forms part of the planning assessment below.

5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER

5.1 It is not considered that the development would be likely to have any significant impact on crime and disorder.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

6.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the land to a wellness glamping campsite, with the siting of 4no. geodomes, the formation of a new access and parking area, and the conversion of an existing stable building to a toilet and shower block.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 Policy 11 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that measures which promote and enhance local cultural facilities, including recreation based rural diversification, will be encouraged. Any development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the location and should increase the range, or improve the quality of accommodation, attraction or experiences for tourists, day visitors, business visitors, and residents in the District. Support will particularly be given to proposals which: reinforce the local distinctiveness and improve existing facilities; focuses major tourism and cultural facilities in Horsham town centre; seek to ensure that facilities are available within the towns and villages in the District and are in keeping with their relationship with the urban area and countryside around them, especially in and around the High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park; develop the opportunities associated with rural diversification and rural development initiatives, particularly where they assist farm diversification projects, benefit the local economy, or enable the retention of buildings contributing to the character of the countryside; and do not result in the loss of a cultural resource.
- 6.3 Policy 26 of the HDPF states that outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria: support the needs of agriculture or forestry; enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; provide for quiet informal recreational use; or enable the sustainable development of rural areas. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.
- 6.4 Policy EE5 of the draft West Chiltington Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals that provide facilities for recreation and tourist activities will be supported provided that: the siting, scale and design respect the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets; the local road network is capable of accommodating the additional traffic movements; adequate parking is provided on the site; and the proposal conforms with other policies of the Development Plan.
- 6.5 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural area, both through conversion of existing building and well-designed new buildings; the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and the retention and development of accessible services and community facilities. Paragraph 85 continues that planning decisions should recognised that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances, it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable.
- 6.6 The Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study dated July 2016 identifies development opportunities in the rural parts of the District, including the eco camping sites, camping pod developments, glamping sites, and more accommodation in settlements in Horsham District that are outside the South Downs National Park but close to the South Downs Way in terms of, among other things, camp sites, and possibly a network of camping pods subject to this supporting the aims and aspirations of the South Downs National Park Authority.

- 6.7 The Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study shows a strong and growing market for hotel and visitor accommodation across Horsham District, with insufficient provision of all forms of visitor accommodation to meet weekend and summer demand across the District. Additional hotel and visitor accommodation provision is needed to fully capitalise on the potential for staying tourism growth, especially in terms of short break demand.
- 6.8 The Planning Statement outlines that the camping/glamping site aims to promote and contribute to “Green Tourism” in the area, while also providing an ancillary wellness retreat focussed on yoga and therapeutic (including sound therapy) services. This retreat would be a supplementary offering to the glamping/camping site, with visitors able to enjoy yoga and sound therapy sessions during their stay. As outlined within the Planning Statement, there is also potential that additional wellness retreats (with associated camping) may take place under permitted development rights to a maximum of 5 events a year in the future.
- 6.9 Tourism is a corporate priority and growth of the visitor economy features in the economic strategy. The proposed development would cater for eco-camping and glamping within the rural area, which is located in close proximity to the South Downs National Park, and would provide additional weekend and short break accommodation in the District. The proposal would contribute to the wider rural economy and outdoor recreation, and this would result in economic and public benefits that are of weight in the planning balance.
- 6.10 The proposal would increase the range of accommodation, attraction, and experience within the District, and would meet an identified tourist accommodation demand within the District. The proposed development is considered to be of a scale and type that would be appropriate to the location, and would result in public and economic benefits to the rural economy and wider District. For these reasons, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to all other material considerations.

Design and Appearance

- 6.11 Policy 25 of the HDPF states that the natural environment and landscape character of the District, including landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes, will be protected against inappropriate development. Proposals should protect, conserve and enhance the landscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance. In addition, Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF promote development that is of a high quality design, which is based upon a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental, and policy context. Development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, and accessible environment that complements locally distinctive characters and heritage of the District. Development should contribute to a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings and the historic landscape in which they sit. Development should ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site.
- 6.12 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; establish a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.
- 6.13 The geodomes are proposed along the western boundary to limit the visual prominence of the development when seen from wider view. This positioning would also limit the spread of

development across the site and would reduce encroachment across the paddock. While the geodomes would result in some visual impact, given their positioning along the field boundary, it is not considered that the proposed development would be overtly visible or readily apparent from wider views. As such, while representing a new form of development within the informal paddock, the proposed siting would limit the visual prominence of the development and would therefore on balance, result in limited adverse impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside setting.

- 6.14 While the introduction of the car parking would further formalise the site, it is recognised that eco-friendly anchored paving tiles would be used. This would allow the grass to remain in place and would limit the visual perception of the surfacing when seen from wider landscape views. It is not therefore considered that the proposed car parking area would result in visual harm or adverse landscape character impact.
- 6.15 An existing stable block has been converted to a composting toilet/shower block. While these works have introduced domestic style openings within the elevations, the overall form has been retained. Given the established nature of the building within the site, it is not considered that the conversion has resulted in harm to the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and surroundings.
- 6.16 The proposed development is considered to be of a modest scale, which while resulting in additional built form within the informal setting, is not considered to result in demonstrable harm to the landscape character and ambience of the countryside location. The geodomes would be read against the backdrop of existing vegetation, and this is considered to limit the visual perception and prominence of the proposed development. Minimal intervention is proposed across the wider site, with the conversion of an existing building to a toilet/shower block considered to result in no further harm to the landscape character or visual amenity of the rural location. On the balance of these considerations, and given the enclosed nature of the site, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in significant adverse harm to the landscape character, key features, visual amenity, and ambience of the countryside location. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Amenity Impacts

- 6.17 Policy 32 of the HDPF states that development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, and adaptable environment that contributes a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves. Policy 33 continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.
- 6.18 Paragraph 185 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the nature environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so, they should mitigate and reduce to a minimum, potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development, and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life. In addition, tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value should be identified and protected, and the impact of light pollution on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation, should be limited. Paragraph 188 continues that the focus of planning decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions.
- 6.19 The proposed development would be located at a distance of approximately 60m from the nearest residential property to the west, with the application site well enclosed by mature

vegetation. The land adjoining the site to the west is utilised as paddocks, with a number of field trees separating the residential dwelling and associated amenity space of 159 Hatches located from the application site. Given this spatial context, and the modest scale of the proposed geodomes, it is not considered that the proposal would result in overlooking and loss of privacy to the nearby residential properties.

- 6.20 It is recognised that a number of objections have been received in respect of potential noise and disturbance resulting from the development, and specifically the impact on the nearby residential properties and users of the public footpath. It is recognised that the proposed development would increase the level of activity within the countryside location, however given the well-enclosed nature of the site and the modest scale of the proposed development, it is not considered that this would result in a significant intensification or demonstrable adverse impact to justify a reason for refusal. It is however considered reasonable to impose a condition requiring the submission of a Site Management Pack to outline the expectations of guests during their stay.
- 6.21 It is also noted that concerns have been raised regarding the impact the proposal would have on access to the public footpath, and particularly the potential pedestrian and vehicle conflict between users of the footpath and users of the campsite. Following consultation with WSCC Public Rights of Way, no objection has been raised to the proposal. It has however been highlighted that public access rights have precedence over private access rights, and the Applicant must consider how access is managed so that the public is not endangered or inconvenienced. The Applicant is therefore encouraged to introduce signage to advise vehicle drivers of the hazard and to act responsibly. An informative is suggested to advise the Applicant of these needs.
- 6.22 While the proposal has the potential to increase activity, noise and disturbance within the countryside location, the proposed development is considered to be modest in scale, with the distance from the neighbouring properties and the enclosed nature of the site considered to limit potential conflict. For these reasons, it is considered on balance that the proposal would not result in significant adverse harm to the amenities and sensitivities of neighbouring properties and users of the public footpath, in accordance with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Highways Impacts

- 6.23 Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.
- 6.24 Policy GA3 of the draft West Chiltington Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that proposals must provide adequate parking in accordance with the standards adopted at the time.
- 6.25 The proposal seeks to utilise the existing access from Sinnocks, with the creation of a new to the south of the access track. The proposal includes a designated parking area, which is proposed to accommodate 15no. car parking spaces, 7no. motorcycle spaces, and 6no. cycle spaces.
- 6.26 Following consultation with WSCC Highways, it is not anticipated that the level of use of the site would severely increase the number of vehicle movements. There is no evidence to suggest that the access is functioning unsafely or inadequately, or that the change of use would exacerbate an existing safety concern. While no formal details have been presented in respect of the parking arrangement, it is considered that there would be sufficient space to accommodate the anticipated parking spaces.
- 6.27 While the proposal would introduce additional vehicle movements along the lane, it is not anticipated that these would result in a material intensification, with the existing access onto Sinnocks considered to be adequate for the intended use. The proposed access onto

the access track is considered acceptable, with the level of parking proposed also considered suitable for anticipated needs. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Ecology:

- 6.28 Policy 31 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it demonstrates that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate.
- 6.29 Policy EH5 of the draft West Chiltington Neighbourhood Plan states that development that damages or results in the loss of trees of arboricultural and amenity value, or loss of hedgerows and/or priority habitat, or which significantly damages ecological networks will be resisted unless the need for, and the benefits of, development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. Development proposals, where appropriate, must be designed to incorporate biodiversity within and around developments and enhance the ecological networks, seeking to retain wherever possible ancient trees, trees of good arboricultural and amenity value and hedgerows.
- 6.30 The Applicant has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated March 2021 which indicates that the scattered trees, dense scrub and semi-improved grassland provide structure and are of site value, but other habitats are of negligible importance due to poor plant diversity. It is recommended to enhance and replace habitat and vegetation within the site to offset the impact, with the planting of native trees/shrubs and the installation of wildlife boxes proposed.
- 6.31 The Council's Ecology consultant has reviewed the Appraisal and notes that it recommends further surveys for Great Crested Newts (GCN) given there is pond onsite which acts as a potential habitat. The Applicant has provided Great Crested Newt eDNA results from May 2021. The Ecologist has confirmed that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination and that the mitigation measures identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal will provide appropriate measures toward net gain.
- 6.32 These measures are considered appropriate to address the potential impacts of the proposed development, and it is suggested that these measures be secured by condition.

Climate change

- 6.33 Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change.
- 6.34 Should the proposed development be approved, the following measures to build resilience to climate change and reduce carbon emissions would be secured by condition:
- Dedicated refuse and recycling storage capacity
 - Opportunities for biodiversity gain
 - Cycle parking facilities
 - Electric vehicle charging points
- 6.35 Subject to these conditions the application will suitably reduce the impact of the development on climate change in accordance with local and national policy.

Conclusions

- 6.36 The proposed development would increase the range of accommodation, attraction, and experience within the District, and would meet an identified tourist accommodation demand within the District. The proposed development is considered to be of a scale and type that would be appropriate to the location, and would result in public and economic benefits to the rural economy and wider District. For these reasons, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to all other material considerations.
- 6.37 The proposed development is considered to be of a modest scale, which while resulting in additional built form within the informal setting, is not considered to result in demonstrable harm to the landscape character and ambience of the countryside location. The geodomes would be sited along the western boundary and would be read against the backdrop of existing vegetation, and this is considered to limit the visual perception and prominence of the proposed development. Minimal intervention is proposed across the wider site, with the conversion of an existing building to a toilet/shower block considered to result in no further harm to the landscape character or visual amenity of the rural location. On the balance of these considerations, and given the enclosed nature of the site, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in significant adverse harm to the landscape character, key features, visual amenity, and ambience of the countryside location.
- 6.38 While the proposal has the potential to increase activity, noise and disturbance within the countryside location, the proposed development is considered to be modest in scale, with the distance from the neighbouring properties and the enclosed nature of the site considered to limit potential conflict.
- 6.39 While the proposal would introduce additional vehicle movements along the lane, it is not anticipated that these would result in a material intensification, with the existing access onto Sinnocks considered to be adequate for the intended use. The proposed access onto the access track is considered acceptable, with the level of parking proposed also considered suitable for anticipated needs.
- 6.40 For these reasons, the proposed development is considered to accord with all relevant local and national planning policies.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To approve the application subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- 1 Plans list
- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 3 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of foul and surface water disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into use until strategy has been implemented in full. The strategy shall be retained and operational at all times thereafter.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the development is properly drained and to comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until a plan showing the layout of the proposed development and the provision of car parking spaces for vehicles has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No use hereby permitted shall be commenced until the parking spaces associated with it have been provided in accordance with the approved details. The areas of land so provided shall thereafter be retained for the parking of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure that adequate and satisfactory provision is made for the parking of vehicles clear of all highways in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 5 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until means for the charging of electric vehicles by way of fast charging points have been installed in accordance with details that have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall have regard to the Council's latest Air Quality & Emissions Reduction Guidance document and include a plan of all charging points, their specification, means of allocation, and means for their long term maintenance. The means for charging electric vehicles shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To mitigate the impact of the development on air quality within the District and to sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants in accordance with Policies 24 & 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 6 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until details of secure and covered cycle parking facilities for the occupants of, and visitors to, the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No use hereby permitted shall be commenced until the approved cycle parking facilities associated with that dwelling or use have been fully implemented and made available for use. The provision for cycle parking shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for the parking of cycles in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 7 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until details for the provision for the storage of refuse and recycling facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall be provided prior to the use of the development hereby permitted and thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of recycling facilities in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 8 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until full details of all hard and soft landscaping works shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans and measures addressing the following:

- Details of all existing trees and planting to be retained

- Details of all proposed trees and planting, including schedules specifying species
- Details of all hard surfacing materials and finishes
- Details of all boundary treatments

The approved landscaping scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed or retained planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 9 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for Protected and Priority species has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
- b) detailed designs to achieve stated objectives;
- c) locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans;
- d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures;
- e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

- 10 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until a Site Management Plan for future guests of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Site Management Plan shall include, but not be limited to:

- responsibilities at all times,
- measures to control playing of amplified music at all times,
- a fire risk management plan,
- no fireworks at all times,
- no noise after 23:00,
- prevention of nuisance from BBQs and campfires including fixed locations for fires and BBQs,
- no group bookings of more than one pitch, and
- dealing with antisocial behaviour.

The management plan shall be made available for all guests of the campsite and occupiers shall operate in strict accordance with the approved document at all times.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 11 **Regulatory Condition:** No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal application.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 12 **Regulatory Condition:** The permission hereby granted shall be limited to 4 pitches (comprising 4no. geodomes) at any one time. The geodome pitches shall not be occupied on the site for longer than 4 consecutive weeks in any one calendar year.

Reason: To maintain control over the development and to protect the appearance and character of the area in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 13 **Regulatory Condition:** No public address or sound amplification, including the amplification of music, shall be installed or used at any time.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 14 **Regulatory Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (David Archer Associates, February 2021) and the Great Crested Newt eDNA Results (May 2021).

Reason: As these matters are fundamental to safeguard the ecology and biodiversity of the area in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and to enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).