

Agenda Item 6
Report PC25/26-28

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	11 December 2025
By	Director of Planning
Local Authority	Chichester District Council
Application Number	SDNP/25/03104/FUL
Applicant	Mr A Sprackling
Application	Change of use of agricultural land to permanent use as a seasonal campsite with no.18 pitches between May and October each year.
Address	Land and building south of Clarefield Copse, Dumpford Lane, Nyewood, South Harting, West Sussex.

Recommendation:

- 1) That Planning Permission be granted subject to the conditions set out at paragraph 9.1 of the report, and any amendments or other conditions required to address technical matters.**

Executive Summary

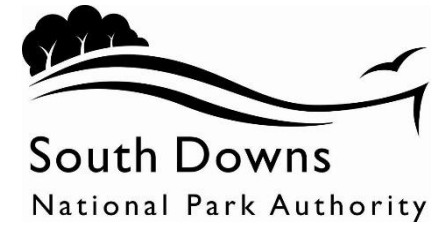
Key Matters

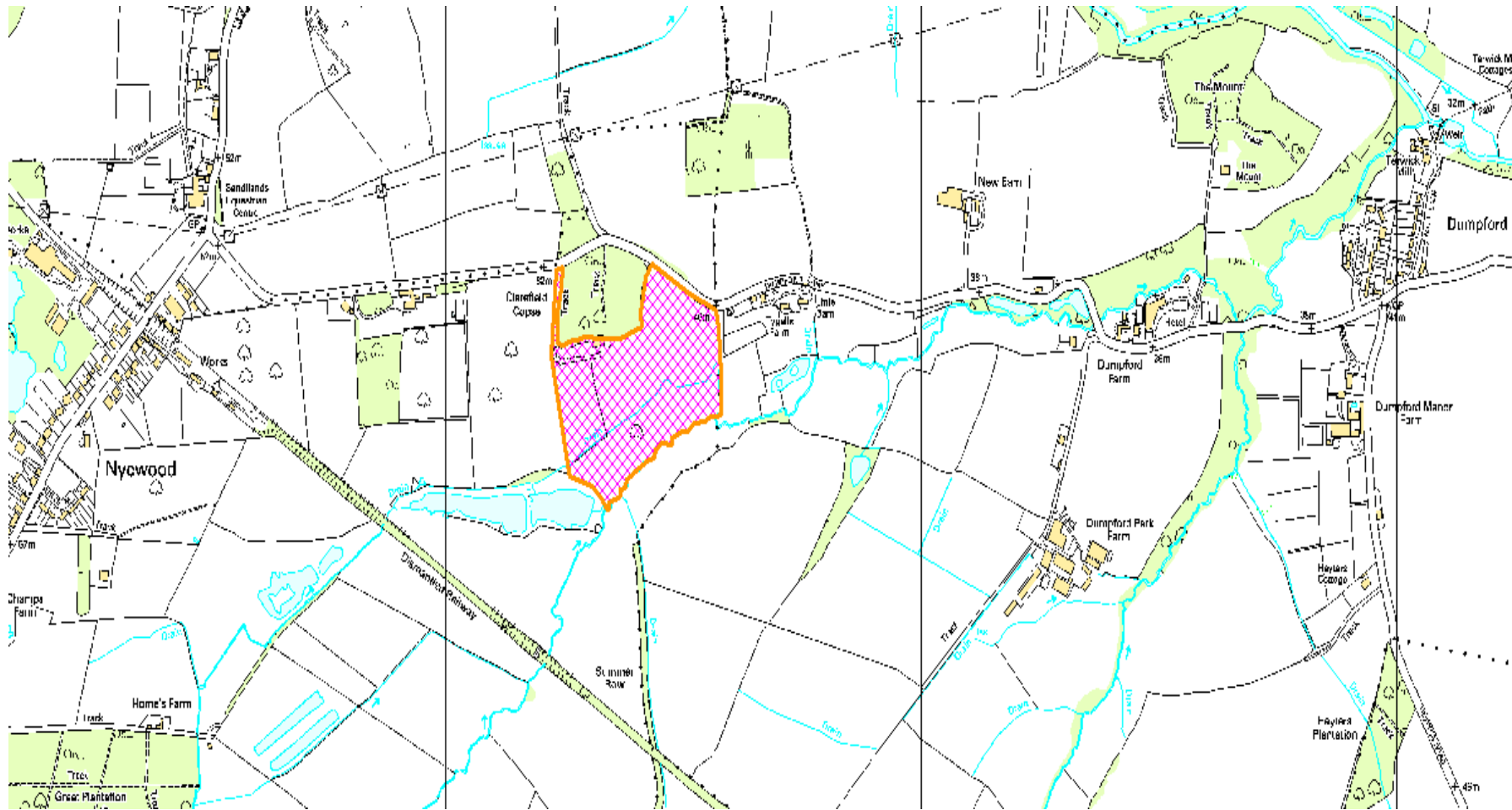
- The application was previously considered by Members at the June 2021 planning committee meeting. Permanent consent was sought by the Applicant. Members granted temporary permission until October 2024 to consider whether there would be longer lasting environmental impacts and appropriate management of the site.
- Planning and environmental health related complaints were submitted to both the SDNPA and Chichester District Council during this time. These related to the impacts from camping (eg, noise and disturbance), the management of the site, and compliance with planning conditions. The Applicant has acknowledged in the application submission that there have been breaches of conditions. Whilst complaints have previously been investigated, none have resulted in formal action being taken by either the SDNPA or Chichester District Council.
- The key considerations include the principle of development. It is considered that this is justified under policies SD23 and SD25. Regarding landscape impact, it is important to consider that even though the camping has taken place since 2019 and there have been complaints which have arisen over this time, the site itself largely retains its character and appearance and is still part of, rather than detracting from, the surrounding prevailing local landscape character. Some

landscape enhancements are also proposed, more so in the context of meeting the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

- Other relevant considerations include impacts upon surrounding neighbouring amenities, highway safety, amenity of a public right of way (PROW). In these respects any impact is not so significant as to justify a reason(s) for refusal.
- A revised site plan, an amendment to the proposed amenity building, plus a response to the Landscape Officer's comments in this report are currently being re-consulted upon. The consultation period ends prior to the committee meeting. Members will be updated on any further responses as a result of the latest consultation.
- The proposals are considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to any comments received as a result of re-consultation, appropriate and strengthened conditions and the recommendation is for planning permission to be granted, subject to conditions.
- The application is before Members due to the previous consideration of granting temporary consent for the campsite and the issues raised.

Site Location Map





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I. Site Description

- 1.1 The application site covers a total of approximately 8 hectares(ha), of which approximately 7ha comprises of fields, currently grazed by ponies. It has been used as a seasonal campsite since temporary permission was granted in 2021 and prior to that using permitted development rights. There is an area of hardstanding used as a parking area and adjacent to it is an agricultural workers dwelling and barn.
- 1.2 Access is via Dumpford Lane where an unmade track leads to the parking area, which is on higher ground to the rest of the site and has an embankment along its southern edge. The site is bordered by mature trees and hedgerows, including an area of ancient woodland on its northern boundary.
- 1.3 The fields undulate and, overall, slope southwards and running east to west through the site is a ditch. A stream runs along the southern site boundary. Its flood zone (zones 2 and 3) marginally extend into the application site, whereas the rest of the site is outside of any flood risk.
- 1.4 The site is not particularly visible along Dumpford Lane given the ancient woodland and mature vegetation lining the road. The most relevant public vantage points are along a PROW which runs along the access track, past the parking area, and immediately adjacent to the western site boundary. This route is part of the Serpents Trail which runs along Dumpford Lane and southwards beyond the site.
- 1.5 There is a small group of dwellings approximately 300 metres (m) west of the site on Dumpford Lane. The closest dwelling at Tygalls Farm to the east is approximately 95m from the site boundary. There are no listed buildings or conservation areas within the immediate vicinity of the site.

2. Relevant Planning History

- 2.1 Whilst within the site there is planning history in respect of the agricultural workers dwelling (granted in 2011), the most relevant planning history is below.
- 2.2 SDNP/19/04198/FUL: Change of use of land from agricultural to campsite with disabled access. Withdrawn 10.12.2019. Note: this application related to a smaller parcel of land in the north east part of the current application site, where 17 pitches were proposed. It was withdrawn for reasons relating to landscape considerations, ecology, and highways considerations.
- 2.3 SDNP/20/05627/FUL: Change of use of agricultural land to use as campsite, for seasonal camping use with 18 pitches between May and October only. Landscape character and biodiversity enhancements for a further 4 hectares. Temporary consent granted on 18.06.2021, which expired on 31.10.2024.
- 2.4 SDNP/22/00390/DCOND: Discharge of conditions 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 16 of application SDNP/20/05627/FUL. Approved 25.09.2023.
- 2.5 SDNP/24/02523/APNB: Erection of a general purpose agricultural building. Prior Approval required and refused 04.07.2024 (Note application within 'blue land' west of the application site).
- 2.6 SDNP/24/03389/APNB: Erection of an agricultural barn. Prior Approval required and refused 03.09.2024. (Note application within 'blue land' west of the application site).

Relevant planning enforcement history

- 2.7 Between 2019 and 2020 the SDNPA dealt with a number of complaints related to the land in question. No action was taken in some cases and where action (albeit not formal) was required compliance was secured.
- 2.8 During 2021 to 2023, after temporary permission was granted, complaints were received. These included the campsite use exceeding permitted development rights including in the absence of discharging conditions, how it was managed, outbuildings remaining onsite, and condition of the access road for example. Investigations undertaken resulted in some (albeit

not formal) action being taken whilst a number of matters were resolved following the discharge of planning conditions.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Full Planning Permission is sought for the permanent use of the land as a campsite, with 18 pitches, between 1 May and 31 October annually.
- 3.2 Specific pitch locations are proposed around the site, largely around the field margins. No pitches for caravans, motorhomes and campervan are proposed. Pitches would not have their own individual electricity or water supplies. Up to 6 persons per pitch at any one time is proposed.
- 3.3 A permanent amenity building with toilet, shower and washing up facilities is proposed in the north-west part of the field. It would be a timber clad building with a corrugated metal pitched roof. It would measure 6.4m x 4.4m and 2.9m high. A new track leading to this building is proposed between it and the parking area. This would be 3m wide and 50m long, with a vehicular turning circle next to the building. It would have a hardcore base and surfaced with road scalplings.
- 3.4 An amended site plan re-positioning some pitches, amending the design of the amenity building to include a covered washing up area, and further justification in response to consultee feedback is currently being re-consulted upon. The period ends on 5th December and Members will be updated on any further responses.

Access

- 3.5 The existing access track with Dumpford Lane would be used. The parking area would be retained and no demarcation of spaces or new surfacing is proposed, it would remain as is. As part of the management of the site, parking at pitches would not be permitted, albeit there would likely be activity of visitors loading/unloading vehicles temporarily.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Landscaping

- 3.6 In addition to planting pursuant to the temporary permission, habitat enhancement and hedgerow planting is proposed for achieving mandatory BNG. Improvements to existing habitat equates to a 13% increase and new hedgerow planting a 33.8% improvement. The proposals, therefore, exceed the minimum 10% required.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 The following responses have been received.
- 4.2 **Drainage:** Response received; no comments.
- 4.3 **Ecology:** No objection, subject to conditions.

- Further information provided in response to original advice about erosion/damage of grassland in north-east corner of the site. Understood that this relates to activities separate to the campsite use; unfortunate given ancient woodland buffer.

Officer Note: The Applicant states that the erosion of grassland is the result of movements by a tractor and toppler unrelated and separate to the campsite use.

- 4.4 **Environment Agency:** No objection, subject to condition.

Officer note: The Environment Agency (EA) have recommend that its measures of (1) locating development only in flood zone 1; and (2) its seasonal campsite use be conditioned. These measures are already accommodated within the layout of the pitches and the proposed seasonal use.

- 4.5 **Environmental Health:** No objection, subject to condition.

Officer note: The response covers pollution (noise/disturbance and ground contamination), recommending a condition to secure the Campsite Management Plan to ensure suitable noise controls. During the temporary use, some complaints were received, none of which resulted in formal action.

4.6 **Environmental Protection (Chichester District Council):** Comments

- Satisfied with BNG calculations.
- Satisfied with 15m buffer from ancient woodland; additional planting needed within buffer in conjunction with fencing to prevent access into woodland stream.
- Hedgerows and trees used by bats for foraging and commuting and potentially for dormice; need to be retained and include a 10m buffer; any hedgerow gaps recommended to be filled in, secured via conditions.
- No external lighting recommended.
- Require bat boxes and dormice nesting boxes.
- 10m buffer proposed for water vole supported.
- Satisfied with precautionary approach regarding land management for reptiles.
- Any vegetation clearance and works to trees only to be undertaken outside of breeding season and supervised by an ecologist.
- Require bird boxes/swift brick(s).
- Potential for hedgehogs in compost and debris piles; sensitive clearance needed and nesting boxes should be provided.

Officer note: The measures raised by the consultee are recommended to be secured via BNG conditions.

4.7 **Fire Service (County Council):** No response.

4.8 **Harting Parish Council:** Objection, as follows:

- Temporary consent a trial period to assess impacts on landscape, amenity and environment.
- Negative impacts on landscape character, tranquillity, views, neighbouring amenities.
- Conditions not discharged in timely manner and not complied with.
- Adjacent farm no longer owned by applicant; farm shop closed; undermines farm diversification and sustainability case.
- Unused for cattle grazing since 2020.
- Site operations over last 4 years contravenes National Park's First Purpose.
- Widening of existing track via hedgerow removal has occurred.

Specific management issues during camping season:

- Cars parked beside pitches
- Amenity building not removed during off season.
- Amenity facilities inadequate.
- Groups of tents
- Noise disturbance – amplified music.
- No resident warden and access not controlled
- Traffic on Dumpford Lane unsafe for riders and walkers.
- Complaints in online reviews (with some positive reviews also)

Officer note: The assessment concludes there is no significant landscape impact to justify refusal, and the proposals would conserve and enhance the landscape. Previous management issues are separate and this application must be considered on its merits. If permission is

granted, proposed conditions provide adequate controls, and any breaches would be addressed by SDNPA enforcement officers.

4.9 **Highways Authority:** No objection.

Officer note: The Highways Authority raise no objection to site access or traffic impacts, confirming adequate parking and turning. They note cycle parking could be conditioned if required, though new cycle hoops are already in place.

4.10 **Landscape:** Objection.

- Landscape character deeply rural, tranquil location with has a high sense of ‘naturalness.’
- Key considerations are: potential impact on the tranquil, pastoral, landscape character; and intrusion on views from adjacent PROW.
- Acceptability hinges on adherence to the management and mitigation measures and further evidence of past compliance needed to assess landscape impact.
- Level of impact depends on effectiveness of site management, namely compliance with Campsite Management Plan; erection of amenity hut as designed and removal during off season; return to grazing during off season; mitigation planting and its management; no external lighting; and fencing to exclude activity/disturbance from habitats.
- Further evidence needed to demonstrate how the site has been managed during temporary consent.
- Query the need for the track to the amenities building; suggest its removal.
- Question the extant building appearance versus submitted plans.
- How has the site provided a hay crop during camping season.
- Existing brick rubble paths do not appear to have been surfaces as intended and detract from the landscape.
- Controls on the proposed camping use and requirement for the land to remain intrinsically agricultural are essential to fulfilling First Purpose.

Officer note: The site’s character and appearance remain largely unchanged since the temporary permission, and the scale and extent of camping now proposed is similar. Conditions are recommended to maintain its landscape and ecological value. The proposed physical development (i.e amenity hut and its access track) is considered acceptable in landscape terms.

4.11 **Lead Local Flood Authority:** No objection.

4.12 **Public Rights of Way:** No response.

4.13 **West Sussex County Council (Minerals and Waste):** Response received – no comment.

5. Representations

5.1 12 objections, 15 representations in support, and 1 neutral response have been received, as follows:

Objections

- Sustainable camping not demonstrated; earlier temporary consent unsuccessful.
- Site’s baseline is agricultural use; not part of applicant’s farming activities.
- Incremental non-agricultural development; farm diversification justification weak.
- 18 pitches not viable; risk of expansion and loss of farmland.
- No local amenities; no community or employment benefits.
- Conflicts with Development Plan policies (SD1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 19, 23, 25, 34).

- Negative impact on neighbouring livestock farming and shared access track.
- Planning history shows intent to expand; unauthorised works alleged.
- Isolated, rural site unsuitable; reliance on vehicles, harm to tranquillity, dark skies, and landscape character.
- Poor site management: breaches of conditions, noise, litter, light pollution, trespass, livestock disturbance.
- Increased traffic; safety conflicts with walkers, riders, cyclists; lane erosion.

• Lack of local support; disregard for planning laws. Support

- Provides affordable, semi-wild camping experience with generous pitch spacing.
- Opportunity to enjoy nature, tranquillity, dark skies, and South Downs access.
- Discreetly sited; minimal visual impact; seasonal use only.
- Visitors support local businesses; tourism boosts National Park economy.
- Sustainable use of unproductive land; biodiversity gains possible under conditions.
- Reduces risk of unauthorised wild camping elsewhere.
- Traffic levels manageable; less disruptive than other local commercial activity.
- Quiet, family-oriented atmosphere; self-regulated to avoid large groups.
- Tents screened; no views from South Downs Way; invisible off-season.

• Meets growing demand for camping; supports farm income diversification. Neutral

- Small sustainable campsites need to be proscribed and restricted as such, with good management.
- Should not set a precedent for further development disproportionate to local infrastructure.
- Enjoying nature should be done responsibly and sustainably; South Downs should retain its special status.

Planning Policy Context

The Development Plan comprises the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) (2019). The most pertinent policies are listed below. A longer list of relevant policies is in Appendix I.

6.

Most relevant policies of the adopted SDLP (2019)

6.1

- SD4: Landscape Character

6.2

• SD5: Design

- SD9: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- SD19: Transport and Accessibility
- SD22: Parking provision
- SD23: Sustainable Tourism
- SD25: Development Strategy

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and other guidance

6.3

- Design Guide SPD
- Parking for Residential and Non-Residential Development SPD

- Camping and Glamping Technical Advice Note (TAN)
- Ecosystems Services(non-householder)TAN
- Biodiversity Net GainTAN
- Dark Skies TAN

6.4 Most relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

- Section 6: Building a Strong, competitive economy
- Section 9: Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 12: Achieving well designed places
- Section 14: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6.5 Most relevant policies of the South DownsPartnershipManagement Plan (2020-2025)

- Policy I:Landscape
- Policy43: Support appropriate recreationand tourism

7. Planning Assessment

Background context

- 7.1 Between 2019 and the2021 temporary planning permission,the sitewasused as acampsiteviapermitted development rights. This allowed the camping use for up to 28 days, whichwas extendednationallyto 56 days in2020.During that time,local concerns were raisedabout pollution and traffic,however, with the camping being undertaken via permitteddevelopment rightsno planning measures could be imposedforhow the site operated.Subsequently, the temporary permissiongranted in 2021 affordedmoreplanning controlanditextended the seasonal camping usebeyond 56 days.
- 7.2 During the previousapplication process, officers negotiated a reduced scale ofcampingtoasmaller site area(tothe current application site)andlesspitchesfrom 25to 18. Officersconsidered that this addresseda breadth of concerns raised by consultees and third partiesto the extent that the application was recommended for approval.Temporary permissionwassubsequentlygranted by the SDNPA Planning Committee in 2021 on the basis thatenvironmental impact(s) of the campsite usecould be assessed.
- 7.3 The campsite does not appear to have beenwhollymanagedin the wayrequiredby theplanning conditions.There have been enforcement investigations(see section 2 above) andthese did not result in formal action being takenasit wasassessed notexpedientin thepublic interest, nor significantly materialtoformallypursue.Furthermore, separateinvestigationsbythe District Council's environmentalhealth departmentover the period ofthe temporary consentdid notresult inanyformalaction.
- 7.4 The followingrelatetoissuesraised to the SDNPAconcerning thetemporary consentandconditions.
- Existing amenity building not in accordance with the approved plans—it 'scurrentlyamodified field shelter. It has also not been removed outside of camping season,asrequired.
 - Campinguse extending beyond permitted development rights.
 - Campsite management-eg, noise/disturbance, security (keypad entry), number of tentsper pitch, exceeding capacity; parking next to pitches, campervans and caravans enteringthe site, traffic issues and erosion of Dumpford Lane.

Principle of development

- 7.5 The relevantLocal Plan policies for assessing the principle of development areSD1, SD4, SD23 and SD25 primarily.These are addressed in numerical order below.

- 7.6 The acceptability of the proposals under SD1 and SD4 are addressed in further below in the landscape related sub-section. In summary, the presence of a campsite here can accord with SD1 and SD4 as well as the First Purpose regarding conserving and enhancing natural beauty and landscape character to achieve a sustainable form of development.
- 7.7 The acceptability of the proposals under SD23, when considering its criteria as a whole, is set out in table I below. The overall conclusion of this assessment is that SD23 is accorded with.

Policy SD23 criteria	Comment
a)The proposals will provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities.	The site is well located for visitors to explore the National Park landscape, including via the PROW network.
b)The design and location of the development minimise the need for travel by private car and encourages access and/or subsequent travel by sustainable means, including public transport, walking, cycling or horse riding.	There is a limited bus service in the area offering connections with Petersfield and Midhurst but overall lacks good public transport opportunities. Visitors will largely be reliant on private vehicles, but it is adjacent to a notable PROW (Serpents Trail) and there is some opportunity of public transport. The location was deemed acceptable in the previous temporary permission.
c)Development proposals will not detract from the experience of visitors or adversely affect the character, historical significance, appearance or amenity of the area.	A low key use is proposed, with a 8ha site being occupied by 18 pitches. The pitches are reasonably sensitively located. The proposals involve new planting and ecology enhancements. They would not impact upon cultural heritage. Subject to the site's management plan, there would not be a significant impact upon surrounding amenities. The proposed amenity building is a modest sized single storey timber building which would weather over time, and discreetly located on the site.
d)Development proposals make use of existing buildings, and, if no suitable existing buildings are available, the design of any new buildings are sensitive to the character and setting.	The proposals do not re-use an existing building(s), they replace the existing field shelter with a new amenity building. The design is acceptable for reasons outlined in the landscape impact considerations.
e) Ancillary facilities are not disproportionately large in relation to the rest of the visitor facilities.	The amenity building is of an acceptable scale to accommodate the number of pitches and is not disproportionately large.
f) Any proposal does not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of town or village centres or assets of community value.	Not applicable.

<p>g) Where proposals are located outside settlement policy boundaries as defined on the Policies Map, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Positively contribute to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and ii. Are closely associated with other attractions/established tourism uses, including the public rights of way network; or iii. Are part of farm diversification schemes or endorsed Whole Estate Plans. 	<p>Criterion (i) - accorded with given considerations on landscape and ecology.</p> <p>Criterion (ii) - accorded with insofar as the site is well located for access onto the PROW network, with the Serpents Trail and other routes.</p> <p>Criterion (iii) - less relevant in this instance given the change in the Applicant's farm holdings. No Whole Estate Plan (which is not unusual in this instance).</p>
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Table I: SD23 policy criteria

- 7.8 Policy SD25 outlines the development strategy for the Local Plan. It outlines that only in exceptional circumstances should development in countryside locations be permitted, provided they accord with other relevant policies, respond to the context of the area and, as in this case, whether there is a need for a countryside location.
- 7.9 Regarding an essential need in this countryside location, a campsite ultimately is countryside use by its very nature. Representations have raised concern about the need and location of the campsite, contending there is sufficient offerings in the wider area and that temporary campsites are capable of being set up under permitted development rights.
- 7.10 The Authority's latest Visitor Accommodation Review (2025) identifies tourist accommodation has notably increased since the last review in 2014. Whilst it surmises that visitor demand could be met by existing provision, the proposals would nonetheless contribute to the diversity of tourism offerings available to visitors.
- 7.11 There are other campsites in the wider area, however, it is not considered to be significant and they have their own differing scales, characteristics and experiential qualities compared with the application site. Camping along notable routes like the Serpents Trail is also supported by the Authority's Tourism Strategy.
- 7.12 In all of the above respects and in combination with according with SD23, it is considered that there is sufficient justification for the proposals under these relevant policies.
- 7.13 While SD40 (Farm and Forestry Diversification) was previously relied upon, it is now less relevant to the principle of development and should be given limited weight. The current proposals differ materially from those approved in 2021, as the Applicant's wider farm enterprise has since been sold. Although diversification remains part of the justification, it mainly relates to land at Emsworth outside the National Park. The application site is now grazed by ponies with a hay crop taken. However, the proposals remain justified under SD23.
- 7.14 The expired permission is also a relevant material consideration given some weight in assessing the principle of development, as well as the environmental considerations further in this assessment. It is relevant because:
- 1) A similar scale and nature of proposals are re-applied for regarding the site area, access and parking, an amenity building (albeit different location and design), number of pitches, site management, landscaping and habitat management, with some additional enhancements to meet mandatory BNG.
 - 2) The character and appearance of the site and its surroundings have not fundamentally materially changed since the 2021 decision.

- 3) The decision was made in the context of unchanged Local Plan policy and National Park Purposes. There is a more up to date NPPF (2024) which still places 'great weight' which continues to support the rural economy and outdoor recreation and tourism.

Landscape Impact

- 7.15 The site is within a prevailing agricultural landscape with fields enclosed by mature tree and hedgerow field boundaries and 'pockets' of woodland. The area is also relatively tranquil. Proposals are of a seasonal nature and for the remaining time of each year the site would be grazed.
- 7.16 Camping has taken place since 2019 and in spite of concerns raised about its management during each season, the fundamental character and appearance of the site appears largely unchanged and it remains part of the surrounding landscape character. The evidence of pitches are no longer apparent. The presence of the field shelter/amenity hut is not material to the overall character and appearance of the site. This lack of fundamental change to the fields is an important consideration in the assessment of a permanent consent.
- 7.17 The proposed physical development involves a new amenity building and access track to it adjacent to the existing parking area to be retained, plus some boundary fencing to help protect more sensitive areas and site boundaries.
- 7.18 The proposed pitch locations would not involve permanent hard standing or fencing and, with a maximum of 18, would be a low density given the 7ha site. Certain pitches along the eastern boundary have been moved further into the site during the application process to primarily set them away from the neighbouring property. Overall, the 18 pitches would be satisfactorily dispersed to reduce an impression of an over occupied site.
- 7.19 Each pitch is now proposed to be occupied by up to 6 people instead of explicitly stating only one tent. This is in response to bookings and required flexibility for families (eg, children having their own tents). This is a reasonable approach and it is not considered to cause an undue proliferation of tents given the size of the site and 18 pitches.
- 7.20 Parking at pitches is to be restricted other than for loading/unloading purposes. It is acknowledged that there is evidence in representations that there were times when multiple tents were erected on pitches and cars parked within the field. These restrictions would be secured in the Campsite Management Plan and enforcement would be a separate matter. It is understood that an employed warden and the applicant have been on site to manage the camping, which would continue.
- 7.21 New planting has already been undertaken through the temporary consent and further proposed supplementary planting of hedgerows and habitat management would help to enhance site.
- 7.22 The parking area is not proposed to be formalised with marked parking bays or further surfacing and, therefore, would not consequently have an overtly urbanising appearance particularly when viewed along the adjacent footpath. The ancient woodland on its immediate northern side shields it from view along Dumpford Lane. The parking area would still be shared with visitors to the fishing ponds and as access for the adjacent stockmans dwelling and barn. A shared space helps to avoid further proliferation of hard standing for each use.
- 7.23 The proposed amenity hut would not be conspicuous within the landscape given its siting at the bottom of the car park embankment and set back into the site by approximately 50m from the track running along the western site boundary. It would also be reasonably well screened from public vantage points given existing trees and hedgerows both within the site and surrounding it. It would be of a modest scale and a simple gabled design with timber cladding which would weather naturally. For these reasons and due to its siting, the building is not considered to have a negative impact upon the character and appearance of the site and surrounding landscape character.
- 7.24 The access track leading to the amenity building would be a relatively more prominent physical feature compared with the amenity building it would serve. This is because it links

with the existing track and immediately passing walkers would be able to see along its straight 50m surfaced length. Its width has been reduced to 3m wide (originally 4m) via an amended site plan, whilst still retaining a modest turning circle at its end. This has reduced the extent of surfacing to an acceptable amount. The track would not be discernible in the wider landscape given its location, public vantage points, and being bordered by the car park embankment and a new row of hedging.

- 7.25 Regarding tranquillity, during the camping season there have been both planning enforcement and environmental health complaints concerning the camping activities. Whilst these have not resulted in formal action being taken, the site is in a tranquil location where noise in particular can ‘travel.’ A campsite of 18 pitches on this large site is not an over development whereby there is an excessive use or level of activity. Its seasonal use lessens its impact further and during the off season the site would be grazed and therefore the tranquillity of the area would be unaffected during this time.
- 7.26 A key consideration is how the site is managed. The recommendation includes a condition securing the agreement of a new Campsite Management Plan which requires further details to make it more robust. Whilst such a document has been submitted, it is considered that it could be made more robust. Any breaches of it would be a separate enforcement matter. That is not to say that past complaints should be disregarded, rather the proposals have been assessed within the context of the Development Plan and concerns have been considered as a material consideration in reaching the recommendation.
- 7.27 Conserving dark skies is a consideration. The access and car park are not proposed to be illuminated. There would need to be some lighting at the amenity block and its extent and design are proposed to be conditioned. The requirements would involve keeping lighting to the minimum necessary and of a design to minimise upward light spill. It is also noteworthy that the campsite is seasonal whereby the amenity hut would essentially remain under used for the darkest Winter periods. In these respects, the proposals would accord with policy SD8.
- 7.28 Overall, the proposals are not considered to have an overriding adverse impact upon the National Park. The prevailing landscape character of the site and its surrounds would be conserved for the reasons above and there would be a degree of enhancements involving new planting and habitat management. In these respects, policies SD1, SD4 and SD5, as well as Purpose 1 would be accorded with.

Impact on surrounding amenities

- 7.29 Representations raise a variety of impacts related to campsite management. Given the tranquillity of the area sound is likely to travel for example. The nearest dwellings are however notable distances away (c.95m east and c.300m west) and given that no previous formal action has been undertaken regarding noise and disturbance this suggests that it is not so significant as to justify a reason for refusal.
- 7.30 Concerns raised about the visual impact of tents and cars is also considered to be limited given the enclosed nature of the site with mature boundary vegetation and the aforementioned distances with neighbouring properties. For similar reasons any light pollution is not considered to be a significant issue. No permanent lighting at pitches is proposed and the extent of lighting between groups of campers is likely to be very variable. Pitches have also been removed from the eastern boundary to further into the site to nonetheless assist in reducing the impact upon the easterly neighbouring property.
- 7.31 Concern has also been raised about conflict experienced between existing farming activities and visitors using the access track, stray dogs and damage to fencing in particular. The behaviour of visitors will vary. Also, the PROW along the access is a public footpath with walkers who may not be staying on site.
- 7.32 Overall, an 18 pitch seasonal campsite is not an excessive use of the site and the Campsite Management Plan could be amended to outline that visitors will be aware of their surrounds and requested to act appropriately, whether this is travelling around the site and its

surrounds to managing camp fires. It is not considered that there is sufficient justification to refuse the application for reasons relating to significant impact upon surrounding amenities.

Impact on the PROW (Serpents Trail)

- 7.33 Views from the PROW through the car park are elevated and a reasonably wide view across the site. Views then become more restricted when passing along the western boundary track due to the hedgerow and lower ground levels than the car park. At the southern end of the site, the site boundary is delineated by a post and wire fence whereby views along the PROW open out again across the site.
- 7.34 It is considered that through this series of views when passing the site, the amenity of the PROW would not be significantly impacted upon. A seasonal use is also proposed and the PROW may arguably be used more during the more clement months. Whilst tents and activity would be visible, a campsite use is not an uncharacteristic use in the countryside and the proposals are of a relatively low scale given 18 pitches on a 7 hectare site with many of the pitches distant from the PROW.
- 7.35 A cluster of pitches is proposed at the southern end of the site near to the PROW, however, this would not be significantly visually impactful for the above reasons. The overall character and appearance of the site would not fundamentally change and it could still be seen as part of the landscape, even when camping is taking place.
- 7.36 Overall, it is not considered that there would be a significant impact upon the amenity of the PROW nor would its use be hindered by the proposals.

Drainage and flood risk

- 7.37 The site is in Flood Risk Zone I. The Lead Flood Authority have recommended that pitches be positioned outside of the river flood zone and this is the case. The amenity block, parking area is also well outside of a flood zone.
- 7.38 The proposed drainage for the amenity hut involves a cesspit. No detailed comments from the drainage consultee has been received. Condition 14 is proposed to consider these and surface water drainage details in further detail. The proposed track leading to the amenity building is proposed in order for service vehicles to readily reach the amenity block, whether this is for clearing the septic tank, bins and general cleaning.

Ecology/BNG

- 7.39 The proposals rely on both the planting already secured via the temporary permission plus additional hedgerow planting and habitat management over and above the previous landscaping scheme. The additionality is largely due to needing to provide a mandatory 10% BNG on site. This is achieved based on a 13% hedgerow increase and 33.8% of habitat units, which consultees are satisfied with.

Fire Risk

- 7.40 Although no response from the County fire service has been received, no objection was raised previously and a recommended updated Campsite Management Plan can address fire risk and precautions.

Highways and parking

- 7.41 The existing access would remain as is and its use was previously acceptable. Representations raise concern about traffic and erosion of the roads. There would be no significant material increase in traffic generated compared with the temporary consent and it is a seasonal use. With 18 pitches and visitors coming and going at various days/times depending on bookings.
- 7.42 There would not be a significant impact upon the PROW along the site access due to volume of traffic. The parking area and its capacity remain the same. There would not, therefore, be a parking issue or impact.
- 7.43 For these reasons and given the Highways Authority raise no objection a reason for refusal is unlikely to be sustainable on highways impacts.

Cultural Heritage

- 7.44 The site is not within, nor within the setting of, a conservation area. It is also not within the setting of a listed building.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017)

- 7.45 Natural England withdrew its 2021 Position Statement on 31 October, meaning development within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone (including this site) is no longer required to demonstrate 'water neutrality', due to wider strategic mitigation for the Arun Valley Special Protection Area (SPA). Nevertheless, proposed water-saving measures in the amenity building are recommended to be secured by condition to support the sustainability of the development.
- 7.46 The site is within the wider buffer of the Singleton and Cocking Tunnels SPA. Due to the location, scale, nature of the proposals including the seasonal use, the retention and enhancement of existing habitat and vegetation, and minimal lighting it is not considered that the proposals would adversely affect the integrity of this sensitive site and its designation regarding bats.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Previous enforcement investigations and third-party complaints are acknowledged. It is also acknowledged that the temporary permission was an opportunity for the Applicant to demonstrate sound management of the site.
- 8.2 A key consideration, however, is that with the campsite having been operating since 2019 that the character and appearance of the site and surrounding landscape character have not been significantly impacted upon by this use. During the off season (as at present) the land recovers and apart from the physical development of the car park and amenity hut there is little evidence of pitches within the fields that the site has been used as a campsite.
- 8.3 Its location and use can also be justified under policies SD23 and SD25 regarding the principle of development and the landscape conserved and enhanced to accord with SD4. Impacts upon wider amenities are not so significant to justify a reason for refusal on these grounds.
- 8.4 The proposals accord with the Development Plan, NPPF 2024, and National Park Purposes and relevant legislation as a whole. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight which would justify not granting planning permission for the reasons outlined.
- 8.5 The NPPF outlines overarching economic, social and environmental objectives to sustainable development. The campsite would have social benefits in regard to visitor's accessing the National Park. There could be local benefits to surrounding businesses and there are no overriding environmental considerations to justify refusal and some landscape and ecological enhancements are proposed which would be secured via conditions.
- 8.6 The application is, therefore, recommended for approval subject to conditions outlined below.

9. Reason for Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions and any amendments or other conditions required to address technical matters:
1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed below under the heading "Plans Referred to in Consideration of this Application".
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Use

3. The site shall only be used as a seasonal campsite between 1 May to 30 September (inclusive) each year. The use shall be limited to 18 tent pitches as identified on approved plan W2113-02E, and up to a maximum of 6 persons per pitch. Occupation by caravans, motorhomes or campervans on the site is prohibited. No sleeping in vehicles anywhere on the site is permitted. Outside of 1st May to 30th September the site shall remain in agricultural use.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to regulate and control the development of land.

4. The pitches shall not be occupied by any person, group or their dependants, for a consecutive period of more than 28 days in any calendar year. A register of the occupancy of the pitches shall be maintained and kept up-to-date by the operator of the site, and shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority upon request (within 14 days of a written request being made). It shall record the names, addresses, pitch bookings including arrival and departures dates, of all visitors.

Reason: There is a need to ensure that practical and permanent management measures are in place to manage the site as visitor accommodation.

5. Notwithstanding the details provided, an updated Campsite Management Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Its additional detail shall include:

Detailed description of a Code of Conduct for visitors and how this is communicated;

- Detailed noise control/management measures;
- Further detail on warden/on site management;
- Measures to address any anti-social behaviour;
- Commitment to the provision and arrangements of a pin-coded entrance gate;
- Car park management;
- Management of fire pits, fuel used and on-site safety precautions;
- Any provision (eg, wheelbarrows) for guests to transport camping equipment and possessions to/from pitches;
- All waste management (eg. campfires, litter, food waste, fuels, amenity block, bin collection);
- Complaints procedure for dealing with complaints either from visitors and/or third parties;
- Protocol for emergencies.

The campsite use shall, thereafter, be undertaken in full accordance with the agreed Campsite Management Plan.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to regulate and control the development of land and any impacts upon surrounding amenities.

6. No part of the development shall be first brought to use until details of any fire pits to be provided on site are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the number, location and size of fire pits as well as mechanisms towards reducing fire risk and facilitating their extinction. Once approved, the development shall operate in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity, of preventing pollution and control fire risk.

7. The amenity building shall be provided prior to the commencement of the campsite use. In the event that the campsite use permanently ceases, the amenity building and any

concrete slab or pad foundations, plus its access track, as identified on Site Plan W2113-02E, shall be completely removed from the site within 3 months of the cessation of the use and the land restored to its former original condition.

Reason: To conserve the landscape character and amenity of the site.

Materials and specification

8. Prior to the erection of the amenity building hereby approved, a schedule of materials and samples of such materials, finishes and colours to be used for external walls, windows and doors, roofs, and rainwater goods of the building, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The building shall, thereafter, be constructed in full accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

9. The access track to serve the amenity building hereby approved shall be constructed in full accordance with the details as annotated on Site Plan W2113-02E.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory finish in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Biodiversity Net Gain

10. The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in full accordance with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Metric prepared by South Coast Ecology Ltd, dated 02.04.2025.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act, Policy SD9 of the South Downs Local Plan (2014-33) and the SDNPA Biodiversity Technical Advice Note.

11. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, an updated Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The HMMP shall accord with the Biodiversity Gain Plan and include:

- i) A non-technical summary;
- ii) The roles and responsibilities of the people or organisations delivering the HMMP;
- iii) The planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- iv) The management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved; Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the first use of the development
- v) The monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat; and
- vi) Provision for the identification, agreement and implementation of contingencies and/or remedial actions where the results from monitoring show that the conservation aims and objectives of the HMMP are not being met.

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall thereafter be managed, maintained and monitored in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act, Policy SD9 of the South Downs Local Plan (2014-33) and the SDNPA Biodiversity Technical Advice Note.

12. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, a completion report, evidencing the completed habitat enhancements set out in the approved Habitat

Management and Monitoring Plan, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act, Policy SD9 of the South Downs Local Plan (2014-33) and the SDNPA Biodiversity Technical Advice Note.

Trees

13. The construction of the amenity building and service access track, as identified on Site Plan W21 I 3-02E, shall be undertaken in full accordance with the Arboricultural Constraints Assessment (prepared by Bernie Harverson, dated September 2025) and Tree Constraints Plan (ref: BJH-02)

Reason: To safeguard existing trees on site.

Drainage

14. Prior to the erection of the amenity building hereby approved, details for its foul and surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall, thereafter, be undertaken in full accordance with the agreed details and retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory means of drainage.

Dark Night Skies

15. Prior to the amenity building being brought into use, details of any external lighting to be used on the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include its location, type and specification of all lighting. The specification shall not exceed 500 lumens and 3000K, and be of a design which is sensor controlled and minimises upward light spill. The internal lighting shall also be sensor controlled and not exceed 500 lumens and 3000K in order to minimise light spill via the rooflights. The lighting shall thereafter be implemented and retained in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To conserve dark night skies, ecology, and create a suitable level of amenity for future occupiers.

16. Apart from at the amenity building, no other permanent external lighting shall be installed on the site.

Reason: To conserve dark night skies, ecology, and avoid impacts to wider amenities surrounding the site.

Highways and access

17. The car parking area (as shown on plan W21 I 3-02E) shall be retained in accordance with the approved plan and campsite visitors are not permitted to park at pitches at any time, other than for loading and unloading of camping tents and equipment at the beginning and end of each stay.

Reason: To ensure appropriate management of the site, conserve the character and appearance of the site, and protect surrounding amenities.

18. The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in full accordance with the submitted Travel Plan (prepared by Whaleback, reference: W32 I 2, dated July 2025).

Reason: To assist with the sustainability of the campsite use.

19. The existing cycle hoops within the parking area (as shown on plan W21 I 3-02E) shall be retained for campsite visitors.

Reason: To assist in the sustainability of the site.

TIM SLANEY

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Appendices: Appendix I- Legislation and policies

SDNPA Consultees: Legal Services, Development Manager

Background Documents: [SDNP/25/03104/FUL | Change of use of agricultural land to permanent use as a seasonal campsite with 18 no. pitches between May and October each year. | Land and Building South of Clarefield Copse Dumpford Lane Nyewood South Harting West Sussex](#)

[South Downs Local Plan \(2014-33\)](#)

[South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan](#)

[SDNPA Supplementary Planning Documents and Technical Advice Notes](#)