

Subject: **Written representations from the public**

Report to: Full Council, 19 March 2026 – supplementary paper

Report of: Town Clerk

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To receive and consider written representations received.

2. Background

2.1 Under Standing Order 3e, members of the public may make representations, whether in writing or verbally. At the Mayor's discretion, an author may also address the Council verbally for up to 5 minutes, and councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions for clarification.

3. Main considerations

3.1 The following written representations have been received.

- Carol Palmer & Clare Klaire, Say NO to 1100 Houses at Chawton Park Farm Campaign (4 documents) – item 7
- John Millar – item 7
- Sue Petas – item 7
- Jenny Griffiths, Alton Climate Action Network – item 7

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Council is recommended:

To note the written representations received.

Via email to Alton Town Councillors
cc townclerk@alton.gov.uk

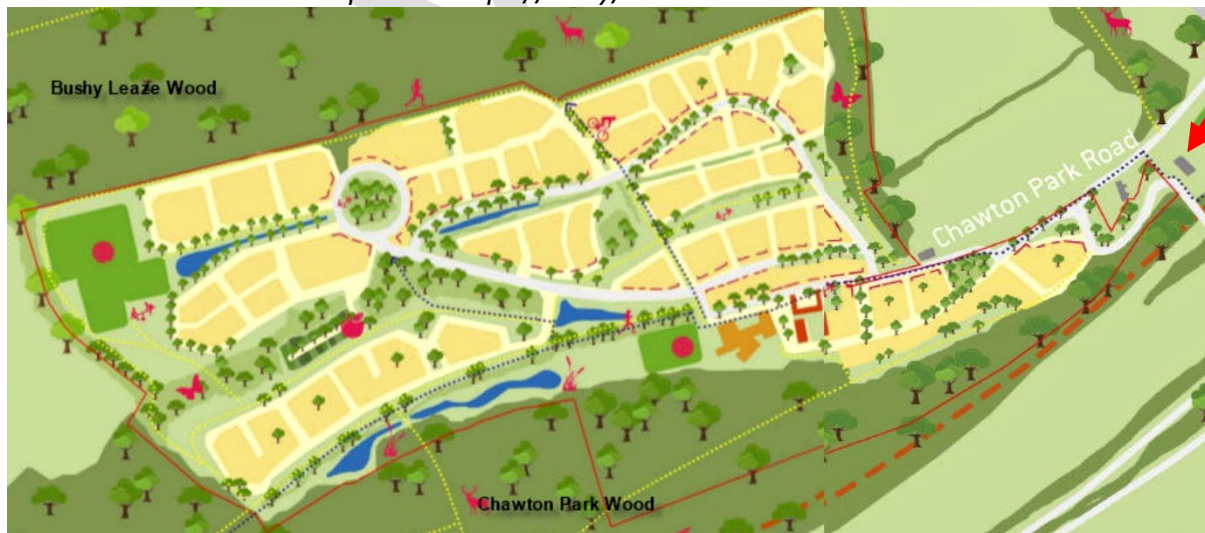
11th March 2026

Dear Councillor,

Full Council 19th March 2026 – Item 7. Planning Application EHDC-25-1383-EIA, Chawton Park Farm, Chawton Park Road, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1SW

The Say NO to 1100 Houses at Chawton Park Farm campaign is writing to you with reference to the above to introduce you to our campaign and our perspective on this as a development site. The above EIA scoping opinion request on the EHDC planning portal can be seen here <https://bit.ly/HarrowCPF>. We appreciate you taking the time to read this letter and hope you find it helpful. If you have any questions or would like further information about anything we've written here, do email saynotochawtonparkfarm@gmail.com. Our Facebook page is here <https://bit.ly/SayNOtoChawtonParkFarmfacebook>. Our bullet point flyer is attached.

Here is a graphic from Harrow Estate's 2024 brochure showing the extent of the proposed development: <https://bit.ly/HarrowCPFBrochure2024>



Background to the Say NO Campaign

The Campaign began in August 2021 after East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) made Chawton Park Farm (CPF) the preferred 'large site' in its Draft Local Plan after the Large Sites consultation in 2019 despite the public ranking it the least preferred option. Cue collective horror at this and the Town Clerk at the time commissioned a **Barrister's Opinion** which can be seen here <https://bit.ly/BarristersOpinion2021>.

A summary of the opinion is attached and the key points are the 'soundness' of the choice of this site, with questions over its sustainability, access and car-dependency. Key Quotes from page 5 of the Summary:

- The site's greenfield status, environmental sensitivities, and distance from existing settlements undermine sustainability credentials.
- Its development risks damaging ancient woodland and valued landscapes, conflicting with NPPF policies requiring protection of irreplaceable habitats and valued landscapes.
- The new settlement's ability to provide necessary facilities and affordable housing at proposed levels is not assured.
- Risks exist that the development will be car-dependent, lacking meaningful public transport and local services, contrary to sustainability goals.

Our view is that these comments are still relevant today.

The difference the Campaign made in the years 2021 – 2022 can be summed up in the Leader, Councillor Richard Millard's remarks on 28th July 2022. He was replying to the following comment by Simon Jenkins, his Chief Operating Officer and 'lead planning professional' who said ... 'at this point in time, I will be recommending refusal.'

Cllr Millard closed with: ".....my immediate response to that is good. It is the wrong location, it is the wrong size, it is the wrong infrastructure provision."

After two years of campaigning, we were invited to present our petition (now at 5967 signatures) <https://bit.ly/CPFPetition> to EHDC Full Council on 23rd September 2023 and our speech is attached. We also attach the Background Note sent to all Councillors at the time. The petition numbers represent **30%** of the population numbers in the 2021 census (19,425). Apologies for the volume of material we are sending but as volunteers yourselves you will understand the amount of work that goes into campaigning.

Key Issues with the CPF Site & Supporting Comments from Statutory Authorities & Other Organisations

Traffic

The 2015 Alton Transport Strategy predicted that on completion of the Ackender Hill development on Chawton Park Road, queues of about 34 vehicles would appear at morning peak hour, at the Chawton Park Road/Whitedown Lane junction.

The strategy also predicted that the junction would operate at 96 per cent capacity – defined as being well above its practical limit and that is before any development at Chawton Park Farm! We understand that Hampshire County Council expressed concern over any signalisation of this junction and that they are currently 'monitoring' the situation. 1100 houses at the farm would bring at least an extra 1500 - 2000 cars to this area and c1800 extra journeys a day.

The developers' plan includes an alteration to Northfield Lane which would route traffic west of the current Lane – they say this would allow the Jubilee Fields car park to be extended. However, it seems to be currently closed for most of the time to stop travellers.

The Landscape Planning Team (LPT) at Hampshire County Council (HCC) have stated in their response to the Scoping Opinion Request that: “It is anticipated that significant highway infrastructure improvements will be required, to access the site and impact of these on the existing landscape character also need to be factored into the assessment and/or a separate assessment produced.”

CPRE 'Red List' Sites March 2026 & Comments

Their comments on CPF are below – one of 6 sites in Alton on their 'Red List'

3. CHA-007: Chawton, Alton

LAA assessed capacity: 1200

EHDC Evidence

- landscape value assessed by Terra Firma on behalf of EHDC as Beyond the Ordinary and of Medium/High landscape value (see EHDC Landscape Value Statements: Large Development Sites dated July 2020)
- assessment by Terra Firma on behalf of EHDC concluding on landscape grounds that the Site is within Local Area (2b.6) of medium/low capacity to accommodate change and only able to accommodate new housing in limited situations (see EHDC Landscape Capacity Study dated September 2018)
- landscape value assessed by RPS Watson on behalf of EHDC as within an Area of Special Landscape Quality (ASLQ) (see Landscape Assessment of East Hampshire, Final Report, dated December 1994)

CPREH Evidence

- landscape value of assessed on site visit as Beyond the Ordinary and a Valued Landscape (see CPREH response of 14 October 2019 to the consultation on Large Development Sites, Appendix A)

Site Given 4 Red Flags in the EHDC 2019 Large Sites Assessment

1. **Ancient Woodland** - the impact 1100 houses and c2400 to 3000 residents would bring to the ecologically diverse woodland which would suffer irremediable damage from incursion by the residents.

LPT stated in their response to the Scoping Opinion Request “It is considered that the LVIA [Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment] ought to conclude that the **immediate context** of the site is a high value landscape for the following reasons: Natural Heritage: Adjacent Designated Ancient Woodlands of Chawton Park Wood and Bushy Leaze Wood, which are also designated **SINCs**. The site itself also seems to contain priority habitat and a **small section of Ancient Wood land extends into the site from Bushy Leaze Wood**.”

They went on to make the following comments:

- Development here would mean “permanent change to landscape character ...which lies outside the settlement boundary, in the Countryside between Alton and Four

Marks...".

- "...wholesale change from fields representative of the LCA^{*}, to residential development and supporting infrastructure, sees a permanent urbanising change"
- "Effects may be felt strongly [on] ... landscape character due to the changes principally in land use of the site and increased activity with the site, (para.6.4.2. of the EIA Scoping Request by Savills November 2025), and will be adverse. This will have tangible effects on perception: levels of tranquillity and dark skies, beyond the site."
- "The LVIA is required to demonstrate if the proposed mitigation measures are sufficient to offset the harm to landscape character and views."
- Their conclusion: "Due to the high levels of environmental, landscape and historic designations within the wider context, it is considered that the effects on the wider landscape character receptors have the potent to be significant and potentially adverse..." * Landscape Character Assessment 2024

We agree. Any housing on CPF would completely alter the rural character of this part of Chawton – it is a 'stand-alone' site so does not tie-in with any other housing in the locality.

The LPT are also concerned about the views from Chawton House: "From a visit to Chawton House Estate on 1 February 2026, the Landscape Officer is concerned that the site may be seen from the 'Jane Austen Garden Trail', particularly from viewpoints along the Upper Terrace". Jane Austen is known to have walked to Chawton Park Farm to visit farmer Andrews.

2. SINCs (sites of importance for nature conservation) – see below – green areas



3. Listed Building – Chawton Park Farmhouse is Grade II listed. The EHDC Conservation Officer responded to the Scoping Opinion request as follows on 23 Dec 2025:

“The listed building currently enjoys a rural setting reflecting its historic use as a farmhouse. The proposed development would engulf the heritage asset with widespread residential development.”

The site also appears to be substantially distanced and isolated from the nearest amenities in the centre of Alton and hence risks becoming a car dependent, unsustainable development.

Whilst the suggested use of the farmhouse as a local centre does offer the opportunity to retain some primacy to the building in the new development, the urbanisation of the immediate vicinity means there is potential for the development to cause substantive harm to the heritage asset. An EIA should be submitted.”

4. 1.5km from Alton Town Centre (actually Sainsburys is 2.4 – 4km away) – and Harrow have stated CPF has ‘good connections to Alton’ – this is not the case.

Impact on the Principal Chalk Aquifer under Alton and surrounding area

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), in response to the Scoping Opinion Request, says “the Scoping Opinion (section 13) identifies the site to have a chalk geology and this bedrock being classified as a “highly productive aquifer” and the site largely having a ‘medium’ groundwater vulnerability area. The National Park is inherently linked to the chalk aquifer and water quality considerations should be assessed through the drainage strategy.”

CPF has a blue Source Protection Zone running through it see graphic from DEFRA’s Magic Map. Water from this drains into Alton’s Principal Aquifer.



Historic Interest

Medieval Deer Park Pales – evidence in the Woodlands around CPF.

In 2018 the County Archaeologist stated (in response to the Strategic Land Availability Assessment) that “Within the south part of the site is a medieval deer park defined by intact



park pale. This is a is regarded as being of national importance although it is not a scheduled monument. It represents a significant constraint to the full development of the whole allocation, despite the size of the allocation."

Roman Road

The County Archaeologist stated in 2018

"Within the valley, study has shown evidence of prehistoric activity and it is likely that areas developed will encounter archaeological remains which will need to be addressed (but are unlikely to constrain). This may include the line of the Roman road which is projected to the south but is speculated by some to have taken the line of the valley to approach the high ground to the west. The wood, putatively constrained by the presence of the deer park also appears to contain earthwork braided routes up the hill where the A31 has taken different lines in history, often in the coaching age in wet weather when multiple routes would be attempted." This final remark alone demonstrates that water run off from the escarpment and Four Marks has been a long running issue. It remains one.

Historic Parkland

The 2007 HCC Guidebook to "Hampshire's Historic Parks and Gardens" shows a photo of "Parkland, Chawton House. This underlines what a grave error it would be to allow the destruction of this acknowledged historic parkland.

Other Statutory Authority Comments to Note

South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) 11 Dec 2025, are concerned that the EIA should cover the lighting impact on the 'Dark Skies status' of the National Park. The boundary lies c350m south of CPF, so very close. The **LPT** supported the point about Dark Skies "The site exhibits very good levels of dark skies, and whilst the tranquillity of the wider area is reduced by the presence of A31, Four Marks and Alton, the site itself exhibits relatively good levels of tranquillity."

Thank you for reading our letter. We hope that it will prove helpful as a summary of the main issues as we see them, supported by the Statutory Authority comments and those from other organisations, when considering your responses to the EIA Scoping Opinion Request by Harrow Estates.

With very best wishes,

Kind regards,

Carol Palmer & Clare Klaire

Co-Chairs of the "Say NO to Chawton Park Farm" Campaign

Summary by Notegpt.io of Barrister's Opinion September 2021

- <https://bit.ly/BarristersOpinion2021>

Core Points

- **Context and Purpose of Advice:**

- The advice is provided to Alton Town Council regarding the inclusion of Chawton Park Farm as a preferred option in East Hampshire District Council's Emerging Local Plan 2017-2038.
- Chawton Park Farm is located west of Alton, about 2 miles from the town centre, near the South Downs National Park (SDNP) boundary.
- The Local Plan covers areas outside the SDNP, which has its own adopted local plan.
- Concerns and objections have been raised about Chawton Park Farm's inclusion during consultations, prompting the Town Council to seek an independent review of the plan's progress and evidence base.

- **Key Issues for Assessment:**

The advice focuses on five specific concerns:

- The procedural process used to select Chawton Park Farm.
- The reduction in housing numbers at Whitehill & Bordon due to SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) capacity constraints.
- The duty to co-operate with the South Downs National Park Authority regarding housing needs distribution.
- The use of the government's Standard Methodology for calculating housing need.
- The assumptions and figures used for windfall housing developments.

- **Planning and Legal Framework:**

- The Local Plan must be legally sound, positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy (NPPF 2021).
- The District Council must comply with legal duties including the duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities and SDNP, community involvement, and environmental assessments (SEA, HRA).
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation must be integrated into the plan.
- Inspectors tend to support authorities' plans unless there are fundamental flaws, recognizing the pressure to deliver housing and maintain up-to-date plans.

- **Site Selection Process for Chawton Park Farm:**
 - Originally, the strategy relied on two large strategic sites (Whitehill & Bordon and Northbrook Park) plus smaller sites. Chawton Park Farm was not initially included.
 - Subsequent consultations introduced Chawton Park Farm as a large site option, which attracted significant objections.
 - There has been criticism about a lack of published, transparent, and comprehensive analysis of all large site options, with some sites disappearing without explanation.
 - The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been iterative and has identified significant constraints to Chawton Park Farm, including environmental sensitivity and access issues.
 - Viability concerns exist over the ability of the new settlement to provide sufficient facilities and reduce car dependency.
- **Reduction in Housing Numbers at Whitehill & Bordon:**
 - The Council reduced the allocation at Whitehill & Bordon due to revised advice from Natural England about the capacity of SANG to mitigate recreational disturbance to protected heathland.
 - This emerging advice significantly limits new housing at this location, forcing reliance on other sites like Chawton Park Farm.
 - The rationale appears robust but needs further scrutiny and clarity on whether promoters accept this limitation.
- **Duty to Co-operate with SDNP Authority:**
 - A Statement of Common Ground (March 2021) confirms East Hampshire District Council will accommodate most housing needs outside the National Park, reflecting strong policy protection of the SDNP.
 - Housing needs inside the SDNP are accounted for but limited due to policy constraints.
 - This uneven distribution creates pressure on non-National Park areas to meet housing demand.
- **Use of the Standard Methodology for Housing Need:**
 - The Council uses the government's Standard Methodology based on affordability ratios to calculate housing need, without adjustment for environmental constraints posed by the SDNP.
 - Planning Practice Guidance allows alternative methods only in exceptional circumstances, but the large proportion of the district covered by the National Park may merit reconsideration.

- The Council deducts anticipated housing in the SDNP area from overall need but does not reduce the total requirement for the non-SDNP area, increasing pressure on sensitive sites.
- This approach is legally sound but may increase reliance on constrained sites.
- Alternative approaches would need to justify unmet need consequences.
- **Windfall Development Figures:**
 - The Council uses a conservative windfall allowance based on historic completion rates (62 dwellings per annum outside the SDNP).
 - Recent extensions to permitted development rights may increase windfall supply but are difficult to quantify currently.
 - The windfall allowance is consistent with NPPF guidance requiring compelling evidence and realism.
 - Any increase in windfall supply is unlikely to materially reduce the need for sites like Chawton Park Farm.
- **Environmental and Sustainability Concerns with Chawton Park Farm:**
 - The site is greenfield countryside, about 2 miles from Alton, not adjacent to existing settlements, and surrounded by ancient woodland and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).
 - It includes a Grade II listed farmhouse and a medieval deer park of national importance, potentially subject to heritage protections.
 - The site is assessed as significantly constrained environmentally and in terms of access infrastructure.
 - The site risks becoming a car-dependent development due to limited existing facilities and public transport options.
 - The NPPF requires protection of valued landscapes and ancient woodland, with development only allowed for wholly exceptional reasons.
 - The site is unlikely to meet sustainability criteria and may conflict with national policy promoting sustainable development and brownfield site optimization.
- **Summary of Overall Position:**
 - The Council is under strong government pressure to boost housing supply and maintain an up-to-date Local Plan, leading to the inclusion of sensitive sites.
 - The reduction in Whitehill & Bordon housing numbers and constraints on other sites limit alternatives, intensifying reliance on Chawton Park Farm.

- The Council's approach to housing need calculation and site selection appears legally compliant but raises soundness questions related to justification, effectiveness, and consistency with national policy.
- The Chawton Park Farm allocation should be carefully scrutinized, with clear evidence that all reasonable alternatives, including brownfield opportunities, have been exhausted.
- The viability and sustainability of the proposed new settlement require detailed examination to avoid a car-dependent, unsustainable outcome.
- Transparency and comprehensive evidence in the site selection process remain essential to withstand Local Plan examination.

Key Conclusions

- **The Emerging Local Plan's Inclusion of Chawton Park Farm is Contentious and Potentially Unsound:**
 - The site's significant environmental constraints, lack of adjacency to existing settlements, and risks of unsustainable development challenge the plan's soundness.
 - Unless the District Council can robustly justify that no reasonable alternatives exist, the allocation may fail the NPPF's requirement for sustainable development and sound planning.
- **Site Selection Process Needs Greater Transparency and Justification:**
 - The District Council must demonstrate it has considered all reasonable alternatives evenly and properly, providing clear comparative assessments of all candidate large sites, including those omitted from current proposals.
 - Without this, the Local Plan risks challenge on grounds of insufficient justification and lack of proper consideration of alternatives.
- **Reduction in Whitehill & Bordon Housing Numbers is Supported by Emerging Natural England Guidance:**
 - This reduction appears justified based on SANG capacity to protect nearby protected heathland, though further clarity on the status and acceptance of this advice is necessary.
 - This reduction intensifies the need to find alternative sites elsewhere.
- **The Duty to Co-operate with the SDNP Authority Has Led to Concentration of Housing Needs Outside the National Park:**
 - This creates significant pressure on East Hampshire's non-National Park area to accommodate housing, including on sensitive sites like Chawton Park Farm.

- This is a recognized and accepted planning position but requires careful balancing of housing need and environmental protection.
- **Use of the Standard Methodology is Legally Compliant but May Not Fully Reflect Local Constraints:**
 - The Council's approach of deducting SDNP-area housing from overall need but maintaining high demand outside the SDNP increases pressure on constrained land.
 - Alternative methodologies are permissible only in exceptional circumstances, which may or may not apply given the large SDNP proportion.
- **Windfall Housing Allowance is Reasonable and Consistent with National Policy:**
 - The allowance is conservative and evidence-based.
 - Even if increased, it would not reduce the need for strategic site allocations.
- **Chawton Park Farm is Likely Not a Sustainable Development:**
 - The site's greenfield status, environmental sensitivities, and distance from existing settlements undermine sustainability credentials.
 - Its development risks damaging ancient woodland and valued landscapes, conflicting with NPPF policies requiring protection of irreplaceable habitats and valued landscapes.
- **The Council Must Fully Explore Brownfield and Other Alternatives Before Committing to Chawton Park Farm:**
 - Policy requires optimization of previously developed land and avoidance of sensitive greenfield sites where possible.
 - Failure to do so could render the Plan unsound.
- **Viability and Infrastructure Delivery Are Uncertain and Need Detailed Scrutiny:**
 - The new settlement's ability to provide necessary facilities and affordable housing at proposed levels is not assured.
 - Risks exist that the development will be car-dependent, lacking meaningful public transport and local services, contrary to sustainability goals.

- **Local Plan Examination Will Rigorously Test These Issues:**

- The Inspector will expect clear evidence of soundness, including justification of site selection, assessment of alternatives, and delivery feasibility.
- The District Council should take concerns seriously and seek to address them prior to plan submission to avoid delays or rejection.

Important Details

- **Consultation History:**

- Two Regulation 18 consultations occurred in 2019: the first excluded Chawton Park Farm; the second included it, resulting in numerous objections.
- Public and parish council representatives have expressed concerns about transparency and site assessment completeness.

- **Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Findings:**

- The Interim SA report highlighted environmental constraints at Chawton Park Farm: ancient woodland, SINC, rural landscape, limited access.
- The site is not considered a “stand-out” option in comparative assessments.
- Employment land near the site has mixed suitability; some parts risk isolated urbanizing influence.

- **Infrastructure Constraints:**

- Access to the A31 is constrained by a narrow railway arch.
- Proposed facilities include a small village center, primary school, shop, and possibly a health center, but viability is uncertain.
- Public transport provision and cycling infrastructure funding are uncertain, increasing car dependency risk.

- **Environmental and Heritage Assets:**

- The site is adjacent to ancient woodland and SINC, which are irreplaceable habitats protected under the NPPF.
- A medieval deer park with an intact pale exists on part of the site, nationally important though not scheduled; potential for further heritage designation may impact development feasibility.
- The site is considered a valued landscape by CPRE under NPPF paragraph 174a).

- **Natural England's Revised SANG Advice:**
 - Natural England's recent assessments reduce SANG capacity at Whitehill & Bordon due to proximity to protected heathland and sensitivity of land.
 - Some previously identified SANG sites have been deemed unsuitable.
 - This advice is emerging and may still be subject to discussion but currently limits housing numbers to about 800 at Whitehill & Bordon.
- **Housing Need Calculations:**
 - The Standard Methodology uses a 12.58 affordability ratio (median house price to earnings) as of April 2021.
 - East Hampshire's total housing need is calculated at 598 dwellings per annum, amounting to 12,558 over the plan period.
 - After deducting anticipated National Park housing (1,533 homes), the need outside the SDNP is 525 dwellings per annum or 11,025 total.
 - This approach aligns with current Planning Practice Guidance but does not adjust for environmental constraints.
- **Policy References and Legal Obligations:**
 - The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires plans to be sound and compliant with legal duties.
 - NPPF 2021 paragraphs 11, 35, 60, 61, 71, 174, 176, 180, and others are heavily referenced regarding soundness, sustainability, environmental protection, and housing delivery.
 - The Procedural Guide for Local Plan Examinations (March 2021) guides Inspectors' approach to plan ownership and soundness testing.
- **Potential Risks of Unsound Plan Elements:**
 - If Chawton Park Farm allocation is not well justified or alternatives ignored, the Local Plan may face challenges or be found unsound by the Inspector.
 - Overreliance on constrained sites may increase risks of plan delays or imposed modifications.
 - Car-dependent development undermines climate change mitigation and sustainability goals.
- **Recommendations for Alton Town Council:**
 - To press the District Council for transparency and detailed evidence on site selection and alternatives.

- To scrutinize viability and sustainability assessments for Chawton Park Farm.
- To ensure all reasonable alternatives, especially brownfield sites, are fully considered before plan adoption.
- To maintain a “critical friend” role supporting sound, sustainable local planning.
- **Broader Planning Context:**
 - The government’s target of 300,000 new homes annually pressures local authorities to accelerate housing delivery.
 - Inspectors generally support authorities’ plans unless there are clear fundamental flaws.
 - The inclusion of sensitive sites is sometimes unavoidable but requires strong justification and mitigation measures.

This comprehensive advice aims to assist Alton Town Council in understanding the complexities surrounding the Chawton Park Farm allocation and to engage constructively with the District Council to ensure the Emerging Local Plan is robust, sustainable, and sound.

Speech for 28th September Full Council Meeting

Good evening councillors and thank you for allowing me to address the meeting. I will be speaking for about 5 minutes.

My name is Carol Palmer I am the Chair of the Say *No* to Chawton Park Farm Campaign Group, and in that capacity I am here to present to you our petition against building on Chawton Park Farm. The reason for presenting this now is that early next year we are expecting Part 2 of the Reg 18 Local Plan Consultation. This will identify sites for housing in East Hampshire, outside the National Park, up to 2040.

Our petition has been running since August 2021 and to date has attracted 5369 signatures. Signatures are still being added. This represents nearly 30% of the total population of Alton. A significant number as I'm sure you will agree. In fact last week marked the 2nd anniversary of our protest at Penns Place. If you haven't yet seen the proposed site, I would urge you to visit.

Before this meeting I sent out a background document to all of you to explain why this campaign exists via links and articles and a graph showing the issues raised by petitioners.

Their prime concerns were a) Destruction of Landscape (and ensuing impact of its loss on mental health); b) loss of biodiversity and farmland; c) the wrong location for development - too far from facilities; d) the fact that Altonians have already accepted a considerable amount of development around their town; e) the worsening of traffic issues and last but not least, the inability of infrastructure to cope.

As well as those, here is a brief summary of the 6 main issues mitigating against development on Chawton Park Farm:

Public response

- In response to the Council's Large Site Development Consultation in 2019, the public ranked it as the least preferred option while EHDC's Site Assessments Background Paper at the same time, had already given it four red flags.
- The public response to the Reg 18 Part 1 Consultation earlier this year, was that a concentration of housing in a new settlement (such as Chawton Park Farm) was 'by far the most commonly ranked **least** preferred' option.
- And of course you have our petition numbers to show you what people think, as well.

Traffic issues

We know that EHDC has written evidence of the traffic issues associated with this area of Alton and which would make it a living hell for local residents if Chawton Park Farm were to be built. The 2015 Alton Transport Strategy predicted that on completion of the Ackender Hill development on Chawton Park Road, queues of about 34 vehicles would appear at morning peak hour, at the Chawton Park Road/Whitedown Lane junction.

The strategy also predicted that the junction would operate at 96 per cent capacity – defined as being well above its practical limit and that is *before* any development at Chawton Park Farm! We understand that Hampshire County Council expressed concern over any signalisation of this junction and that they are currently 'monitoring' the situation.

1200 houses at the farm would bring *at least* an extra 2000 cars to this area.

Access

Access to the site is constrained by the combined hazards of, firstly the narrow width of Northfield Lane & Chawton Park Road; secondly an almost *single* lane Victorian railway arch and thirdly a tight 90 degree bend, directly opposite the entrance to Chawton Park Farm.

Sustainability

This is *not* a Sustainable Site. The eastern boundary is nearly 1 and half miles from the centre of Alton and at least a 30 minute walk, with the western boundary being roughly another *mile* away from the town centre. This is considerably outside the latest thinking on 15 to 20 minute neighbourhoods and completely inconsistent with this Council's Climate Emergency declaration of 2019.

Development of Chawton Park Farm will inevitably impact its nearby SINC's, ancient woodland, 'valued' landscape and the Medieval Deer Park Pales

The site is surrounded by woodland some of which is designated 'ancient woodland' and Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation. A large busy development would negatively impact the wildlife in those woodlands and the woods themselves by incursion of residents, domestic animals, and light pollution. The Council for the Protection of Rural England has characterised this site as a 'valued' landscape within the definition of the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 170(a). Finally, the site contains, and parts are in close proximity to, medieval Deer Park Pales which have been described by the County Archaeologist as a 'monument of national importance'.

We would respectfully remind this meeting of the public exchange between Cllr Millard and Mr Jenkins in July last year regarding any granting of planning permission for Chawton Park Farm where Mr Jenkins said when questioned by Cllr Millard that "as your lead planning professional, at this point in time I would be recommending refusal", and in response Cllr Millard said "my immediate response to that is "good". It is the *wrong* location, it is the *wrong* size, it is the *wrong* infrastructure provision."

This perfectly sums up how we feel.

In conclusion I would like to thank you for listening, and to ask on behalf of our Campaign that this petition be incorporated into the evidence base for the Local Plan, and that the Council and its Planning Officers listen to their constituents' concerns and exclude Chawton Park Farm from the Local Plan Consultation on site options, next year.

Thank you



Say No Campaign Group Background Document for Councillors

Dear Councillors,

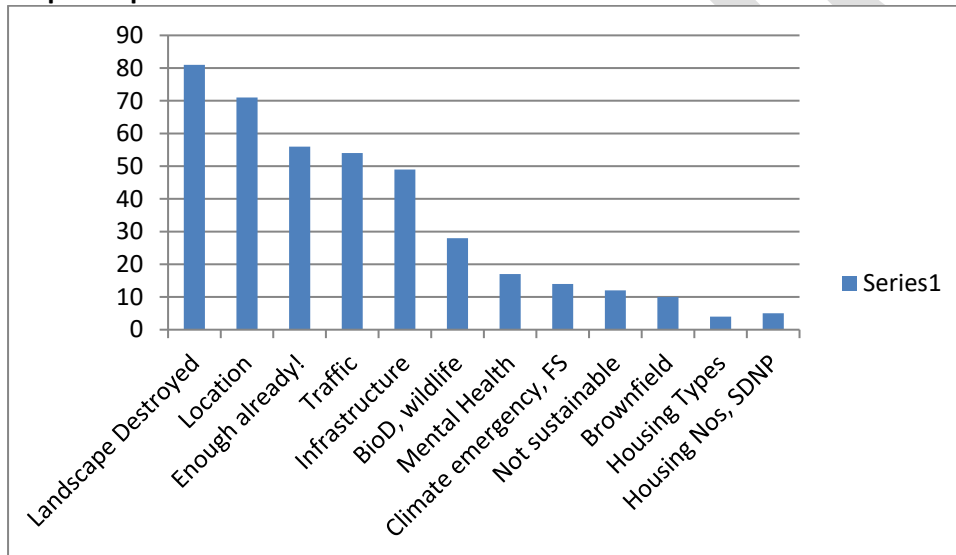
I hope these articles and other links/information will serve to give you some background to my speech on 28th September. They are (nearly all) in chronological order.

Kind regards,
Carol Palmer
Chair, Say No to Chawton Park Farm Campaign

Petition

Link to it: <https://chnng.it/xjbHcgmlhp>

Graphic representation of Petitioners Comments



Link to Barristers Opinion obtained by Alton Town Council in September 2021.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W0pu5mHndbnp55owUQ9xX4vfJLF1n3DD/view?usp=drive_link



Win a pair of tickets to West End sensation Come From Away
Competition - Page 40

COME FROM AWAY
THE NEW MUSICAL BY LIN-MAN WANG

NHS staff are being reduced to tears by abuse, says local GP
NHS backlog - Page 16-17



Don't panic! Leave fuel for those who really need it
Call for calm - Page 8

Chawton Park Farm 'on pause' after fierce protests



BATTLE WON

...but war over 1,200-home plans not over as council writes to Gove

THE PROSPECT of Jane Austen's back yard becoming a building site has receded for now - but it has not gone away.

After banner-waving protestors at Penns Place campaigned against plans for 1,200 homes at Chawton Park Farm last Thursday, East

Hampshire District Council removed its 'preferred' housing site tag from the land. **SPECIAL REPORT** ■ Pages 4 and 5

4 The Herald 30th September 2021

www.famhamherald.com @famhamherald www.facebook.com/famhamherald

SPECIAL REPORT

Campaigners hail Chawton Park Farm decision

No longer preferred but still in the frame for 1,200 houses

A SITE proposed for hundreds of new houses has had its 'preferred site' tag stripped as protesters pledge to step up their opposition to the plan.

The protest began after East Hampshire District Council's Conservative-run ruling cabinet revealed Chawton Park Farm was a 'preferred site' for 1,200 new homes.

Land at the farm was included in the council's Local Plan Spatial Strategy as development land.

After a vociferous protest, that saw thousands sign a petition against the idea, the council removed the 'preferred' tag at its meeting last Thursday.

About 30 protesters gathered outside the meeting at Penns Place with banners outlining their opposition to the plan.

Absent from the meeting was cabinet member Ingrid Thomas, member for Four Marks and Medstead, whose ward includes Chawton, home of the protest vote.

By JON WALKER
jonwalker@petersfieldpost.co.uk

In a statement the council said: "At the meeting, which saw significant cross-party collaboration, councillors agreed to amend the wording of the Spatial Strategy preferred option, removing the word 'preferred'."

Council leader Richard Millard later agreed removing the tag didn't mean Chawton Park was safe from development.

He said: "We will continue gathering evidence on its suitability, as we will do with other sites that have been identified in the Spatial Strategy."

"When all the evidence has been gathered, a decision will be made, probably by spring of next year."

The council's Lib Dem opposition group leader, Steve Hunt, said a battle had been won, but the war was still to be fought.

He added: "There was lot of

cross-party interaction, which was great. But the decision to remove the word 'preferred' is just a pause. Chawton Park Farm could still be built on, and the campaign to stop that continues."

After the lengthy meeting, a new action group was formed by residents and town and parish councillors to step up the campaign.

A spokesman said: "The objections are not going away, and the district council can expect a vigorous examination of its evidence and justifications from this group of experienced planning campaigners."

The council has now taken the battle over housing numbers to government minister Michael Gove (leader's letter, Page 5).

The government wants 600 houses a year built in East Hampshire, but only 100 of those will go in the part of the district inside the national park - the rest will have to be sited outside it.



An artist's impression of the proposed 1,200-home development at Chawton Park Farm



Protesters gathered outside East Hampshire District Council's offices before last week's meeting

Alton Herald 7th October 2021

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Peeps into the Past

with Chris Shephard in association with the Rural Life Museum

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www.rural-life.org.uk

peeps@chrispics.co.uk



Proof that Chawton housing site is truly 'Austen country'

An interesting item from Jane Austen's Alton this week about Chawton Park Farm, the possible site for a 1,200-home development, and its connection with Jane Austen and the latter's concern for the farmer therein the early years of the 19th century.

As Mrs Hurst points out: "It shows Jane Austen did know the area and one wonders what she would have thought about the plans for the land."

"On Sunday, November 26, 1815, Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra: 'Poor Farmer Andrews! I am sorry for him, and sincerely wish his recovery.'"

"Poor Farmer [John] Andrews' was a member of a family who came from the neighbouring village of Medstead and who had occupied New Park Farm (also called Chawton Lower Park Farm or Chawton Park Farm) since the 1750s. At that time, the farm was about 100 years old, having been made out of the lower part of the larger of two medieval Chawton hunting parks which belonged to the Knight family.

"John Andrews had married in 1786 but, after the birth of two daughters, his young wife died.

"A year later, in 1796, John married again and a third daughter was born. In



October 1809, the family had some visitors. Fanny Austen/Knight, daughter of Jane's brother Edward, wrote in her diary on Tuesday, October 22: 'Aunts C[assandra] & J[ane]

Charles & I walked to New Park Farm.'

"Fanny was aged about 16 and the Andrews girls were Elizabeth, aged 18, and Ann, aged eight. Their older sister,

21-year-old Sarah Andrews, had already married and left home. The walk to Chawton Park Farm would not have been the only time the Austens would have met

Farmer Andrews as John took an active part in village affairs, holding the post of church warden and 'overseer of the poor'.

"On November 26, 1815,

John must have been ill as that was when Jane wrote her comment about 'Poor Farmer Andrews'!

"Aged 54, he was to survive another year, being buried in Medstead on November 6, 1816. The estate accounts of Jane's brother Edward were kept by the Trimmers, attorneys of Alton, and they show the tenancy of Chawton Park Farm was kept on by John's representatives for another year while his estate was settled.

"As there was no son to carry on the business, the buildings were repaired with the work being done by William Gold (a local mason), James Clinker (the blacksmith who was next door to the Austens), and William Jones of Farringdon (a carpenter).

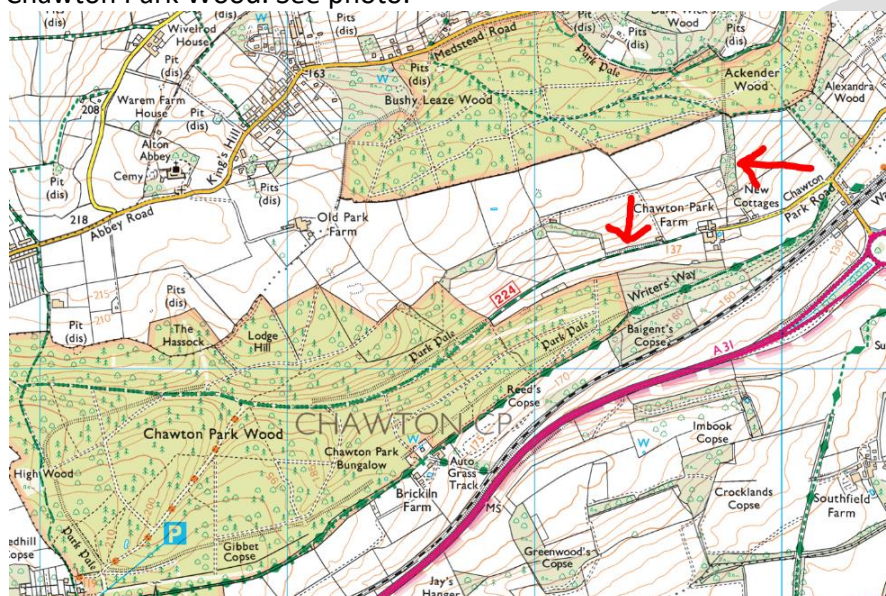
"Farmer Andrews' widow, Mary, was paid £36 for straw and £318 for sanfoin (a perennial legume that thrives on chalky soils) left on Chawton Park New Farm' and the farm was leased to James Windibank. Mary moved to Medstead where she died in 1820, aged 61."

Jane's photograph shows Chawton Park Farm later in the 19th century, still looking very peaceful which is something that will definitely change if the contents of the EHD Local Plan come to fruition.

Ancient Monument within Chawton Park Farm woodlands
Medieval Deer Park Pales within and around Chawton Park Farm
28th October 2021

We were excited to discover recently that Chawton Park Farm and its nearby woodlands contain a Medieval Deer Park, and would thank Alton Town Councillors Richard Platt and Ginny Boxall for their research into this. The County Archaeologist has described this Deer Park as being of **“national importance although it is not a scheduled monument”**.

The partial extent of the park can be seen on the Ordnance Survey Map with the ‘palings’ (banks and ditches) marked and labelled as ‘Park Pale’ within Bushy Leaze Wood, Ackender Wood and Chawton Park Wood. See photo.



The ‘palings’ were very deep on one side with the wooden fence on top, and less so on the other side, so deer could jump in but were unable to get out again. One stretch of the palings is alongside the NCN224 that runs through Chawton Park Farm.

The Deer Park in this area was first recorded in 1337 according to a 1998 edition of the Chawton House Female Spectator magazine. It says that indications are there were two parks, dating from the 13th century. This area was originally known as the ‘pass of Alton’ and was once a notorious haunt of outlaws preying on the rich merchant caravans passing from Winchester to Guildford and on to London. Ownership of a deer park indicated high status, as they were reserved almost exclusively for the upper classes of society. And Historic England says “although a small number of parks may have been established in the Anglo-Saxon period, it was the Norman aristocracy's taste for hunting that led to the majority being constructed. The peak period for the laying-out of parks, between AD 1200 and 1350, coincided with a time of considerable prosperity amongst the nobility.” Here’s the link to the Chawton House magazine (see page 2):

<https://chawtonhouse.org/.../2018/12/TFSSPRING1998pdf.pdf>.

The remains of a stretch of paling in Chawton Woods can be seen in this photo:



Medieval Deer Parks can and have been, scheduled as Ancient Monuments by Historic England. This helps to protect and conserve the areas that contain them.

An example of a Scheduled Deer Park in Hampshire is to be found at Ampfield Wood, Hursley, south west of Winchester, listed in 1975. See here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1019124>

This Deer Park is one of originally 3000 in England, many of which survive today in varying degrees of condition. Ours is not yet scheduled as an Ancient Monument with Historic England under the 1979 Act. We are hoping that Alton Town Council will consider applying to get it scheduled for a variety of reasons. Not only is it a fascinating historic artefact of local and national historic interest, which in our view should be something the town can be proud of and should widely publicize, but a listing would be a major constraint to building on Chawton Park Farm for the following reasons:

The Barrister's opinion obtained in September 2021 by Alton Town Council stated **"Scheduling would of course have a significant impact on the potential to allocate the land, depending upon its extent and the setting."**

The County Archaeologist said in 2018 that the Deer Park **"represents a significant constraint to the full development of the whole allocation despite the size of the allocation."**

The original 2019 Sites Assessment said Chawton Park Farm is "beyond 500m from the nearest Scheduled Ancient Monument (Medstead Camp, 2.7km)". If it was within 100m of a Scheduled Ancient Monument this would give it another red flag to add to the 4 it already has, thereby making it equal 6th place in suitability with Whitehill & Bordon, rather than where it currently is – 5th place.



Alton Herald



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Rose & Crown**

All the tasty details on Page 38



**Veolia: Our new
incinerator will be
the cleanest ever...**

Controversial plant 'will meet guidelines' - Page 4



Brewing has resumed at Gilbert White's 250-year old brew house in Selborne - and the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson, paid a visit recently to see for himself. He is pictured with brewers Glen Earney, John Elder, Steve Scott, Margaret Barnfield and Andy Murphy. See Page 9...

DEAR OH DEER!

A NEW barrier to plans to build 1,200 homes at Chawton Park Farm has emerged this week - with campaigners and councillors calling for a medieval deer park west of Alton to be registered as an 'ancient monument' as part of efforts to ward off the development.

In a column printed in full on Page 12, the Say NO! to 1,200 Houses at Chawton Park Farm campaign group claims it

Could deer park derail housing plans?

has, with the support of a trio of Lib Dem councillors, found evidence of the ancient deer park in Chawton Park and surrounding woodlands.

And according to the county archaeologist, the deer park is of 'national importance'.

It hasn't, however, yet been scheduled as an ancient monument by Historic England.

But campaigners hope Alton Town Council - which has previously spoken out against the Chawton Park development - will now consider applying for ancient monument status, as 'a listing would be a major constraint to building on Chawton Park Farm'.

Alton town clerk Leah Coney said the deer park was discussed at the town council's planning meeting this month, and added "we are still in conversation with Historic England about the merits of the site" as well as with neighbouring parishes.

COMMENT ■ Page 12



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Could ancient deer park derail Chawton Park's housing plans?

We were excited to discover recently that Chawton Park Farm and its nearby woodlands contain a medieval deer park, and would thank Alton town councillors Richard Platt and Ginny Bosall and East Hampshire District Council councillor Steve Hunt, for their research into this.

The county archaeologist has described this deer park as being of 'national importance' although it is not a scheduled monument.

The partial extent of the park can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map (pictured) with the 'palings' (banks and ditches) marked with the thick red line and labelled as 'Park Pale' within Bushy Leaze Wood, Ackender Wood and Chawton Park Wood.

The 'palings' were very deep on one side with the wooden fence on top, and less so on the other side, so deer could jump in but were unable to get out again. One stretch of the palings is alongside the National Cycle Network route NCN224 that runs through Chawton Park Farm.

The deer park in this area was first recorded in 1337,

Carol Palmer
Say NO! to 1,200
Houses at Chawton
Park Farm campaign



according to a 1998 edition of the Chawton House Female Spectator magazine.

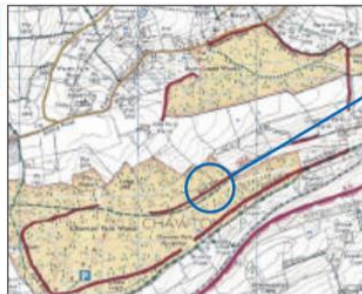
It says indications are there were two parks, dating from the 13th century.

This area was originally known as the 'pass of Alton' and was once a notorious haunt of outlaws preying on the rich merchant caravans passing from Winchester to Guildford and on to London.

Ownership of a deer park indicated high status, as they were reserved almost exclusively for the upper classes of society.

"Although a small number of parks may have been established in the Anglo-Saxon period, it was the Norman aristocracy's taste for hunting that led to the majority being constructed."

"The peak period for the laying out of parks, between AD 1200 and 1350, coincided with a time of considerable prosperity among the



Hidden in plain sight, the 'palings' of the medieval deer park are marked in red and labelled as 'Park Pale' PHOTO:ORDNANCE SURVEY

nobility."

Medieval deer parks can, and have been, scheduled as ancient monuments by Historic England. This helps to protect and conserve the areas that contain them.

An example of a scheduled deer park in Hampshire is to be found at Ampfield Wood, Hursley, south west of Winchester, listed in 1975. This deer park is one of

originally 3,000 in England, many of which survive today in varying degrees of condition.

Ours is not yet scheduled as an ancient monument with Historic England under the 1979 Act. We are hoping Alton Town Council will consider applying to get it scheduled for a variety of reasons.

Not only is it a fascinating historic artefact of local and national historic interest,



which in our view should be something the town can be proud of and should widely publicise, but a listing would be a major constraint to building on Chawton Park Farm for the following reasons:

■ The carrier's opinion obtained in September 2021 by Alton Town Council stated: "Scheduling would, of course, have a significant impact on the potential to allocate the land, depending upon its extent and the setting."

■ The county archaeologist said in 2018 that the deer park "represents a significant constraint to the full development of the whole allocation despite the size of the allocation."

■ East Hampshire District Council's original 2019 sites assessment said Chawton Park Farm is "beyond 500 metres

from the nearest scheduled ancient monument (Medstead Camp, 2.7km)".

If it was within 100 metres of a scheduled ancient monument, this would give it another red flag to add to the four it already has, thereby making it equal sixth place in suitability with Whitehill & Bordon, rather than where it currently is - fifth place.

For those who are supporting the Chawton Park Farm protest, we now have a campaign group of 12 and a dedicated Facebook page which can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/SayNoChawtonParkFarmAlton>, as well as the protest petition with 3,390 signatures so far, about 15 per cent of Alton's population.

Sign the petition at <https://chng.it/ntQ6pVT>

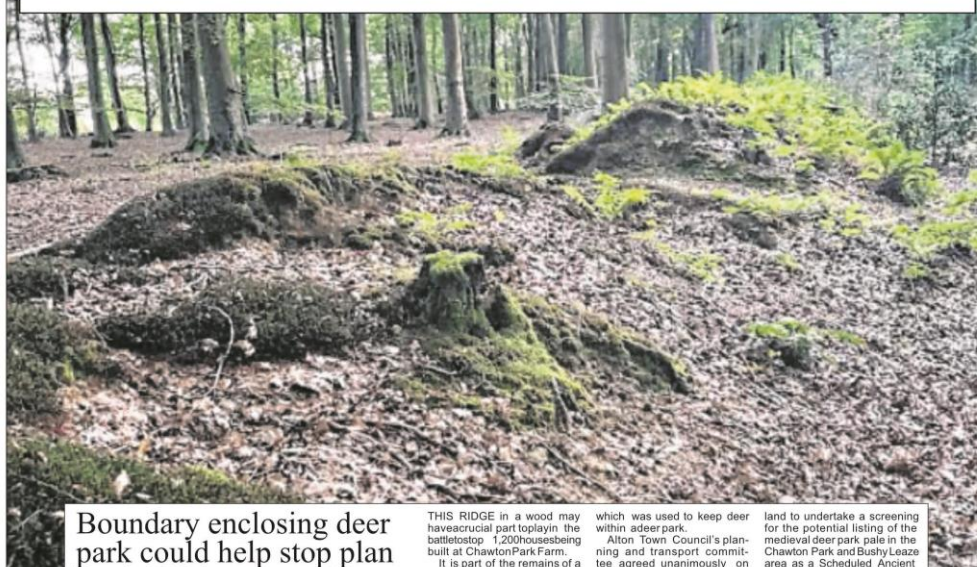


Village celebrates its role rescuing children from the Nazis 80 years ago
Memorial tree planted—Pages 24-25



Council have talked the talk on climate change—but are they walking the walk?
Climate action plans ranked—Page 6

Ditch the homes!



Boundary enclosing deer park could help stop plan for 1,200 houses on farm

THIS RIDGE in a wood may have a crucial part to play in the battle to stop 1,200 houses being built at Chawton Park Farm. It is part of the remains of a medieval pale—a ditch, bank and wooden fence combination

which was used to keep deer within a deer park. Alton Town Council's planning and transport committee agreed unanimously on January 26 to approve the appointment of Historic Eng-

land to undertake a screening for the potential listing of the medieval deer park pale in the Chawton Park and Bushy Leaze area as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

FULL STORY ■ Page 5

Farm housing is beyond the pale

CAMPAIGNERS hoping to stop 1,200 houses being built on Chawton Park Farm have welcomed Alton Town Council's help in their bid to have an ancient deer park boundary on the site listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

On January 26 the council's planning and transport committee agreed to approve the appointment of Historic England to undertake a screening for potential listing of the medieval park pale in the Chawton Park and Bushy Leaze area.

If Historic England does the work it will cost between £6,000 and £7,000. Contributions of £5,800 have been pledged, leaving the council to find a maximum of £1,200—a pound for every house proposed.

Funds have been pledged by Chawton Parish Council (£1,500), The Alton Society (£1,500), Alton Buildings Preservation Trust (£1,000), Beech Parish Council (£800),

by Paul Coates
paul.coates@farnhamherald.com

Say No To Chawton Park Farm said: "Apart from the historic value of these pales, they may form some sort of constraint to the 1,200 houses planned for Chawton Park Farm."

"The barrister's opinion obtained in September 2021 by Alton Town Council stated 'Scheduling would of course have a significant impact on the potential to allocate the land, depending upon its extent and the setting'."

Chawton Park Farm is no longer the 'preferred' large housing site option in East Hampshire District Council's draft local plan, but campaigners want it put further down the list.

They said: "If it was within 100m of a Scheduled Ancient Monument this would give it another red flag to add to the four it already has, thereby making it equal sixth place in suitability with Whitehill & Bordon, rather than fifth place where it currently is."

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Transport Article for Herald November 2021

**Predicted traffic chaos if the proposed 1200 houses at Chawton Park Farm are built
80% increase in traffic at morning and evening peak hours after CPF!
Whitedown Lane/Chawton Park Road Junction will be at 96% capacity after new 280 Treloars
development!**

Based on the evidence that the Say NO to Chawton Park Farm campaign has obtained we believe there is **no way that a 1200 homes development at Chawton Park Farm (CPF) can be considered to be sustainable in terms of transport.** Transport is fundamental: we learnt last week that Havant Borough Council's Local Plan has been rejected on grounds of insufficient **road network capacity** by the Planning Inspector!

- At peak hours 75% of CPF journeys are predicted to be by car.
- There wouldn't be sufficient demand to sustain a bus service at a build out rate of 10 houses per month.
- Even without the CPF development there are considerable problems anyway – see details below.

As we all know Northfield Lane and Chawton Park Road are the only available roads that will serve the proposed Chawton Park Farm development.

Already some residents from the current Treloars Estate are using the Northfield Lane exit instead of the Chawton Park Road/Whitedown Lane junction. One said to me "I use it every weekday morning at 8am to take the kids to school. It's easier to drive the extra mile around than to try to turn right out of CPR onto Whitedown. It wasn't too bad in lockdown/last year but is worse again now. Basically you have to rely on a combination of pedestrians using the crossing and the good will of someone letting you out".

This is happening NOW well before completion of the Crest Nicholson 280 home development on Chawton Park Road.

The Say NO to Chawton Park Farm campaign experts reviewed the 2015 Alton Transport Strategy (ATS) peak hour traffic data predictions for the Chawton Park Road/Whitedown Lane junction. This predicted that even before CPF is built and after the completed 280 home Crest Nicholson development, there will be queues of around 34 vehicles at morning peak hour emerging from Chawton Park Road. The prediction was that the junction would be operating at 96% capacity – well above its practical limit!

In 2015 there were on average 825 vehicles per morning and evening peak hour. Based on the principles underpinning the data from the ATS our experts have predicted how many vehicles would exit and enter the Chawton Park Farm development at those same times and how the extra vehicles would affect the Chawton Park Road/Whitedown Lane junction. This is the result:

- The CPF development would add an extra 671 and 740 vehicles respectively at morning and evening peak hours which represents an increase of 81% in the morning and 90% in the evening! This is between 11 and 12 extra per minute!
- The effect on the junction would be to increase the traffic by nearly half in the morning and a third in the evening so the rest of the increase would impact the Northfield Lane/A31 junction.



What are our local authorities doing about this?

Shockingly the Say NO to Chawton Park Farm Campaign has learnt that this junction cannot be improved to provide sufficient capacity. The ATS found that even if a satisfactory layout for traffic signals could be found, its introduction would make little difference to the operation of the junction. Hampshire County Council (HCC) said in a letter dated 27th January 2015 that 'the operation of the proposed junction [signalization] ... is of concern'. This comment was made before CPF was mooted and so it doesn't even take CPF into account!

The letter also says that the modeling showed that 'Chawton Park Road is shown to be operating over theoretical capacity during (2020)'. This relates to after the new 280 housing development is built! So HCC recognizes the ATS prediction we have highlighted above: Chawton Park Road will be operating at 'over ... capacity' even once the 280 Crest Nicholson homes are built and before CPF!

Currently HCC is 'monitoring' the situation – they decided in 2015 that introducing traffic signals would be premature, and that 'monitoring...' should be undertaken. But maybe recognition of the potential problems with the Whitedown Lane/Chawton Park Road is now dawning. In fact this week we have spotted measuring equipment stretched across Chawton Park Road and a two way camera installed at the junction with Whitedown Lane.

What alternatives would the CPF residents and the residents and users of the many facilities along Chawton Park Road have? Well the alternative access would obviously be Northfield Lane, and of course here we have another obstacle to free-flowing traffic: the narrow bridge and obscured sight of oncoming vehicles when driving south because of the hump in the road surface underneath. Introduce even higher volumes of traffic than those recorded in 2015 (avg 128 vehicles/hour in morning peak, and 229 per hour in evening peak), and The Say NO to Chawton Park Farm Campaign cannot see how anything can be done to avoid dangerous queues stretching back onto the A31 and round the tight right-angled bend on Chawton Park Road. If traffic signals with one-way shuttles were installed these queues would be made worse.

HCC have conceded that in order to maintain safe Stopping Sight Distances (SSD) there would need to be a reduction in the speed limit. This wouldn't necessarily make the road safe depending on the volumes of traffic, and SSDs need to be longer in wet, icy and foggy weather. The Say NO Campaign can only see these dangerous queues forming and Chawton Park Road/Northfield Lane becoming a quagmire of cars and residents' lives being made hell.

Our view is that not only is this proposal unsustainable from a transport point of view, it is hugely dependent on car use and there is simply no realistic solution to the problems of access, congestion and traffic flow. It is an inescapable fact that CPF would result in further Chawton Park Road traffic chaos. The sooner this scheme is removed from serious consideration, the better. If you would like to join our campaign please email saynotochawtonparkfarm@gmail.com and sign our petition at [change.org https://chnng.it/ntQGkpVT](https://chnng.it/ntQGkpVT) (or search for 'Chawton').



Jane Austen's house saved after appeal

Roof to be restored - Page 4



Ghostly goings on, spooky train rides and freaky fun runs

Six-pages of creepy Hallowe'en fun - Pages 24-29



The Watercross Line's spellbinding Wizard Weekend returned last Friday to Sunday - with many youngsters (and grown-ups!) dressing up for the occasion. See Pages 28 & 29...

New estate gridlock

CAMPAIGNERS opposed to 1,200 new homes being built at Chawton Park Farm say they have uncovered documents that show cars from the estate would gridlock roads.

Chawton Park Farm car quagmire

Road into dangerous traffic quagmire. The campaigners go on to say if the estate is built, there would be long queues of peak hour traffic back from the Whitelown Lane junction.

One road resident said: "It's easier to drive the extra mile around than to try to turn right at the Whitelown Lane junction."

"After lockdown it's become much worse."



FULL STORY ■ Page 3

Extra cars would 'make life hell'!

By JON WALKER
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01780 803561

CAMPAIGNERS against a proposed 1,200 home estate at Chawton Park Farm have called for the plan to be scrapped claiming it would gridlock roads, making residents lives hell.

Chawton Park Road and its junction with Whitelown Lane at one end and its exit via Northfield Lane under a very narrow rail bridge onto the A31 roundabout at the other, is the proposed access for the estate.

The campaigners say adding the proposed estate after 280 homes now being built on Chawton Park Road are finished will put more cars on the local roads than they can cope with, and gridlock the area.

Say No To Chawton Park Farm spokesman Carol Palmer said: "We can only see Chawton Park Road and Northfield Lane



Peak hour traffic queues on Tuesday evening in Chawton Park Road

becoming a quagmire of cars and residents' lives being made hell.

"It is an inescapable fact that the Chawton Park Farm estate would result in further Chawton Park Road traffic chaos."

"The sooner this scheme is removed from serious consideration, the better."

Among the campaign group members are traffic experts who have reviewed earlier Alton Town Council reports

and Hampshire County Council papers.

They say these reveal the roads can't safely take cars from another 1,200 homes.

The 2015 Alton Transport Strategy shows after the 280 Crest Nicholson homes are completed, there will be queues of around 34 vehicles at morning peak hour emerging from Chawton Park Road onto Whitelown Lane.

The strategy predicts the

junction will be operating at 96 per cent capacity - well above its practical limit, say the campaigners.

And in a letter the county council said that Chawton Park Road 'modelling' showed it would be operating over its theoretical capacity after the 280 houses are built.

"And this is before the proposed estate on Chawton Park Farm goes up," said Mrs Palmer. "But maybe recognition of the potential problems with Chawton Park Road are dawning."

"This week we spotted vehicle monitoring cables across it and a new two way camera at the Whitelown Lane junction."

For details about the Say No To Chawton Park Farm group email sayno@chawtonparkfarm@gmail.com

See next week's Herald for a detailed report on the campaign group's findings.



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Swifts need farm dung for survival

by Paul Coates

paul.coates@farnhamherald.com
07508848327

A SENIOR Conservative member of East Hampshire District Council has spoken out against the possibility of 1,200 homes being built at Chawton Park Farm.

Cllr Diana Tennyson cited many environmental reasons why the site should not be in the council's new Local Plan.

She said: "Chawton Park Farm is no longer the 'preferred' site – the word was dropped by the council on September 23. However, as a member for Chawton, Four Marks and Medstead, I felt unable to vote for the draft Local Plan because Chawton Park Farm is still under consideration."

Cllr Tennyson – who describes herself as a naturalist, writer and conservationist, and also co-ordinates the council's treewardens – added: "I oppose



Sheep grazing at Chawton Park Farm in June

development on farmland, because in my view it is important to retain grazing land and agricultural land as droughts and flooding are predicted because of climate change.

"Hydrology and geology are also important factors, as flooding could also reoccur in Chawton and Lower Farningdon despite culverts and ditches being maintained along the A31 and A32. Rain-fall dumps on Four Marks, the

highest point at 644 feet above sea level, and during torrential downpours rainwater flows downhill to Chawton and the A31 can resemble a river."

The importance to swifts of dung dropped by sheep grazing on Chawton Park Farm should not be overlooked, warned Cllr Tennyson.

She said: "In May, swallows, house martins and swifts migrate to the UK to nest and raise their young, and are

dependent on insects to feed their chicks. The sheep dung at Chawton Park Farm attracts insects, and this is important for all migratory bird species – but particularly for swifts."

A fall in the proportion of old houses with nooks and crevices to provide nesting space has seen a drop in the number of swifts in the UK, and Cllr Tennyson said the loss of dung would exacerbate the problem.

She added: "Swifts are also at risk if development at Chawton Park Farm is approved."

"This is a very important area for foraging birds, and once the sheep and their dung disappear to be replaced by bricks and mortar, there will be very few insects for these birds to feed their chicks."

"Once the sheep disappear, sadly numbers of swifts and other migratory birds will also continue to decline."

TRAFFIC CHAOS FEARS ■
Pages 16-17

Alton Herald pages 16 – 17 11th November 2021

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Say NO to Chawton Park Farm campaigners back

Housing plans will increase



A bus approaches the Northfield Lane railway bridge, 11am, Monday, November 8, 2021

Based on the evidence the Say NO to Chawton Park Farm campaign has obtained, we believe there is no way a 1,200-homes development at Chawton Park Farm can be considered to be sustainable in terms of transport.

At peak hours, 75 per cent of Chawton Park Farm journeys are predicted to be by car.

There wouldn't be sufficient demand to sustain a bus service at a build out rate of ten houses per month.

Even without the Chawton Park Farm development there are considerable problems anyway.

As we all know, Northfield Lane and Chawton Park Road are the only available roads that will serve the proposed Chawton Park Farm development.

Already some residents from the current Treloars Estate are using the Northfield Lane exit instead of the Chawton Park Road/Whitdown Lane junction.

One said to me: "I use it every weekday morning at 8am to take the kids to school. It's easier to drive the extra mile around than to try to turn right out of Chawton Park Road on to Whitdown Lane."

"It wasn't too bad in lockdown/last year but is

BY CAROL PALMER

Say NO to Chawton Park Farm campaign

worse again now. Basically you have to rely on a combination of pedestrians using the crossing and the good will of someone letting you out."

This is happening NOW, well before completion of the Crest Nicholson 280 home development on Chawton Park Road.

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enter the Chawton Park Farm development at those same times and how the extra vehicles would affect the Chawton Park Road/Whitdown Lane junction.

This is the result:

■ The Chawton Park Farm development would add an extra 671 and 740 vehicles respectively at morning and evening peak hours which represents an increase of 81 per cent in the morning and 90 per cent in the evening! This is between 11 and 12 extra per minute!

■ The effect on the junction would be to increase the traffic by nearly half in the morning and a third in the evening so the rest of the increase would impact the Northfield Lane/A31 junction.

What are our local authorities doing about this?

Shockingly the Say NO to Chawton Park Farm Campaign has learnt that this junction cannot be improved to provide sufficient capacity.

The ATS found that even if a satisfactory layout for traffic signals could be found, its introduction would make little difference to the operation of the junction.

Hampshire County Council said in a letter dated January 27, 2015, that "the operation of the proposed

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The Herald 11th November 2021 17

up claims proposed 1,200-house development on Alton farmland will cause traffic chaos

peak traffic 'by 80 per cent'

junction [signalization] ... is of concern".

This comment was made before Chawton Park Farm was mooted and so it doesn't even take the 1,200-home development into account!

The letter also says the modelling showed "Chawton Park Road is shown to be operating over theoretical capacity during (2020)".

This relates to after the new 280 housing development is built!

So the county council recognizes the ATS prediction we have highlighted above: Chawton Park Road will be operating at 'over ... capacity' even once the 280 Crest Nicholson homes are built and before Chawton Park Farm!

Currently Hampshire is "monitoring" the situation – they decided in 2015 that introducing traffic signals would be premature, and that "monitoring..." should be undertaken.

But maybe recognition of the potential problems with the Whitdown Lane/Chawton Park Road is now dawning.

In fact, this week we have spotted measuring equipment stretched across Chawton Park Road and a two way camera installed at the junction with Whitdown

Lane.

What alternatives would the Chawton Park Farm residents and the residents and users of the many facilities along Chawton Park Road have?

Well the alternative access would obviously be Northfield Lane, and of course here we have another obstacle to free-flowing traffic: the narrow bridge and obscured sight of oncoming vehicles when driving south because of the hump in the road surface underneath.

Introduce even higher volumes of traffic than those recorded in 2015 (average 128 vehicles/hour in morning peak, and 229 per hour in evening peak), and The Say NO to Chawton Park Farm campaign cannot see how anything can be done to avoid dangerous queues stretching back onto the A31 and round the tight right-angled bend on Chawton Park Road.

If traffic signals with one-way shuttles were installed these queues would be made worse.

Hampshire has conceded that to maintain safe Stopping Sight Distances (SSD) there would need to be a reduction in the speed limit.

This wouldn't necessarily make the road safe depending



Cars queuing in Chawton Park Road at the junction with Whitdown Lane, 5.12pm, Tuesday, November 2, 2021

on the volumes of traffic, and SSDs need to be longer in wet, icy and foggy weather.

The Say NO campaign can only see these dangerous queues forming and Chawton Park Road/Northfield Lane becoming a quagmire of cars

and residents' lives being made hell.

Our view is that not only is this proposal unsustainable from a transport point of view: it is hugely dependent on car use and there is simply no realistic solution to the

problems of access, congestion and traffic flow.

It is an inescapable fact that Chawton Park Farm would result in further Chawton Park Road traffic chaos.

The sooner this scheme is removed from

serious consideration, the better.

If you would like to join our campaign please email saynotochawtonparkfarm@gmail.com and sign our petition at change.org/https://chnq.1n70/G6pV7 (or search for 'Chawton').

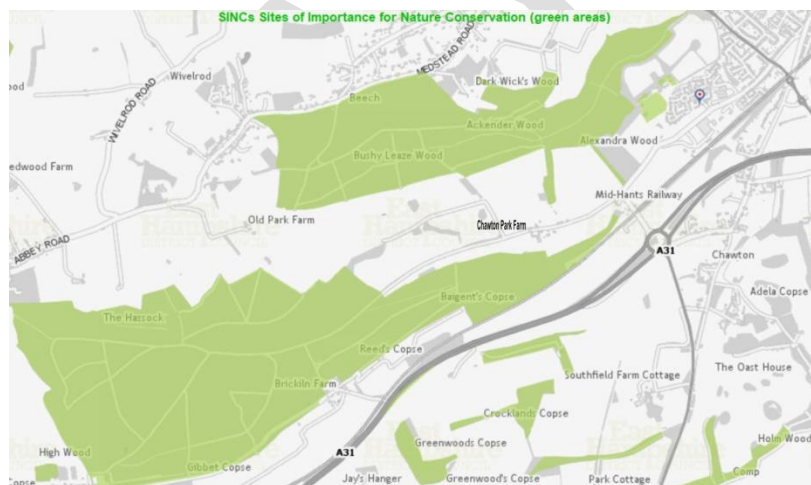
2nd December 2021

What We Will lose if Chawton Park Farm is built on: Beauty, Biodiversity, and Landscape Value



Why is the landscape at Chawton Park Farm so precious to Altonians? For many reasons. One of which is the easy flat approach from the end of High Street going westwards, to a beautiful rural walk and national cycleway, past a late 17th century listed farmhouse, through green fields and woodlands – an easily accessible ‘green lung’ of Alton. This was so appreciated by us all in lockdown.

Apart from the historic use of this area, which we hope to cover in a forthcoming article, (having already discussed the Medieval Deer Park here <https://tinyurl.com/2n49fbym>), Chawton Park farm is enclosed within a protective band of woodlands, partly ancient, also designated as Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINCs), Bushy Leaze, Ackender Wood, Baigent’s Copse – see map below taken from East Hampshire District Council (EHDC)’s useful mapping site <http://maps.easthants.gov.uk/easthampshire.aspx>



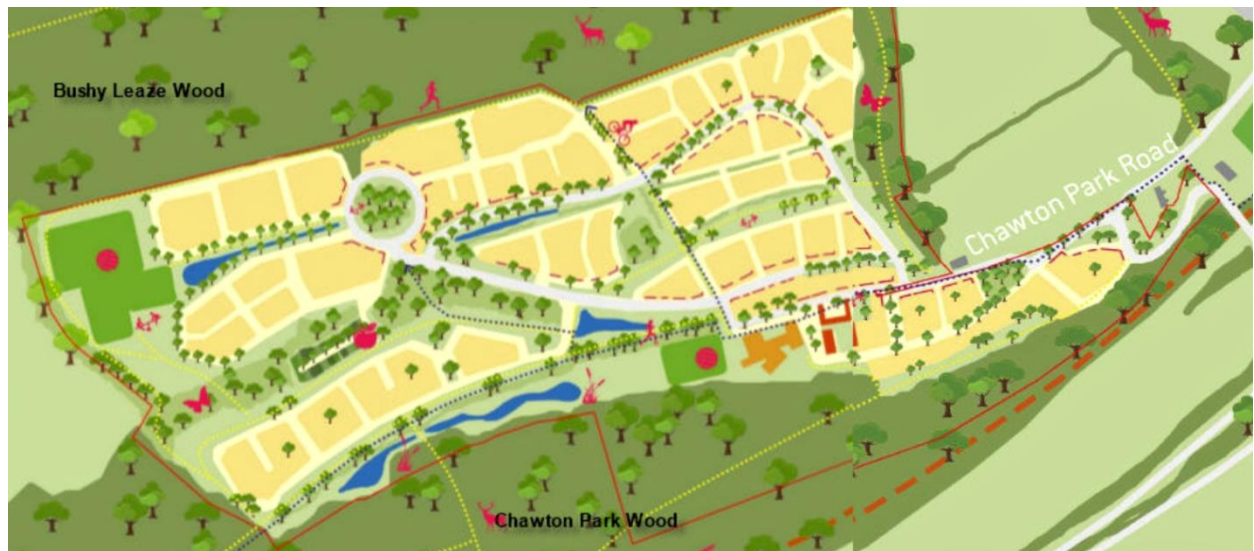
East Hampshire District Council © 2021

An ancient woodland is one that has existed since before 1600 AD. It develops irreplaceable, complex ecosystems. Only 2.5% of UK woodlands are ‘ancient’. Shockingly EHDC have told us that these woodlands currently have no special legal protection. However, Damian Hinds MP has told us that in October 2020 the Government announced stronger protections for Ancient Woodlands. The *Say No to Chawton Park Farm Campaign* has asked him for timescales on this. However, the Government’s support for Ancient Woodlands did not stretch to accepting the Lords’ amendment to the new Environment Bill to include 50m buffer zones between Ancient Woodlands and new developments.

Although there is no indication in their brochure that Harrow Estates (HE) will be cutting down any trees, (<https://tinyurl.com/Harrow-Estates-Info-Brochure>) even a cursory look at the image below shows that they will be. It takes 138 mature trees to absorb the carbon emissions of one average household's gas boiler, and replacing with semi-mature trees (c15 years old) as stated in HE's brochure

"will not make much of a difference in the next two or three decades because little trees just don't store much carbon" quote from William Moomaw, of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Harrow Estates will be shoehorning 1200 houses and 3000 people (a 15% increase in Alton's population!), in between the woodlands onto farmland (see graphic below), thereby obliterating the grasslands and subjecting the ecologically diverse woodlands to irreparable damage from incursion by the residents and their domestic animals. The tiny buffer zones quoted in their brochure of only 10m and 15m will not now need to be increased to 50m (see above), although developers would have been able to argue against this anyway, and will provide very little scrub, meaning fewer "food resources and shelter for many animal species as part of a diverse mosaic of habitats." (Quote from EHDC's "Biodiversity and Planning Guidance June 2021".)



Harrow Estates ©2018 (note: author has merged images on pages 6 & 7 of brochure for clarity)

Forestry England says in its management objectives that it wants to maintain 'sustainable access and provision for recreation' within these woodlands, but The *Say No to Chawton Park Farm Campaign* cannot see how 3000 people wanting access to these woodlands can be made sustainable!

EHDC itself has admitted that negative impacts are possible and are concerned about avoiding adverse impacts on these Ancient Woodlands. But how can light pollution from 1200 homes and 3000 people be avoided - despite Harrow Estates assertion that they would ensure 'a sensitive lighting strategy to avoid impacts on nocturnal species'? Light pollution will impact biodiversity by, (amongst other things) disrupting the feeding and breeding of the local moth population - numbers nationally are down 30% in the last 50 years. Fewer insects means fewer pollinators and less food for birds.

The obliteration of the grassland will destroy the foraging areas for Rooks, Jackdaws, Mistle Thrushes, Green Woodpeckers, as well as the insects that emerge from the sheep dunged turf which supplies aerial 'plankton' for swifts, swallows and house martins. Swifts continue to decline at 5% per year after a 50% decline in the last 20. Harrow Estates dismiss this grassland habitat as 'the least ecologically important site habitat' – the implication of which we strongly disagree with, i.e. that one



can rank habitats in order to sacrifice one or another. Meanwhile we don't think that the insects lost will be replaced by the provision of a few insect boxes.

Harrow Estates maintains that **biodiversity** can be *enhanced*. An incredible assertion given that they want to cover the land with 1200 houses. The new Environment Act asks Developers to show that they are providing a 'net biodiversity gain' but so far, according to the Wildlife and Countryside Link they only need to leave bits of scrub and grassland throughout a development to achieve this. Harrow have not gone into any details about what 'enhancement' actually means, and the planting of a few trees to connect Bushy Leaze Wood with Chawton Park Wood (see image above) does not to us provide the level of biodiversity gain suggested by their words "an additional wildlife corridor between two previously unconnected woodlands". Meanwhile these attempts at 'enhancement' are not monitored by the Local Authority going forward so how do we know if biodiversity has been enhanced or not? And what is the baseline status for comparison purposes? Rather than just being a box-ticking exercise to get planning permission, resources need to be committed to monitoring and *enforcing* as well as *avoiding* initial impacts to biodiversity.

The Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 embeds a duty to **conserve** biodiversity on all 'public authorities' so The *Say No to Chawton Park Farm Campaign* asks EHDC to do just that by taking Chawton Park Farm out of its Spatial Strategy (i.e. now - pre Local Plan stage).

Lastly, the **Landscape Value** of Chawton Park Farm cannot be overstated in our view. The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) has been unequivocal in its comments. The full text of what they have said can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/2exmp7mn>. They consider the Site to be a "valued" landscape within the definition of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 170(a) which says '*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...protecting and enhancing **valued landscapes**...*'. CPRE's reasons are because of "**the distinctive character of this undeveloped valley of great natural beauty, with its strong historic resonance and tranquillity, and the high quality of the public experience of this landscape**" – descriptions with which we concur wholeheartedly. As well as the "significant contribution [it makes] to the **landscape character areas** identified in the Hampshire Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2010) and the East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment (2006), being part of the Four Marks Clay Plateau.

Just one more argument to add to the long list, against building on Chawton Park Farm

Anyway there are so many policies that exist at all levels of Government, local and national that one would think building in such a special area would just *not be allowed to happen* but no, it seems that the need to satisfy housing numbers overrides everything.

Say NO to Chawton Park Farm Campaign

saynotochawtonparkfarm@gmail.com

Do sign our petition at change.org (search for 'Chawton') <https://chng.it/ntQGkpVT> and find us on Facebook.

on Park Farm, East Hampshire District Council? Just pick one!

ne Austen ton Park...

development to achieve this.

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Just one more argument to add to the long list, against building on Chawton Park Farm. Anyway, there are so many policies that exist at all levels of Government, local and national that one would think building in such a special area would just not be allowed to happen but no, it seems that the need to satisfy housing numbers overrides everything.

Do sign our petition at change.org – search for 'Chawton' at <https://chnq.it/ntQGkpVT> and find us on Facebook.



Chawton Park Farm was appreciated by so many of us during lockdown

From: John Millar

Subject: Chawton Park Farm development

Here are my written submissions which I provided as a result of the public consultation on 11th March.

I am providing these as input to the debate on the EIA scoping request.

I attended the event at Alton community centre on 11th March. I did not fill in the form for feedback as the ability to do so online was widely advertised. This turned out to be false, as the only online facility was to send a simple message.

Please, therefore, consider this email as my submission of the feedback form.

Q1: I agree there is need for more genuinely affordable housing in the East Hampshire district and more generally in Hampshire. I strongly disagree that this needs to be in Alton. In fact, I believe there is undue pressure put on developments in and around Alton because of the prohibition of substantive development within the South Downs National Park. This leads to ill-justified pressure on space that would otherwise be considered as wholly inappropriate for such development. It is an artificial constraint that any considered evaluation would have set aside, in order to come to a properly assessed plan for the district, leading to proposals being made that are not properly and logically assessed. Simply, these are decisions being made with the decision makers' hands tied behind their backs. It is nonsense.

Q2: I note the proposals to set aside land for a new primary school. I am no expert in the data regarding school places and provision in Alton, but I suspect a development of this size would require further school places and almost certainly a new building and resources. However, space set aside is not the same thing as a funded building and the money to pay for its teachers and operation. This requires mutual agreement between the school authorities and the developer. In recent developments locally, early promises and apparent commitments of this nature are always left to fall between the cracks, and I fear this will be yet another example.

Q3: I have no opinions on the re-use of retained buildings.

Q4: With regard to the use of public open space, again this is the sort of thing which, despite the aspirations when planning permission is sought, require real commitment by developer and local authority alike., and historically have conveniently been forgotten. I give as example the much lauded country park on Ackender Hill which remains an open and unresolved issue despite the fact that the development there is nearing completion. The local authority has still made no commitment to how this will progress. As a further example, I refer to the much vaunted sustainable pedestrian and cycle access from Ackender Hill and encouragement to use public transport along the Chawton Park Road corridor. These have all been cynically

ignored and passed between local authority and the developer (and in the case of the pedestrian route into town, blocked for nearly 4 years by an unresolved dispute between two developers). As Ackender Hill nears completion of its 280-odd houses, pedestrians and cyclists have to contend with a dangerous, narrow, winding (and heavily potholed) rat run which has traffic far above Hampshire Council's estimates and design goals, and Hampshire Council continues to try to deny the facts in justification of inaction. Bus tops provide to shelter and in the case of the Alton-bound side, are on an isolated strip of a few paving slabs requiring passengers to walk along or cross the road; there is no space even for passengers with prams to stand in safety awaiting the bus. As yet another example, I refer to the local play areas constructed as part of the Ackender Hill plan, which appear to consist of no more than a small area of grass with one public bench and a few wood stumps knocked into the ground.

If the development as proposed is built, then in it is critical that the developer and the local authority, in concert, have their feet held to the fire on matters which are proposed at the planning stage to ensure they are delivered when the pressures of the planning stage are long gone. Otherwise, this development, like many others locally, will reflect cost-cutting in the interests of profit.

Q5: I have little to say about public art, except to say that it would appear to be a good idea if this development is to reflect the high quality aspirations now set out.

Q6 -9: This issue is my main concern about the development, and I found the representations of the developer at the public meeting far from convincing. Chawton Park Road (CPR) is a heavily used rat-run and bus route, already with significant traffic from the leisure centre, health centre, community hospital, several sports clubs, playing fields and two substantial new-build estates. Vague notions that the proposed development will allow lesser use of vehicles is palpable nonsense and delusional. 1000 plus houses means the probability of 2000 plus additional vehicles, plus delivery vehicles, buses and during what is likely to be a decade-long construction period, heavy goods vehicles, many oversized. CPR is a residential road in part, and although wider at the Alton end, is often obstructed by kerbside parking on both sides for much of its length. At its western end, the road is narrow, winding and constrained by ill-defined edges and high banks on either side, and sight-lines are constantly impeded by overgrowth which Hampshire County Council fails to keep in check. It is, especially at weekends, frequently obstructed by parked cars relating to sporting events at the Jubilee playing fields. There are no pedestrian walkways for most of its western extent, and there is no protected pedestrian crossing, just some dropped kerbs. Hampshire County Council have for years denied the risks associated with this road, using data flow and speed capture data which was taken years ago and does not reflect current conditions. It is a bus route served by double-deckers which can barely pass each other give the restrictions on road width. It does not help that the road is badly maintained and has many edge-erosion pot holes caused by vehicles trying to pass each other.

During peak hours (and often at other times) the T-junction at the Butts end of CPR becomes a traffic jam. This is largely due to the asymmetric pattern of traffic – Whitedown Lane is a busy trunk road connecting Basingstoke and Liss, Petersfield and the Bordon conglomeration. It is used by HGVs as a shortcut between the M3 and the A3. The flow of traffic on this across the working day is such that making a right turn out of CPR towards Alton becomes perilous, as there are very poor sight lines and traffic exiting the roundabout at the railway bridge is often travelling at speed. I, personally, have been involved in several very close-shaves when turning right with a high risk of being side swiped, and my neighbours have had similar experiences. Hampshire County Council know this is a problem, but appears to be waiting for serious casualties or deaths before spending any money. The proposed new development will necessitate proper action on resolving this problem, and ought to be a precondition.

At the western end, where CPR meets Northdown Lane, there is a dangerous right-angled bend. This has been recognised in the planning documents, and I understand that the proposed remedy will be to dog-leg Northfield Lane around the west of existing houses to make a loop. I do not profess to be a traffic engineer, but I found this far from convincing as a solution. To be frank, it looks like an amateur attempt to find a simple and cheap “solution” to an intractable problem which might put the whole development at risk. My view is that it is nonsense, and will not properly deal with the Northfield Lane and site access problems.

Which leaves the issue of Northfield Lane: a currently dangerous, narrow and very restricted access which is being used as a rat-run between the A31 and the sports centre, playing fields and the A339 Whitedown Lane north-south trunk route. The main constrain here is a narrow Victorian railway arch with extraordinarily poor sight-lines due to the crest of the hill. The proposed signalisation is, again to be frank, a nonsense, which can only have the effect of creating more of a constraint than even at present, and against a backdrop of massively increased traffic flows. Apart from anything else, the waiting northbound queue during even moderate traffic flow is almost certainly going to back-up onto the Chawton roundabout and A31. Again, the starting assumption appears to be to find the cheapest way of getting round this problem, without any proper analysis of current data and robust modelling of the solution.

It seem plain that at the very least serious consideration needs to be given to ensuring prime access to the new village from the major trunk routes, the A31 and the A32. But the approach being taken in consideration here is to assume something cheap and then find a way of “proving” it will work, so when it doesn’t work it will be too late and the local authority and developers will simply walk away.

It seems inconceivable to me that this development could even have reached this stage without any serious consideration of this access. It would be a dereliction of public duty for the planning authority to let things proffers beyond d this point without full and proper, costed considerations of access. It seems plain that the Northfield Lane railway bridge needs to be widened as a prerequisite for the development of the site.

And it needs to be completed first, otherwise there is going to be no adequate access for construction vehicles. In the case of Ackender Hill, planning permission was granted on the basis that there would be a separate access route and haul road for construction traffic, and that HGV movements would be limited to no more than 3 per working day between 09:00 and 15:00. There was also commitment that heavy site traffic would not use Northfield Lane or the western part of CPR. This was all, in the interest of cutting costs, studiously ignored by the developer and the planning authority proved too weak-willed to enforce its own conditions of planning. Lessons need to be learned and both developer and the planning authority needs to deal with this very real issue, and not rely on turning a blind eye to what they see as an inconvenience.

So, in summary, I am not opposed in principle to the development; we are in the South East of England and homes are needed. But I do think this site is an extraordinarily bad choice, that more should be done with empty housing stock in East Hants and Hampshire and that the National Park pressure should not enforce a poor structural decision for Hampshire as a whole and a overwhelming pressure on Alton specifically. It also seems an extraordinary waste of valuable amenity green space. There must be better options.

But if the development is to be approved, it seems to me essential that access and traffic issues are properly addressed and works done in advance of any commencement. This includes widening the Northfield Land railway arch and carriageway, widening and straightening CPR, building cycleways and pedestrian walkways and safe crossings, improving existing bus stops and access and sorting out, once and for all, the dangerous T-junction at the Butts. It requires proper planning of construction traffic flows, and full enforcement, with penalties that have real teeth.

Moreover, the local authority and the developer need to enter into a thorough, costed s106 agreement that is actually adhered to, and the local authority must ring-fence the monies to be used for their intended purpose. The s106 agreement should not be regarded as an irrelevance once planning is approved as it has in many recent cases in Alton and East Hants.

From: Sue Petas

Subject: Re plans to build at Chawton Park Farm

I write to you as I would like my opinion taken into account when you discuss the proposal for 1200 new houses at Chawton Park Farm next Thursday (unfortunately I can't be at the meeting on due to prior commitments).

I am totally opposed to these plans.

I demonstrated on the Butts a few years ago when these plans were first put forward and my views have certainly not changed. This should not be allowed to happen and the voices of the locals must not be ignored (as often feels the case).

It would be a travesty to build on beautiful fields, farmland and green countryside full of wildlife and ancient trees. Once it's gone it's gone and cannot be reversed. This land is used for farming and recreational purposes, I cycle and walk through this area regularly. The positive benefits of being outside and connecting with nature is proven and yet once more, 'fat cat' developers want to build and pave over this land. It is all about money and profit - simple, and to the detriment of the Altonians live here.

Over the last few years there has been so much development in Alton, the town has changed. It's no longer a market town, but a commuter town with cars everywhere (on frankly awful road surfaces, potholes everywhere that are not maintained - but that's another story!).

The traffic on Chalk down road has already increased hugely since the new development opposite the Sports Centre (Warren Road). Despite promises of good transport links, or that people will walk/cycle, it won't be the case and there would be MANY more cars on the road. It's already difficult to pull out safely onto White down Lane, often with queues. Traffic speeds along Chalk down road, I have been knocked off my bike and when walking, the difference in air quality due to traffic is noticeable, as is the noise.

The road after the sports centre and up to Chawton roundabout is not built for the existing level of cars on the road, let alone even more. It is too narrow and totally unsuitable for this amount of traffic, with a sharp bend and brick railway bridge also (and no, please don't agree to knocking down the bridge to allow access!).

I went to the community centre on Thursday and came away feeling very angry. The feedback form from the developer was totally biased with 'weighted' questions, I do hope that most people came away and didn't fill it in as it 'tricks' people into answers, that then give the impression that they approve of the development.

How anyone can think building houses in this location is a good idea, is totally beyond me for so many reasons. Please DO NOT allow this to happen.

ALTON CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Registered charity no. 1189431

CHAWTON PARK FARM DEVELOPMENT

Written representation to the Extraordinary Meeting of Alton Town Council on 19 March 2026

on the Environment Impact Assessment scoping request for the proposed development comprising up to 1,100 dwellings, a local centre, and associated education provision at Land at Southwest Alton in Chawton Parish

INTRODUCTION

Alton Climate Action Network's (ACAN's) usual policy is to seek to influence developers to reduce the environmental impact of new housing, by making comments and representations directly to developers at the outline and full planning application stages, on key issues such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, transport and biodiversity.

However, the scale and location of the proposed Chawton Park Farm development are of such significance that, exceptionally, the ACAN Trustees have decided to support the "Say No to Chawton Park Farm Campaign" and comment at this early stage. We supported the "Say No" campaign for the same reasons when previous proposals were submitted in 2021.

ACAN challenges this development on environmental and biodiversity impact grounds. It is too large and in the wrong location on a greenfield site.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE BUILDING PROGRAMME

From inception this will be an 11-year development programme. The noise and pollution from construction traffic with deliveries will have a catastrophic and possibly irreversible effect on the local natural environment and biodiversity.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The preliminary promotional document produced by Harrow Estates and Redrow is very vague on infrastructure. The document mentions upgrading and widening Chawton Park Road. However, currently this is a narrow country lane. Even with the proposed widening it will be unsuitable for the traffic that 1,100 homes will produce. The developer's proposal totally ignores this problem and only mentions the benefits of the "enhanced" bus routes and extended cycle paths. There are major pinch points at each end of this road: the Watercress Line tunnel at one end and a major junction with Whitedown Lane (already extremely

congested) the other end. With an envisaged 1,800 car journeys daily, noise, pollution and the effect on the environment have been ignored.

PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

CPRE has designated the area as " Natural Landscape ". The area is a valued rural amenity and landscape with large tracts of woodland, including semi-ancient woodland. It is vital that a full Environmental Impact Assessment is undertaken of the potential impact on the natural environment. The destruction of the natural landscape and local woodland will be inevitable and irreversible, with catastrophic consequences for the natural wildlife and loss of biodiversity.

When completed, artificial light and noise pollution created by this large development will permanently change the adjacent natural environment. The development of this greenfield site will inevitably lead to fragmented habitats. Evidence suggests that when habitats become fragmented, resilience to the effects of climate change are significantly reduced. It will open up previously inaccessible areas to further development.

WATER AND SEWERAGE PROVISION

Water usage calculation based upon government statistics:

1200 homes x 2.5 occupancy level x 140l per day per person. = 420,000 litres per day. How will this vast development be served with this quantity of water?

Ginny Boxall, EHDC Councillor, has taken the lead in ensuring that the significance of chalk streams, and the exceptional environmental sensitivity of the aquifer system beneath Alton, is recognised as a key consideration in the emerging EHDC Local Plan. Chalk streams are globally rare, highly fragile and extremely difficult to restore once damaged. How will they be protected from water extraction to serve this development during times of water stress, which is becoming more prevalent with climate change? The stress on the aquifer and rivers that serve these areas needs to be quantified. During high demand and drought conditions abstraction continues.

Will the waste treatment plant be capable of serving these housing developments?

ENVIRONMENTAL SPATIAL PLANNING & ANALYSIS

Human development needs to be balanced with ecological protection, by analysing the effects of the development on the natural environment, using tools such as statistical modelling. The Council and developer must demonstrate they have data-driven solutions to the issues of conservation, sustainability and infrastructure.

17 March 2026