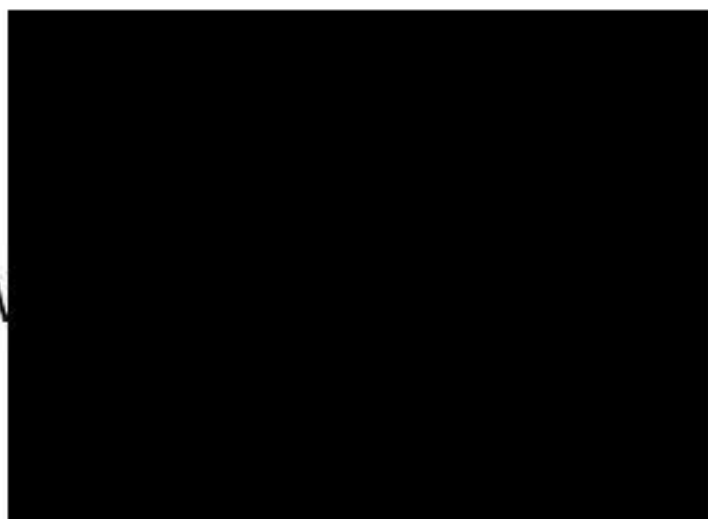




August 20th 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

APP/18/00672 land off Westwood Close Emsworth.

This letter is written to submit our strongest objections to the proposed development above.

The proposed development of 46 houses will have serious impacts and implications to the area as noted in the submissions made by the Emsworth Residents Association , Westbourne Parish Council and the numerous individual objections already lodged . Having read all of these I am in total support of the points made and the reasons provided for the objections placed .

However as owners of Mill Meadows Farm whose western boundary is adjacent to the entire eastern boundary of the proposed development we have further additional serious concerns to add to those already made .

1. Mill Meadows Farm is a family owned farm consisting of 24 acres of ancient water-meadow through which the River Ems and the Lumley Mill Leat flow . The farm is managed under a Natural England Entry and Higher Level Stewardship (ELS/HLS) agreement (Agreement Number AG00325828). This agreement requires management of meadows , hedgerows and ditches and other habitats in an environmentally sustainable and biodiversity encouraging manner. Rare breed cattle and sheep as well as Alpacas are reared on the farm .
2. This proposed development will impact on the farm and its economic viability as follows :
 - a) **Security** – Increased population from the development in close proximity to the farm and noting that the footpath diversion will be towards and immediately next to our existing farm fence will result in significantly increasing security risks , potential intrusion and damage to property.
Additionally -we have already had to deal with problems of out of control dogs attacking and injuring/killing sheep . This further concentration of dog walking close to our boundary fences will only add to this threat to our livestock.

- b) **Environmental Services function of the flood plain** . The area of meadows on the farm and including the proposed area of development is a significant flood plain that can absorb flood water reducing flood risk on vulnerable houses downstream . A clear example of this capacity was demonstrated in December 2012 when prolonged rainfall caused river flood conditions . During this period the level of flow of the River Ems exceeded the capacity of the culvert carrying the River Ems under the A27 (Photo 1). Consequently the Great Meadow -part of Mill Meadows Farm - immediately to the north of the A27 flooded (Photo 2).

Significantly Photo 3 shows the extent of **the flood coming to within 100 metres of the southern end of the proposed development** . Clearly with increasing extreme weather events expected in the future the level and extent of this flood may well be exceeded at any time . The house visible in photo 3 is located in Westbourne Avenue behind the proposed development.

Photo 1.



Photo 2.

Photo 3.



- c) **Biodiversity** . Since purchase of this land in 2011 many improvements have been made to habitats throughout the farm for the benefit of biodiversity and the ecological services they provide not least to the River Ems itself.¹ Under the Water Framework Directive Ecological Status report (2009-15) the River Ems was classified as Poor . Working with the Environment Agency , Portsmouth Water and The Arun and Rother Rivers Trust the entire length of the River Ems flowing within the farm (a length of more than 400m) has been fenced in order to eliminate cattle from grazing on the riverine and riparian vegetation and also to reduce pollution into the river as a result of cattle defecation. Additionally re-engineering of the river to provide improved habitats and flows creating riffles and deep pools has dramatically improved river quality in terms of biodiversity and the reducing nutrient loads by the dramatically increased vegetation in the river . As a rare example of a winterbourne chalkstream the River Ems , these and other steps being taken along the length of the river have already recently enabled its classification rating to improve to Fair.

¹ The farm supports breeding populations of Brown Trout, and Bullhead within the river and the uniquely characteristic invertebrate and vegetation populations . In 2014 a salmon parr was also identified . Breeding birds and mammals on the farm include Kingfisher, Bullfinch, Savi's Warbler, Linnet, House Sparrow , Song Thrush , Water Vole etc. Wintering waders recorded include Snipe , Jack Snipe, Woodcock, Golden Plover , Green Sandpiper . Bat Surveys in 2018 based along the river and Lumley Mill leat have recorded more than 6000 files including various Myotis species , Common Pipistrelle and Serotine Bats . A Bechstein's Bat was trapped and photographed on the northern perimeter of the farm in 2015 .

The proposed development - with particular reference to its inadequate proposed land drainage systems and increasing footpath traffic close to the river - poses a severe threat to these improvements on this important chalkstream habitat .

As the connection between the chalk downs of the South Downs National Park and the significant SSSI of Chichester Harbour the health of the Ems is critical and the potential impact of the increased urbanisation resulting from this development will impact on these critical improvements

In conclusion the above points are provided to contribute to the already submitted objections to this totally unnecessary development proposal by concerned stakeholders .

