

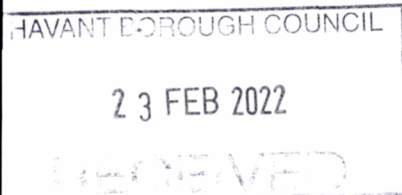


18 February 2022

Dear Sir,

I attach my objection to the Rook Farm planning application, APP/21/01434 which I would be grateful if you would take into consideration.

Yours faithfully



18 February 2022

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION FOR UP TO 300 HOUSES ON LAND AT ROOK FARM, ST MARY'S ROAD, HAYLING ISLAND – APPLICATION NUMBER APP/21/01434

I wish to add my support to the hundreds of other Hayling Island residents objecting strongly to the proposed development of land at Rook Farm for housing, for these main reasons:

TRAFFIC

300 houses on this site must mean about 600 cars and possibly 1200 extra traffic movements a day. Residents would be likely to have to commute off Hayling Island for work in view of the lack of employment on the Island. The main road through Hayling and Langstone to Havant is already under intolerable pressure and could not cope with the additional car journeys this development would bring. The current debate over the Local Plan for Havant has already shown that even the Planning Inspectors recognise the current strain on the traffic infrastructure, and that this has not been properly taken into account by the Council. The environmental and emotional strain of the road situation on existing and future residents cannot be overstated. There is already pollution, damage, stress, danger and inconvenience to existing residents of Hayling, Langstone and Havant. This proposed development, together with the proposed development of the land south of the Mallards and west of Langstone Road, and the proposed development of the Langstone Technology Park (which would involve very many vehicular movements especially at peak times), would be the perfect storm representing the total overdevelopment of our area beyond the capacity of services to bear it. You may as well just build on the actual A3023, since no traffic would be moving anywhere.

The bridge and our roads are frequently badly affected by even minor traffic events, such as parked delivery vans, a horse rider or cyclists. Major events quickly feed back as far as Havant and cause gridlock. Today due to storm Eunice the bridge is closed to traffic because of a very high tide. This is the second time this has happened in about a month. And of course tidal levels are increasing and weather worsening with climate change. Not only do traffic congestion and road closures mean people can be stranded or unable to make essential journeys (including by public transport), but emergency services are unable to reach Hayling. We probably have more than our fair share of emergency ambulance journeys due to the age of our population. What are we supposed to do if the emergency services cannot cross the bridge?

I see on my daily walks how many traffic accidents there are already along the length of the A3023. Only a few weeks ago there was a written-off taxi in a bus layby near Victoria Road, and I am aware of many other accidents along that stretch of road, including at least one fatality. The frustration motorists experience from the congestion of the road makes joining it from side roads almost impossible, hence "letting out" and "nipping out" which are both very dangerous. I wonder what action if any the Highways Authority is considering to improve the accident black spots on our only access road, with or without all these proposed developments?

THE EFFECT ON ST MARY'S CHURCH, MENGHAM AND ST MARY'S ROAD

An estate of 300 homes will completely change the village nature of Mengham and the setting of St Mary's Church to the detriment of existing residents and new ones. Local facilities could not cope with possibly an additional 1200 people, including perhaps more than 600 children. Where are the school places, recreational facilities and medical facilities for these additional people? There is already a dearth of such things on the island. Even before Covid, it was almost impossible to get a doctor's appointment within a reasonable time at either of the surgeries. St Mary's Road is currently quiet, and quite rural in nature, with low levels of traffic. It does not even have pavements along all its length. With the access to the proposed development being off this road, its nature would change very much for the worse. The change would be to the complete and unreasonable detriment of existing residents. The children attending the school in St Mary's Road would be at increased risk of traffic accidents.

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

According to a report in the Hayling Herald, much of Hayling, including Mengham, will be under water by 2050 due to climate change unless drastic international action is taken. One hopes that some action will be taken to mitigate this disaster, but it is unlikely, on present evidence of global co-operation, to be totally effective. We must expect to lose a lot of land in the area in the next few decades. It does not make sense to build houses and create communities that should have a 50 year plus lifespan on land that may be under water by then. Also, the Rook Farm land, like so much of Hayling, has a low water table and is not suitable for building, but does have important environmental value. Neither is our sewerage infrastructure up to the task, as evidenced so often by the environmentally disastrous discharges made already into Langstone and Chichester Harbours, for which Southern Water has been fined millions of pounds but appears to be unable or unwilling to stop. The health of our area and our world needs green fields, wild life, agricultural land and environmental diversity to combat climate change, not more and more brick, concrete and traffic in inappropriate locations.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Living on Hayling has many benefits, although they are rapidly decreasing, but also many disadvantages. It is still a lovely place to live and visit for its remaining environmental assets, quirky nature and small communities. But its problems are growing, not only because of the existential threat to the island from flooding, but the many problems brought by the desire to build so many large scale developments here. These out of proportion plans will overwhelm our infrastructure, swamp our communities and bring increasing problems for us all, existing residents and new ones alike. The Government is pushing its levelling up programme and trying to create jobs, wealth and communities in the north. Surely housing needs to follow that initiative instead of constantly trying to follow some formula and shoehorn more into areas in the south which are already under so much pressure.

The original Rook Farm application, for fewer houses, was rejected because of traffic issues, drainage, flooding and environmental damage. These grounds for rejection are now even stronger than they were then because of developments that have been allowed to proceed in the interim, and climate change. This application must be rejected. It is unfair, unreasonable and unsound.