



Consultation Response

Following the circulation of the recent consultation document about the consolidation of Iford Farm to various interested parties I have received the following questions and comments, which I have attempted to answer below. Some questions may have been asked by more than one respondent, and some were very similar so have been included in one answer.

The consultation was circulated to the parishes of Iford, Rodmell and Kingston, and in the case of Iford to all residents of that parish. Additionally, it was sent to various district and town councillors in Lewes, the local MP and several local interest groups such as the South Downs Society. In total 11 responses were received.

All alterations and actions as a result of comments are *highlighted in red*

Planning Policy Issues

- **Can you demonstrate how the application will deal with SDNP policies** - The application, when submitted, will address the policy areas upon which the previous application was refused, as well as any other relevant policies
- **Please take into account the Dark Night Skies policy, will you address the lighting in the arena in Swanborough please?** – As well as there being fewer buildings planned, agricultural buildings have little impact on dark skies, as they are seldom used in the hours of darkness. There will be some external security lighting, but these will be on sensors. The proposed commercial buildings will not have skylights and are also seldom used late at night.
Action – we will identify opportunities to reduce the number of rooflights planned in the agricultural buildings.
Action:- It is now proposed to replace the riding arena lights with low level, shielded lighting to make a significant reduction in the existing light pollution.

Sustainability issues

- **Can you consider encouraging sustainable travel to and from the site, particularly with regard to the proposed commercial units** – The new Lewes-Swanborough path is seen by existing tenants as facilitating cycling to work, removing as it does a large part of the C7 from the cycle route to Iford and Swanborough

Action - All proposed units will have provision for cycle parking, and prospective tenants will be encouraged to cycle to work.

Action – Office units will include electric car charging facilities

- **Can any new units and buildings include provision of renewable energy** – Farm buildings will be supplied by the existing solar panels.

Action - Any office units will have air source heating. Workshop space is not generally heated. We will investigate other forms of renewable energy.

- **The effects of climate change may limit the range of crops grown, the buildings will last many years, will you consider alternative crops that don't require such large buildings** – we constantly review our choice of cropping and frequently consider alternative farming enterprises, which tend to be niche and require only small land areas. The effects of climate change are unlikely to alter the basic enterprises, combinable crops are grown throughout Europe, although the mix of crops varies depending on local climate – eg sunflowers or soya beans.

Farm Building Issues

- **Will you justify why the consolidation will happen at Iford and not the other sites you farm** – We currently farm on fewer sites than we did at the time of the previous application, having given up a contracting agreement at Falmer. These sites are Iford, Swanborough, Rise, and Houndean Farms, as well as a small area at Tarring Neville and Northease, both of which are contract farmed ie not owned by us. It would not be possible or practical to develop these sites. Of the 4 owned farms there is virtually no existing infrastructure at either Houndean or Rise farms, whereas Iford farm has a base around which to consolidate. Any other sites would require buildings to replace those built in the last 10 years at Iford. These themes will be further explored in the application.
- **Some other sites are adjacent to 'A' roads, why not build your farmyard there?** As explained above of the sites we own only one, Houndean Farm, is situated on an A road. Building there would massively increase the traffic on the C7 as all farm traffic would be continually moving between there and Iford and Swanborough. Any alternative would not be a consolidation unless the newest buildings at Iford were abandoned – which would be totally unviable. Houndean Farm does not have a suitable site to build an extensive farmyard.
- **What about Swanborough Farm?** – Notwithstanding the presence of existing modern buildings at Iford Farm, our landscape assessments have shown that Swanborough is a far more sensitive site than Iford, and much more visible from the SDW. We do not believe this would be a good place to site a new farmyard.
- **Has the grain drier been built yet?** – Permission for a new grain drier and livestock sheds was previously granted, the livestock sheds have been erected, but the grain drier has yet to be constructed

Redundant and Removed Building Issues

- **What will be the future use of the sites where buildings are removed?** – it is envisaged that the footprint of the straw barn at Swanborough will form parking provision for the livery unit. The Sheepyard site will not be used for anything, the building will be removed and the site levelled and left. Buildings removed at the Iford site will form part of the general site.
- **What will be the future use of retained buildings?** – many of the retained buildings made redundant by this application are of significant historical interest eg The existing workshop in Iford. We have no immediate plans for these buildings and if and when we do they will be subject to planning applications and further consultation with interested parties. Due to the reduced size of the planned development some of the existing agricultural buildings will necessarily remain in agricultural use, for storing machinery, straw, seed etc.
- **Will you provide an audit of all the existing buildings? Will it include the current activity at Lower Stalls, including buildings already converted without planning permission?**
Action – An audit will be included as part of the application.
Action – we will include a retrospective application for the buildings already converted, many of which have been there for many years.
- **Have you considered art studios for any of the redundant buildings?** - We are proud of the many creative and craft business that have made their home on the Estate, and are keen for this to continue, and this could potentially form part of any future development proposals for the redundant buildings.
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Swanborough Issues

- **Will you clearly define the land use for equestrian purposes – a detailed site plan with schedule of use eg horse boxes etc** – This will form part of the application.
- **What will the external appearance of the equine unit be?** – we envisage a concrete block wall below timber cladding. There will be access doors as well, but all stables will look inwards. Detailed elevational drawings will be provided as part of the application.
- **How many stables will there be? Where will feed and bedding be stored?** – depending on the final design there will be between 12 and 14 stables, which is a small increase over the existing stables. Feed and bedding will be stored internally.
- **Where will cars and horse boxes park? Is it dangerous to have parking straddling the footpath? What about the other paraphernalia?** – all parking will be contained within the footprint of the demolished straw barn, and will not imping on the RoW.
Action – the existing parking next to the straw barn will be removed
- **Have you considered providing full livery rather than DIY livery? Could you create an expanded equine centre of excellence?** - We have considered full livery but currently consider it to be uneconomic. An equine centre of excellence is something we could consider for the central barns in the future. *Action – continue to consider providing full livery, review regularly*

- **Could you demolish the central barns and create grazing paddocks? you have plenty of buildings at Iford and South Heighton.** – the cost of creating paddocks would far exceed any potential benefit. The buildings will also be required for the farm as the number of buildings proposed at Iford is reduced. We have no buildings at South Heighton.
- **Swanborough Shoot buildings should be identified** – the Swanborough shoot will not use any buildings in Swanborough following the imminent sale of the buildings they have previously used.
- **Views of the Manor will still be obscured** – following the removal of the straw barn we believe that views of the Manor and the historic “Thatched Barn” from the SDW will be improved, although from some viewpoints the improvements will be greater than others. Regardless, the removal of this building will significantly improve the wider views, being a prominent and unsightly building.
- **HGV access to Swanborough should be via the farm drive** – *Action – the gap between Bimble Solar and the farm buildings will be gated or otherwise blocked to prevent lorries and other traffic using the Drove, whilst still allowing emergency access.*
- **A separate cycleway should be constructed up the farm drive** – our traffic consultants and I are happy that the volume of traffic (including cars, vans and HGVs) on the farm drive will not interfere with the use of the drive by pedestrians and cyclists. It will be used substantially less than the Drove, upon which all forms of traffic coexist happily. *Action – Speed bumps will be installed on the farm drive to ensure traffic travels slowly up it.*
- **In reference to the central Yards, what was their previous use? What do you mean by “much reduced scale” in reference to the proposed use of these buildings?** – until the last couple of years we have used these buildings for cattle housing, and have found them to be difficult and dangerous to use, and very labour intensive. They have also stored (and continue to do so) hay, and some machinery during the winter months. For the last few months they have been used for temporary storage of shoot equipment which will shortly cease. One of the long thin barns has been used to park some trailers and as a store for a local carpenter. In future we intend to only store machinery which would otherwise be parked outside in Iford.
- **How does this application relate to the previous pre application advice for Swanborough? How will your proposals be structured? Why is the pre-application is still showing as “live” on the SDNP website?**– we envisage making three linked but separate applications, one for the farmyard at Iford, one for the other buildings in Iford, and one for Swanborough. The previous pre-app is concluded as far as we are concerned, but evidently has not been marked as such by the SDNP.

C7 Issues

- **Please provide statistics of the impact of the development on the C7 traffic** – this will be done in a much clearer way than before, to avoid the misrepresentation of the previous application on social media. It is important to note that currently all the farm land is operated from Iford and Swanborough and the farmed area is not changing in size. This application is to consolidate buildings in Iford and Swanborough and as a consequence There will be no increase in farm traffic (including HGVs) as a result of these proposals, indeed because of the reduced scale of farm buildings in Swanborough the farm traffic on

the C7 will actually reduce, as the need to travel between the two sites will be largely eliminated. Unlike the previous application there will be some increase in car traffic from the conversion of the various buildings to different uses, but this will be detailed in the application. The provision of the new access road will eliminate almost all farm traffic within Iford.

- **The new access road needs careful siting to ensure safety on the C7** – the design of junctions on this type of road is laid down by the highways authority, and visibility splays etc are carefully sized for the type of road and speed of traffic.
- **What will be the impact on parishes along the C7?** – as detailed above there will be no extra farm traffic on the C7, indeed there will be a reduction as we will no longer travel between Iford and Swanborough.
- **Will you erect signage and improve the safety on the C7?** – Signage will form part of the application, improvements to the C7 are within the remit of the highways department, although I imagine that an additional entrance will help reduce average speeds on the road, through encouraging drivers to be more careful.

Iford Issues

- **Please consider the setting of the flint barn adjacent to Lower Stalls Cottages** – the setting will be improved by removing the current traffic around it by the provision of the new access road, and the blocking of the route between Lower Stalls Cottage and the farm building next to it.
- **Please consider the impact on the adjacent residential properties at Lower Stalls from the business use in building B** – the application will be for B1/B8 use which is defined as being suitable for a residential area. *Action – Hours of use will be limited and prospective tenants will be vetted to ensure they are not a nuisance to neighbours.*
- **Please soften the visual impact of the new and existing buildings in Iford** – there will be extensive tree planting and landscaping to reduce the visual impact, and this will be significantly greater than the previous application. The proposed buildings will be smaller and subservient to the existing large shed and material choice such as timber cladding will further soften the impact. All existing buildings in Iford use fibre cement panels which soften in time to become far less visible in the landscape. The use of other materials such as coloured tin sheets never soften. The existing old buildings are almost invisible from a distance.
- **The concrete hardstanding is very large, what will it be used for? Could it be of a porous material? How will you contain the run-off?** – The hardstanding will be used for storing silage bales for most of the year, and for machinery storage during the working season. Silage bales in bags do not produce any runoff, unlike bulk silage. At other times machinery will be stored in some of the other existing buildings eg at Swanborough. *Action – the hardstanding will be constructed of permeable materials.*
- **How will slurry and effluent be dealt with? Is the Rise farm slurry tank now redundant?** – The cattle are bedded on deep litter straw, and generate no slurry. All manure is transported to fields and stockpiled before spreading. *Action – Remove redundant slurry tank at Rise Farm.*

- **The Silage/storage area should not be in full view of the rights of way including the SDW –**
Action – the silage/storage area will be moved slightly north to be behind the existing buildings, and therefore more hidden.
- **Can the size and height of the new buildings be documented –** These drawings, and others, will form part of the final application
- **Why is the Egrets Way being linked to the consolidation?** – the SDNP and ESCC highways linked the two seemingly separate issues together in their highways report for the refused application, in response to comments about traffic on the C7 from local people. It was insisted upon that the Egrets Way was included as part of the previous application.
- **Can the footpath along the C7 be improved as part of this application –** significant highways work would render the application unviable, we are already proposing to donate a significant land area to construct the Egrets Way.
- **What is the timescale for completion of the works? Will the new road be built first?** This will be a relatively long term project, as the funds to complete it will have to be found. We hope that some elements such as the access road will be constructed relatively quickly, some of the other buildings will take longer. As the new buildings are constructed we will then remove the redundant old ones. The conversion of existing buildings into equine and commercial space will be subject to funding being available within the business and additionally suitable tenants being found. *Action – The new road will be constructed prior to any significant development on the site*
- **How is animal waste to be treated? Will you use a reed bed? Will it enter water courses?** – as mentioned above there will be no liquid waste to be treated. A reedbed is planned to provide ecological benefits, to buffer the flow of water off the site and to clean any water running off the concrete areas, which may be muddy.
- **Will land raise material contain asbestos and other contaminants?** – it is illegal to use anything other than inert waste. The amount of land raising is minor in comparison to the previous application.
- **How will the ditch alongside the new access road be protected as an historic boundary feature?** Our proposals do not affect this ditch, other than a very small area by the C7 where the access splay will be constructed.
- **You mention the Game Farm planning permission, what is this?** – the farmyard site has a planning permission for use as a game farm, which currently is not used. The planning permission is still valid, and we propose to remove this potential use as part of this application.