

CAMPSITE
AT
LITTLETON FARM, UPWALTHAM
Planning, Design and Access Statement
Including Ecosystem Services Statement

To be read in conjunction with the application drawings and Landscape Appraisal

1. OBJECTIVES

- a. To enhance public appreciation of the special qualities of the South Downs National Park.
- b. To improve the tourism offer and provide, low impact, accessible and affordable camping facilities close to the South Downs Way.
- c. To provide a more diverse income stream for the farm following the closure of the dairy.
- d. To manage the farmland in a sustainable way that conserves and enhances the landscape.
- e. To achieve the above objectives within framework of the NPPF, and to accord with the aims and intentions of the Development Plan, and objectives of the SDNPA.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The following is an aerial photo showing the extent (outlined in Red) of the proposed camping field at Warren Bottom that would only operate between March and September (inclusive), accessed along an existing farm track (Dotted Red), Water point locations (White Triangles), parking area and access to existing showers in the farm buildings (White Circle).



- 2.2 Camping will be restricted for up to 20 pitches at any one time with visitors allowed to pitch anywhere within the field (outlined in Red above).
- 2.3 Vehicles would be allowed for campers to set up but would be parked within the farmyard close to the shower facilities within the existing buildings (White Circle above) and not allowed to remain on the fields.

- 2.4 There are a number of water points along the East side of the field (White Triangles above) and temporary sanitary facilities (porta-loos) stationed close to the existing water points.

3 CONTEXT

- 3.1 Littleton Farm is located at the head of the Lavant Valley extending from Upwaltham to Duncton Down with the farm buildings located close to the A285 that makes its way up the valley floor.

- 3.2 Warren Bottom is a small wooded hanger to the North West of the farm base, directly behind the farm buildings as seen from the road, with the proposed camping field at its base.

- 3.3 The recent closure of the dairy and sale of the herd has brought about significant changes to the management of the farm holding and the applicants are exploring a diversified approach to generate income to supplement the arable farming activities and contribute to the upkeep of the holding.

- 3.4 Set well back from the road, the North part of the camping field is within the wooded hanger and lower section of field not widely visible from public vantage points in the landscape but due to being shielded from the road, enjoys a quiet remoteness that makes the field attractive to visitors.

4. LAYOUT

- 4.1 Camping restricted for up to 20 pitches at any one time with visitors allowed to pitch anywhere within the field.
- 4.2 There are a number of water points along the East side of the field (White Triangles above) and temporary sanitary facilities (porta-loos) stationed close to the existing water points.
- 4.3 The proposals do not affect the layout of the farmyard with access over existing farm tracks
- 4.4 Vehicles would be allowed for campers to set up but would be parked within an existing parking area in the farmyard close to the shower facilities within the existing buildings

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5 SCALE

- 5.1 Camping will be restricted for up to 20 pitches at any one time between March and September (inclusive) each year.
- 5.2 Temporary sanitary facilities will be provided when the camping field is in use with a varying number of porta-loos provided to suit demand.

6 LANDSCAPE IMPACT

- 6.1 A separate Landscape Appraisal is included with the application.
- 6.2 The proposal does not include any change to the existing landscape and outside the camping season, the field would be used to keep livestock.
- 6.3 The landscape appraisal concludes that despite the proximity of the campsite to the South Downs Way, its location within the foot of a wooded hanger (Warren Bottom) significantly limits the visibility of the site with very few publically accessible views of the site.
- 6.4 By its very nature a campsite use has a very low and temporary impact and in limiting the number of pitches, carefully positioning facilities and managing the site to reduce vehicular access and mitigate litter, the character of the landscape is unlikely to be harmed.

7 APPEARANCE

- 7.1 Tents are not an un-common site within the South Downs and it is unlikely that the appearance of a tent in a field would give rise to a fundamental change in the rural character of the site.
- 7.2 The applicants allowed camping at Warren Bottom to take place (within permitted development rights as a temporary use), with visitors allowed to pitch tents anywhere within the field but the applicant's noted that campers tended to remain on the more level ground within the middle third of the site that happens to be the least visible in the landscape.

- 7.3 The water points (pictured below) were provided for animal husbandry and require no alteration for use by campers.



- 7.4 The porta-loos are a necessary addition when the campsite is in use to prevent contamination through inappropriate disposal of human waste and would be regularly inspected and emptied.
- 7.5 The positioning of the porta-loos along the East side of the campsite is also the least visible in the wider landscape and unlikely to result in visual harm to the landscape character.

8 INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL INTERESTS

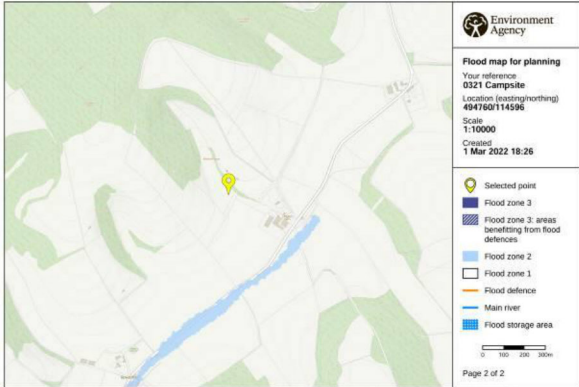
- 8.1 The applicants allowed camping at Warren Bottom to take place (within permitted development rights as a temporary use), with visitors allowed to pitch a tent anywhere within the field.
- 8.2 Reviews of the campsite online gave 5 out of 5 stars on www.pitchup.com and the applicants received no complaints during the sites operation in 2021.

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9 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT



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Extract of EA flood map, taken from the flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk

9.1 The flood map indicates that the application site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

10 FOUL DRAINAGE

10.1 Sanitary facilities are provided during the campsite use to prevent contamination through inappropriate disposal of human waste and would be regularly inspected and emptied.

10.2 Porta-loos are brought to the site and serviced by reputable loo-hire companies and waste is removed by an appropriately licensed contractor and taken to a waste receiving site.

10.3 Existing warm water shower facilities are opened to visitors during camp-site use.

11 BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT

11.1 The existing agricultural field is used by livestock and therefore the temporary use for camping is unlikely to affect or alter habitats of wildlife interest.

11.2 A potential impact on wildlife arising from litter is to be managed by the applicants by imposition of site rules and regular inspections.

11.3 Sanitary facilities are provided during the campsite use to prevent contamination through inappropriate disposal of human waste and would be regularly inspected and emptied.

12 DARK NIGHT SKIES/ LIGHTING ASSESSMENT

12.1 The proposals will follow the recommendations and good practice outlined in the South Downs National Park Dark Skies Technical Advice Note including the design, location and operation of appropriate lighting.

12.2 No permanent lighting is installed within the camping field and only existing external lighting is retained in the farmyard.

13 ACCESS & HIGHWAY CONSIDERATIONS

13.1 Access to the field is through the existing farmyard and over an existing gravel farm track that connects to the South East corner of the field.

13.2 The proposals do not affect the layout of the farmyard with access over existing farm tracks

13.3 Vehicles would be allowed on the field for campers to set up but would be parked within an existing parking area where indicated in the farmyard.

13.4 No changes to the existing access onto the public highway are proposed.

14 TREE SURVEY AND ARBORICULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 No trees are affected by the proposals.

15 SIGNS AND ADVERTISING

15.1 The campsite bookings are managed online with a listing on www.pitchup.com where camping proved popular in the 2021 season (within permitted development rights as a temporary use).

15.2 Discreet signage is included at the farmyard to ensure visitors do not stray into active farm areas and other arrival and information signs are positioned on the farm including at the entrance to the site and on the South Downs Way (VP5, see below and VP10), giving contact details for potential visitors to the campsite and any complaints from footpath users.

15.3 An example of these signs is shown below:-



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16 ECOSYSTEM SERVICES STATEMENT

- 16.1 The proposed campsite is located on an existing grazing pasture that will continue to be used for agricultural purposes outside the camping season and thereby form part of the sustainable management of the land environment in accordance with Criteria A of Policy SD2.
- 16.2 The strict confines of the campsite maintain existing field margins and help to conserve and protect existing wildlife habitats in accordance with Criteria B of Policy SD2.
- 16.3 The proposals involve the minimum of change to the field but by using the existing water points and providing temporary sanitary facilities, helps to conserve water resources and improve water quality in accordance with criteria C of Policy SD2.
- 16.4 The management of the land, providing a break from grazing on the field for the campsite use helps to conserve the soil quality in accordance with criteria G of Policy SD2.
- 16.5 The Glover Review states at page 99 that *“By enabling individuals to access the natural environment more regularly, 87% of participants reported a “significant or great benefit to their mental health” A further 63% reporting benefits to their physical health”* Improving opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing in accordance with criteria J.
- 16.6 The provision of low-cost camping on the site provides opportunities for access to the natural and cultural resources which contribute to the special qualities

17 SOCIO ECONOMIC AND PLANNING CONTEXT

- 17.1 The applicants allowed camping at Warren Bottom to take place for a short period in the year in accordance with their permitted development rights under GPDO Part 4 Class B – temporary use of land.
- 17.2 The temporary use required no change to the structure of the land and was returned to agricultural use.
- 17.3 The statutory purposes of the South Downs National Park are:-
- i. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
 - ii. To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
- 17.4 In addition to its statutory purposes SDNP policies include a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of the local community.
- 17.5 The applicant's objectives align with the second purpose to enable the enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public and demonstrate an environmentally aware approach with careful consideration to preserve the character and setting of the surrounding landscape.
- 18 THE NPPF AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**
- 18.1 The application proposals have been formulated to meet the aims and intentions of the National Planning Policy Framework policies as a whole, having specific regard to the following policy areas:-
- 18.2 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
The proposals conserve the existing established character of the farm fields, enhancing public appreciation of the unique qualities of the National Park.
- 18.3 Supporting a prosperous rural economy.
The proposals provide a diversified income stream for the farm holding, with the potential to provide an improved tourism offer to aid the greater appreciation of the National Park.

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19 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

19.1 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) became the statutory authority responsible for planning policy on the 1st April 2011.

19.2 The South Downs Local Plan was formally adopted by the South Downs National Park Authority on Tuesday 2 July 2019.

19.3 The proposals have been formulated with regard to and in accordance with the following policies

19.4 The purpose of Policy SD1 is to reflect the 3 guiding principles the local plan, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the National Park purposes and conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. In accordance with Policy SD1 the proposals are considered to be for sustainable development that seeks to fulfil the two National Park purposes and are in “*substantial compliance with other relevant policies in the development plan*”

19.5 The purpose of Policy SD2 is to embed a holistic approach to managing our natural resources sustainably for the future. The application is accompanied by an Ecosystems Services Statement that sets out how the development proposals benefit ecosystem services.

19.6 The purpose of Policy SD4 is to set out how development proposals will be expected to conserve and enhance landscape character in the National Park. In accordance with Policy SD4 the proposals include a Landscape Appraisal that looks in depth at the visibility of the site, the existing landscape character and the impact that the proposed campsite use is likely to have upon it and concludes that the proposals will have no adverse impact on the wider landscape.

19.7 Policy SD5 describes a ‘Landscape-led’ approach to the design and layout of development proposals, generated from an understanding of the local landscape character and setting. The proposed campsite location has been selected and proposals developed with the applicant’s deep understanding for the landscape they have farmed for generations and as demonstrated in the Landscape appraisal, it is no coincidence that the applicants selected location for the campsite is close to the farm base and probably the least visible field they own in the wider landscape.

19.8 The purpose of Policy SD8 is to ensure that development does not harm the quality of dark night skies. In accordance with Policy SD8 the proposals avoid unnecessary external lighting and light spill from internal lighting as described elsewhere in the statement.

19.9 The purpose of Policy SD9 is to set out a positive strategy to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity across the National Park. The proposals accord with policy SD9 with respect to the retention, protection of biodiversity on the site.

19.10 Policy SD23 sets out 8 criteria where “*Development proposals for visitor accommodation, visitor attractions and recreation facilities will be permitted*”

a) *The proposals will provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities;*

At paragraph 2.9, the South Downs Technical Advice Note (TAN) or Camping and Glamping sites published in July 2021 quotes the Glover Review where at page 9 it states that “*New campsites in the National Park can provide low-cost and well-designed tourist accommodation*”.

Allowing tents to pitch in Warren Bottom, close to the South Downs Way and integrated with existing facilities at Littleton Farm would provide low-cost camping facilities with minimal impact on the landscape and provide opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

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- b) *The design and location of the development minimises the need for travel by private car and encourages access and/or subsequent travel by sustainable means, including public transport, walking, cycling or horse riding;*

Littleton Farm is served by a bus stop and the campsite is very close to the South Downs Way and thereby the footpath and bridleway network that serves the upper reaches of the Lavant Valley.

- c) *Development proposals will not detract from the experience of visitors or adversely affect the character, historical significance, appearance or amenity of the area;*

The proposal does not include any change to the existing landscape and outside the camping season, the field would be used to keep livestock.

The landscape appraisal concludes that despite the proximity of the campsite to the South Downs Way, its location within the foot of a wooded hanger (Warren Bottom) significantly limits the visibility of the site with very few publically accessible views of the site.

- d) *Development proposals make use of existing buildings, and, if no suitable existing buildings are available, the design of any new buildings are sensitive to the character and setting;*

The proposed camp site makes use of temporary sanitary facilities within the field and existing shower and parking facilities within the car park that are not visible from public vantage points within the wider landscape.

- e) *Ancillary facilities are not disproportionately large in relation to the rest of the visitor facilities;*

The ancillary facilities specific to camping are temporary and discretely sited. Existing ancillary facilities within the farmyard are used wherever possible and the proposals are therefore not disproportionately large in comparison to the visitor facilities.

- f) *Any proposal does not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of town or village centres or assets of community value; and*

No 'town-centre' uses are proposed on the campsite and the campsite would therefore not compete with shops and cafes in neighbouring towns and villages.

- g) *Where proposals are located outside settlement policy boundaries as defined on the Policies Map, they;*

i. *Positively contribute to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and*

ii. *Are closely associated with other attractions/established tourism uses, including the public rights of way network; or*

iii. *Are part of farm diversification schemes or endorsed Whole Estate Plans.*

The recent closure of the dairy and sale of the herd has brought about significant changes to the management of the farm holding and the applicants are exploring a diversified approach to generate income to supplement the arable farming activities and contribute to the upkeep of the holding.

The campsite does not detract from the natural beauty of the National Park and contributes toward the cultural heritage of the historic Littleton Farm complex that has played a central role in the cultural heritage of the area and management of the protected landscape.

The proposed campsite is part of a farm diversification proposal that seeks to generate diversified income streams following the closure of the dairy and may be integrated into other tourism uses planned for the redundant farm buildings (subject to separate consents) and the approved restoration of Dairy Cottage as approved in January 2022 (SDNP/21/03313/LIS).

- 19.11 Policy SD53 controls Advertisements. Signage for the campsite is very discrete, with arrival signage at the Farm yard directing campers to the car park and camping field and on the South Downs Way (VP5, see below and VP10), giving contact details for potential visitors to the campsite and any complaints from footpath users.

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20 CONCLUSION

- 20.1 The proposed campsite is part of a farm diversification proposal that seeks to generate tourist income streams following the closure of the dairy and following an initial trial in 2021 proved successful generating good reviews with no recorded complaints
- 20.2 The proposals do not alter the field in any way and make use of existing farm facilities wherever possible with temporary sanitary facilities provided on site during camping periods in discrete locations.
- 20.3 Despite the close proximity of the campsite to the South Downs Way and A285, the site is not widely visible from public vantage points and retains the tranquillity and sense of remoteness that attracts visitors to the area, which is well connected to the footpath and bridleway network.
- 20.4 The proposed campsite location has been selected and proposals developed with the applicant's deep understanding for the landscape they have farmed for generations and as demonstrated in the Landscape appraisal it is no coincidence that the applicants selected location for the campsite is close to the farm base and probably the least visible field they own in the wider landscape.
- 20.5 Allowing tents to pitch in Warren Bottom would provide low-cost camping facilities that protect and conserve the landscape in accordance with the first purpose of the SDNP, provide opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park in accordance with the second purpose, while providing a diversified income for the farm, protecting the economic and social well-being of the community.
- 20.6 The proposals therefore accord with polices of the Local Plan, purposes of the National Park, contribute toward mental and physical wellbeing and therefore merit support.

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