We are writing to lodge our objections to the proposals outlined in planning application PL/2023/04922 and the associated applications PL/2023/05222, PL/2023/05266, PL/2023/04999 (Hat Farm, Corsham, SN13 8DJ).

Our objections are primarily in relation to the impact the proposed significant development will have on the surrounding areas, particularly regarding noise, traffic, light pollution and the negative impact on the landscape, wildlife and broader environment.

We see that several comprehensive objections have already been submitted and agree with the points raised within them, however, we felt it important to re-iterate some of the concerns raised as well as adding some additional points.

Noise

As others have already commented, our local area is very flat and the distance any noise travels is quite significant. An example of this is that it is very easy to hear in Blue Vein, the live music from the Queens Head pub in Box. Despite being approximately **1.3km** away as the crow flies – and the pub situated in the valley – the music is loud enough for us to clearly distinguish the words to songs being performed when in our garden, with the music still clearly audible even when in our bedroom. Fortunately, these performances seem limited to a very occasional weekend in Summer, and, except for these performances, we enjoy beautifully quiet evenings. Hatt Farm is situated only approximately **360m** from Blue Vein - this area is quite exposed and so the effect of the wind carrying sound shouldn't be under-estimated. Clearly the noise is going to have a significant impact on the quality of the lives of all residents in the area. Personally, I suffer from Tinnitus and have noise hyper-sensitivity, and this type of loud background music is particularly problematic for me. We have four young children and chose to live in this area specifically to escape the noise and traffic of more suburban areas, and instead enjoy a peaceful, rural setting.

It's difficult to decipher the Noise Report modelling, suffice to say that we feel it's nonsense to do any modelling with doors/windows closed – it's not realistic to imagine that the Ceremony room is going to have its doors permanently closed – and if being opened/closed on a regular basis this will cause a fluctuation in volume – quite possibly making any noise more apparent. Furthermore, the report goes on to state (4.4) that "There will not be any sound sources in the Post Ceremony Space". However, the following sentence states "For small weddings, music at 95dB has been modelled in the post ceremony room.". Given that the music volumes for both sizes of weddings is estimated at 95dB, and we have no indication of the proportion of large weddings to smaller weddings, assuming we've understood the proposal correctly, the music noise generated from smaller weddings would be louder/travel further due to the less insulated construction of the post ceremony area and the fact that it has an open-air spill out area – and this could be the more regular scenario. It's also worth noting that the Transport Statement acknowledges (5.7) that "the busiest time of year would be during the summer season" – obviously when windows/doors are far more likely to be open (of both the venue and local residences).

The noise from the traffic is also clearly going to have a significant negative impact – in particular due to the concentrated nature of arrivals and departures – notably at 7am to 10am, 12-2pm, 7pm and at the end of the events. Whilst the noise report suggests that guests will leave gradually from 10pm, (and we acknowledge some will leave early), our experience suggests most guests will remain until near the end. Even the Transport Report acknowledges this in section 5.6, "*it is anticipated that most guests will leave between 1am to 2am*"

This sort of venue, situated so close to our house, would have a life-changing impact on us and from what we can gather, the proposal would fail to meet the criteria in Section 185 of NPPF, specifically:

a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;

and in particular:

b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; '

Whilst the report attempts to dismiss concerns about noise levels by referencing WHO sound levels within residents' houses – it fails completely to address noise levels experienced in gardens throughout the afternoons/evenings and seems to completely overlook point b) above. It also doesn't seem to address the frequency (in terms of the number of nights) on which local residents will be subjected to this noise, or the duration of noise on each occasion – these are clearly key factors in determining the impact on health and quality of life but seem to be completely overlooked/omitted.

We've also a few specific observations about other details omitted from the Noise Management Plan:

1. There doesn't seem to be any indication of the earliest start time for music.
2. There don't seem to be any constraints or estimates around the number of large weddings vs smaller weddings.
3. It's not clear how many weddings (noise events) are anticipated per year.

Despite the report suggesting that the client recognises the potential for disturbance, the proposal seems at odds with this, partly due to the above omissions, but also:

1. there appears to be no proposal for further noise mitigations such as acoustic fencing, planting of specific hedges with the aim to reduce noise, etc.
2. The suggestion that bottle, glass & refuse disposal could continue until 10pm at night strikes us as particularly thoughtless.

Traffic

We'd like to make a few general comments about traffic:

The Transport Statement indicates that Geometry controls the vehicle speeds – this feels like a fair observation (although that's not the same as saying it forces drivers to stay under the speed limit - real-life observations prove this isn't the case), but this road geometry also leads to the situation that drivers take the opportunity to exceed the speed limit on the stretch of road at Blue Vein to pass vehicles that are sticking to the speed limit – because the geometry of the roads either side of this area offer less opportunities to overtake.

The analysis of traffic fails to consider the level of acceleration of vehicles which is notable for traffic travelling eastwards along this stretch of road. Whilst we appreciate the speed of any vehicles is most significant, the behaviour of drivers/vehicles in this regard is clearly also important.

Indeed, this acceleration level is borne out by the average speed figures, bearing in mind the proximity of the test area to the series of tight bends at Turnpike Cottage.

The Transport Statement appears to fail to consider the consequences of the above points – that we see a significant amount of (often impatient) accelerating overtaking from drivers who have navigated the final corner near Turnpike Cottage. We've personally witnessed several close misses with vehicles entering/exiting driveways (and Longsplatt) because of this kind of driving. Adding a further junction on this stretch of road simply increases these risks and will encourage this kind of overtaking at a point in the road where it isn't safe to do so.

Bearing in mind the above – and considering some of the specifics around the road layout as highlighted in other objections - clearly the additional traffic using this junction at concentrated periods of time will add significant risk.

It's also worth highlighting that the main road in this area is unilluminated and with no footpaths but does offers a bus stop – thus inherently meaning pedestrians are required to walk on an unlit road in the immediate vicinity of the proposed junction - this feels like further additional risk.

There are repeated references to the use of taxis in the various supporting documents – please can we drawn attention to the fact that taxis effectively double the amount of journeys being made (we doubt that guests are intending to retain their taxis for the duration of the day/night!) – further impacting noise, traffic and pollution. However, as per another response, we're doubtful of the availability of taxies in this area to provide the necessary service.

As per the Highways Department observation, a development that mandates a significant increase in private vehicle usage (no-one seems to dispute this), feels like a step backwards.

Light

Currently there is next to no light pollution in the Hatt Farm area. At night this enable a dark landscape with beautiful night skies in the southerly direction from Blue Vein. The proposed development will completely ruin this. Apart from the lighting of the buildings and grounds themselves, the primary access road and vehicles using this will cause distracting light pollution right across the rural fields directly up to the main road. This is going completely spoil what is currently an unlit area of rural countryside.

Other

We don't understand why there are multiple separate planning applications. This appears to be a specific attempt to "game the system" as these are clearly all related to a single development objective. This makes it very difficult – and time consuming – to be able to review and respond to the overall proposal.

We don't understand how the Planning Statement suggests all guests will leave by 1am. The proposal refers to a "licence running until 1am" (is this the drinks or performance licence?) and music stopping at 1am. It's not realistic to expect an immediate exodus of all guests and this is borne out by the Traffic Statement which states in section 5.6, "*it is anticipated that most guests will leave between 1am to 2am*"

Conclusion

In conclusion, we object to these proposals as they will significantly impact the quality of life of the local residents and be of considerable detriment to the rural surroundings. We would be open to alternative developments that would be more sympathetic to the immediate environment and would protect the tranquillity of this peaceful area.

Regards,

Bern & Sian Stangroom

Greenfields, Blue Vein, SN13 8DQ