

Mr Adrian Smith,
Senior Planning Officer
Wiltshire Council

9th March 2026.

Re: Land to the south of Swan Meadow, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5D
Application Reference **PL/2025/09744**.

Dear Mr Smith,

I am writing to you as the applicant of the above proposed development and the purpose of this letter is to clarify certain statements and make sure that the overall facts are being properly considered and to refute wrongful allegations.

1. Building outside the settlement boundary.

The proposed site is completely within the Pewsey Limits of Development in the Settlement Policy Boundary in the Neighbourhood Plan and is an area well related to the village and would be a sustainable location for new development. Indeed, this site has been in the Neighbourhood Plan for over 40 years and there have been many opportunities to remove it. As such, it has already been accepted that that the Local Planning Authority can raise no "in principle" objection to the development of the site, subject to any scheme satisfying other local and national planning policies.

2. Tree Removal

A number of references have been made to tree removal prior to ecological and tree surveys being done on the 9th June 2025. I can confirm this is absolutely not the case and no tree cutting or removal happened on June 6th 2025.

"The noise eluding to tree cutting at the end of April 2025" is nothing to do with our land. No trees were cut or felled in April 2025, nor in fact the whole of 2025.

I can confirm on 3 May 2025 there was some noise in reference to stump grinding of root stumps that were legacy for tree removal by the Electricity company under the electricity wires. Please see attached pictures date stamped 3 May 2025. These stumps had been left by the Electrical companies prior felling, which is a regular occurrence under the power lines and were causing considerable breakages to machinery and trip hazards. These were ground out in one day and all the wood chippings were put in the woodland for ecological purposes.



In reference to “other tree removal in the past year “ I can confirm this also is not true. No tree work has occurred in the area since Dec 2024.

The proposed area was planted approximately 40 years ago, presumably as a privacy screen or shelter belt and is not ancient woodland.

This area had had no tree maintenance for many years and there was overcrowding, diseased trees and remnants of old barbed wire fences (some of which are still in the field). Children had broken into the area and littered, and this was becoming a regular occurrence. It had started to become a dumping ground with rubbish, bottles, cigarette packets and cans being disposed of within the area.





Post Covid, as part of a phased woodland maintenance plan the field and woodland area underwent some maintenance work over the past 4yrs and this involved:

Phase One: Trees being lifted and thinned so could be assessed

Phase Two: Barbed wire fences and rubbish being cleared so the area was more exposed in the attempt to deter being broken into and littering.

Phase Three: Removal of any dead or dangerous limbs and trees

Phase Four: Removal of any self-seeding sampling from the field and using branches where possible to build dry wall hedges.

Phase Five: Stump grinding of legacy stumps for electricity company felling from under the electricity wires and creation of wood chippings

Pictures of self-seeding poplars and area under the electrical wires later stump ground and wood chip added to the tree belt.



No tree removal has occurred in the area since Dec 2024, with the exception, as mentioned above (in rebuttal to the noise claims in April 2025) of adding woodchip from the grinding of the stumps legacy of electricity felling) and adding apples to the area to help compost with the leaves. (These are the piles noted on some of the pictures that have been submitted.)

Also of note in October 2025 we were notified a limb had fallen adjacent to the public footpath and we cleared this as was a danger for walkers – This was cleared mid-November 2025



Please note:

Tree felling and any clearing was done outside of the bird nesting season, and the location does not fall within a Conservation Area and the trees or collective area were not subject to a Tree Protection Order. This was confirmed via the Wiltshire Council Website.

Advice was sought via the Forestry Commission website and a licence was not required to conduct thinning nor for the removal of dead or diseased trees. There was no intention to sell any firewood nor fell more than 5 cubic metres in a calendar quarter.

Whilst there is always an environmental impact in felling/pruning trees this was reduced by chipping branches and spreading the woodchip on the ground to allow it to rot back to nature. Useable timber was converted into firewood for our own use. Firewood is carbon neutral.

3. Loss of woodland and proposed removal of Trees

The submitted plans indicate the removal of 17 trees. An inference has been made these are all mature trees and in good health - 6 of these are small self seeded saplings. The remaining 11, the majority are a mix of Ash, lime and Norway maple and are of poor quality with a number of trees having twin stems, deadwood and bark inclusions. Not all trees in the area are proposed for removal with a number of mature trees still being retained.

A comprehensive proposed landscaping and compensatory planting scheme has been designed with predominantly native trees and native hedgerows. In brief circa 34 new trees are proposed within/adjacent to the site and a further 36 trees as an offset for compensatory planting. (See details of planning scheme Section 5) and a new wildlife corridor/shelter belt (Please see further details under landscaping)

4. Ecology

A few broad-based comments have been made regarding the ecological value of the site all of which have been addressed in the detailed ecological survey. All of these documents are available to view on Wiltshire Council's website .

The survey was undertaken by a highly respected, independent company All Ecology, with extensive experience, with the site being fully accessible and no limitations. No roosting bats nor dormice were identified.

As mentioned above, with dated photographic evidence and to alleviate any misconceptions – No trees were removed in April nor June 2025 or in the year of 2025 in this area prior to any surveys been undertaken. Suugestions that the reports are in some way incomplete or unreliable is unfounded.

The current site is mainly non-native trees, a lack of diversity of trees, which are also of poor quality and limited hedgerow and shrubs.

All Ecology have proposed mitigation and enhancement suggestions which have been taking into consideration with a proposed new landscape and planting scheme, providing considerably more native trees, native hedgerows and improved habitats. (see section 5.)

5. Landscaping and biodiversity

The biodiversity offset landscape proposal for Swan Orchard, Pewsey, includes x 34 no. mixed native trees in total to be planted - 31 trees within or in close proximity to the site and a further 3 within an adjacent new length of hedgerow. Of this 34, x 12 no. are cultivated varieties of British natives, to make them more suitable for a garden location eg more compact. The other 22 no. trees are all British natives. These will be supplied as full standards.

The entire site is to be surrounded by a mixed native hedge, in accordance with British Woodland specification.

To the south of the site, the proposal includes a wildlife corridor/shelter belt to continue the existing wildlife thicket to the far (western) end of the site and includes an understory planting beneath the native trees, to replace any lost on site. This new woodland corridor will also act as a visual buffer to the site when viewed from the south as well as creating a continuous tree canopy for wildlife and birds, stretching from the existing thicket to the south of the existing development, to the trees retained to the west of the site. Nesting boxes can also be added to these trees and log/dead wood piles from any trees lost, can be created and retained in the area to create extra invertebrate habitat.

To the south of this wildlife planting scheme, there is a proposed strip of grassland habitat, which would be managed differently from the rest of the field eg only cut late summer/early Autumn, not topped regularly. Also 20% would be left permanently uncut to provide refuge for insects This will create a new habitat for invertebrates, pollinators, small mammals and birds.

There is also an additional length of mixed native hedging and x 3 no. Native trees to be planted under the electricity cables, where there is currently a gap in the boundary hedge and tree planting.

Finally the plan includes a proposed new woodland, to the south east of the site and planted in accordance with the recommendations from Totally Trees . This involves new planting of 36 trees

6. Privacy & Amenities

Comments have been made with regard to loss of privacy: namely houses and gardens in Swan Meadow/Woodlands Road.

Swan Meadow: The distance between the new Plots 1 & 2, and the nearest dwelling on Swan Meadow is over 40m away, with new proposed planting in between, well in excess of the generally accepted yardstick.

Plot 2 has no windows overlooking Swan Meadow on its North West Elevation.

In addition, as shown in the attached photograph, most bungalows abutting Swan Meadow have very high and thick perimeter hedges and do not directly face the site.



7. Pewsey Vale Views

Views from the Pewsey Vale hills show a large proportion of Swan Meadow houses being very conspicuous. The proposed new plan provides a much more elevated screening than its counterparts and the replanting of native trees as a shelter belt. The new woodland corridor will also act as a visual buffer to the site when viewed from the south as well as creating a continuous tree canopy for wildlife and birds,



8. Drainage & Highway Comments

Requested reports have been obtained and shall be submitted for review once completed

9. Misc objections and comments

Some comments have been made inferring a lack of obligation to new planting, and a poor track record on wildlife conservation. This is completely unfounded and not true. If anything it is the absolute opposite. Since our time at Southcott Manor, we have planted over 200 new apple trees within a new Orchard, all British varieties, we have planted over 30 native trees in the field, being Oak, Copper Beech, Acers, Hornbeams etc. We have encouraged Flora and Fauna and have 3 Bee hives on site for the pollination of the trees. These are maintained by local Kennet Association Bee Keepers.

A substantial native thicket has been planted with Hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and is thriving with wildlife and often frequented by deer.

We have made dry hedges where possible and we re-use all the woodchip and surplus apples back into the land for compost. We are a great believer in native trees rather than non native trees and hedges and where possible, over the years have replaced non native with native species.

If anything since we have lived here with all the additional planting over the years, wildlife is thriving. The proposed new scheme would encourage more wildlife, have considerably more native trees and hopefully reduce littering in the area.





Conclusion:

I urge everyone to look at the facts involved in this planning application.

The site sits within the Settlement Policy Boundary in the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposal has been supported by the Village Parish Council.

All comments have been taken into consideration and mitigations being put in place to accommodate and alleviate most concerns.

Approval of this application would not only provide steady work to a number of the village tradesman, helping them support their families, but also allow for more housing within the settlement boundary, which is very much needed and in line with government policy.

Kind regards

Richard & Rebecca Middleton

