

Dear Julie Mitchell,

19th April, 2026

My Objection Comments to Wain Homes Planning Application PL/2026/01383.

This Planning Application is outside the Settlement Boundary and encroaches into open countryside, contrary to Core Policy 1, Core Policy 2, and Core Policy 29 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Paragraph 17 of the National Planning Framework.

Blind Lane residents cannot accommodate 90 extra homes, 180 more residents, not including children, on open farmland bordering a village Lane. Southwick's Neighbourhood Development Plan clearly concluded that the village is unable to support further large scale housing development. Even though our Parish Council has effectively allowed our NDP to lapse, we had already identified a further 25-30 sustainable homes around the village, to add to the existing development of 32 homes off of Wynsome Street-PL2022/05416. Why are speculative applications for housing even being considered given that Southwick has a made Neighbourhood Plan in place. Southwick has already identified land for future development via democratic process. Land off Wesley Lane/ Lamberts Marsh has the capacity to deliver more new homes. Full permission to build 30 new homes on this site has already been granted. There is known capacity to build more houses here.

The fact remains that Southwick does not have the infrastructure in place to support a large development of 90 homes!

This speculative application for development has not been brought forward as part of Southwick's made Neighbourhood Plan. One of Wiltshire's Core Strategy key aims is to "provide the framework to deliver appropriate community-led planning policy documents including neighbourhood plans" Southwick has only one small basic shop that sells no fresh food, one Pub, no Post Office, Doctors, Dentist, or Chemist and a poor and extremely restricted bus service. No cycle paths, a substandard footpath into Trowbridge, less than a metre wide in places next to the busy A361 Frome Road.

Flood Risk. Global Warming is leading to climate change and more frequent storms and heavy rainfall events. Southwick's heavy clay soil makes it difficult for flood water to drain away which is why Southwick was historically known as the Clay Vale!

Wain Homes Flood Risk Documents suggest Southwick has never flooded, even during the storms of 2004 and 2014, therefore it is concluded that Southwick does not suffer from flooding!

However as many residents are aware, both Blind Lane and Brookmead suffered extensive flooding in both 2004 and 2014 and often in subsequent years.

Areas of Poles Hole Farm are prone to flooding, especially close to the Lambrok waterway.

The Environment Agency are updating their flood risk maps and now consider the Lambrok a river due to its extensive flood risk.

The field Wain Home plans to develop often suffers from surface water flooding, sometimes extensively. Not just at the periphery as has been suggested but over much if not all of the site. Several photos have been sent to Wiltshire Council Planning Officer, Julie Mitchell, together with photos of extensive flooding in 2004, 2014 and up to the present day.

On occasions flooding from fields and the river behind Blind Lane, have merged to funnel into an area around the Baptist Chapel, Baptism Pool, causing extensive flooding. A nearby home, has had flooded to the whole ground floor, three times in the two years, between 2003-2005.

A swathe of mostly flood zone 3 river flood risk borders this development site and on towards homes, gardens and fields in Blind Lane and Wynsome Street. After heavy rainfall any flood water discharged from the two retention ponds on this site, will contribute to increased flooding downstream. The intensity and frequency of flooding here is only likely to further increase due to Climate Change.

Wain Homes also suggest there are two points of groundwater emergence close to a farmhouse on the site. Southwick has no history of groundwater flooding and our heavy clay soil makes this very unlikely! It is in fact not groundwater flooding but where two streams emerge from under Wesley Lane, close to the Farmhouse!

Drainage. Wain Homes plan to join this development to the Blind Lane Sewer, but after agreeing to accept 30+ homes from the Wesley Lane Site as part of the Southwick NDP, Wessex Water considered this sewer was close to capacity. It seems unlikely it will be able to accommodate a further 90 homes without an extension to this sewer, an expensive undertaking.

Sewer Flooding. Wain Homes suggest Southwick no longer experiences sewer flooding as the sewers have been relined. However despite this, on 12th August 2025, sewer flooding was seen escaping from a manhole in the footpath beside the development site and flowing towards the river. This was reported to Wessex Water who sent an engineer to deal with it.

Hedgerow removal. The hedgerow bordering Poles Hole Farm is as important to Bind Lane residents as it is to the bats and wildlife that use it! Yet despite promises to retain most of the hedgerow to shield the site. The inevitable visibility splays will lead to the removal of much of this species rich hedgerow!

When Redrow Homes planned to develop this site (16/12279/OUT), the Wiltshire Highways Officer explained that due to its close proximity to the highway and the curve of the of the site, a total of 112.5 metres of hedgerow would need to be removed for visibility splays for the site entrance and 17 metres for the Public rights of way entrance.

Since the Wain Homes site entrance has an extra footpath on either side of the site entrance and a further footpath entrance at the end of the site, the approximate amount of visibility splay to be removed will be considerably more, leaving little privacy for residents living opposite this development and no space for a footpath along the front of the site.

The 27 affordable and social homes should be dispersed amongst the site not all in groups at the front!

Southwick Primary School. This small village school is oversubscribed, already has two mobile classrooms and has no further room on site to expand. It is Southwick's only primary school, where will children from these new estates go to school and more importantly to Southwick residents, will many existing village children be unable to attend their own village school and have to travel out of the village every day! More traffic on our roads at an already busy times! Also the traffic monitor was deliberately sited where it would record little of the Primary School traffic!

Arable Farm Land. At a time when far too much farmland is being given over to housing, Poles Hole Farm is the only remaining arable farm in the area and has produced a crop on this development site over many years. These are uncertain times and we may need to be able to feed ourselves if food imports were to be restricted!

If as seems obvious, the developer wishes to give up farming he should sell to someone who wishes to preserve our fields and farmland, to find crops that will flourish here, and provide food for our country, not selling to a developer for large profits regardless of the loss of wildlife and farmland, when we may need it most!

Wynsome Street Traffic. The A361 Frome Roads leads into Wynsome Street via the mini roundabout. A narrow C class road it is nevertheless considered to be part of the Primary Route Network, The Major road Network and is included in Wiltshire's Freight Network Map. Our local roads are already very congested and whenever there are delays we see Blind Lane used as a rat run. Frome Road and Wynsome Street are Blind Lane's only entrance / exit points. An extra 90 homes would generate at least 180 extra car movements every day if not more!

The area around the Mini roundabout is often obstructed by road works and delays. In 2017 a WC highways Officer commenting on the Redrow planning application for 100 homes in Blind Lane, suggested of the mini roundabout, that the three more trafficked arms of the junction will operate over or at capacity in 2021 without the development.

Wynsome Street was never intended to take the volume of HGV traffic that is routed through Southwick every day.

The roadway is in need of repair and often suffers from flooding as the drainage cannot always cope with the volume of flood water experienced here.

Children and parents walking to school or waiting to use the Pelican Crossing can often be sprayed with flood water as HGV's speed past the narrow footpaths.

Housebuilders for any new developments will need lorries and HGV's to supply these developments sites, in and around Southwick. At a time when building is also about to begin on the Westbury Incinerator! Perhaps one day we may actually get a Westbury By Pass!

Ecology. There are many reasons why this Wain Homes Planning Application should be refused, but for me the devastating effect this would have on the ecology of these fields is of prime importance. Perhaps Southwick's greatest concern as far as ecology is concerned is for the continued loss of habitat for our protected bat species. Planning Applications at Southwick Court Fields (180 homes) at Wesley Lane (30 homes) and at Upper Studley, (50 Homes?) already threaten important areas of bat habitat.

The whole of Southwick falls within the Yellow Zone of protection for rare and endangered bats and our main concern regarding Ecology must be for the protection of their habitat. All housing developments planned in Southwick must conform to guidelines designed to protect these three particular species of Bats. Bechstein's bats, Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats and possibly other species of endangered bats that may be found here.

The river Lambrok formed from the merging of two streams in the fields of Poles Hole Farm, forms part of a much wider wildlife network of open countryside that forms a wildlife corridor stretching from the outskirts of Rode and Beckenham, from where these two streams originate and later merge to become the River Lambrok, before flowing through the fields of Pole Hole Farm to fill the Baptism Pool, flow under the Wesley Lane Bridge and through open grassland bordering Chantry Gardens and Brookmead, from where it is now considered a Main River by the Environment Agency.

From here the river crosses Southwick Court fields (where centuries ago residents of Southwick Court diverted the river to fill a moat around the Manor House), before flowing under the bridge that crosses under the A361, Frome Road and into the Southwick Country Park Nature Reserve. To then flow around Trowbridge to merge with the River Biss close to the Biss Meadows Country Park in Trowbridge.

Many residents of both Southwick and Trowbridge greatly value the river Lambrok and it's extensive wildlife habitat that had remained largely untouched for centuries.

Bats, including Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats and the rare Beckstein's bats, recently discovered in nearby woods, follow this waterway and the trees and vegetation found here. Small numbers of protected water voles may live in the river banks (unfortunately according to residents, a large colony were destroyed when the river at Brookmead and Chantry Gardens was dredged a few years ago to protect homes in Brookmead, mistakenly built on the river flood plane.

In Poles Hole Farm the Lambrok Stream from Beckenham was once home to a small number of water voles, a few may still remain.

Unfortunately wildlife found in the fields and waterways of Poles Hole Farm is decreasing, perhaps due to climate change or farming practices these wildlife species are now seldom seen. A few years ago we heard tawny owls calling from the trees behind our home in Blind Lane, little egrets nested in the river and foxes and badgers visited the fields. Grass snakes and slow worms were seen in the grassy river banks. Kingfishers fished for tiny fish from the Lambrok. On one occasion we watched as two kingfishers fought for a branch across the waterway and the victor caught and ate a tiny fish. A few years ago a resident of Blind Lane lost all the fish from his pond and the remains of one was found at the entrance to the Wynsome Street Bridge. It was considered an otter had taken them!

The once thick species rich hedgerows bordering Blind Lane have been allowed to grow tall and thin, offering few sites for nesting birds but still greatly valued by residents.

However all is not yet lost, over the winter and in recent weeks, residents have seen roe deer using the river as a wildlife corridor, as did an otter that visited my garden recently on an excursion from the river Biss. One evening I watched as a barn owl swooped down on its prey. Residents have seen ducks, a family of pheasants, a pair of moorhens, green woodpeckers and jays. A Red kite and buzzards can often be seen in the sky above.

After commenting on Planning Application PL/2025/08329 to build 9 homes in a nearby overgrown field. I was surprised to find from the Ecology Report hows many endangered and protected animals birds and bats were using and often thriving in such a small space next to a busy road, close to Poles Hole Farm.

If you give wildlife a chance, it will take advantage of any opportunity it may find!

There is so much potential in this wildlife corridor that is about to be destroyed by three large housing developments sited right on the Lambrok river banks

It seems so sad to cover these fields in concrete and to take away these wildlife opportunities. I've read much from Wiltshire Council about river recovery, A Green and Blue Infrastructure for Wiltshire 2022-2030 and more. And recently I received an email regarding the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy! This seems an ideal opportunity to do just that before

irreparable damage is done to the viability of both the river and the wildlife it supports in Southwick, in the fields of poles hole Farm and in the fields around Southwick Court.

Kind regards,

Barbara Johnson

