

Objection to planning application PL/2026/04461 — Land at Church Lane, Limpley Stoke: Pear Tree Community Farm

We submit this as a separate objection alongside the specialist planning representation being prepared for us by our planning consultant. It is addressed both to the Local Planning Authority, and to members of the community.

The proposed farm site lies immediately adjacent to our home, Knowle House, making us the household most directly affected by the development. For this reason, we have carefully studied the Pear Tree Farm Business Plan to understand the full consequences of the proposal.

We were initially supportive of the notion of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and engaged with the concept in good faith. However, having now seen the finalised plans, we have concluded that the impact - on both our property and the wider landscape - is much greater than we had originally understood, and that the claimed community benefits are far from certain. We are also not convinced that the full extent of that impact has been clearly explained to the community, so that people can make a properly informed judgement.

This objection makes four points:

1. The benefits claimed for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm are not guaranteed; they can only be delivered if the business plan is viable. However, Pear Tree Farm's business plan appears to be optimistic when benchmarked against other CSAs' operations.
2. The proposal locks in permanent, hard-to-reverse physical change before the viability of the enterprise has been demonstrated. That makes the approach unusually high-risk for the community.
3. There is a significant risk of affecting the functioning and community role of the Galleries Shop.
4. The design and layout of the farm in this location would create a very substantial impact on the Sharp Family household.
This is a consequence the community may not have understood when weighing their support for the proposal.

Point 1 - The claimed community benefits should be treated with caution

The project is being presented as a long-term community asset, but potential community benefits are dependent on the farm being viable. This means the farm should be financially sustainable. However, Pear Tree Farm's business case appears

highly optimistic on a number of counts - most critically on the estimated revenue and the estimated overheads.

Revenue

The revenue forecasts in Pear Tree Farm's business plan sit well above real-world data from established UK CSA farms. Recent case studies of 12 UK CSAs¹ show **an average revenue of approximately £33,000 per hectare, per year**. By contrast, by Year 6, Pear Tree Farm projects a revenue of £131,685 from 0.8 hectares², **which is equivalent to £164,600 per hectare per year** (see Figure 1).

Such a stark divergence from real-life benchmarks, on one of the most fundamental parts of the business model, **raises serious questions about the reliability of the plan**. As the operating margins are very slim for Pear Tree Farm (as they are for most CSAs), this level of overestimation would be hard to mitigate.

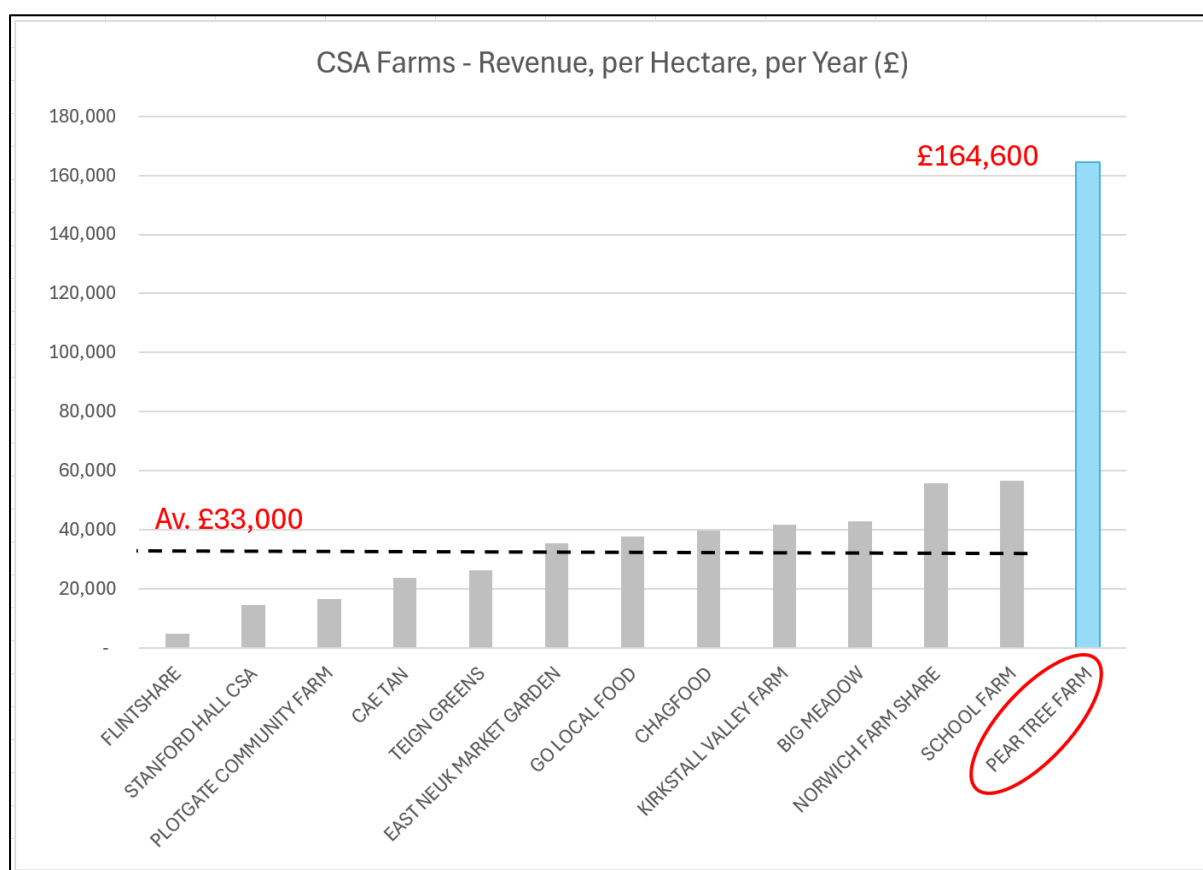


Figure 1- Actual Revenue per Hectare, per year (£) for 12 established CSA farms Vs. Pear Tree Farm's Forecasted Revenue by Year 6 (Source: CSA Network UK - <https://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/case-studies/>)

¹ Published by the UK's main reference body – the CSA Network UK (<https://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/case-studies/>)

² P.33, Pear Tree Community Farm Business Plan - 6th July 2026 (the figure £131,685 is the total projected revenue for produce grown on site – i.e. 'Veg sales (own)', 'Others (flowers/herbs/seeds)', and 'Wholesale' – in Year 6)

Overheads

It also seems probable that some of overheads have been *underestimated*. A main example is **the cost of water**. The business plan states that mains water is the primary water source for irrigation³, yet it does not account for the annual charge from Wessex Water. According to the current agricultural water rates⁴ the cost would range from a **highly conservative estimate of £13,000 a year, up to £20,000+**, if the summer is hot and dry⁵.

There are other substantial oversights in the business model, but just these two examples demonstrate that the foundations of the plan may not be secure.

Point 2 - The proposal locks in permanent change on a highly uncertain model

This is not a modest, low-impact or easily reversible proposal. **It combines an apparently optimistic operating model with the permanent purchase of the land, the erection of substantial buildings and hardstanding, and the removal and opening-up of an ancient hedgerow in a highly sensitive location.** Wiltshire Council's own pre-application response has already questioned whether the cumulative floorspace proposed is excessive for a market garden of this scale.

This matters because the proposal is not merely seeking permission for food-growing in principle; it is **seeking permission for a permanent physical transformation of the site before the viability of the enterprise has been demonstrated**. In planning terms, this materially compounds the viability concern set out above. Many horticultural CSA ventures operate on more flexible land arrangements — particularly rented land — allowing them to expand, contract, relocate or fail with relatively limited permanent consequence. By contrast, this proposal seeks to lock in major and potentially irreversible physical change from the outset, whilst relying on a business case that already appears to be an extreme outlier. If the farm was unable to achieve financial stability, there is a risk of closure.

In summary, this is an avoidably high-risk approach for the community: the planning harms — heritage, landscape, residential amenity and the permanent alteration of this sensitive site — would arise immediately, while the benefits relied upon to justify them would remain unsecured and uncertain.

³ P.43, Pear Tree Community Farm Business Plan - 6th July 2026

⁴ <https://businessservices.wessexwater.co.uk/retailers/wholesale-charges>

⁵ P.62, Pear Tree Community Farm Business Plan - 6th July 2026

Point 3 – Pear Tree Farm is likely to disrupt the functioning and community role of the Galleries Shop & Cafe

The Galleries Shop and Cafe are seen by the local community as a real asset, and they form an important social hub - a welcoming inclusive space in the village.

The success of this community initiative has been hard won over 17 years of operation, balancing the demands of running a financially sustainable enterprise, with the support of dedicated volunteers, and offering good value to customers. The shop runs on tight margins, but profits are reinvested back into the community.

The proposed business plan of Pear Tree Farm will very likely disrupt the finely calibrated social enterprise of the Galleries Shop by competing on sales of produce, and may also deplete the availability of committed individuals volunteering to serve customers. Furthermore, if the farm struggles financially there may be pressure to diversify, and start offering other products - not an uncommon strategy for CSAs – which would almost certainly intensify competition with the Galleries Shop.

None of these serious risks to the Galleries Shop and Cafe has been adequately accounted for in the Pear Tree Farm Business Plan.

Point 4 - The community is being asked to make a judgement without full information of the impact

The information gap

Knowle House is the sole adjoining property to the proposed farm site. We believe it is very likely that members of the community may not be aware of the degree of impact the proposed farm development will have on the household. This lack of information might therefore influence their overall assessment of the balance of costs and benefits to the community.

We believe this could be the case because the Pear Tree Farm Business Plan doesn't provide explicit information on this subject. Also, its main illustration of the site for the proposed development only *labels* "Knowle House" but does not show our home's actual structure, its front entrance, or how the proposed buildings would sit against our boundary. Therefore, a reader working through the plan — or seeing that diagram on its own — might reasonably miss how overbearing the layout would be from the adjoining property.

The impact on Knowle House

Our family was initially supportive and engaged constructively throughout the earlier concept phase with representatives of Pear Tree Farm. However, **we were not consulted before the final site layout was published online in March 2026**. Once

published, it became clear that the submitted design had a **far more severe consequence for our household, beyond what we had understood was being initially proposed.**

The design **concentrates the farm's highest-impact elements — an 8-bay car park, turning bay, packing shed, welfare building, site entrance and a large area of hardstanding — along the western boundary of our home.** The front of our house, including the front door and driveway, is separated from this complex by only a one-metre-high fence.

Our front door faces north-north-east. Opening it, we look straight out onto the turning bay and car park, and directly at whoever happens to be standing there. This is not a view of a field of vegetable crops, and it is not a glimpsed or oblique view: the busiest part of the site sits squarely in the line of sight from our own threshold. There is no barrier to the noise of an active car park, turning area and built working environment. The main buildings are over four metres high and sit close to our boundary.

In planning terms, **this creates an overbearing impact on residential amenity.** In practical terms, it would **radically affect our privacy and day-to-day quality of life.**

Wiltshire Council's own Pre-application Response had already identified residential amenity as a material concern, alongside landscape, heritage, site-choice and scale-related concerns. In our view, those concerns remain unresolved.

We have produced the following images to better illustrate the spatial relationship between Knowle House and the proposed farm site (see Figures 2 & 3).



Figure 2 - Site Map: Proposed Farm & Knowle House

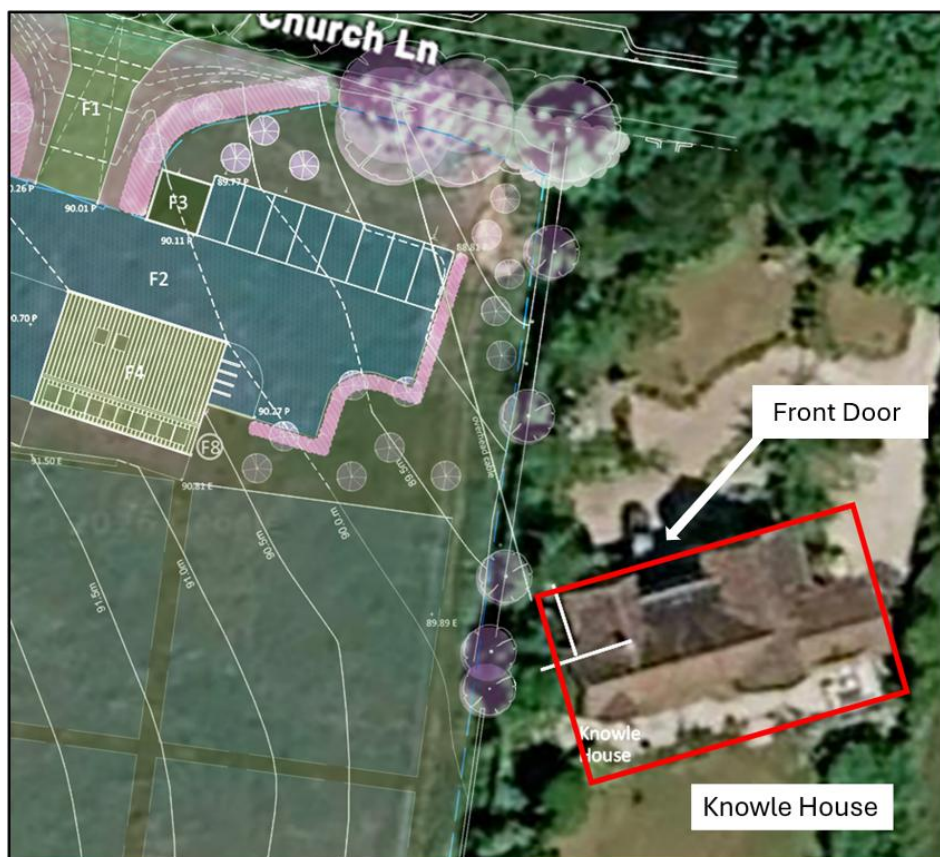


Figure 3 - Site Map: Proposed Farm & Knowle House – close up

Conclusion

This objection rests on four separate points, each of which is, on its own, a serious concern:

- The claimed benefits are not guaranteed, and particularly not proven in the business case presented.
- The proposed approach is highly risky, seeking to make permanent and difficult-to-reverse changes before the underlying business case has been shown to be viable.
- The Galleries Shop's community role and overall viability will quite probably be harmed by the Pear Tree Farm initiative.
- The burden placed on the sole adjoining household is serious and may not have been fully understood by other members of the community, when weighing their own support for the proposal.

In closing, we ask the community to review their support for the proposal in light of the points above, and we ask the Local Planning Authority to refuse this application.

Forbes Sharp on behalf of the Sharp Family

██████████ Church Lane, Freshford