



Villages Oppose Warehouses (CIC)
12 Derbyfields
North Warnborough
RG29 1HH
Company Number 14403242

Dear Hart District Council,

We are writing in response to the LCWIP Consultation on behalf of many of the residents of Hook, North Warnborough and Odiham and wish to make Hart District Council aware of a vitally important and much loved “green grid” that already connects our communities. We would like Hart District Council to recognise the importance of this route and where possible provide support in maintaining and promoting it for the benefit of future generations.

The route which we have illustrated on the attached Map allows residents and visitors to walk between Hook, North Warnborough and Odiham, along public footpaths, and tracks without having to walk alongside the busy roads in the area. It is the only off-road route between the settlements and it encourages social interaction between the communities. It provides a sense of space, particularly through the countryside within Lodge Farm which is important for the physical and mental wellbeing of residents. The route connects all three settlements with the Locally Important Employment Site at Lodge Farm which provides access to several Class E businesses, including Newlyn's Farm Shop and Café. This is located midway along the route and directly benefits from the residents and visitors using the route.

The route passes through beautiful landscapes, protected habitats, a river valley, and through two conservation areas. It runs alongside and across a rare Chalk Stream, the Basingstoke Canal and an historic Deer Park. A rich array of wildlife and plants can be seen on the route <https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/hook-common-and-bartley-heath> and <https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/blog/hiwwt/importance-chalk-streams>

The route acts as a green corridor connecting the settlements through the following locally, nationally, and internationally important sites.

Hook

Bartley Heath (Hook) a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

North Warnborough (Hampshire Village of the Year)

Bartley Heath (North Warnborough) a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Lodge Farm through which the River Whitewater flows, one of only 200 or so Chalk Streams in the entire World, and itself a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC). The Government has recently embarked on a Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy to restore and protect these incredibly rare habitats.

Newlyn's Farm Shop and Café that showcases local produce and is one of several Class E businesses at the Lodge Farm Locally Important Employment Site.

Odiham (Hampshire Village of the Year)

The Basingstoke Canal a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Conservation Area

Odiham Deer Park frequented by Henry VIII and part of a Conservation Area
 Public footpaths along the route are well established and generally signposted. They are used by Runners as well. The route also connects with a network of other public footpaths that allow users to access other local areas as well.

The route can become very muddy in Bartley Heath North and South either side of the M3 motorway and the south of the Deer Park close to the Basingstoke Canal and could benefit from improvements in this respect eg Boardwalks. More information on signposts eg directions, points of interest of which there are many, distance etc would also be welcome for the many visitors to this historic area which is the gateway to the Magna Carta Trail as well as being the location for the Hampshire Village of the Year.

In light of the immense value this “green grid” holds for our communities, we would urge you to recognise its importance and help us to safeguard the heritage, biodiversity, and quality of life in this area for the generations to come. We have attached a list of petitioners from Hook, North Warnborough and Odiham who are in support of this request.

Sincerely,

David, David and Sally
 Directors of Villages Oppose Warehouses

