

Draft Local Plan Response

Glennis Turrell (district resident)

I am strongly opposed to the following three proposals and wish that they be removed, in full, from the plan:

R1 (Cooting Farm)

R2 (Aylesham South)

R22 (Land west of Cooting Lane and South of Station Road)

We have lost 97% of our beautiful lowland and meadows in England and Wales since 1930. And the loss goes on. Recent reports show that over the last fifty years, 56% of our wild plants and animals have declined and 15% are at risk of disappearing altogether. Much of this has been due to intensive agriculture, but built development continues to be a major contributor. This has reduced the space left for wildlife and disrupted ecological processes.

Working closely with the RSPB, Birdlife International, The Wildlife Trusts, The Woodland Trust, British Hedgehog Preservation Society and the PTES, I strongly oppose the new housing developments proposed for Adisham. The protection of all forms of Wildlife are paramount, with absolute serious debate and consideration needed.

PRESERVATION OF ALL HEDGEROWS

- Hedgerows are one of the most easily encountered Wildlife habitats found lining our roads, railway, and footpaths, bordering our fields and gardens.
- They are a vital feature in our landscape. They give clean air, capture carbon, reduce flooding and give clues to our historic land management.
- Many planted as boundary lines around farms, fields and gardens are historically important.
- They are teeming with wildlife providing landscape connectivity and make immense contribution to biodiversity decline and tackling climate change.
- Hedges are important Wildlife habitat in their own right - as the most widespread semi-natural habitat supporting a large variety of flora and fauna.
- They provide shelter and with flowers, berries and nuts provide vital food for invertebrates, birds and mammals.
- Harvest mice and hedgehogs nest and feed in our hedgerows, alongside our many species of birds including blue tit, yellow hammer, bullfinch, tree sparrow and white throat.
- The Soprano Pipistrelle Bat also use them as commuter routes for foraging and resting.
- As well as providing food and shelter, our hedgerows help species move through our landscape from one habitat patch to another. These wildlife corridors are vital for species like the hazel dormouse which struggles to cross large open areas of our farmed fields.
- The White Throat are Summer migrants to the UK - flying all the way from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to breed here. The first birds tend to arrive in April, with the last leaving in early October. They will be found in open habitats with plenty of low vegetation like shrubs, bushes and brambles. They are common in hedgerows and occasionally rest in woodland areas.

They have been sighted in Adisham and seen in our gardens that are rich with plants and vegetation for wildlife, along with many other species : Blue tit, Great tit, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Coal tit, Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Blackbird, Gold crest, Wren, Robin, Dunnock, Starling, Carrion Crow, Pied Wagtail, Treecreeper, Collared Dove, Magpie, Raven, Tawny Owl, Little Owl, Long-eared Owl and Geese.

- Birds are the most crucial species to the Global Eco System. **THEY MUST BE PROTECTED AT ALL COSTS.**
- They have value culturally, artistically, philosophically and economically.
- Beyond this they play a huge roll in our precious eco system and as such, life on this planet.
- They control pests, clean up waste and spread seeds.
- Around 5% of plants humans use for food or medicine are pollinated by birds.

- THREATS; 118,000 MILES OF HEDGEROWS have disappeared since 1950 due largely to interference of agriculture. The loss has slowed since the 1990s, but neglect, damage and removal remain significant threats.
- Our management of our hedgerows in Adisham needs to be standardised : - Agricultural chemicals spread right up to the hedge foot and heavy or badly timed cutting can lead to physical damage and reduce the benefits to our wildlife and people within our community.
- Many existing hedgerows in Adisham will be lost, along with environmental stewardship land at the edge of arable fields.

Our Iconic HEDGEHOG now on THE RED LIST FOR EXTINCTION

This beautiful wildlife mammal is cited throughout the village and cared for by many residents, ensuring their safety and that there are undisturbed habitats for them to rest shelter and forage for their natural foods.

- Tragically the numbers are down by half in rural areas due to loss and damage of suitable habitat such as woodland and hedgerows. The use of pesticides on farmland and in gardens and increasing developments are all contributing factors. All contributing to deprivation of food and shelter.
- We need to ensure their safety and survival and at present the British Hedgehog Preservation Society is consulting with conservationists and developers to ensure provision is made with new building developments, providing safe highways for the hedgehogs to travel through gardens and hedgerows to find shelter and food. This bill will be going through Parliament very shortly.
- The increased traffic will make the environment far less safe for hedgehogs.
- WE SEEK TO PROVIDE COMPLETE PROTECTION AND FREEDOM FOR THIS ICONIC WILD ANIMAL

OUR COMMUNITIES HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Connecting with Wildlife is important for us all, keeping us emotionally, psychologically and physically healthy. Our relationship with nature - how much we notice, think about, and the appreciation of the soundscapes that are provided by our rich wildlife, is critical for our health and wellbeing.

This is the “growth” we need to maintain and to “develop” for all in our village.