

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STOP THIS?

IMPORTANT: log your objection to this planning application (WD/2022/1637/MEA) with Wealden District Council **before 28th August.**

You can do this on Wealden DC's website, or by emailing: Planning@wealden.gov.uk quoting the above reference.

Attend Uckfield Town Council's Plans Committee on:

12th September @ 7pm: Weald Hall, Uckfield Civic Centre

Consider putting the following points into your objection:

- 1) Your personal history of this piece of countryside
- 2) Concerns that this will set a precedent for development of the countryside between Maresfield and Uckfield
- 3) Concerns about increased traffic through the two towns
- 4) Concerns about the impact on this irreplaceable ancient woodland and the wildlife within it from fragmentation. Only 2% of woodland in UK is classed as ancient woodland and it can be as rich in biodiversity as tropical rainforest. It is impossible to mitigate against the loss of this habitat and the damage this development will cause
- 5) Concerns about the watercourse of Shortbridge stream; fear of pollution and the impact on Lake Wood lake

If you would like more detailed guidance on how to frame an objection, or would like to help the Downlands Action Group, please email savedownlands@gmail.com

Please also join the [Save Downlands Farm](#) Facebook group



The seriously endangered hazel dormouse is threatened by the fragmenting of this landscape.

SAVE DOWNLANDS FARM.

PUT THE EARTH FIRST.



Drone shot illustrating the grassland and unbroken woodland of the Downlands Farm site. Any plan to build on this site will result in irreversible fragmentation of an irreplaceable habitat.

**SAY 'NO' TO 424 HOUSES
ON OUR BEAUTIFUL
COUNTRYSIDE.**

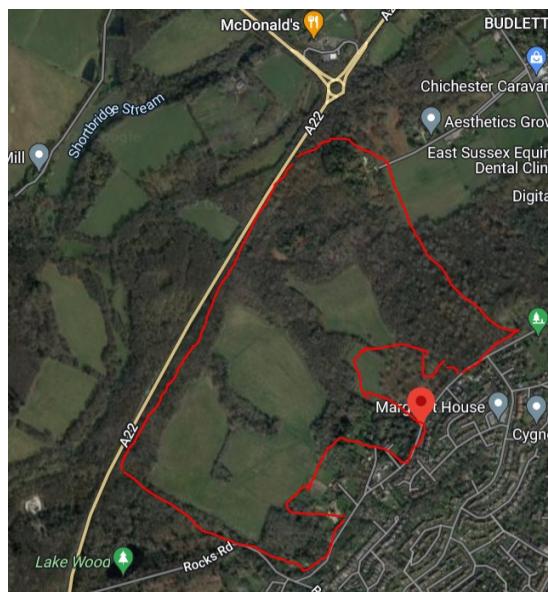
WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Despite a detailed planning inquiry in 2009 concluding that it should never be built on, the countryside between Uckfield & Maresfield is under threat from a major planning application. The proposed development of 424 houses will occupy the ridge to the west of Snatts Road and will border the beautiful Lake Wood, a Local Wildlife Site and Local Geological Site.

Developers plan to build two access roads to the site known as Downlands Farm; one leading from a new roundabout on the A22, through regenerating ancient woodland, the other running from Snatts Road to a new car park. There is no plan for infrastructure, such as schools or GP surgeries, in the planning application. There are already over 1000 houses planned for Uckfield and Maresfield, which have not yet been built.



Aerial view of Lake Wood showing proposed development site to the north. Courtesy of Woodland Trust & Daniel York Photography.



Map showing approx. site boundary. © Google

WHAT MAKES THIS SITE SO SPECIAL?

Wildlife: Downlands Farm and Lake Wood are home to over 70 species of birds, including skylarks, kingfishers and curlew; mammals e.g. badgers, foxes, dormice, deer, voles, shrews; 14 species of dragonfly and over 150 different moths and butterflies. The site is also home to endangered hazel dormice, bats, such as the Barbastelle (scarce in Sussex), rare invertebrates, reptiles, and ponds of SSSI-equivalent quality for amphibians. These species thrive because they occupy an unbroken wildlife corridor between Lake Wood and the Malling Budletts medieval common; enabling unfettered movement for foraging, feeding and breeding wildlife.

Landscape: the site consists of fields formed from old grasses and hay meadows, surrounded by irreplaceable ancient woodland, including rare wet woodland, and sandstone rock outcrops. The landscape contains systems of 'ghylls', headwater streams and rivulets that flow as a freshwater ecosystem to nearby Shortbridge Stream (a Salmonid and Cyprinid stream; part of the migration stream for UN Critically Endangered European Eels and a trout spawning habitat). Water from the fields permeates through sandstone and peat, giving this rare peat-fed lake its noticeable black colour.

History: these proposals also threaten a piece of Uckfield history: the carriage drive, dating back to around the 1790's, which ran from Lake Wood to the common of Malling Budletts at Budletts Common, taking in the Mesolithic rock shelters, lake and beautiful woodland. This was the creation of the Streatfeild family who occupied 'The Rocks' (now Buckswood Grange - a Grade II listed building), who modelled Lake Wood in line with the Picturesque school of landscaping inspired by William Gilpin, and is still visible today.