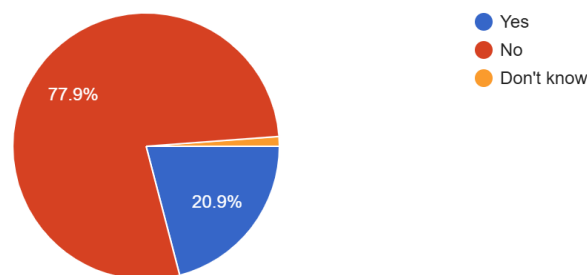


Summaries of Concern and Support

Headline results:

Do you agree that the Ford Farm site should be included in the Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan, following its reclassification by AECOM as ‘Amber’ (“potentially suitable for development if constraints can be resolved and mitigated”)

86 responses



Summary of Public Concerns about the Ford Farm Housing Allocation

This document summarises the main categories of concern raised by residents in response to the proposal to allocate the Ford Farm field for development towards the indicative target of 20 homes for Harberton. The comments reflect widespread anxiety about the environmental, infrastructural, and social impact of the scheme.

1. Flooding and Drainage

Flooding is the most frequently cited concern. Residents fear that hard surfacing from new homes will increase surface water runoff, raising flood risk for lower parts of the village already affected by flooding. Many reference serious events in September 2023 and 2024, with some homes now uninsurable. The village drainage system and stream capacity are described as inadequate, and attenuation ponds are viewed as insufficient to mitigate risk. Downstream flooding in Harbertonford and along the Harbourne River is also feared.

2. Sewage and Wastewater Infrastructure

The sewage treatment works (STW) is widely believed to be over capacity, frequently overflowing into the stream. Residents describe raw sewage and sanitary waste being deposited along stream banks. Concerns extend to the management of any proposed private sewage treatment works (PSTW) — including who will maintain it, fund it, and ensure compliance. South West Water is not expected to provide upgrades before 2029, and pollution of the watercourse is viewed as an ecological threat.

3. Highways, Access, and Traffic Safety

Many objectors highlight that access roads are narrow, single-track, and without pavements, creating risks for pedestrians and vehicles. Visibility is poor at proposed junctions, and construction traffic is expected to cause congestion and damage. Residents stress that new homes will inevitably bring more cars due to the lack of local services, worsening congestion and road safety.

4. Infrastructure and Services

Harberton is described as an isolated settlement with limited facilities — no shop, school, or café, and only an infrequent bus service. Existing infrastructure such as drainage, parking, and utilities are said to be struggling already. Respondents question whether the village can sustain further growth.

5. Character, Heritage, and Landscape Impact

Many residents emphasise that the Ford Farm field contributes to the historic and rural character of Harberton. It lies close to a Grade I listed church and the conservation area, and development here would alter the village's traditional Devon appearance. Loss of Devon banks and hedgerows for access is viewed as damaging to both heritage and ecology.

6. Ecology and Environmental Impact

The site is regarded as an ecologically valuable green space, likely to host wildlife and support biodiversity. Concerns include loss of natural habitat, impact on ecological corridors, and pollution from surface runoff and sewage overflow affecting the stream environment.

7. Housing Need and Affordability

Several respondents argue that local housing demand is low, with existing homes selling slowly. They also question whether the proposed development would provide genuinely affordable homes for local people. Alternative sites nearer Totnes or better-served locations are suggested as more appropriate.

8. Process and Planning Concerns

Respondents note that AECOM's 'amber' classification indicates unresolved constraints. Many express distrust of the planning process, fearing that approval here could set a precedent for further development ('ribbon development') and permanently alter the village. Some feel pressured to accept building simply because national targets demand it.

Summary Table of Key Issues

Category	Main Concerns	Frequency (approx.)
Flooding & Drainage	Increased flood risk; runoff; existing flooding	★★★★★
Sewage & Wastewater	Overcapacity; pollution; no upgrades	★★★★★
Roads & Traffic	Narrow lanes; safety; no footpaths	★★★★★
Infrastructure & Services	Lack of amenities; isolation	★★★★
Character & Heritage	Visual harm; loss of Devon village feel	★★★★
Ecology & Environment	Wildlife loss; pollution	★★★
Housing Need & Affordability	Low demand; not affordable	★★★
Planning & Process	'Amber' rating; precedent; lack of trust	★★★

N.B. I have starred the frequency of comments (all on the same themes) here as there were more respondents to sum up than in the 'Support' category. I haven't done this in the next table as the frequency and quantity of comments was less.

Summary of Support for Ford Farm Housing Allocation

This document summarises positive and conditionally supportive responses to the proposed allocation of land at Ford Farm to go towards meeting Harberton's indicative target of 20 homes. Comments have been grouped by theme to show the main reasons residents support the scheme, as well as the conditions they believe are essential, but also encompass concerns attached to development.

1. Conditional Support

Supporters agree to the development provided key conditions are met regarding flood risk, sewerage capacity, design quality, and infrastructure improvements.

- Flooding and drainage systems must include effective SUDS and attenuation measures to protect lower parts of the village.
- Sewerage and wastewater infrastructure must be upgraded before homes are occupied.
- Homes should meet high standards for energy efficiency, design, and outdoor space.
- Traffic calming and safe pedestrian access should be implemented.
- Example comments:
 - "IF there is adequate provision for both the sewerage burden and flood mitigation."
 - "Infrastructure required MUST be addressed BEFORE new builds become occupied."
 - "A SUDS scheme to handle rainwater runoff and contribution to upgrade the village sewerage plant."

2. Support Focused on Affordable Housing

Many respondents support the Ford Farm site specifically because it can deliver affordable housing for local people, helping sustain the community.

- Calls for a high proportion of affordable homes (30–90%).
- Desire to prioritise local people and first-time buyers.
- Recognition that affordable homes would help young families stay in the area.
- Seen as key to maintaining a vibrant, balanced community.
- Example comments:
 - "90% affordable housing, please."
 - "All affordable please."
 - "In theory I'm in favour of new housing especially 'affordable' and designated for local, first-time buyers."

3. Support Linked to the Neighbourhood Plan

Some residents view Ford Farm as the most suitable site in line with the Neighbourhood Plan, citing consultation, sustainability, and planning consistency.

- Confidence in the AECOM reclassification from green to amber.
- Belief that Ford Farm is the natural place for development, avoiding the village centre.
- Support for bringing the Neighbourhood Plan to referendum after delays.
- Example comments:
 - “This seems the best site all things considered.”

4. Support for Village Sustainability and Renewal

Several supporters see new housing as vital to maintaining the village’s long-term sustainability and preventing demographic decline.

- No new homes have been built in decades.
- Falling population numbers threaten the local school and services.
- New homes could help attract younger families and balance the age profile.
- Example comments:
 - “The village needs to provide more housing — nothing new has been built for over 40 years.”
 - “Falling population numbers will have a negative impact on our local school.”

Summary Table of Supportive Themes

Category of Support	Core Message	Representative Comments
Conditional Support	Support if key issues (flooding, sewerage, design, traffic) are addressed.	“If there is adequate provision...”
Affordable Housing	Support due to need for affordable homes for local families and first-time buyers.	“90% affordable housing please.”
Neighbourhood Plan Alignment	Seen as the right site, consistent with local planning aims and consultation.	“This seems the best site all things considered.”
Village Sustainability	Development viewed as essential to keep the village community vibrant and viable.	“Nothing new built for 40 years.”