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Re Planning application WD/2022/1637/MEA, appeal reference APP/C1435/W/23/3321978, Land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield. Gleeson Land and John Alison Land and Research Ltd A Hybrid planning application for the demolition of Chicory Cottage and associated outbuildings, and the development of up to 424 residential dwellings, the creation of a Strategic Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), along with the provision of open space and associated access, parking, landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks

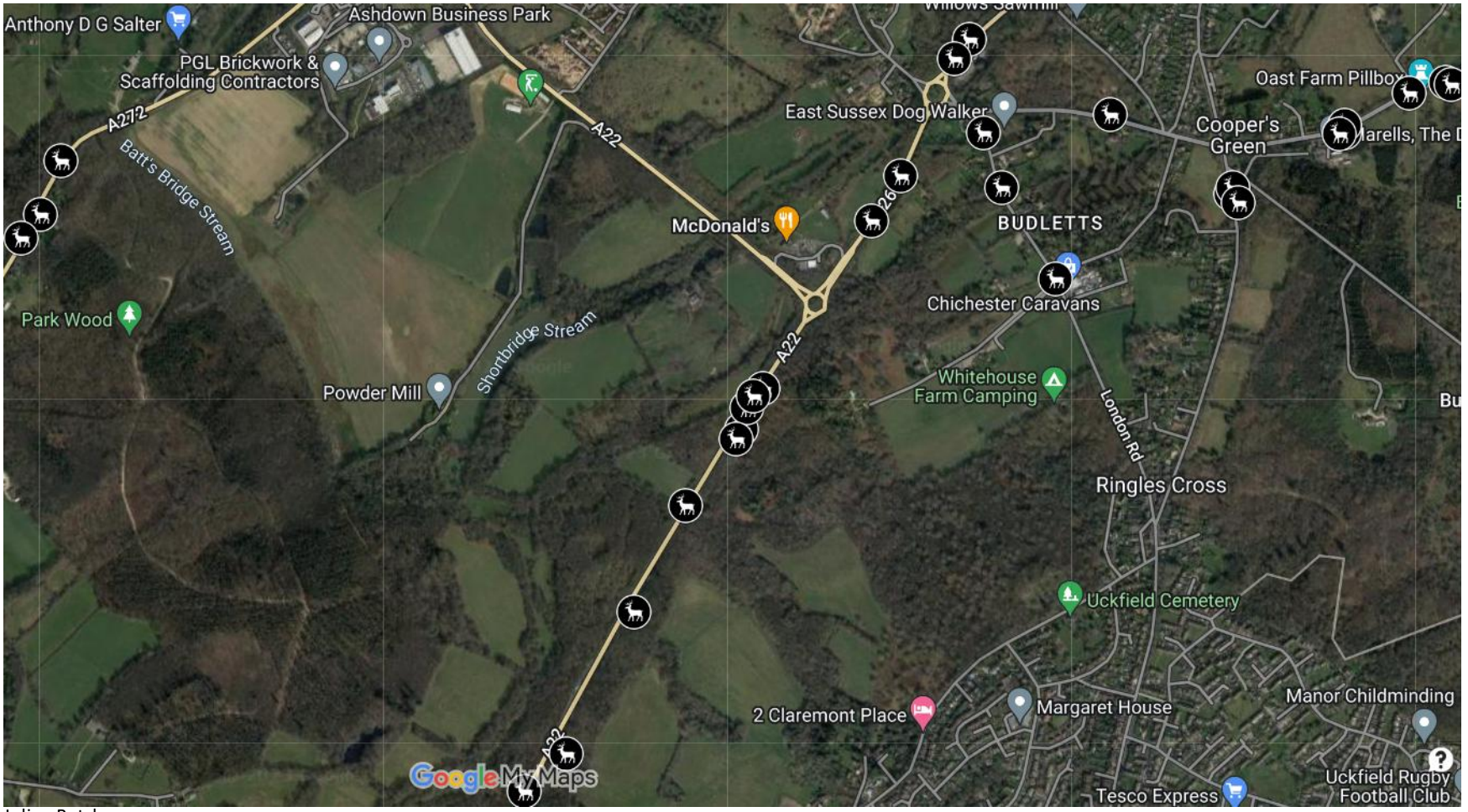
Downlands Farm – Proposed Development – Impact Assessment on Wild Deer Population by Julian Butcher – Deer Warden

The area highlighted for development has for a number years sustained a healthy population of primarily the Fallow Deer species.
In my 5 years as a Deer Warden I have attended multiple Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVC's) from the Blackdown to Copwood roundabout, A22 (see Fig 1 of 2023 DVC's in enclosed)
With each DVC the A22 can be closed until the deer has been dispatched and or vehicle wreckage cleared, there is also the high risk of human DVC injuries, from what I have been witnessed to and according to my records there have been 3 injuries to motorists this year (2023) at this location.
The Fallow deer that reside in this area can be found regularly in any of the fields and woodlands within the development boundary. I estimate conservatively the number range from 150 to 250 deer.

Impact on Deer Population by Development

1. The deer become displaced and restricted in the area they have become accustomed to roaming within, this will result in further DVC's on a main north south trunk road.
2. Deer are ruminant animals, it's means by definition they require quiet wildlife-rich refuges and corridors that give safe places for them to feed, move and rest during the day. Failure for them to find these areas means they travel farther and will traverse highways and in doing so gives rise the increased risk in DVC incidents.
3. Developments completed within high density deer areas have resulted in deer subsequently venturing into those residential areas due to their restricted 'green' roaming area – A case in point is the new Alphington housing development near Swindon whereby it's now common sight to see Fallow deer walking the residential streets and entering the school grounds.
4. I note with interest the inclusion of a SANG within this development plan, whilst this is a good idea for some wildlife species it most certainly will not work well for deer (in a natural sense) By definition deer are constantly looking for predators (despite man being their only predator in the UK) and as such, will so far as possible never interact with humans (unless fed, such as the aforementioned Alphington project). So with regards to the SANG proposal the mix of humans (e.g. dog walkers) and wildlife such as deer is a great on paper, the reality is that the two will not co-habit naturally which should be the default position.
5. The planting of shrubs and saplings along the road side edge (eg Ridgwood development, A22) simply provides a 'magnet' to deer, post the aforementioned project I was being called to this stretch of the A22 at least three times a week. Any planting of any kind needs to be considered carefully with inclusion from experts in deer management.

* I am in a team of 25x Wardens, anyone of them can be called to this area should I not be available and then we must therefore consider that my summary of DVC's is probably a lot more. It is also the case that a large number go unreported
Fig.1



Julian Butcher
Deer Warden
[redacted]