

Planning Department  
Chichester District Council  
East Pallant House  
1 East Pallant  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1TY

7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

To whom it may concern

RE: Worker accommodation - South Downs Holiday Village, Bracklesham Lane  
East Wittering, Chichester West Sussex, PO20 8JE

Roundstone Nurseries Ltd. and its group members operate out of multiple sites covering 100 acres of production and distribution in the Chichester area with a further 100 acres in outlying areas.

Our requirement for seasonal labour is critical for us to be able to supply our customers and to keep our businesses running twelve months of the year.

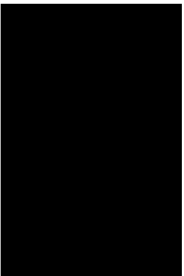
We employ over 100 permanent employees and through the months of February through to the end of June our labour requirements increase to up to a further 300 workers. It is impossible for us to source this volume of workers locally and we therefore rely heavily on the services provided by ProForce.

The Group has built a strong working relationship with Proforce, over the years we have worked hard to attract workers from the local community to no avail and have instead continued to rely solely on the migrant labour workforce. Many workers who live here all year round have properties in the area but with the South Coast having a shortage of rental properties, it is one of the most expensive areas to reside in the UK. Therefore, the holiday park in Bracklesham Bay seems to be the ideal solution to help support the additional workers the businesses in the area require. The holiday park is an existing infrastructure with facilities that far exceed one of the alternative solutions of caravans. It is central to not only Roundstone Nurseries but many other businesses in the surrounding area who, if they do not maintain their labour supply, will have crops that will fail and customer orders will not be fulfilled. This could have a devastating effect on our industry.

As Brexit fast approaches we face many challenges, sourcing the supply of labour being high on the list. There is a clear business requirement to maintain the additional labour requirements in the Arun area and we therefore put forward our support for Proforce to continue with the use of the previously derelict holiday camp in Bracklesham Bay.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Kind regards



Sarah-Jane Milbourn  
Group HR Manager

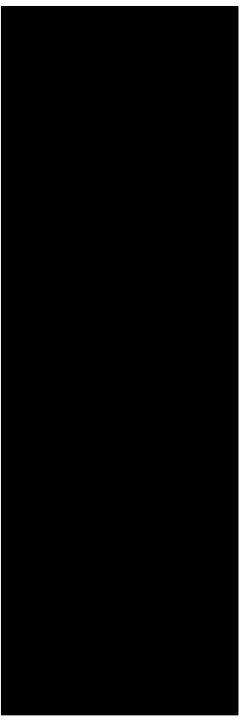
For:



Company ID:



GROWING SINCE 1920



To: Chichester District Council

Reference: The availability of accommodation for seasonal workers

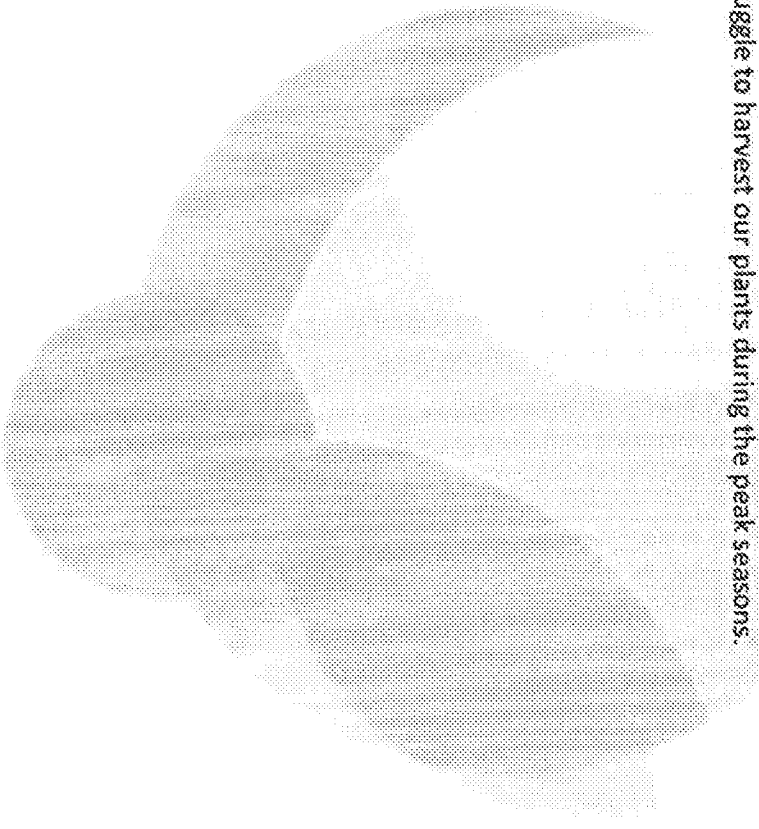
In light of recent challenges finding staff Hill Brothers are keen to highlight the need to increase the availability of accommodation for seasonal horticultural workers in the Chichester area.

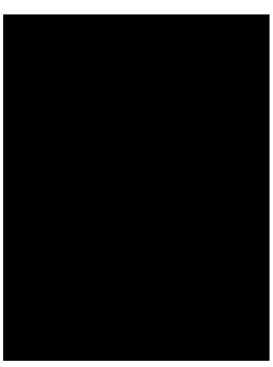
Our business employs an average of 80 people through the year of which 34 are seasonal. Over the last few years, we have found that the recruitment of seasonal labour has become increasingly more difficult. There are a number of factors effecting this, high employment levels across Europe, Sterling devaluation and concern over Brexit.

In order that we are able to continue to operate our business effectively it is imperative that we address this shortfall in good quality affordable accommodation. This ensures that workers can earn a good level of pay and are encouraged to come and work in this country. Without seasonal labour, we will struggle to harvest our plants during the peak seasons.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hill





FAO: Jeremy Bushell  
Planning Department  
Chichester District Council  
East Pallant House  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1TY

10/08/2017

Dear Sirs,

**Letter of support for planning application reference 17/01722/FUL – Change of use of a former holiday park to agricultural workers accommodation and associated works for a temporary period until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

We write to you on behalf of Landlink Estates Ltd and Langmead Farms Ltd to support the above application submitted by the applicant Mr Matthew Brown on behalf of Pro Force Ltd.

We own and operate two worker accommodation sites within the Chichester District being Home Farm, Selsey and River Farm, Petworth. Additionally we have two further sites within the Arun District, one of which is occupied by workers employed by Pro-Force.

From our direct experience of having Pro-Force occupy one of our static caravan sites we can see that they have invested considerably in the facilities available. They ensure the site is well maintained, clean, tidy and presentable. They have wardens employed directly to manage the site, caravans and people as a shared job responsibility with at least one being a live-in position.



The site itself is attended on a daily basis by a supervisor and up to 2-3 times a week by Facilities and Operations Managers. The regular attendance of site ensures that employees residing on the site have continuous contact with the management and that any issues and concerns are addressed. Furthermore, I am aware that Pro-Force along with other industry counterparts have to partake in a number of external audits which assess the accommodation standards. The audits are undertaken by businesses employing Pro-Force to provide labour, supermarket audit standards, Association of Labour Providers, SEDEX Ethical Audit, HMO audits as well as a number of other industry governing standards which must be complied with in order to maintain labour contracts.

Mini buses are operated from the site on a regular basis to ensure that workers are able to visit local grocery stores, appointments with GP, inductions, training, places of work etc. In addition a number of occupants have their own methods of travel with their own cars, bikes and walking. Where residents do travel by car often it is usually as car share with groups of friends and family travelling together, which is consistent with our own experiences at Selsey.

A commercial waste contract is in place with Veolia to manage recycling and general waste. Local contractors such as Caravan, Gas and Boat Services Ltd are used to maintain facilities on the site

It is my understanding that the same principals of management and procedure are in place for the application site and is consistent with other operators.

From walking the site with Pro-Force we have seen firsthand the investment they have already made using local contractors to restore the chalet and hotel rooms.. The facilities available on site offer a good opportunity for social amenity and games facilities both internally and externally. It is important that the site is able to create a sense of community and inclusion and allow all residents who will be working various working patterns which can include daytime, evening, weekend shift patterns to have access to amenity services at any time.

From our close working relationships with a wide array of local businesses in the horticultural, agricultural, viticulture and food processing industries we are acutely aware of the severe shortfall and availability of both affordable housing and housing or accommodation facilities specifically for workers. Workers are often unable to meet the referencing or guarantor criteria for market let houses, with flexible hours, minimum

deposits and unknown length of stays. Where accommodation caravan sites are known to take workers there can be a significant contrast in accommodation standards and facilities available which may be unsuitable.

The nature of employment within these industries has changed within the last 5-10 years as a result of price pressure from retailers placing downward price pressure on local businesses to drive down costs and achieve greater efficiencies. As a result the industry relies much more on agency labour providers such as Pro-Force to provide specialized and skilled labour for the exact hours, days and weeks that are needed.

Therefore workers employed by agencies are not directly linked to any one holding, may be employed across multiple industries with a fresh produce or processing focus and may not be linked to any particular season. Traditionally planning applications have been granted to landowners, employing their own labour working on a particular farm, this is an dated concept which sees many existing sites restricted in the accommodation provision they can offer and is a gap in local planning policy.

The concept of worker accommodation being seasonal is also a dated theory. The vine viticulture industry requires pruning works during winter months, field work and planting can start in March through to September, horticultural irrigation and harvest can start from April through to November, arable harvest needs can start in June/July, groundwork and field preparation and maintenance can be year round. Production needs fluctuate year round peaking over public holidays such as Christmas. In essence there is year round demand for short term labour.

From our knowledge of other local businesses there are not enough alternative accommodation sites available for housing workers in caravans, hostels, holiday parks or as a new development. Our accommodation site at Home Farm, Selsey is occupied by individuals employed by labour agencies and has experienced an average occupancy year to date of 82% with the last 7 weeks being 91%. We are currently operating a waiting list for bed spaces and would be unable to take large quantities of people or block bookings.

The other sites under our control are also at maximum occupancy.

We have recently submitted representations to Chichester District Council as part of the HELAA consultation where we proposed a number of sites that could form part of the Council's strategy and policy for providing worker accommodation. In the short term the

application site would fall within the saved policies of the Chichester Local Plan (first Review) to 2006 (adopted 1999) where Policy RE1 and BE11 deal with new development in the rural area.

This application would not be detrimental to local community by way of scale, design, siting or layout. If the site was not occupied and used by the occupant the harm and impact on the neighbouring community would be harmful. The site would remain empty and void whilst development plans were drawn up allowing the site to become derelict and fall further into dis-repair increasing the risk of theft and arson to the site. An unoccupied site would also have negative impact on the use of community leisure and retail services where the proposed use would have a positive and supportive effect in this regard to support rural and seaside communities. The provision of on-site services would complement those offered locally and allow those working anti-social shifts to access amenity.

The NPPF under paragraph 28 also allows that planning policy support economic growth in rural areas to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. This further supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF also promotes sustainable development in rural areas.

The application made by the applicant is for a temporary use of a site that encourages local employment in the district in a sustainable, existing settlement by converting/re-using existing buildings whilst emerging policy and strategy is consulted on. This application should be supported and meets the spirit of the saved local plan and NPPF to benefit and support all types of business operating locally in the rural economy.

Please accept our letter of support in consideration of this application.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Randall MRICS  
Estates Manager, Landlink Estates Ltd

**Reference: The availability of accommodation for seasonal workers**

We write in support of the statement that there is currently a shortfall in the supply of accommodation for seasonal labour in the Chichester area.

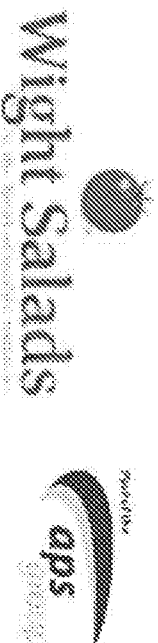
Our business employs an annual average of 140 staff of which 50 are seasonal. We have, over the past few years, but particularly this year noticed that the recruitment of seasonal workers has become more difficult. We believe that this is down to higher employment levels both in the UK and Europe, Sterling devaluation and the concern over Brexit.

To ensure that we are able to pack our product and remain competitive in the global market we believe that it is imperative that we are able to provide accommodation of a high standard at a price that ensures that the workers "take home" pay is at a level that attracts them to our country.

Without our seasonal labour, we would not be able to harvest our Tomato crop or pack it for onward distribution around the UK.

Yours sincerely

Simon Micholls  
Operations Director



**WS  
GA**

**West Sussex Growers' Association**

*(Specialist Branch of the National Farmers' Union)*

Hollyacre, Newlands Nursery, Pagham Road, Lagoon, Chichester,  
West Sussex PO20 1LL

To: Chichester District Council

6<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Subject: Horticultural Industry – Workers Accommodation

Dear Chichester District Council,

West Sussex Growers' Association (WSGA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on issues concerning the availability of accommodation for horticultural workers in the Chichester area.

The local Horticulture Industry produces over £1billion of food and plants each year and employs more than 8,000 FTEs. It is the largest employer in the CDC area.

Due mainly to extraordinarily high employment levels in the region, the recruitment of local workers has become more difficult in recent years. Higher employment levels elsewhere, the devaluation of sterling and the concern over Brexit is also making it more difficult to attract workers from further afield. It is essential therefore that everything is done to attract new workers to the Chichester area, including the provision of good standards of accommodation.

In order to ensure that our members are able to operate their businesses efficiently, and remain competitive in the global market, we believe that it is imperative that accommodation of a good standard and at a reasonable cost is available for the workforce.

WSGA fully supports CDC and applicants in their endeavors to meet this overwhelming need. There are some obvious local planning solutions to this problem; including granting change of use for redundant holiday accommodation, the conversion of suitable farm buildings to accommodation for workers and the provision of purpose built accommodation for workers.

Members of West Sussex Growers' Association would be very pleased to discuss this issue further with Councilors and Officers of Chichester District Council.

Kind regards,

Graham Bryant

Chairman

7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

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Chichester District Council  
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PO19 1TY

Dear Sirs

**Re: Accommodation for seasonal workers**

Labour providers play a vital role in the UK economy by supplying the workforce for the consumer goods supply chain across the food processing, horticultural and wider manufacturing, industrial, warehousing and distribution sectors.

The Association of Labour Providers (ALP) is the specialist trade association representing and supporting labour providers to ensure that the provision, use and management of labour in our sectors is recognised as a model of good practice.

Seasonal labour to pick our harvest is predominantly sourced from the EU, this not being work that a significant number of UK workers wish to perform.

2017 so far is proving the most challenging year this century for the recruitment of seasonal workers – this is due to a combination of factors including increasing employment levels in the UK and Europe, a fall in the value of the pound and fears around Brexit.

The provision of good quality accommodation at a reasonable cost is essential in attracting workers to perform this essential function.

The use of a derelict holiday park to meet this need will help to meet the shortfall in this type of accommodation in the area and help serve an essential economic need.

Yours sincerely



David Camp  
Chief Executive