



**Planning Technical Note**

**Juhring and Hobbs fields, Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead**

**MSDC Planning Application ref: DM/25/2333**

**May 2026**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Technical Note has been prepared to provide further justification for the proposed development (DM/25/2223). The contents of this Technical Note are material planning considerations which support the proposal and therefore should be taken into account in the determination of the application.
- 1.2 The planning application for Juhring and Hobbs Field at Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead proposes the following development: *“Change of use of vacant land to event area for use with installation of permanent infrastructure and reinforced ground surfacing (cellular paving grid) to facilitate the erection of annual marquee structures including ground level alterations, wash block and toilets, generator enclosure and concrete ring together with the erection and dismantling of the temporary marquee structure themselves (for a total maximum period of 84 days per year) and overflow car parking for the Church and neighbouring sports clubs consisting of reinforced ground surfacing (cellular paving grid) for up to 683 car spaces (comprising up to 113 cars (Area A) for no more than 30 days per annum, 313 cars (Areas A & B) for no more than 13 days per year and up to 683 cars (Areas A, B & C) for no more than 7 days per year), construction of a new access and internal road, sustainable surface water and foul drainage provision, associated landscaping and ecological enhancements, (Amended Description, Plans, Documents)”*
- 1.3 Our view is that the proposed development does not constitute major development in the National Landscape, the case for which was set out in our Planning Statement submitted to Mid Sussex District Council on 27 February 2026. We request for the Local Planning Authority to consider the case presented to it, including referencing proposed allocations for residential development in the National Landscape, and test whether the application is a minor development in the National Landscape.

## 2. The Economic Justification for the development

- 2.1 There are substantial economic benefits which have been clearly explained and evidenced in the previously submitted reports prepared by Marshall Regen Ltd comprising:

**The Economic and Employment Impacts of the International Association of Scientologists (IAS) 2025 Annual Anniversary Event (January 2026).**

Key conclusions from this report comprise the following (these are set out in paragraphs 3.30 and 3.31 of the February 2026 Planning Statement:

- the 2025 event generated a gross positive economic impact of £6.96 million within East Grinstead, £11.3 million across Sussex (including East Grinstead), and £21.71 million nationally. Additionally, it sustains 287 gross jobs across the UK, including 92 within East Grinstead.

- The event also attracts a high proportion of international attendees (over 47%) which is higher than the UK event average at c33% as stated in the Visit Britain Business Event Delegate Survey Report, 2025 supporting local hotels, hospitality, transport services, and visitor attractions, particularly valuable given its timing in October, outside the main tourist season.

### **Economic and Employment Benefits of Short Events in Sussex and Beyond – A Comparator Report (February 2026).**

Key conclusions from this report comprise the following (these are set out in paragraph 3.32 of the February 2026 Planning Statement):

- This was a study to compare the IAS 2025 Annual Anniversary Event delegate spending against all UK events data published in the Visit Britain Business Event Delegate Survey Report, 2025, delegates attending the IAS Event spent more per trip (+ £805) and more per night (+ £149) than the average that delegates spent at all UK events. The main difference is in the much higher spending by overseas delegates at the IAS Annual Anniversary Event compared with delegates at all UK events (+ £954 per visit).

### **3. Why does the development have to take place at Saint Hill**

3.1 Although there are large economic benefits as noted in the Marshall Regen Ltd reports referred to earlier, this scheme is not primarily an economic benefit proposal. The scheme is instead, fundamentally a community benefit proposal to allow freedom of religion and belief for members of the Church of Scientology together with a significant package of local benefits.

3.2 These benefits cannot be delivered on another site because:

- The Saint Hill estate in East Grinstead is the most well-known and important location for all Scientologists around the World. It is the former home of the Church's founder, L. Ron Hubbard – and for Scientologists is considered to be the home of L. Ron Hubbard. Scientologists travel to Saint Hill to not only participate in Scientology services at the largest Scientology Church in Europe, but to see and experience where Mr Hubbard lived and where many of the most important teachings of the religion were originally written and delivered by Mr Hubbard. It is due to the significance of this location to Scientologists and to the Scientology religion, that the International Association of Scientologists (IAS) was founded there in 1984, and why the annual anniversary gathering, attended by Scientologists from all over the World, is held there every October. We refer to the details contained in both the February 2026 Design and Access Statement (see pages 4, 16 & 50) and the April 2026 Design and Access Statement (see page 4, 18 & 54). For this reason, there are no other

alternative venues (such as conference centres in Brighton or Ardingly Showground) or any other places within the UK which would be appropriate.

- There is a large community of Scientologists living in the East Grinstead area, for whom the Church at Saint Hill is their place of worship, and who greatly benefit from the opportunity that Saint Hill offers them to commune with other Scientologists from around the World – particularly in the context of the IAS Annual Anniversary celebration event
- Local community benefits in terms of the provision of parking for large scale community and charity events held at Saint Hill throughout the year.
- Necessary additional parking for the East Grinstead Rugby Club and other local sports clubs, who are immediate neighbours of the Church of Scientology on Saint Hill Road.

3.3 The only “alternative” is therefore for some of these events to continue muddling through under permitted development rights, with the associated impacts to the field and the adjoining highways from parking, or to make proper provision for them by the current application.

3.4 The nature of the proposed use and the lack of any realistic alternative also gives a strong element of exceptionality. By nature, there will be few sites of global religious significance in the National Landscape. For this reason, were planning permission to be granted, there will be no precedent set for other applications in the National Landscape.

#### **4. Limited impact on the National Landscape**

4.1 In our assessment, there is very limited harm arising from the proposed development on the National Landscape. The very limited harm is well articulated and evidenced in the previously submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Enplan and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by PJC Consultancy.

4.2 Moreover there is clear evidence of enhancements to the National Landscape contained in the proposals including:

- The removal of the irregular parking on the highway (the current impact of which is visually illustrated in the photographs on pages 32 and 33 of the April 2026 Design and Access Statement)
- The maintenance of the ground in both fields in a better and more attractive condition (the current impact is illustrated in the photographs on page 31 of the April 2026 Design and Access Statement)
- The Biodiversity Net Gain far exceeding the statutory minimum of 10%
- The provision of attractive landscaping

- The improved ability for people to access and experience the National Landscape when attending events at Saint Hill.

4.3 It is also appropriate to compare the proposals to the fallback position of temporary uses under permitted development rights. Class B of Part 4 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) permits *“The use of any land for any purpose for not more than 28 days in total in any calendar year, of which not more than 14 days in total may be for the purposes of—*

*(a) the holding of a market;*

*(b) motor car and motorcycle racing including trials of speed, and practising for these activities,*

*and the provision on the land of any moveable structure for the purposes of the permitted use.”*

4.4 This provision therefore offers the potential for 28 days use of the whole field per permitted development rights, without any of the above mitigations / enhancements. The application represents arguably a lesser level of use (as use of the whole Juhring field is restricted as per the description of development), at the very least only a minimal level of increase.

## **5. Overall balance**

5.1 Taking all the above into account, the overall balance falls clearly in favour of the grant of planning permission.

5.2 Similar considerations will apply in context of the impact on the setting of the listed building and/or conflict with parts of development plan, although the reasoning may need to be differently expressed to reflect relevant policy wording in those instances.