

Southmere Field: A Case Against Development

- **The Gap.** Southmere is a central part of the “green corridor” framing the Conservation Areas of the historic village and provides the link between the nationally- and internationally-designated sites of special scientific interest to east and west.

- **Agriculture.** Southmere is officially Grade 1 Agricultural Land, the highest designation for agricultural value. It is also **Ancient Meadow**, a highly threatened environment, which has declined by 97% since the Second World War. Southmere has not been ploughed or received artificial fertilizers at least since then, and there is no record that ploughing has ever taken place.



- **Wildlife Significance.** Southmere is a significant high tide roost for waders, notably the red-listed Curlew whose numbers have fallen nationally by 64% over the last 30 years. The British Trust for Ornithology records show Southmere with the highest numbers of Curlew anywhere on the Langstone shore. It is also regularly used by other red-listed species, Lapwing and Oystercatcher, and occasionally by Brent Geese.

- **Impact on traffic and local housing.** Any housing on this site will inevitably generate more traffic, whose only outlet is via Langstone Road, a road already heavily overloaded for long stretches of the day, not merely at rush hour. It will also greatly increase run-off: the field at present acts as a sponge, slowing run-off onto neighbouring areas and into the Langbrook. Building will lead to rapid run-off, increasing the flood risk, especially at high tide when the Langbrook cannot release the flow.

Southmere Field is currently covered by a covenant, entered into by Havant Council on behalf of the local inhabitants, specifically to preserve the gap and the meadow. THIS SHOULD NOT BE OVERTURNED as it forms an important part of the setting for Mill Lane Conservation Area and prevents coalescence with urban Havant. The reasons for it remain, and indeed are now even stronger.

**Write NOW to
andrew.biltcliffe@havant.gov.uk
Head of Planning (HBC) and
let him know your feelings!**

