Your name

Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

Address line 4

**Postcode**

**Trevor Watson**

**Director of Economy and Culture**

**Harrogate Borough Council
PO Box 787
Harrogate
HG1 2RW**

**Via email to** trevor.watson@harrogate.gov.uk

 [insert date]

Dear Mr Watson

**Re:** **Brimham Rocks Adventure Farm,**

**Fiddler’s Green Farm, Brimham Rocks Road, Harrogate HG3 3HB**

**Planning Application Number 18/04514/FUL**

We are supporters of Fiddlers Green Farm at Brimham Rocks - the Dales hill farm that won the *Yorkshire Post* Farmer of the Year award last month.

Fiddler’s Green Farm is a working farm and is also home to the Brimham Rocks Adventure Farm education centre. Brimham Rocks Adventure Farm helps to educate children under 12 – many of them from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds, or with mental and/or physical disabilities – about rural life, the farm-to-fork journey and farming. As a visitor and supporter of Brimham Rocks Adventure Farm, and the work Becky and Richard Burniston have done over the last ten years to educate children, protect and sustain agriculture within Nidderdale and support the wider Harrogate communities, we are fully aware of the difference they have made to many groups and organisations, and those who otherwise would not have the opportunities afforded them by a visit to Brimham Rocks Adventure Farm at Fiddler’s Green Farm.

Becky and Richard Burniston have a planning application lodged with your planning department [Planning Application Number 18/04514/FUL] for the retention of play equipment they put up at the farm - which is a small matter to trouble you with.

This is the second time a planning application has been lodged in this regard – the first was refused as a Delegated Decision, rather than being referred to Planning Committee in accordance with the council’s ***Scheme of Delegation*** (*Constitution – Part 3 – Responsibility for Council Functions/Planning Committee/The Planning Scheme of Delegation*).

Some of your officers think the play equipment, erected as an inadvertent breach following advice from professionals in their respective fields, has an adverse impact upon the Nidderdale AONB. We disagree.

Furthermore, these same officers want to close the farm down so that it can no longer accommodate visitors and children within the approved education centre. The ward member, Councillor Tom Watson, says he will support the referral of the application to the planning committee - but that the final decision to have the application referred rests with you.

Brimham Rocks Adventure Farm is an important facility for the district and if it is going to face the threat of closure, surely this is something that your council members should be involved in, given the high-profile impact this would have on the district in general and the planning department in particular. Please do not let officers close this facility down without a proper public debate. Even AONB-designated land need visitors!

What Becky and Richard are doing is to be commended – breaking down the barriers between rural and urban lifestyles, creating opportunities for children to learn through play and to interact with animals they would not ordinarily come into contact with. To lose this incredible facility would be travesty of justice, and this planning application deserves to be considered in an open and transparent forum.

*I urge you to refer the application to planning committee for the following reasons:*

1. The application is of a significant, controversial or sensitive nature – we understand from planning advisors that this would ordinarily require the Development Control Manager to refer the application to committee (and are aware that this did not happen when the first application was decided)

2. The scheme involves potential enforcement action, to close a well-known and popular educational facility, and could lead to the closure of an important Dales Hill Farm - the farm in question won the *Yorkshire Post* Farmer of the Year award in 2018!

3. The scheme involves the need to consider a possible departure from the Councils Development Plan policies to enable the continued operation of a well-known and highly popular education centre within a working farm

4. There are a significant number of the public who are interested in the outcome of this application and it is likely to generate significant media interest across all printed and broadcast platforms.

It is for these reasons that we request that you refer the Planning Application Number 6.66.205.J.FUL to the Planning Committee for consideration in an open forum, with the benefit of a full discussion and debate, and a considered decision by elected members.

Please advise, by return, that you are willing to make this request in respect of planning application Planning Application Number 18/04514/FUL

Yours sincerely

Your name