

Ellie Thornhill

Senior Planner Kirklees

4th May 2026

Dear Ellie,

It has come to our attention, and we feel it is only appropriate to raise it for consideration, that the field proposed for development, may not currently be being actively farmed, or may be being managed in a way that gives the appearance of reduced agricultural value. I hope this is not the case, and there may well be a legitimate explanation; however, it does seem unusual that the field appears to have been consistently and actively farmed over many years—clearly visible in imagery from 2009, 2015, 2021 and as recently as July 2025 (from google earth)—yet more recent photos suggest a noticeable change in its management and condition. (See further on in this document).





Barnsley Road View:  
May 2023



Barnsley Road View:  
July 2025



A further sequence of images from Barnsley Road, dated May 2021, August 2021, September 2021 and more recently July 2025, continues to show clear evidence of active agricultural use, with visible crop growth across the field. In addition, these views consistently reveal the presence of an enclosure wall running through the site, aligning with historic enclosure mapping which will be referenced separately. The continued visibility of both cultivated land and this long-established boundary feature reinforce the impression of ongoing, structured land management over time.



> Sep 2021

Barnsley Road 2:  
September 2021



Barnsley Road 2:  
July 2025

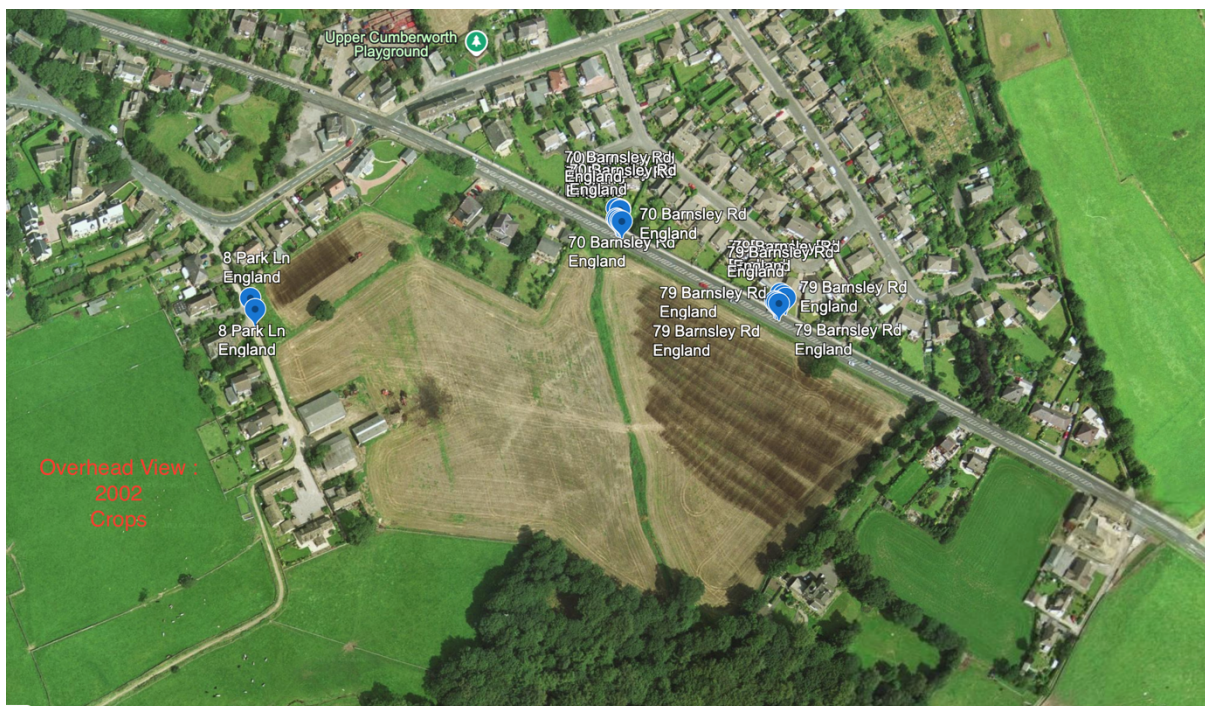


A final set of street views from Park Lane—albeit more limited in number, likely due to its nature as an agricultural track serving fields on either side—provides further supporting context. Despite the reduced coverage, these images again show clear evidence of active cultivation, along with the continued presence of the historic enclosure wall. The established landscape features, including mature vegetation within the field, further reinforce the character of a managed and historically farmed agricultural setting.

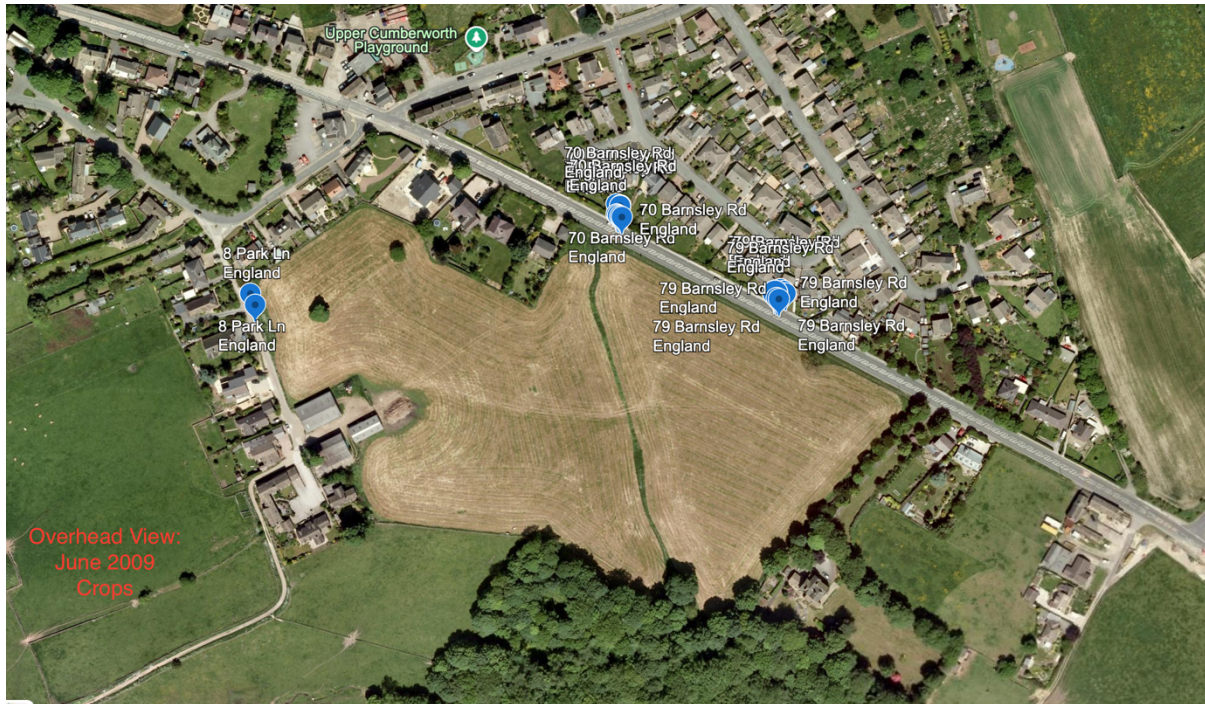


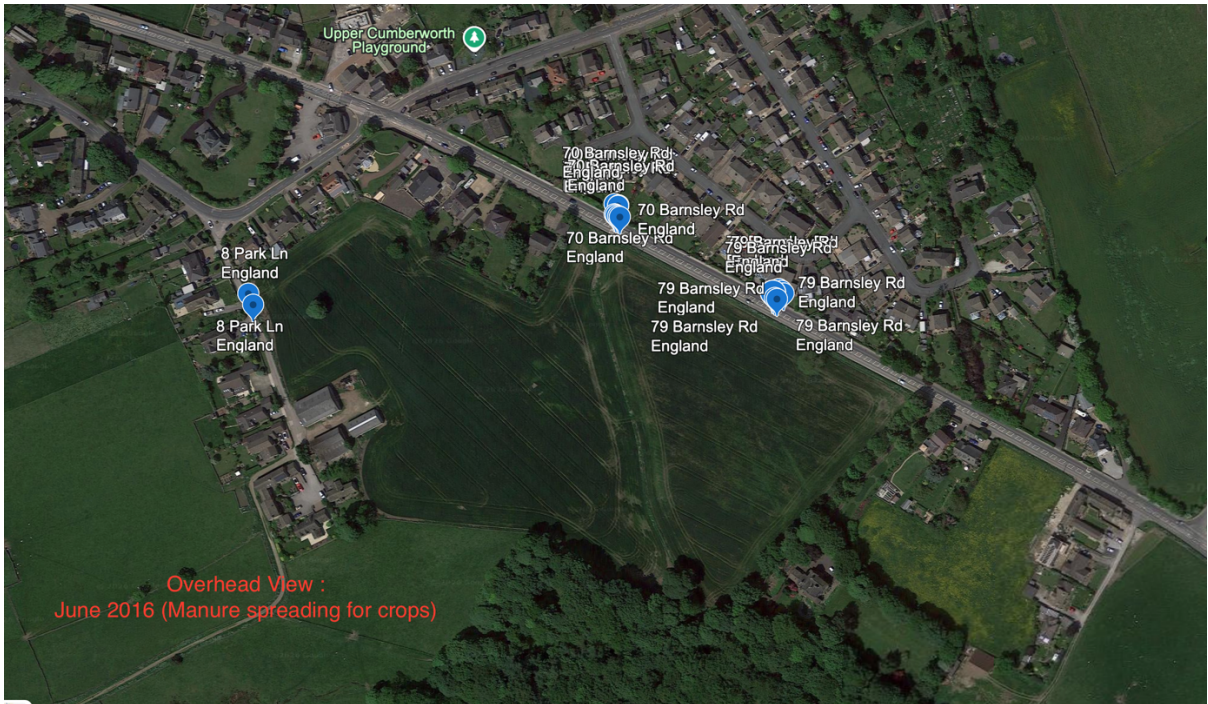
A series of overhead images further illustrates the long-standing agricultural use and established features within the field.

The earliest available image from 2002 clearly shows two enclosure walls: one running between two trees toward the top left of the field, and a distinctive diagonal boundary crossing the site. Notably, tractor movement is visible entering through defined gaps, indicating the presence of gateposts and confirming that these boundary features were sufficiently intact at that time to guide and restrict access. Evidence of muck spreading is also apparent, consistent with active agricultural management.

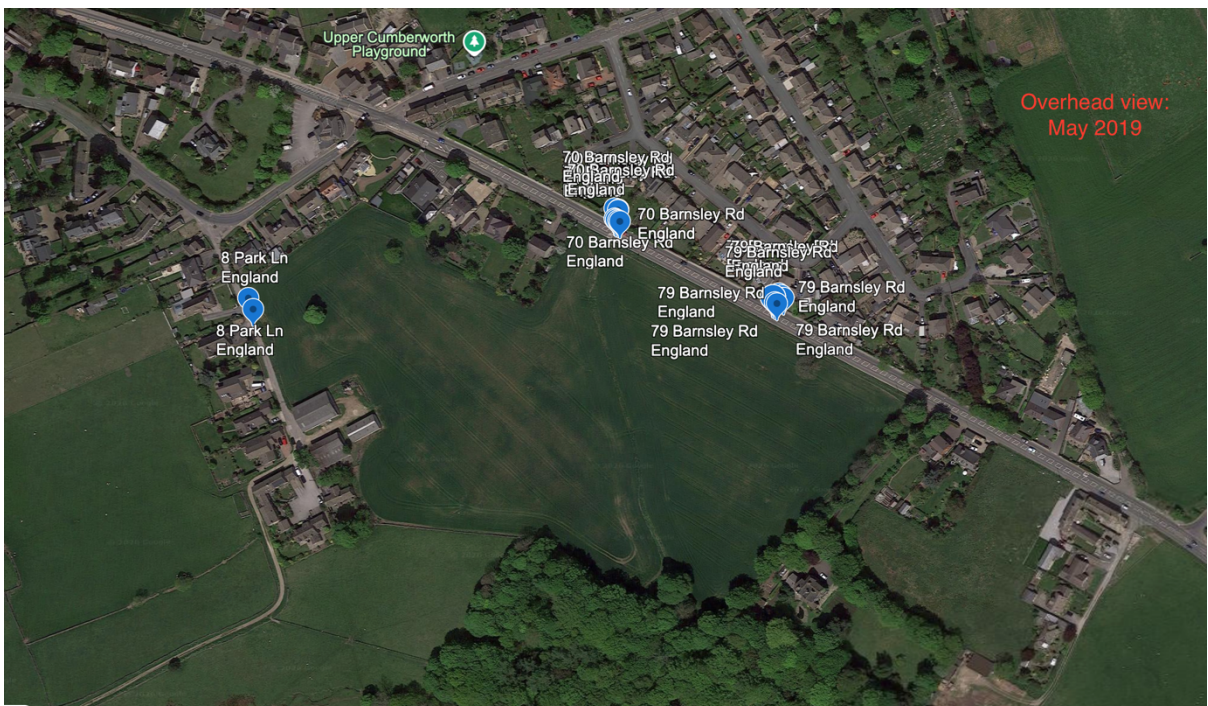


By June 2009, the field continues to display clear crop growth. While the enclosure wall between the two trees appears to have diminished or been removed, the diagonal wall remains visible. Importantly, tractor tracks continue to align with the same access point through this boundary, suggesting that elements of the wall—and its associated gateway—were still present and influencing land use patterns.

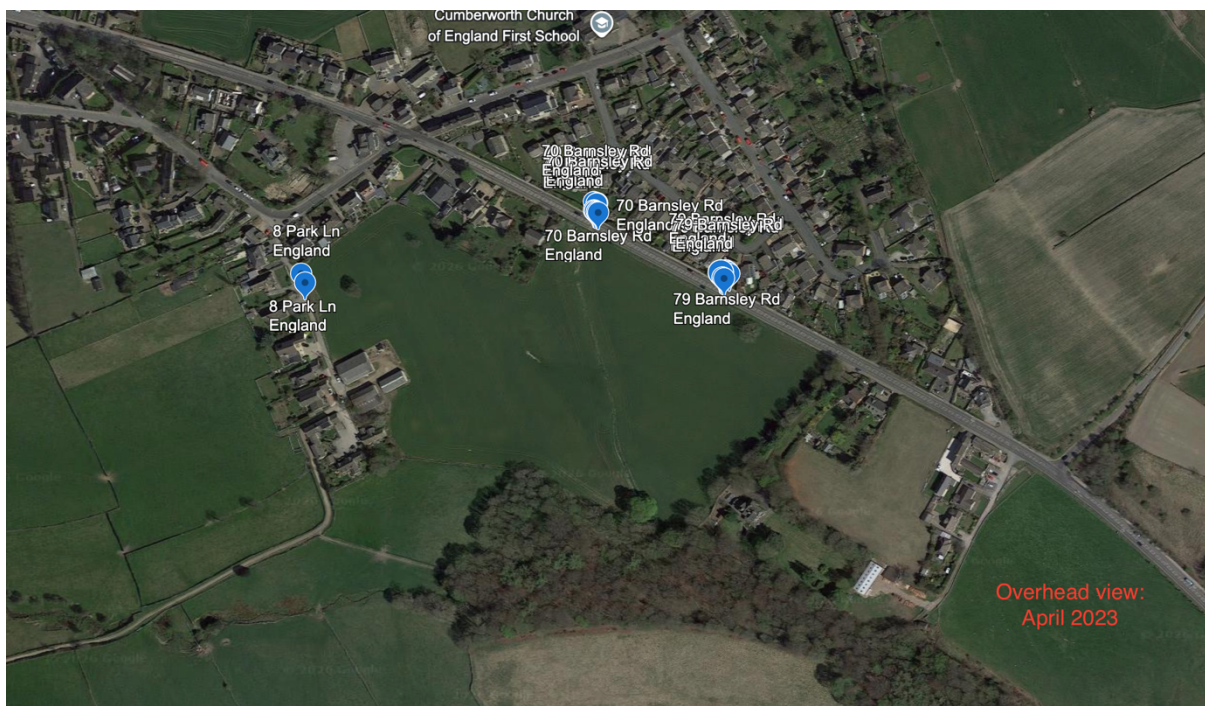




In imagery from June 2016, although visibility is reduced due to the darker tone of the image, this is consistent with ongoing muck spreading, again reinforcing active agricultural use. This pattern continues in May 2019, where the darker appearance of the field similarly reflects continued land management practices.



By April 2020, the land has been clearly ploughed, and the diagonal enclosure wall remains identifiable, along with the established access gap used by agricultural machinery. This consistent pattern of cultivation and access is again evident in April 2023, where crops are visibly growing across the field.



However, by April 2025—coinciding with the timing of the planning application—the condition of the field appears notably different from the established pattern observed over the preceding decades. Instead of cultivated crops, the land shows signs of a departure from its typical agricultural use. The temporary presence of grazing livestock, which is not characteristic of the field's usual management, appears to have resulted in the removal of surface vegetation. In comparison to earlier imagery, the land appears less maintained, and the central diagonal enclosure wall is now barely discernible.

This contrast with the consistent historical pattern of cultivation and land management raises questions as to whether the current condition of the field is representative of its typical or long-standing use.



Photographs taken within the last few days show a marked change in the condition of the field. The first three images indicate an absence of active cultivation, with unploughed ground now dominated by weeds rather than managed crops. This differs notably from the consistent pattern of agricultural use evidenced in earlier imagery.



In addition, there is a significant presence of scattered stones across the surface of the field. This is unusual when compared with previous cultivated conditions, where such material would typically be removed or managed to allow effective ploughing and crop growth. It is therefore difficult to reconcile the extent of visible surface stone with the field's long-established history of arable use.

It is understood that these stones may originate from former enclosure walls within the site, which have become less visible over time. Their current distribution across the field further contributes to the impression that the land is no longer being maintained in a manner consistent with its previous agricultural condition.





Overall, the present state of the field appears notably unmanaged and inconsistent with its historic use, as demonstrated in both street-level and overhead imagery.

The final three images provide further evidence relating to the former diagonal enclosure wall. As noted in earlier overhead imagery, agricultural machinery consistently accessed the adjoining field via a defined gap aligned with gateposts, indicating that a boundary feature was present and influencing movement across the site.





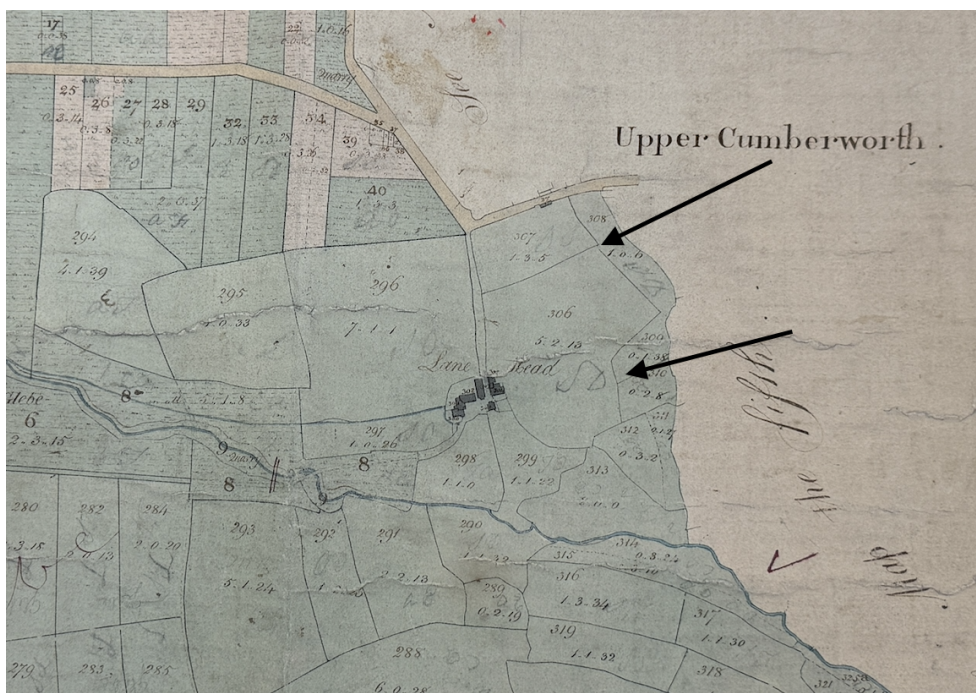


In contrast, the most recent photographs show these gateposts now standing in isolation, with no visible wall structure extending from either side. If the field had historically been open in this way, there would have been no obvious reason for machinery to consistently follow such a fixed route of access. The repeated use of this specific point strongly suggests that a physical boundary—namely the enclosure wall—was previously in place.

The absence of this boundary in the current images, together with the presence of scattered stone across the field, raises the possibility that material from the former wall has been redistributed. This contributes to the present appearance of the site, which differs noticeably from its historically managed and enclosed condition.

Historic enclosure mapping for Upper Cumberworth, likely dating from approximately 1750 to 1830, shows the field subdivided by established stone boundary walls, reflecting its long-standing agricultural use and historic landscape structure.

Within the map provided, two features are highlighted. The first (indicated by the top arrow) corresponds to an enclosure wall that appears to have been removed over time. More significantly, the second arrow identifies the diagonal enclosure wall running through the field—this is the same feature that has been consistently visible in both street-level and aerial imagery across many years, and which appears to have very recently diminished or disappeared.



The longevity of these features, evidenced both in historic mapping and modern imagery, demonstrates that the site retains elements of historic field patterns that have endured for centuries. Such enclosure walls are widely recognised as characteristic features of the local landscape, contributing to its historic character, visual amenity, and sense of place. In many cases, surviving historic field boundaries are considered non-designated heritage assets, particularly where they reflect early enclosure patterns and remain legible within the landscape.

The apparent recent loss—or significant degradation—of the diagonal enclosure wall, combined with the presence of dispersed stone across the field, raises concerns as to whether material from this historic feature may have been disturbed or redistributed. This is particularly notable given the long-standing stability of the boundary as evidenced over time.

Overall, the enclosure mapping reinforces that the land proposed for development is not only agricultural in function but also of historic significance, retaining features that contribute to the understanding and integrity of the area's historic landscape.

In light of the evidence presented, the current condition of the field appears inconsistent with its established history of active agricultural use. While there may be a legitimate explanation, the timing and nature of these changes give rise to reasonable concern that the land's appearance does not accurately reflect its true status or value within the Green Belt.

We therefore respectfully ask that this matter is given careful consideration in the assessment of the application, ensuring that any conclusions reached are based on the field's long-term character and function, rather than its present, potentially unrepresentative condition.

Many thanks

Cumberworth Environmental Action Group