

Mizbrooks House
Cleavers Lane
Cuckfield
West Sussex, RH17 5HZ



Mr. Stephen Ashdown
Planning Team Leader Major Developments
Planning Services
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
RH16 1SS

21 January 2024

Dear Mr. Ashdown,

DM/23/2867 : Parkland reserve at Beechy Bottom

I am writing to object to the above planning application to create a "*Parkland Reserve*".

This site is in the High Weald National Landscape on a ridgeline to the west of Cuckfield. The land falls from north to south from 124m to 55m aod. It is crossed by footpaths including the High Weald Landscape Trail. Ancient Woodland lies within the site and along its perimeter. Natural England classifies the land as being agricultural Grade 3 Good to Moderate.

The application proposes fencing to secure the site's perimeter and enclose the Ancient Woodland. Development includes high viewing platforms, sports pitches, dog walking areas, cycle routes, signage and buildings such as 'hides'. Additional development can also be expected such as shelters; ramps/jumps in the dog walking areas; and car parks for visitors. Pressure for wide, surfaced pathways to facilitate access is also likely to result.

In my opinion, the proposal would:

- Have significant adverse landscape and visual impacts on the High Weald National Landscape and on the Cuckfield Conservation Area;
- Adversely affect existing biodiversity due to the introduction of new species, which encroach upon existing habitats; disturbance by humans; pollution/litter; soil compaction; and the obstruction of existing wildlife corridors by erecting long lengths of fencing;
- Compound existing highways issues along the Staplefield Road at the Whiteman's Green Recreation Ground in terms of sufficiency of parking and vehicle movements;

- Lead to a potential loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- Have cumulative adverse landscape and visual impacts, when taken together with the application to construct 1,450 houses under DM/23/2866;
- Not provide 'onsite' mitigation for biodiversity losses under DM/23/2866; and
- Allow the applicant, if both DM/23/2866 and DM/23/2867 were permitted, to selectively implement one but not both of them.

The application is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Ansty Staplefield & Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan and the High Weald AONB (National Landscape) Management Plan.

It should, with respect, be refused.

