

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 12 December 2024 15:49  
**To:** planninginfo  
**Subject:** Objections to Planning Application DM/23/2867- The Country Park/Parkland Reserve

[REDACTED]  
Fao: Stephen Ashdown

**Objections to Planning Application DM/23/2867- The Country Park/Parkland Reserve**

We are writing to formally object to the above application on several grounds, which are outlined below:

**1. Primary Purpose of the Application**

It is evident that this application's primary goal is to facilitate Fairfax's compliance with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements to offset the ecological damage caused by the development at the Ansty Farm site. This is not an authentic proposal for delivering meaningful recreational facilities. Fairfax's own documentation reveals that public access would be restricted to less than a third of the site, with additional limitations during February to August each year to protect "ground nesting birds."

**2. Non-Compliance with District Plan Policy DP16**

The current District Plan (2014–2031) adopted in 2018 stipulates under Policy DP16 that "Development will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty." This proposal does neither, as it fails to conserve or enhance the unique qualities of the area.

**3. Impact on Ancient Woodland**

The proposed cycle path cutting through ancient woodlands such as Walks Wood will disrupt delicate ecosystems. Tree roots, smaller plants, and wildlife will be adversely affected by the rolled hoggins surface, which compacts the soil and disturbs the natural environment. Cycling activity will exacerbate these negative effects.

**4. Sensitivity of the High Weald National Landscape**

The High Weald National Landscape has a high sensitivity to even modest changes. The introduction of footpaths, increased visitor numbers, and potential parking facilities could severely impact the landscape fabric. Conflicting documentation regarding parking - one document dismissing parking facilities while another mentions income generation from 100 weekly visitors, a café, or concessions - illustrates a lack of clarity and raises concerns about environmental degradation.

**5. Erection of Fencing**

The proposed fencing will obstruct wildlife, including deer and small rodents, disrupting historic field boundaries and compromising the area's visual and ecological integrity. National Landscape (AONB) authorities disapprove of such fencing as it diminishes the area's natural beauty.

**6. Ineffectiveness of "Rewilding" Efforts**

The "light touch management regime" proposed in the application would not enrich the existing habitat but rather replace a biodiverse natural environment with a less effective and alien one. References to rewilding inspired by the Knepp Estate are particularly troubling given that Sir Charles Burrell, owner of the Knepp Castle Estate, has criticised the plan. He notes significant errors in Fairfax's documentation and asserts that the site is too small for successful rewilding.

**7. Confusion and Contradiction in Purpose**

The stated goals of enhancing biodiversity while simultaneously providing recreational resources are contradictory. The site's small area cannot support both objectives effectively, as they are incompatible.

**8. Incompatibility with Historical Landscape Qualities**

The special qualities of the High Weald are the product of centuries of interaction between rural communities and the natural landscape. Imposing a new land management regime disrupts this balance and is unlikely to improve upon the area's existing biodiversity.

**9. National Planning Guidelines on Biodiversity Net Gain**

National Planning Guidelines prioritise achieving Biodiversity Net Gain at the development site itself rather than at an alternative location. Common ownership aside, both sites are entirely separate entities. The activities at one cannot logically compensate for the environmental damage at the other.

**10. Flawed Biodiversity Net Gain Metrics**

The claimed BNG of 18.2% across both sites is unsupported by the statutory biodiversity metric and is instead based on desk-based assessments by advisers lacking practical rewilding experience, thus casting serious doubt on the validity of the figure. The leading expert in re-wilding, Sir Charles Burrell, has dismissed the BNG claim as unsubstantiated.

**11. Impact on Listed Buildings**

The proposed cycle path would harm the setting of nearby listed buildings, including Old Mill Cottage and Pondtail Cottage. We don't feel that such intrusion into the heritage landscape is acceptable.

**12. Conflict with Bridleway Users**

Cyclists using the proposed path may come into conflict with existing bridleway users, including horse riders, thus creating safety and usability concerns.

**13. Risk of Future Development**

Once land ceases to be used for agriculture, the likelihood of subsequent development increases. This pattern has been observed elsewhere and raises concerns about the long-term impact of this proposal.

In conclusion, the proposal appears to contradict itself in areas, fails to address its stated goals effectively and raises significant concerns about environmental, ecological, and cultural impacts. It does not provide local people anything it doesn't already have in relation to access to our countryside and cannot be seen as an improvement.

Thank you for considering our objections.

[REDACTED]  
2 Cross Cottages  
Cuckfield Road  
Ansty  
RH17 5AG