

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 June 2025 15:38
To: planninginfo
Subject: Stephen Ashdown - Stephen Ashdown

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Objection to Planning Application DM/23/2867

We are writing to formally object to the above application on multiple 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.

2. **Ineffectiveness of "Rewilding" Efforts**

Allegedly, the creation of a Parkland Reserve was inspired by Sir Charles Burrell's rewilding of the Knepp Castle Estate, however Sir Charles has made it abundantly clear that Fairfax's proposals are not credible. He notes significant errors in Fairfax's documentation and asserts that the site is too small for successful rewilding. We understand that there has been no explanation how this would be managed or financed and we can't understand how Fairfax can propose that the Beechy Bottom land can serve as both wilded land and a country park.

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 hoggin 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. **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.

7. **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.

8. **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.

9. **Impact on Listed Buildings**

The proposed cycle path would harm the setting of nearby listed buildings and we don't feel that such intrusion into the heritage landscape is acceptable.

10. **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.

11. **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.


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