

27.06.2025

Ref: DM/23/2867

Proposal: Change of use of farmland and woodland to parkland reserve to include public access and instigation of long-term management and rewilding regime, including establishment of pedestrian and cycle tracks, with new pedestrian and cycle access points off Cuckfield Road to the south and Staplefield Road to the north. Proposals to include the addition of two wooden viewing platforms and two hides. Sports pitches at Beech Farm Field to remain in sports use. (Additional information and amended plans received 27th May 2025). Location: Land East of Ansty Way, Cuckfield Bypass, Cuckfield, West Sussex.

Dear Sir,

In our previous representation dated 23.12.24 as shown on the planning portal, we objected to the following:

- The effect of this proposed development on the appearance of the area.
- Intrusion on the countryside to both animals and local people.
- The flawed quality and design.
- Significantly increased noise and disturbance.
- The non-existent ecological benefits to the proposal.
- Degradation of the countryside.
- The application's lack of compliance to and consideration of inclusivity.

These points are still relevant, and we do not wish to withdraw them. To reiterate:

It had been proposed that the '*Country Park*' called Beechy Bottom is to be '*rewilded*', which is contrary to the proposal that it can be used as a recreational facility for the people of the new development as well. The result of allowing the public on foot or on bicycle would create intrusion into the countryside and the '*Country Park*' could not be served as both, i.e. '*rewilded*' and recreational. It is therefore not a serious mitigation for the loss of biodiversity net gain on the development site.

A good example of 'intrusion into the countryside' is that although the cycle track has been rerouted in this recent application¹ it still traverses through ancient woodland. This is shown on another map which marks the same area as ancient woodland, shaded in dark green and named '*ancient woodland*' in the key².

In addition, there is a flaw in the design of the cycle track which is shown in the Flood Risk Assessment of this recent application¹. The track is marked to pass through an area now called 'Copyhold Gill' where it's depicted on the map as coloured dark blue which the key indicates it as '*high risk of flooding*'³. The diagram is similar to the government's own flood risk assessment service found on their website: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map>.

The statements in the same document¹ are contradictory as they submit conflicting evidence. On the one hand Fairfax provide one map that shows the area at high risk of flooding but do not consider it to be of any importance in terms of public safety and on the other hand provide evidence to support that it doesn't flood. The following points have been numbered for example purposes:

1. Fairfax state that *The Mid Sussex SFRA* contains no references of historical flooding occurring at the site area⁶. However, the area in question named Copyhold Gill is not a development site in terms of housing which *SERA* specialise in.
2. This extensive area (Copyhold Gill) is shown, in the government's Flood Risk Assessment Service as at '*high risk of flooding*'. Photos also show serious flooding of the same area which are displayed on the planning portal dated 23.12.24.
3. No evidence has been supplied to substantiate Fairfax's statement '*there is easy access (along the proposed footpaths and cycle routes) to areas outside of the flood risk zones*'⁴.
4. Fairfax has not supplied evidence that consent or consultation has been obtained from the waterways, for the cycle track travelling through Copyhold Gill or for the cycle track to bridge the tributary to the River Adur, and they only promise this in their statement⁵.
5. The area described as '*Copyhold Gill*' is in fact an ancient dried-up lake. Its original purpose was to supply water to the 16th century fulling mill now called *Old Mill* which is located downstream. The lake is clearly shown on the Tythe Map as coloured blue indicating water and it's therefore not surprising that this area has never been used for development purposes.

Furthermore, there is still a 'Lack of compliance to and consideration of inclusivity', as nothing has changed to accommodate equestrian use when options are clearly available. As a new development it has not complied to the National Planning Policy Framework, the West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Government's initiative that '*all new developments should be **accessible to all***'.

Yours Faithfully



¹ Flood Risk Assessment – (parkland reserve site) appendix B map (dated 27.05.25 as shown on the planning portal).

² *Environmental Statement Volume 4: Appendix G: Ecology & Biodiversity Part 8 page 58.*

³ *Flood Risk Assessment – (parkland reserve site) figure 4-2 Surface water flood risk zones, page15 (dated 27.05.25 as shown on the planning portal).*

⁴ Flood Risk Assessment - (parkland reserve site) no.5. page15 (dated 27.05.25 as shown on the planning portal).

⁵ Flood Risk Assessment -(parkland reserve site) no.5.6. page15 (dated 27.05.25 as shown on the planning portal).

⁶ Flood Risk Assessment - (parkland reserve site) no.4.6. page15 (dated 27.05.25 as shown on the planning portal).