

THE BERSTED BROOKS COUNTRY PARK PLAN
A Personal Perspective by David I Lainchbury

As this is prepared for a Parish Council meeting, I duly declare a personal interest in that I live on Bersted Park and jointly own a property there. I shall focus my comments on those aspects of the plan which fall south of the A259 into Bersted Park – the Friends of Bersted Brooks will I'm sure make their own representations.

The Bersted Brooks Country Park plan is an ill founded, politically motivated and wholly misguided project. The subtle change of name away from the Bersted Brooks & Bersted Park Country Park while retaining the original boundaries has fooled no one. The stated aim of the scheme is to increase public access to the ADC owned green areas, seemingly to enhance someone's green credentials. Unfortunately it has failed to take into account the complex nature of the sustainable drainage plans and restrictive covenants which have applied to Bersted Park since the main land transfers from Berkeley Homes to ADC took place during the period 2015-19. It appears that the consultancy which is being paid to deliver this project is aware of at least some of this and has recommended that the project is undeliverable south of the A259. Astonishingly, the project managers at ADC seem undeterred and are pressing ahead.

In terms of the specifics of the plan, first, to attempt to conjoin the relevant parts of ADC owned land by a narrow and dangerous pedestrian road crossing of the A259 where a 50mph speed limit is in force is surely madness. Next, the scheme proposes an additional network of footpaths within the green areas; not only are these footpaths to be raised – which in itself is unacceptable in an area with a delicately balanced flood risk – but they are to connect to additional entrances (locations as yet to be announced) to the green areas. Due to the obvious limitations of the geography of the area it is assumed that these entrances will have to be forced through from North Bersted Street, requiring additional bridges across the Rife tributaries further exacerbating the flood risk calculations. There is also no guarantee that such entrances would be made traveller-proof which would be an expensive undertaking.

Having attracted all these extra people into the Park who is to pay for the additional grounds upkeep & maintenance when we know there is no uplift to the ADC Parks & Open Spaces budget? Extra people mean extra dogs so who is to fund the additional bins needed? Sussex Rangers have their home on the BP sports field and have to check all playing surfaces for dog mess before every game; they do not need more. ADC has previously declared it has no extra funding for dog bins so does that mean we must all suffer a bit more or is there an expectation that the parish council will inherit the problem?

Looking beyond the sports fields, we see the wildfowl lake which is apparently the jewel in the Country Park crown. So how are visitors to experience it when most of the lake is obscured by reeds due to poor maintenance and there is only one viewing platform with no adjacent parking? An enlarged car park by the community centre with its concomitant effect upon the flood risk calculation will not resolve the issue and it is inevitable that drivers will strive to park as close as possible to the viewing platform, directly in front of the garages & driveways of Ruskin Avenue. The same

THE BERTSD BROOKS COUNTRY PARK PLAN
A Personal Perspective by David J. L. [unclear]

As this is prepared for a Parish Council meeting I duly declare a personal interest in that I live on Bertsd Brook and jointly own a property there. I shall focus my comments on those aspects of the plan which fall within the ASB9 into Bertsd Brook - the Friends of Bertsd Brook will, I am sure, make their own representations.

The Bertsd Brooks Country Park plan is an excellent, politically motivated and wholly unadvised project. The subtle change of name away from the Bertsd Brooks & Bertsd Brook Country Park while retaining the original boundaries was noted by me. The stated aim of the scheme is to increase public access to the A100 owned green areas, seemingly to enhance someone's green credentials. Unfortunately it has failed to take into account the complex nature of the sustainable drainage plans and technical constraints which have applied to Bertsd Brook since the main land transfer from Berkeley Homes to A100 took place during the period 2012-10. It suggests that the consultancy which is being paid to deliver this project is aware of at least some of this and has recommended that the project is undeliverable south of the A100. Astonishingly, the project managers at A100 seem to have seen and also pressing ahead.

In terms of the specifics of the plan, first, to attempt to contain the relevant parts of A100 owned land by a narrow and dangerous pedestrian road crossing on the A100 was a thoughtless idea that is in force is surely madness. Next, the scheme proposes an additional network of footpaths within the green areas, not only are these footpaths to be raised - which in itself is unacceptable in an area with a delicately balanced flood risk - but they are to connect to additional entrances, locations as yet to be announced to the green areas. Due to the obvious limitations of the geography of the area it is assumed that these entrances will have to be raised through North Bertsd Brook, requiring additional bridges across the site boundaries further exacerbating the flood risk calculations. There is also no guarantee that such entrances would be made traveller-proof which would be an expensive undertaking.

Having attracted all these extra people into the Park who is to pay for the additional grounds upkeep & maintenance when we know there is no uplift to the A100 Parks & Open Spaces budget? Extra people mean extra dogs so who is to fund the additional bins needed? Sussex Rangers have their home on the BP sports field and have to check all playing surfaces for dog mess before every game, they do not need more. A100 has previously declared it has no extra funding for dog bins so does that mean we must all suffer a bit more or is there an expectation that the parish council will meet the problem?

Looking beyond the sports fields, we see the wildfowl lake which is apparently the jewel in the Country Park crown. So how are visitors to experience it when most of the lake is obscured by reeds due to poor maintenance and there is only one viewing platform with no adjacent parking? An enlarged car park by the community centre with its concomitant effect upon the flood risk calculation will not resolve the issue and it is inevitable that drivers will strive to park as close as possible to the viewing platform, directly in front of the garages & driveways of Ruskin Avenue. The same

standard of disjointed thinking applies to the five children's play areas which according to 'emerging concepts' are to gain an extra one at the expense of a large part of the one adult trim trail, with the removed pieces possibly being moved elsewhere within the park or potentially even to the beach. So much for adult Wellbeing in the Community.

Most importantly, there are restrictive covenants in force across BP, as jointly drawn up and agreed by Berkeley Homes and ADC, which forbid interference with the sustainable drainage plans, some parts of which now find themselves situated on ADC owned land and are absolutely critical in terms of ameliorating the flood risk. Should these be compromised in any way, not only does the flood risk increase but ADC may find themselves liable for any insurance claims from affected property owners. As things stand, should this plan be forced through, householders may have no option but to contact their insurers with the inevitable increase in premiums. Would ADC pay? I doubt it. Another part of the covenants forbids ADC from carrying out any action that may result in, or grow to be, a perceived nuisance to residents. Additional country park tourists, more dogs and more vehicles would be deemed to constitute such a nuisance. Furthermore, there are extant planning consent conditions concerning protected wildlife and invasive flora & fauna – are these also to be ignored in order to promote someone's simplistic idea of bio diversity? Even worse, a recommendation by the consultants to produce a formal Ecology Report has been denied – too expensive we're told.

Finally, I turn to the public interaction & consultation in respect of the plan. The two surveys and the so-called consultation day arranged by the relevant consultancy have been wholly inadequate. The survey questions were entirely superficial, with no attempt to explain the impact of the scheme on residents or even the opportunity to declare whether they supported it or not. The approach seems to have been 'the plan will be implemented, there's nothing you can do about it but we'd like your opinion on some of the detail'; hardly a genuine consultation. Moreover, only those residents active on the internet and social media actually stood a chance of responding. Bersted Park contains a large number of retired, non-internet capable persons, many of whom are unaware of the plan. Clearly a mail drop that unambiguously asked residents if they were in favour of the plan or not was not considered and the short article in the latest Bersted Park newsletter (which technically is only for Berkeley Homes customers) fell far short of requirements. A 100% mail drop is now being planned by the BP Steering Group and early feedback suggests that the no vote will win by a country (*sic*) mile! This ridiculous, unsafe and money wasting scheme must be quickly terminated.

standard of displaced parking applies to the five children's play areas which according to emerging concepts are to gain an extra one at the expense of a large part of the one adult that will be removed (possibly being moved elsewhere within the park, or potentially even to the beach). So much for adult walking in the Community.

Furthermore, there are restrictive covenants in force across BP, as jointly drawn up and agreed by Berkeley Homes and ADC, which forbid interference with the residential usage of the park, some parts of which now find themselves situated on ADC owned land and are absolutely critical in terms of ameliorating the flood risk. Should these be compromised in any way, not only does the flood risk increase but ADC may find themselves liable for any insurance claims from affected property owners. As things stand, should this plan be forced through, householders may have no option but to contact their insurers with the inevitable increase in premiums. Would ADC really fund it? Another part of the covenants forbids ADC from carrying out any action that may result in, or grow to be, a perceived nuisance to residents. Additional county park tourists, more dogs and more vehicles would be deemed to constitute such a nuisance. Furthermore, there are extant planning consent conditions concerning protected wildlife and invasive flora & fauna -- are these also to be ignored in order to promote someone's simplistic idea of diversity? Even worse, a recommendation by the consultants to produce a formal Ecology Report has been denied -- too expensive we're told.

Finally, apart from the public consultation & consultation in respect of the plan, the two surveys and the so-called consultation day arranged by the relevant consultancy have been wholly inadequate. The survey questions were entirely superficial, with no attempt to explain the impact of the scheme on residents or even the opportunity to declare whether they supported it or not. The approach seems to have been the plan will be implemented, there's nothing you can do about it but we'd like your opinion on some of the details. Hardly a genuine consultation. Moreover, only those residents active on the internet and social media actually stood a chance of responding. Berkeley Park contains a large number of retired, non-internet capable persons, many of whom are unaware of the plan. Clearly a mail drop that unambiguously asked residents if they were in favour of the plan or not was not considered and the short article in the latest Berkeley Park Newsletter (which technically is only for Berkeley Homes customers) fell far short of requirements. A huge mail drop is now being planned by the BP Steering Group and early feedback suggests that the no vote will win by a county (sic) mile. This ridiculous waste and money wasting scheme must be quickly terminated.