

# Too many 'improvements' - stop meddling with our park!

A RECENT walk through Horsham Park on a wonderful late summer morning was unfortunately marred by the latest evidence of our council's apparently unstoppable desire to meddle with this priceless asset.

The charm of our park is that it is just that - parkland; broad sweeping views uninterrupted by visual clutter.

Yet Horsham District Council seems determined to introduce one unnecessary 'improvement' after another which almost always seems to include more hard landscaping and other forms of suburbanisation such as wooden sculptures and bedding plants.



by **John Steele**  
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Horsham Park is not a conventional Victorian municipal park and we should stop allowing the council to treat it as if it were.

When the putting green was closed The Horsham Society suggested returning the area to parkland as a small recompense for the land lost when the Pavilions was built.

But no; instead at considerable expense it is

creating a themed garden with, yes, more hard landscaping, raised levels and inappropriate wooden sculptures.

The fact that the council has largely persuaded others to pay doesn't make it any less a waste of money and blot on the park.

To add insult to injury there is a sign on the railings which says 'Bringing Life to Community Spaces'.

This is not a community space, it is a park, and it already has plenty of natural life.

There are many genuine community spaces in the town which would benefit better from this sort of investment.

The society also fought

hard to ensure the council fulfilled its long-standing promise to return the old nursery site to parkland, which it eventually did.

But instead of leaving this area of the park alone it has now installed a rather strange version of beach volleyball with deep sand covering a large rectangle of the grass and an ugly net.

Perhaps, you may think, the council is making these changes in response to public demand.

However when it consulted over the park management plan a couple of years ago, to its obvious discomfort, a large majority voted to keep the park as it was. There was no pressure for change.

The council was

instrumental some years ago in setting up The Friends of Horsham Park.

It was a group of interested and informed members of the community keen to support and protect the park for future generations.

But recently, after much frustration, its members decided to wind up the group because they were fed up with being consulted only to have their views ignored.

As far as the park is concerned it seems the council only listens to the views of the few who support its constant meddling.

The views of the majority are ignored and our park continues to be treated as if it were a training ground

for the hard landscaping industry.

The council has promised to consult over where any cuts should fall.

We could axe the time spent in designing and implementing such unnecessary and unwelcome initiatives, and save both money and our park.

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone, who shares these concerns. For more information, visit our website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or telephone 01403 263870.*