



RESPONSE TO THE HORSHAM PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION DRAFT

We welcome the Management Plan and agree with the overall aims and objectives.

We are particularly pleased to see the objective to maintain the naturally managed areas of the Park as we have been concerned about recent trends to suburbanise the Park with more formal planting and hard landscaping. It is important that the essential parkland setting, with sweeping uninterrupted views is protected and enhanced. We note the very high approval rating in the 2005 user survey and lack of ambition for unnecessary change or tinkering.

More attention needs to be given to tree and other permanent planting designed to screen the Pavilions in the Park and the Leisure Centre from view from within the Park.

We support a review of the Park byelaws but consider that more should be done to enforce them. We agree that there is a need for regular and frequent on-site presence of clearly identified Parks staff.

The Plan admits that there is currently a significant amount of cycling in the Park in contravention of the byelaws which have not been actively enforced for many years. The Plan refers to the recent widening of the path adjacent to the tennis courts and says it was designated as a shared cycle/pedestrian route. We find this hard to understand as it would be contrary to the current byelaws. We are opposed to a presumption in favour of cycling in the Park and wish to see the current regulations remain.

We agree that suggestions for further lighting should be resisted other than in the areas identified in the Plan.

As indicated in the Plan, the Horsham Society welcomes the proposals to return the nursery site to parkland and expects the County Council to remove the existing buildings, hard surfacing etc in the very near future, or for HDC to do it and recharge its costs.

The former putting green provides the opportunity to return a significant piece of land to parkland, thus making up in some small measure for the depredations of the Leisure Centre and Pavilions. This would be our preferred option; we most certainly would not favour formal planting.

As far as possible the widening of existing footpaths should be resisted, particularly those crossing the Park which would have the most detrimental visual impact. There must be no further incursions into the Park to provide extra car parking.

In conclusion, we are pleased to see the Council's commitment to safeguarding this unique public asset and the recognition that little change is necessary or desirable beyond continuing high standards of care and maintenance.

10 February 2008