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West Sussex Local Access Forum

5th November 2019

Sent by email to: zak.moallim@midsussex.gov.uk

Dear Mr Moallim

Planning Ref: DM/19/1893
MSDC Hassocks Public Footpath No.9C (Part) Public Path Diversion Order

I am responding to the above consultation on behalf of West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF).

West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF) is an independent advisory body, established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to give access advice to local authorities, statutory organisations and non-government organisations. In giving that advice the Forum's main objective is to ensure the existing network of public rights of way (PRoWs), as well as the wider access network, is protected and where possible enhanced. The Forum has a balanced membership of knowledgeable and experienced users (walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers), landowners and other interests (including conservation, disabled access, landscape). For further information about the Forum please visit www.wslaf.org.

At a meeting of the Forum held on Wednesday 23rd October, Members were asked to consider a response to the above application for a Diversion Order of Footpath 9C (part), associated with the proposed development at the former Hassocks Golf Club site.

In July 2019, WSLAF responded to a proposed development application (DM/19/1897 Friars Oak), located immediately to the east of the former Hassocks Golf Club site and the A273. In our response we highlighted the significant number of developments taking place south of Burgess Hill, which will greatly increase the number of cars and HGVs using local roads, especially the A273 London Road.

Members are concerned for the safety of non-motorised users (NMUs), walkers, cyclists and equestrians, wishing to travel east west across the A273 to reach access routes and public rights of way (prow) on either side of the road (an elderly driver and a horse lost their lives in a fatal accident on this stretch of road a few years ago).

We firmly believe that MSDC should be looking for opportunities from all the proposed developments in the area to provide safe connectivity (in line with National Planning Policy Framework, para 98) and provide better facilities for all NMUs by upgrading and adding links to existing prow networks. We have suggested that a multi-functional east west route should be provided by facilitating the upgrade to bridleway of footpaths 9C and 5K.

The former Hassocks Golf Club site already has a bridleway to the west (8) and north (4_2C). Upgrading footpath 9C and providing a green link northwards to bridleway 4_2C, would greatly benefit all vulnerable road users providing a safe, circular off-road route.

The provision of a safe NMU crossing of the A273, to link into the Friars Oak development, and via a proposed new tunnel under the railway built to bridleway standards to the Clayton Mills development to the east where we understand footpath 5k is being upgraded to bridleway to Ockley Lane, and a new bridleway is proposed going north to the Burgess Hill Green Circle, would complete the NMU route both west-east and north-south.

WSLAF would welcome the opportunity to discuss our proposals with MSDC. Whilst we have no objection in principle to the proposed diversion of 9C, we would ask again that consideration is given to upgrading the path to make it multi-functional.

This letter constitutes formal advice from the West Sussex Local Access Forum. Mid Sussex District Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this Local Access Forum in carrying out its functions.

Yours sincerely

Jane Noble, Forum Officer
West Sussex Local Access Forum

Copy for information to: All WSLAF members