



Wild Park Public Consultation Workshop Results



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for

Brighton & Hove City Council

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Wild Park is a spectacular area of countryside on the outskirts of Brighton in the new South Downs National Park. It is managed by Brighton & Hove City Council.
- 1.2 During 2010 the first stage of a management plan to restore areas of chalk grassland was heavily criticised by some Brighton residents and direct action was taken to disrupt it. The Council therefore decided to re-consult with local residents on the best way forward.
- 1.3 Nick Wates Associates was commissioned as an independent facilitator to help plan and run a series of four workshops in the communities around the Park.
- 1.4 This report explains how the workshops were conducted and sets out the results.
- 1.5 For further information please contact:
Wild Park Consultation
Cityparks, Stanmer Nursery, Lewes Road, Brighton BN1 9SE
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2 Methodology

- 2.1 The workshops were planned by a Focus Group comprising councillors, officers and key residents.
- 2.2 The aim agreed by the Group was to provide an opportunity for local people to spend time exploring what they valued about the Park and how they would like to see it managed. It was decided to hold workshops in the four communities closest to the Park. Two were held on weekday evenings and two on a Saturday during the day. These were advertised in a newsletter distributed to 16,500 homes, as well as libraries, community centres and Wild Park cafe and also on the Council's website. People were invited to express interest in the workshops generally and to sign up for the workshop location of their choice. Guided walk events were also held in October to provide opportunities for people to understand some of the significance of Wild Park, such as wildlife, and these also advertised the consultation and workshops. People were initially invited to express interest in the workshops by providing contact details and a preferred location (Coldean / Hollingdean / Moulsecomb / Hollingbury) and preferred time (evening / weekend) to ensure the accessibility of the events. (See Appendix G & H for publicity material.)
- 2.3 The workshop format was designed to allow people to put forward their views and debate them with others. All four workshops followed a similar process. Participants were seated around tables equipped with plans of the Park, post it notes and pens.

Each workshop began with a verbal introduction by the Council's Head of City Infrastructure and a visual presentation by the Council Ecologist (except Workshop 4 which was introduced and presented by the Council's Countryside Manager). The facilitator then explained that everything recorded on post-it notes or on plans or aerial photograph sheets would be recorded and included in a report which would be publicly available.

Participants were then invited to brainstorm their Likes and Dislikes of the Park before preparing an Action Plan identifying things that should be done Now (this winter), Soon (Easter 2011 to Easter 2012) and Later (Easter 2012 onwards).

Council officers did not take part in the groups but were on hand to provide technical expertise on request.

After presentations of each group's action plan, participants were asked to make suggestions for further public consultation in the future and to provide feedback on the present workshop.

3 Response

- 3.1 Over 70 people expressed interest in the workshops on the Council's website although people were welcome to attend without first expressing an interest or signing up (indeed some did). In the event, less people attended and only in the first two workshops was breaking up into groups necessary. The locations and dates of the workshops are shown in the following table, together with the numbers attending and the number of table groups created:

<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	<i>Groups</i>
1	New Larchwood Cafe, Coldean	29 Nov	13	2
2	Hollingdean Community Centre, Hollingdean	1 Dec	11	3
3	Moulsecoomb Leisure Centre, Moulsecoomb	3 Dec am	4	1
4	The Gathering Place, Hollingbury	3 Dec pm	6	1
			34	6

- 3.2 There was cold weather during the week with some heavy snow which disrupted transport services particularly on 1 December. Larger numbers might have attended otherwise. The Council considered whether to postpone the workshops but it was decided to proceed in order to avoid disappointment to those who had signed up, and people also had the opportunity to attend the later workshops.
- 3.3 Participants were mostly middle aged or elderly and many appeared to have considerable experience and expertise in ecological issues. Several people attended more than one workshop and this proved helpful in providing a sense of continuity.
- 3.4 A number of people sent emails or letters prior to the workshops and the content of these is set out in Appendix E.
- 3.5 All four workshops had a good atmosphere and participants mostly gave positive feedback about the experience of participating. See Appendix F for the workshop evaluation results.
- 3.6 Most workshop groups ended up with consensus on their action plans. Where this was not possible (in workshop 4 for instance), minority views are clearly recorded so that controversial issues can be discussed further on other occasions.
- 3.7 This report aims to provide a comprehensive record of the workshops with information presented in such a way that it is useful to all those involved in Wild Park in the future.

4 Results – Likes summary

4.1 Responses to a brainstorm in groups on the question 'What do you like about Wild Park?' are summarised below. Full transcripts are in Appendix A. Columns to the right indicate how many people made each point and from which workshop group (i.e. 2B = Workshop 2, group B)

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Details</i>	1A	1B	2A	2B	2C	3	4
Accessibility	from residential areas			1	1	1		2
Adventure /space	general		1			1		1
	mountain bikes		1					
	great for kids						1	
	Sports pitches						1	
Cafe				1			1	
Clearance	opening up					1		
Dew pond		1				2	1	
Foraging for food			1					
Habitats /nature				1	1			4
Grassland	grassland general		1					
	fungi		1				2	1
	insects		1				1	
	sward					1		
	wildflowers		1					
Paths	pathways general					1		
	from bottom around top	1						
	through woodland						1	
Peace / quiet							2	1
Scrub							1	1
Sheep / grazing							1	2
Trees	trees general	1	1		1		2	
	trees protection / shade						1	2
	ash							1
	Hawthorn/blackthorn	1						1
	Oak	4						2
	Yew/walnut/rowan							1
Striking landform					1			1
Variety / diversity				1	1	2	3	2
Views / vistas			1	1			1	
Walking	general						1	1
	with dogs						2	1
Wild flowers			1				1	2
Wildlife	General	1			1	2	4	2
	Birds general	1					1	
	Badgers						1	1
	Bats	1						1
	Bees							1
	Butterflies		1			1		1
	Foxes						1	
	insects / bugs					1		
	Nightingdale/warbler	1						
	Rabbit	1						

5 Results – Dislikes summary

5.1 Responses to a brainstorm in groups on the question 'What do you dislike about Wild Park?' are summarised below. Full transcripts are in Appendix B. Columns to the right indicate how many people made each point and from which workshop group (i.e. 2B = Workshop 2, group B)

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Details</i>	1 A	1 B	2 A	2 B	2 C	3	4
Antisocial behaviour	general					1		1
Blocked views						1		
Bowling green grass							1	
Burning stumps							1	
Clearance	general	1						
	affect on root systems	1						
	all way to 39 acres	1						
	along path north side	1						
	way it has been done		1					
	unsympathetic /extreme				1			
Disregard for wildlife	by Council							1
Dog mess	general	1	2				2	
	in bags							1
Dogwalking companies							1	
Fencing	general		1		1			2
	barbed wire						1	
	electric						1	
	poorly sited lines					1		
	ugly							1
Gate	to steep area north of pit	1						
Grazing	people making money out of it							1
Lack of	good woodland paths / rides			1				
	interpretation / understanding					1		
	light under the canopy					1		
	positive management				1			
	seating		1					
	scrub islands in cleared area		1					
	survey prior to clearance				1			
	vegetation around dew pond			1				
Lewes Rd. border	formal bedding			1				1
Loss of access	over the years					1		
	of wood							1
Monoculture	eg hawthorne					1		
Narrowmindedness								1
Neglect	of AC grass							1
	recently							1
Poor access	crossing golf course			1				
Motorbikes			1					
Paths	east upland		1					
Plants	Ash							1
	Cotoneaster		1			1		
	Hawthorne middle		1					

	Invasive plants					1		
	sycamore (too much)					1		1
Rubbish							1	
Scrub	too much							1
Sheep	general							1
	being abused		1					
Too many people in one place							1	
Travellers	general	1						
	rubbish left by			1				
Tree felling	170 oaks							1
Unnatural edge of ski slope			1					
Waste of taxpayers money								1
Woodland	dominance of							1
	large blocks			1				

6 Results – Action Plan – Now - Summary

6 .1 Responses to what actions should be taken now – up to Easter 2011 – are summarised below. Full transcripts and illustrations are in Appendix C.

<i>Action – Now – to Easter 2011</i>	1A	1B	2B	2C	3	4
Chestnut fence posts				1		
Clear area west of Lewes Road					1	
Cleared scrub vegetation control	1	1		1		
Clear or enlarge small valuable patches				1		
Consult with Moulsecoomb Primary School		1				
Consult on fencing - explain why needed					1	
Continue clearance until nesting season						2
Continue consultation				1	1	
Coombe head scrub clearance	1					
Develop management plan informed by consultation			1			
Fence lower down on north slope (to allow woody edge to 39 acres)	1					
Grade edges of grassland / scrub			1			
Graze grassland, chalk grass and cleared areas				2		
Graze for limited time - more sheep, less time					1	
Install benches				1		
Maintain open access corridors				1		
Make more paths for walkers		1				
Open head of coombe area					1	
Open up trails / walkways					1	1
Put grass on football pitches						1
Realign and reinstate fences			1	1		1
Reinstate perimeter walk		1				
Restore pathway access from Highfields		1				
Save and expand grassland to sustainable levels						1
Signage explaining grazing policy					1	
Signage for hill fort				1		
Start education programme eg badgers				1		
Start monitoring wildlife levels					1	
Trees planted back						1
Visualise potential outcomes					1	
Weather fences				1		
Website information					1	
Widen membership of FOWP						1

7 Results – Action Plan – Soon - Summary

7.1 Responses to what actions should be taken soon – between Easter 2011 and Easter 2012 – are summarised below. Full transcripts and illustrations are in Appendix C.

<i>Action Soon – Easter 2011 to Easter 2012</i>	1 A	1 B	2 B	2 C	3	4
Annual celebratory party				1		
Child-useable play areas - playground / skatepark		1			1	
Clear and open up front gardens		1				
Clear other grass sites sensitively with volunteers						1
Clear rides in recent woodland				1		
Continue clearance as agreed by consultation				1		
Control of woody regrowth			1			
Coppice remaining trees				1		
Dew ponds rebuilt in original locations						1
Disability access		1				
Don't put sheep back						1
Exhibitions				1		
Explain fencing choices to public					1	
Find a way to keep travellers out		1				
Grow back trees / scrub next to path						1
Interaction web / wiki sites				1		
Keep scrub footprint but move back from grassland	1					
Log benches and steps as areas cleared					1	
Maintain and enrich website				1		
Maintain cleared area with fence lower down and out of sight						1
Make transitional habitat on edge of ski slope	1					
Make wild meadows with wildflowers		1				
Manage scrub to encourage wildlife	1					
Monitoring				1		
Mowing regime to allow longer amenity grass						1
No more cutting trees down						1
No more fencing than there already			1			1
No more major clearance						1
Ongoing field surveys						1
Ongoing management to encourage chalk grassland						1
Pollard existing trees and leave some					1	
Push scrub / woodland edges back with scalloped edges				1		
Reconnect other areas of grassland eg south end			1			
Remove flower beds next to Lewes Road						2
Remove tree line obstructing grassland view from Lewes Rd.						1
School involvement				1		
Scrub control on other grassland sites	1					
Start linking chalk grass areas				1		
Stop motorcycling in the park		1				
Survey of wildlife already there			1			1
Thin the scrub				1		

Try new name - not Wild Park				1		
Turn football pitches into grassland						1
Widen it out				1		

8 Results – Action Plan – Later - Summary

8.1 Responses to what actions should be taken later – from Easter 2012 – are summarised below. Full transcripts and illustrations are in Appendix C.

<i>Action – Later – from Easter 2012</i>	1A	1B	2B	2C	3	4
Better use of pavilion		1			1	
Better use of dew pond - benches, clear rubbish					1	
Bio surveys to monitor sheep management						1
Consider wider area (E.G. golf course, 39 acres)				1		
Continue management of grassland / whole area				1	1	
Create rides / paths through woodland	1				1	
Create some coppice woodland				1		
Extensive grazing throughout year				1		1
Increase numbers of insects and birds						1
Interpretive material: guided walks; video; web info; displays in libraries, community centres and schools				1		
Keep field behind industrial estate for skylarks						1
Keep gorse regime and hill fort as it is now						1
Landscape path linking grassland areas	1					
Less hard edges between areas						1
Manage for bio-diversity / good balance						1
Management of open grown trees and woodland			1			
Permanent fencing	1					
Plant oak trees between existing mature oaks		1				
Preserve this ancient landscape for later generations						1
Programme of rotational scrub coppicing			1			
Seats - rustic						1
Sensitive tree planting		1				
Stockproof traditional hedges with blackthorn etc						1
Sustainable uses E.G. fleeces; rabbits					1	
Thin woodland to open glades				1		
Woodland management to encourage diversity of tree age/ structure / species				1		
Workshops to review sustainability				1		

9 Results – Future engagement - Summary

9.1 Responses to what future community engagement should take place.
Based on flipchart notes made by the facilitator during a plenary session at each workshop. Full transcript in Appendix D.

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Arboretum				1	
Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society					1
Celebration	education		1		
	Wild Park Fun Day				1
Community Engagement Team			1		
Elderly	Evergreens		1		1
Feedback on monitoring			1		
Forest garden					1
Friends of Queensdown Forest				1	
Friends of Wild Park	relaunch			1	
Golf course	new management				1
Interpretive	field trips			1	1
	guidebook			1	
	leaflets (more)			1	
	panels			1	
	walks				1
Kennel Club					1
Libraries			1		
Local action teams				1	
Mountain bikers					1
Natural England - Bug Life					1
National Parks Association					1
Outreach work			1		
Recycling of materials	wood from clearances	1	1		
Schools	general	1		1	1
	Carden Junior				1
	Moulsecoomb Primary	1			
	Patcham High				1
	presentations		1		
	Queensdown High				1
South Downs National Park					1
Sports users					1
University / City College				1	1
Volunteers	help with clearance		1		
Website	general				
	Council website	1			
	engage online	1			
	Facebook /wiki		1		

10 Conclusions

Some observations by the facilitators:

- 10.1 The workshop process has allowed those who attended to have their say and to have their views recorded. It has also allowed people to engage with others and to develop ideas in a collaborative manner. It is clear that many people found the experience enjoyable and useful.
- 10.2 The result is a rich tapestry of information and ideas which will be invaluable in developing plans for the future of Wild Park. This includes both practical action in the Park and also ways of engaging the local community in its future.
- 10.3 While there is not complete consensus on what should be done when, there is a good measure of agreement on many issues and areas of disagreement have been identified.
- 10.4 There was a spirit of optimism and excitement at the workshops about the future of this wonderful asset and it must be hoped that this spirit can be maintained and built on in the coming years.

APPENDIX

A Transcripts – Likes

A.1 This section contains a transcript of comments made on post-it notes in response to the question 'What do you like about Wild Park?' They are listed in alphabetical order within each group. Numbers in brackets are the number of post-it notes with the same point.

A.2 *Workshop 1 Group A*

Bird habitat
Dew Pond
Badgers
Bats in hawthorn trees and blackthorn
Big trees protect all from wind damage
Hawthorn and blackthorn very distinct and most prettiest area
Nice view from the bus
Nightingale and Warbler habitat
Oak trees marking boundary of the path
Old oak trees (4) are possibly 80 years old
Preserve path from bottom steps around top
Rabbit habitat
Yew trees and walnut trees and rowen, ie like in Coldean on verges

A.3 *Workshop 1 Group B*

Adventure and space
Butterflies, grassland, wild flowers, grassland insects, grassland fungi
Dew pond diversity and view of variation
Chalk grassland and scrub
Chalk grassland wildlife and hawthorn scrub
Clearance
Foraging for food
Mountain bike space
Views
Wild flower grassland – prepared to wait for it to come
Woodland

A.4 *Workshop 2 Group A*

Access to some good quality local habitats
Easy walking distance from where I live
Good café
Landscape vistas
Not lots of interpretive boards
Not too coifed
Variety of interest and activity

A.5 *Workshop 2 Group B*

Ease of access to residential areas
Shelter of trees
Striking landform

Variety of habitats
Wildlife in all its forms

A.6 *Workshop 2 Group C*

Access to Wild Park urban fringe – big park next to so many communities and transport
Adventure space
Best wildlife park in Brighton and Hove
Clearance – opening up, views, linking site areas
Dew pond (2)
Diverse habitat
Flora and fauna – eg. blue butterflies
Once cleared the Park felt united
Leave link hill fort to Wild Park
Many plants, ants and bugs
Pathways
Richness of sward
Varied environment
Wide-open space

A.7 *Workshop 3*

Badgers
Big Views
Big trees
Bio/diversity/support conversation
Birds/wildlife
Café
Dewpond
Different areas - light/dark
Flowers and fungi and insects of grassland
Foxes
Fungi
Great for kids!!
Green space to walk
Horses instead of sheep?
Lots of space to walk dogs
Mature trees
Open space
Paths through woodland
Peace and quiet
People's tolerance of traveller's encampments
Rich Scrub
Seeing wildlife
Shade of trees for rain/sun walks
Sheep
Sports pitches
Tranquillity
Trees and open grass parts
Variety of people using (including dog walkers)
Variety of wild life
Wildlife

A.8 *Workshop 4*

All 3 habitats – (but is out of kilter now?)
Badgers and bats
Beautiful space to walk within the town
Bees
Being able to roam freely round the park
Big Horseshoe Valley provides open space for the woodland birds to fly across the valley at the same altitude
Bio-diversity
Birds that feed on the insects that feed on the wild flowers
Butterflies
Community feeling of walkers
Dense scrub for variety of wildlife
Fungi
Grazing
Important habitats
Internationally rare wild flowers
Keep the ash and yew trees
Keep the trees at top of hill
Mature hawthorn woodland with oak trees growing in among them
Oak trees
Opportunity to save habitat, create openness
Peace
Rambling over new open area
Semi-wild in urban proximity
Shade
Sheep – natural grass controller
That it is not managed
The whole of Wild Park Local Nature Reserve is a wonderful big open space for walking
Trees for shelter for people/nesting birds/animals
Wildflowers (would like more)
Wildlife

APPENDIX

B Transcript - Dislikes

B.1 This section contains a transcript of comments made on post-it notes in response to the question 'What do you dislike about Wild Park?' They are listed in alphabetical order within each group. Numbers in brackets are the number of post-it notes with the same point.

B.2 *Workshop 1 Group A*

Clearage will alter the trees and plant root systems needed for protection
Dog poo
Do not clear all the way to 39 acres
Gate leading to steep area north of pit – dangerous
Lack of trees along pathway north side of circle
Restrictive access from Highfield, [residential street in] Coldean due to scrub
Travellers

B.3 *Workshop 1 Group B*

Abused sheep
Boring views of hawthorn middle
Cotoneaster
Dog shit (2)
Fence
How clearance has been done (is chalk grassland restoration viable?)
Lack of places to sit
Lack of scrub island in cleared area
Motor bikes
Rubbish
Scrappy east upland path
Unnatural edge of ski slope

B.4 *Workshop 2 Group A*

Area bordering Lewes Road
Extensive blocks of woodland
Lack of management
Lack of good woodland pathways/rides
No vegetation round dew pond
Poor access to area, particularly crossing golf course
Rubbish left by travellers

B.5 *Workshop 2 Group B*

Fencing – location and form
Lack of appropriate positive management
Lack of survey prior to work – badgers
Scrub removal unsympathetic and extreme

B.6 *Workshop 2 Group C*

Anti-social behaviour – more education

Cotoneaster and invasive plants
Lack of interpretation/understanding of this rich site hosting wildlife
Litter
Loss of access over the years
Monoculture – eg hawthorn
No light under canopy
Poorly sited fence lines
Too much sycamore
Views blocked

B.7 *Workshop 3*

Barbed wire
Bowling green grass
Dog poo (2)
Dog walking companies
Electric Fencing
Rubbish/burnt cars etc (2)
Sight of burning stumps
Too many people in one place

B.8 *Workshop 4*

Anti-social behaviour
Council's disregard for present wildlife
Dog poo in bags
Dominance of woodland
Fencing
Formal bedding by Lewes Road
Inaccessibility of wood
Narrow mindedness
Neglect of AC grass
People making money out of grazing
Sheep (2)
Sycamore and ash trees
The way it has been neglected recently
Too much scrub (have watched the changes over 45 years)
Trees cut – over 170 oak trees
Ugly fencing
Waste of taxpayer's money
Wire fences

APPENDIX

C Results - Action Plans

C.1 This section contains a transcript of notes made by groups setting out their suggestions for an action plan for the Park. They were asked to suggest actions needed in three time periods:

- NOW - this winter - up to Easter 2011
- SOON - Easter 2011 to Easter 2012
- LATER - Easter 2012 onwards.

Some groups used plans or aerial photographs to illustrate their proposals and these are included despite the difficulty of reproduction.

C.2 Workshop 1 Group A

NOW (this winter)

Continue vegetation control of cleared scrub

Head of combe scrub clearance (to salvage this site)

Fence lower down hill on north slope of pit to allow a woody barrier to 39 acres

SOON (Easter 2011 – Easter 2012)

Do scrub control on other grassland sites

Keep footprint of scrub but move it back from grassland

Managed scrub to encourage wildlife

Ski Slope - make transitional habitat on edges

LATER (Easter 2012 onwards)

Permanent fencing to be done

Landscape a path that links the grassland and create a pleasant walk through scrub/woodland

Create rides through woodland



C.3 Workshop 1 Group B

NOW (this winter)

Open up areas to grassland
Restore pathway access from Highfields [residential street in Coldean]
Reinstate the perimeter walk
Consult with children at Moulsecomb Primary School
Make more pathways for walkers
Diversity of ideas be taken into plan

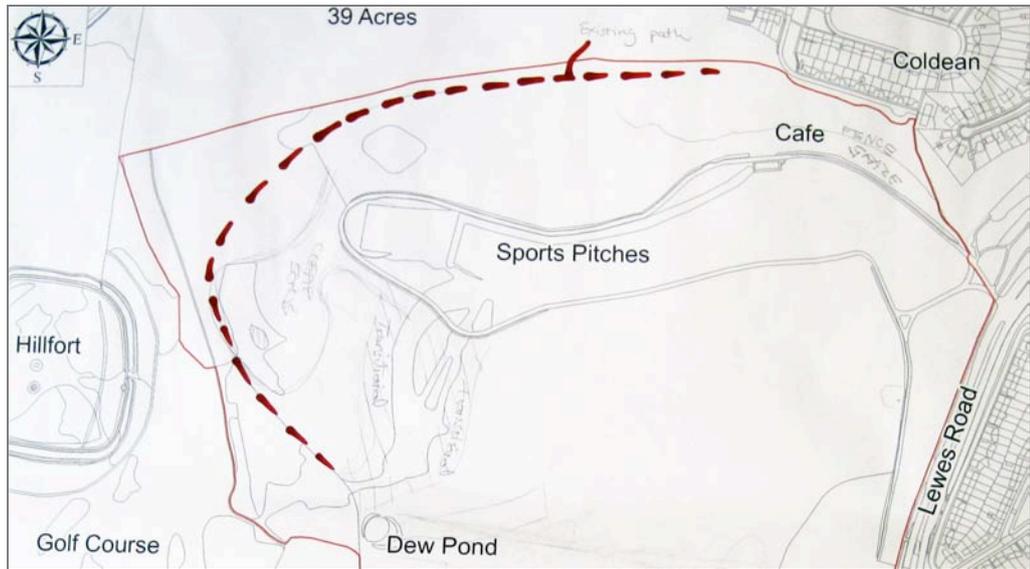
SOON (Easter 2011 – Easter 2012)

Stop motorcycling in the park
Make wild meadows with wildflowers
Child-useable play areas – playground/skatepark
Disability access
Find a way to keep travellers out
Clearing and open up the front gardens

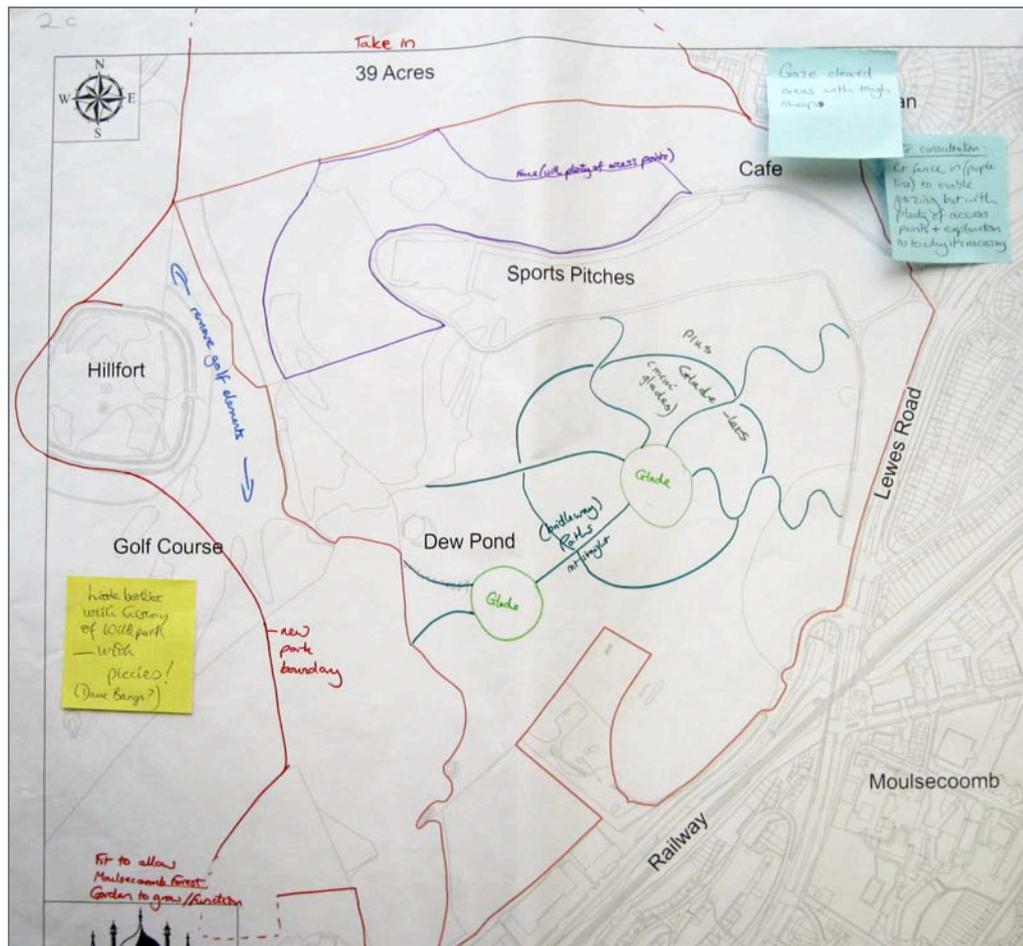
LATER (Easter 2012 onwards)

Better use of pavilion
Sensitive tree planting
Add more oak trees between mature oaks already there





C.4 Workshop 2 Group A
 (There are no notes for this group, just the plan below.)



C.5 Workshop 2 Group B

NOW (this winter)

Grade edges of grassland/scrub

Development of management plan to be informed by consultation

Realignment and repair of fences – especially west end and north edge

SOON (Easter 2011 – Easter 2012)

Proper survey of wildlife already there – bats/badgers etc

Reconnect other areas of grassland eg to south end of park – rides

Control of woody regrowth

No more fencing than is there already

LATER (Easter 2012 onwards)

Programme of rotational scrub coppicing

Management of open grown trees (pollarding) and woodland



C.6 Workshop 2 Group C

NOW (this winter)

Graze grassland areas, chalk grass and cleared areas

Clear or enlarge small valuable patches

Keep re-growth in-check

Maintain open access corridors to link park areas

Graze the land

Put some benches so people walk to them – keeps scrub down

Realign fences to enhance landscape and incorporate all chalk grassland

Re-instate fences (on improved lines)

'Weather' the fences

Re-boundary fencing – making it sympathetic to landscape

Signage for hill fort

Sheep grazing into cleared area
Clear the scrub at top directly attached to the grassland
Consultation continues
More signage
Post consultation workshops embark on education programme
Educate about the badgers – no light = no food
Website information set
Chestnut fence posts – natural/weathered not clean/new

SOON (Easter 2011 – Easter 2012)

Widen it out
Thin the scrub
Coppice the remaining trees
Start further clearance and fencing for eastern grassland
Continue to clear as defined and agreed by consultation process
Clear rides in recent woodland
Start linking chalk grass areas: Hill fort; coombe head; Dew pond; east slopes.
Push scrub/woodland edges back with scalloped edges
Annual celebratory party
School involvement with the scheme
Maintain and enrich website
Monitoring
Try a new name – not Wild Park
Interaction web/wiki sites
Exhibitions

LATER (Easter 2012 onwards)

Form some coppice woodland
Extensive grazing throughout year to optimise grass management
Consider whole area not just Wild Park boundary on map (as golf course boundary between hill fort and coombe head)
Post PR – woodland management to encourage specimen trees – diversity of age/structure/species
Thin woodland to open glades
Continue management of grassland
Workshops reviewing sustainability and new or growing species
Involve Education Department (not just Environmental Services)
Interpretive:

- Guided walks
- Video
- Web info
- Displays in libraries/community centres/schools



C.7 Workshop 3

NOW (this winter)

- Information/consultation – 100% agreement on this
- Limit the amount of time grazing – more sheep, less time
- Signs stating where and when grazing will happen (continuing)
- Consult on fencing and give info on why needed
- Visual representation of potential outcomes
- Start monitoring current levels of wildlife (shows improvement as work done)
- Open head of coombe area (yesterday if possible)
- Open up trails/walkways
- Clear area west of Lewes Road

SOON (Easter 2011 – Easter 2012)

- Pollard free-standing trees and leave some
- Fencing choices need to be explained to the public (especially permanent fences and any barbed wire)
- Child's play area/skate park
- Log benches and steps as areas are cleared

LATER (Easter 2012 onwards)

- Ideas for sustainable use eg. fleeces; rabbits
- Better use of dew pond – benches, rubbish clearance
- Better use of the pavilion
- Do more paths in woods
- Keep on managing the area!

Ongoing field surveys.
Turn football pitches into grassland
Don't put sheep back
No more major clearance
No more fencing other than what is there already
Full survey of wildlife already present
No more cutting trees down
Change mowing regime on the amenity grass to allow longer grasses and less hard boundary.
Dew ponds rebuilt properly where they were originally
Remove the flower bed along Lewes Road
Maintain the area cleared with fence levels lower down and out of sight

LATER (Easter 2012 onwards)

To preserve this ancient landscape for later generations
Change mowing/grazing regime to give less hard edges between areas – eg like at sports pitch edge.
Carry out bio surveys to establish how sheep management affects the chalk grassland.
Sheep grazing!
Long term, I would like to see greater bio-diversity/good balance, BUT we must keep and enlarge the area of CHALK GRASSLAND.
Keep the sheep as they are the best for managing chalk grassland
To see greater number of insects/birds etc in 10 years time
Keep the field behind the industrial estate as its great for skylarks
Stock proof traditional hedges with blackthorn and hawthorn etc
Seats – rustic not benches
Keep the gorse regime and management of the hill fort as it is now

APPENDIX

D Results - Suggestions for Future Engagement

D.1 This section contains a transcript of flipchart notes made by the facilitator during a plenary session at each of the workshops discussing future engagement by local residents in the management of Wild Park.

D.2 *Workshop 1*

Moulsecoomb Primary and other schools
Brighton & Hove City Council website – database of comments i.e. engage online
Recycling of cleared materials – wood etc

D.3 *Workshop 2*

Presentations in schools
Libraries
Web-site/Facebook/Wiki
Outreach work
Evergreens (elderly)
Community engagement team
Celebration – education
Feedback on monitoring
Engage people in clearance
People welcome to wood

D.4 *Workshop 3*

Leaflet good – more
Involve local schools in process
University/City College
Arboretum
Interpretive panels
Guidebook
Field trips
Local Action Teams
Re-launch Friends of Wild Park
Friends of Queensdown Forest

D.5 *Workshop 4*

Local schools – Carden Junior/Patcham High – field studies and walks
Queensdown School
New management of golf course
Natural England – Bug Life
Sports users
Forest Garden
Older people's groups

Mountain bikers
Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society
South Downs National Park
National Parks Association
Uni's – access student conservation groups
Hold Wild Park Fun Day
Kennel Club

APPENDIX

E Transcripts - Letters and Emails

E.1 This section contains a transcript of substantive sections of communications received by the Council prior to the workshops in response to publicity about them. Names and contact details have been omitted. In date order, undated at the end.

E.2 *Email 2 October*

Thank you for your time, I think it is a great idea to involve the community into the conservation of our local parks, as I understand that the conservation techniques are distressing for many people. I am currently studying at Brighton University, Animal Science FdSc and will be continuing my education specifying in Ecology and Conservation. I agree with Dave Bangs about the need for conservation in these areas but have to confess a disregard for the way in which the public were ill-informed and uneducated. This caused confusion and outrage within the community, as you may like to witness on the 'save wild park' facebook group. I would very much like to offer my voluntary services with any conservation within the area or education of the public. I have lived in Hollingdean for many years and enjoy the use of Wild Park for both nature and daily dog walking. I think these workshops are a very good idea, thank you. Kind Regards

E.3 *Email 2 October*

I have received your newsletter.
I would be interested in seeing the criteria for selecting local action teams as the appropriate groups to provide community representatives to the Wild Park Focus Group. Surely there must be resident-led, community-based groups in the areas covered by Fiveways and Preston Park, Hollingdean, Moulsecomb and Coldean LATs? Local action teams were set up specifically as a response to the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to help resolve crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour problems in their neighbourhoods. I understand that it would have been possible for existing community groups in some areas to take on a LAT role and that some LATs may have evolved beyond their original brief to take on a wider community role but it seems to me essential for legitimate public consultation that community and residents' associations should be approached first.
I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

E.4 *Email 4 October*

I just received your leaflet and wanted to make a comment. I am an amateur mycologist (and semi-professional forager). I don't know if the authorities are aware of this but the hawthorn scrub in wild park is home to at least one rare and protected (and spectacular, IMO) species of fungus: Amanita echinocephala. Wild Park and Stanmer Park are the only places in Sussex I

have ever found this fungus, which specialises in growing on dry chalk hawthorn scrub, especially near to beech.

You can't win at this game. If you try to get rid of one uncommon habitat and replace it with another then you will be benefiting some rare species at the expense of others. Anyway, I just wanted to add my voice to those who are saying that clearance of hawthorn scrub could easily do as much harm as it does good.

E.5 *Email 4 October*

Hi

I am writing for information on the workshops that you have given for in the newsletter. I received the letter this morning and am interested in being involved. I have been using the woods for quite some time now and they are a very much enjoyed space for me.

E.6 *Email 4 October*

Please add me to your consultation lists. I have just received your update and whilst I am not overly familiar with the park I will visit it now and support any initiative to conserve and reestablish the last of the grasslands which are vital for butterfly and flower conservation.

I suspect that most of the opposition to the work that you have carried out to date is borne out of ignorance and a misplaced belief that woodland and ground cover by shrubs is necessarily good for nature.

I would be interested in attending a workshop and have an active interest in butterfly conservation and you should look to involve the sussex butterfly conservation people especially if there are important species that need protection.

E.7 *Letter - 4 October 2010*

Thank you for your newsletter on the Wild Park update.

Having been living in Moulsecoomb, Brighton for over 70 years, the Wild Park was our main playground while growing up with my brothers in Goodwood Way, Moulsecoomb. Since living in Wheatfield Way, Brighton for over 50 years, the Wild Park is still our main and scenic park on this side of Brighton. I would therefore like to be informed of any changes to this part of the South Downs National Park, ie Wild Park.

Therefore I would appreciate being added to the Wild Park Consultation Mailing list. Also, my daughter who lives in Higher Benenden would also like to be added to the list.

E.8 *Letter - 5 October 2010*

Re: recent woodland stripping at Wild Park

I would like to add my voice of extreme concern to the blinkered and narrow-minded decision to strip an area of young, developing woodland at Wild Park, apparently in the name of 'conservation'. We live in a world of diminishing afforestation, and are all too eager to cry 'stop' to rainforest plundering – yet it is happening on our doorstep.

The Wild Park that existed in 1946 was a 'man-made' environment and not the natural order of the South Downs. Turn the clock back a couple of hundred years and the Downs was primarily woodland and scrub. The trees were all cut down by the generation before us and we forget they were ever there. This deforestation has led to serious erosion and 'land slipping' all over the Downs.

The denuded open pasture shown in the 1946 photo was a result of man's tree felling activities. So, allowing them to return is the 'normal' use of this land.

I used to walk my dogs in Wild Park, enjoying peaceful woods on all sides. Now it is an eyesore, an open wound, and I rarely go there.

Someone has made a very bad decision through ignorance and a lack of respect for nature. It is time to set it right.

E.9 *Email 5 October*

One of the lovely things about Wild Park was always that it was an unfenced area that was used by the community in a variety of different way. My children have enjoyed rolling down the hills, riding their bikes, sledging down the old Victorian grass ski slope in the snow, making dens and climbing trees. As a family we've had picnics, admired the views and taken dogs for a walk. It has always felt like a little piece of countryside on our doorstep. Rather like a huge back garden.

Those spaces are very important for children growing up in Brighton because we really don't have much space like it. Most of our parks are very formal and don't encourage children to explore and build dens or take risks climbing trees and riding bikes over home-made wooden ramps in the woods. It's particularly important for older children who can have some freedom there. As such Wild Park is a very important space in Brighton.

I strongly feel that the park should be unfenced. The barbed wire was hideous and dangerous and I'm pleased it's been removed but any fencing is dangerous at the bottom of steep slopes. Children, and adults, won't be able to use the space safely for mountain biking, mountain boarding or sledging if it remains fenced and the whole park suddenly seems very domesticated, making exploring in the woods that remain and building dens a bit of an anti-climax.

Therefore, although I feel there is good argument for managing the area and clearing some of the scrub and re-introducing coppicing I definitely would like to see that area remain as an open space. The sheep will just need a good

shepherd and dog to keep them within the park!

E.10 *Email 6 October*

I welcome the action by the Council to control scrub and introduce grazing to part of Wild Park. I know the small areas of chalk grassland within the Park, the condition they were in and the threat that they faced from scrub development.

However, I was disappointed to note that the fenced area cuts through the middle of one of better areas of chalk grassland at its south western corner. This means that about half of this valuable area will not benefit from the grazing that has been introduced. I have attached a copy of your grazing map highlighting (indicatively) the area of chalk grassland that has been excluded. Although rabbits are present in the area (and have of course been instrumental in keeping this area open) I believe it would have been better if this area could be included within the fence and therefore grazed.

As I am sure you will be aware, there is an area of species rich chalk grassland in the south eastern part of the Park. This area continues to be threatened by scrub invasion. It would be good if action could be taken to safeguard this area, including for example –

- scrub control within and on the edges of the grassland, and to help link remaining patches of grassland in this area; and
- introduce an annual programme of cutting of scrub and grassland where the resident rabbits are not sufficient (I assume the area could not be grazed).

I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of further plans to conserve the chalk grassland in Wild Park and would therefore be grateful if you would inform me of the details of the workshops you are planning once they have been decided. An evening or weekend at any of the proposed locations would be fine for me.

E11 *Email 13 October*

I went on the guided walk on 6th October and was interested to hear the views of other people. I have also looked at the information on your website. I am not an expert on conservation and I am only an occasional visitor to the park. I mainly use it as an attractive route if walking from home (Edburton Avenue) on the way to Stanmer or Ditchling Beacon but I was intrigued by the clamour that has been raised by some park users. As a regular walker on the South Downs, I am aware how little “unimproved” downland exists and just how rich those pockets of old grassland can be. I think that B&H have been fairly clumsy in their approach but I support the clearing of sufficient ground to give the opportunity for the current pockets of grassland to survive and expand. I accept that part of this is grazing and as in other areas of the Downs, livestock can live alongside the visitors provided dogs are controlled properly. A comment was made that cattle would be more effective in combating the regeneration of the scrub but that the land was “too steep” for cattle. Surely it is a question of what type of cattle? I have friends who farm on the Cornish coast

as tenants of the National Trust and a headland with steep slopes that lead to cliffs are grazed by a small breed (Dexter?) of cattle as well as Exmoor ponies. I gather people have been upset by the removal of scrub/woodland adjacent to 39 acres. It does look a mess at present but when I sat at the top of the "ski slope" last week, I noticed that there is now a good view across the park across 39 acres and into the distance.

It would be unrealistic to seek to restore the park to how it looked in 1925 but there needs to be a better balance with an end to the gradual forestation of most of the park - this will need consistent and active management so good luck given the anticipated public sector cuts.

E12 *Email 18 October*

I went on a guided walk with Dan Danahar yesterday.

I had not seen the early impact of the scrub clearance before.

There is already vigorous re-growth and soon it will need cutting back again.

Do you need volunteers for this kind of work?

I would be happy to help. Please add me to any e-mail notices list you may have.

It is sad to see the many sections of cut fence, complete with anarchist symbols and 'Save our Trees' messages.

Perhaps there ought to be a piece in a forthcoming B&H city news about the lost delights of the downland slopes and their butterflies. I recall some excellent aerial photos from the '40s, I think, in a management plan published by B&H Council a few years back, showing the slopes free of scrub and sycamore.

Some of the fencing did seem to be a long way into the woodland, in the NW corner of the park. If this implies that the large trees within it are due to be felled, I can see how this might upset some folk

E13 *Email 18 October*

I have today posted some of my comments concerning the Wild Park clearance as I wanted to refer directly to certain areas on the map. Whilst my main interest is birdlife, I like to regard myself as a naturalist so am also interested in the aims of the Council and the resultant protection of grassland and generally improving the butterfly and plant species. But I was horrified to see the extent of the first stage of the clearance and joined the protests which came from people from all walks of life.

I walk the uppermost parts of the Wild Park coomb on well over 100 days of a year and have been recording birds and other wildlife for a good number of years around the whole of the LNR. Of course I bump in to dogwalkers and other people from time to time and they express their concerns to me. Number one complaint has definitely been the introduction of barbed wire in a public place and no doubt we will be pleased to see that this type of fence is not re-introduced here.

Many dog walkers and what I call people just out for a pleasant walk, will appreciate the sounds of birdsong on their contact with the Wild Park and to take away large areas of prime nesting habitat just doesn't seem to be sensible. These people don't study the birds and don't know one from another,

and I suppose take them for granted, but if these sounds were taken away there would be an outcry. I attach herewith a brief report from [name withheld] which outlines the number of birds and species which would be displaced if the Council pursued with the clearance work originally as planned.

I am a member of the Sussex Ornithological Society and the British Trust for Ornithology and I contacted both organisations earlier this year as I wanted to see what their reactions were. The SOS seemed mildly concerned and I volunteered to attend some meetings on their behalf and to report back at intervals. The BTO kindly gave me a brief statement which more or less stated that if consultation had been properly undertaken, they felt there was a need for clearance but with a compromise 'mosaic' effect the best solution. I am unsure of the local RSPB branch's position on this matter but a number of people I have met have indicated their opposition to the original plans.

My own personal views on any continuation of the clearance plans would be for a compromise with a much smaller amount of clearance, perhaps adjoining the fragments of existing chalk grassland. The removal of the number of trees and listed as scrub was wrong, yet I felt that some of the trees felt did have a usefulness - ie some semi-mature trees at the head of the coomb and creating more of an open glade. I had no worries with this as a sensible number of trees were removed. The important shrubs for migrating birds who seek nourishment from berries are of course the Hawthorn and the Elder and some of the areas to the west of the dewpond are prime areas which should be retained. If in years to come there was felt a need to take out older trees please do so at a minimum and it will retain the lower scrub which is important for birds.

I think the remaining fragments of chalk grassland should be cleared, and perhaps a small amount of scrub removal around the fringe, but please no where near the drastic levels that was done on the first stage. I remain unconvinced that the clearance work will eventually create chalk grassland and even with winter management and sheep grazing I still have my doubts. If this chalk grassland is so important I think the results of butterfly surveys should be made available for anyone to see because if there was no evidence of the presence of Adonis Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper or other 'scarce' species on the cleared slope this summer then I feel you may be wasting time, money and effort to no avail. I certainly visited twice at the right time of the year and found neither of the prime species, though I respect other experts may have made more regular visits. I did record Chalkhill Blues on the slope above the Lewes Road viaduct so I guess this should perhaps be your next priority if further clearance work is approved.

As most birdwatchers know the prime areas for birds are on woodland edges. I have to say that there are some parts of the woodland (what you label as scrub) which could be managed in some way. Some of the older Hawthorns are of little value to wildlife, certainly not for producing berries and are only beneficial to birds like Magpie and Crow who may nest in them. A percentage of these Hawthorns could be removed, perhaps with a few Ash and Sycamore, but retaining enough to still make it look like a woodland not a chalk grassland.

I have grown up with the slow changes of the Wild Park since the late 1950's and would hate to see the area ruined. Mosaics is my idea of the way forward. I do hope something good comes out of the consultation.

Attachment

LIST OF NESTING BIRDS COUNTED FOR 2008/2009 IN THE CLEARED AREA OF WILD PARK

Species Stages	Number in Stage 1	Number in all
Green Woodpecker	1	1
Great spotted Woodpecker	-	1
Wren	7	18
Dunnock	7	14
Robin	9	29
Blackbird	9	23
Song Thrush	2	4
Long tailed Tit	1	3
Blue Tit	8	17
Great Tit	7	16
Whitethroat	3	11
Garden Warbler	1	1
Chiffchaff	4	6
Willow Warbler	1	1
Lesser Whitethroat	1	1
Blackcap	4	8
Carrion Crow	1	4
Magpie	2	12
Chaffinch	4	13
Greenfinch	1	2
Bullfinch	-	1
Yellowhammer	1	2
Total	74	188

Some of these species will NOT find replacement habitat within the LNR - these include Nightingale, Whitethroats, Garden and Willow Warbler and Yellowhammer.

All this loss just to gain a few butterflies?

Butterflies affected by the clearance are Green Hairstreak and Orange Tip where the food plants grow in scrubby areas.

He made the point that areas of the Wild Park has been left to mature over a number of years and only a small area has been 'saved' as grassland by voluntary care and maintenance. He disputes the areas of 'scrub' marked on the Council's map as being mature woodland. He thinks that some of the management is right but not to the extent planned. He estimates the area to be cleared will take as much as 20 years to reach the grassland state that the Council wants.

Other affects to birds may well be the removal of trees used by Magpies and finches as roosts in the winter; habitat loss to sustain Sparrowhawk; removal of scrub as shelter; removal of berry-producing shrubs which provide food for migrating birds in autumn and early winter.

E.14 *Letter - 21 October 2010*

Thank you very much for the 'Wild Park update', the information that it contains and the opportunity to make a comment on that information.

I have lived in Brighton all my life and remember the Wild Park in the 1950s. I am now retired and on most weekday afternoons walk from my home over the golf course to Hollingbury Camp, returning by walking through the woods at the top of the Wild Park. I have watched with increasing concern the action by the Council.

I realise that people have different preferences but I far prefer the current (or rather c. 2008) structure of woodland and scrub to the open grass-land shown in the 1946 photograph in your leaflet. There are large stretches of such open grassland both to the north and south of the Wild Park: I can recall the southern stretch between the Wild Park and the new Hertford Primary School as farm land.

I realise the needs of butterflies, and the warmth created by the hollow of the Wild Park itself, I used to watch them as a boy in the 1950s at the bottom of the Park as it abuts the slope going up to the Camp and I am prepared to accept the clearance that has been done up to this point.

However, I believe that it is time to cease any more such clearance, save a slight extension at the very bottom of the slope leading up to the Camp. We need to be able to walk both through woodland and across open grassland. More clearance will deprive people and wildlife of that opportunity. I am a keen birdwatcher and value the variety of birdlife that I can see on my daily walk, this variety arises from the variety of habitat.

Sadly I could not attend any of the walks as I was not available for the shortest walk and cannot now walk for the length of time estimated for the other walks.

I appreciate the efforts now being made by the Council to help people become better informed, it would have been far preferable if this had been done before the action that has been undertaken rather than after!

Although I did not sign the petition I agree with its thrust: although I cannot comment on bullet point 3 and do not agree with bullet point 5 (I would like the resources better used) or bullet point 8 (perfection is impossible). I concur with much of what David Bangs had written, although I am not too sure about the comments regarding a 'playground' for children, who I think run through woodland as pleasurably as open grassland, if not more so.

In conclusion I urge the Council to proceed no further, save possibly a slight extension of the clearance at the very bottom of the slope leading up to the Camp. Please leave the rest of the scrub and woodland for those of us (including the wildlife) who enjoy the variety, peace and calm that it brings.

I would like to be added the Consultation mailing list

E15 *Email 23 October*

I am a local resident living on the Ditchling road side of Wild Park. I recently

attended two guided walks on Thursday and Saturday to become better informed about the nature of the clearance work started by Brighton Council.

I am very concerned that the Council has put a stop to its clearance in response to the very vocal, angry and somewhat misinformed anti - lobby. I hope, now that the Council is managing to communicate what it is doing with the help of some very well informed local naturalists that this clearance work will resume. It is clearly absolutely vital that we do all we can to preserve and indeed extend the unique chalk grasslands that it is our privilege to have on our doorstep. The rapid decline of the chalk grasslands since 1925 is a disgrace. It seems somewhat ironic that while UK residents are happy to lend their support to efforts to preserve the Amazon forests the same people do not appear to attach the same levels of concern to rare habitat on their doorstep.

E.16 *Note - undated*

Please can you put me on the Wild Park Consultation Mailing list?

E.17 *Comment form - undated*

I think the scrub clearance should continue to save the remaining chalk grassland. Grazing would be required to reinstate the bio-diversity.

E.18 *Letter - undated*

[List of 4 names and addresses for mailing list]

APPENDIX

F Workshop Evaluation

- F.1 This sections contains a transcript of comments made by participants who completed a simple Evaluation Form at the end of the first three workshops. The number after each comment is the workshop number (1, 2 etc) followed by a sheet number (relevant for checking purposes only).

The form asked people to give Positive and Negative comments and then asked for a response to two questions: 'How could it be done better next time?'; 'What other activities would be useful?'

F.2 *Positive Comments:*

Diversity of comments/ideas (1/1)
Open consultation (1/2)
Good debate and explanation of facts (1/3)
A good open meeting and sharing ideas (1/4)
Good mix of people (1/5)
Open discussion (1/6)
Well facilitated (1/7)
Non-hostile atmosphere (1/7)
Constructive and enjoyable (1/7)
Intro excellent (2/1)
Table discussion very good (2/1)
Great dynamic interchange of some bright ideas (2/1)
Well presented and introduced (2/2)
Very interesting (2/2)
Felt very engaged and involved (2/2)
Great introductions (2/3)
Very positive that it happened at all (2/4)
Presentation much better (2/5)
Case for made more clearly (2/5)
Good structure to event (2/6)
A very satisfying experience (2/7)
Maps great (2/7)
It's good to be asked your opinion (2/7)
Good variety of ideas (2/8)
Liked small groups giving feedback (2/9)
Maps really help (2/9)
And tea! (2/9)
A very good group (3/1)
Laid back and friendly (3/2)
Good at pulling things together (3/2)
Very good (3/3)
Good amount of time for each exercise/discussion (3/3)
Good knowledgeable people to answer technical questions (3/3)
Slide presentation excellent (3/4)
Good to have rangers/council reps there (3/4)

F.3 *Negative Comments:*

None (1/1) (1/3) (1/4) (1/5) (2/2) (2/6) (3/2)
Too open. More “constant” discussion/explanation would be helpful. Eg What sheep do and need! (1/2)
Landscape scale conservation (1/2)
Lack of contour map or model so view lines might be judged, and positions judged (1/6)
A bit too long (1/7)
Weather clearly put some people off. Why no councillors/public figures turned out? Need political backing/councillors learning debate (2/1)
None – all good stuff guys (2/3)
Less post-it notes please (2/4)
Still no major opportunity to engage (2/5)
Perhaps needs to be done during the day for longer time (2/7)
Felt constrained by consultation boundary (should be wider to include 39 acres, Hillfort etc) (2/8)
Darn! Can’t think of any! (2/9)
Lack of [unreadable] work [unreadable](3/1)
A bit one-sided (3/1)
More people – a shame not many turned out (not your fault though) (3/3)
Not many people – a shame but very productive to work in a small group (3/4)

F.4 *How could it be done better next time?*

Gluten-free biscuits (1/1)
Not ‘likes and dislikes’, but more forward looking, “what do you want? What do you not want?” (1/2)
Being new to group, it was good to have someone who could explain facts to date (1/3)
Show another site that has benefited from this sort of management (1/4)
Worked very well (1/5)
Separate the two table groups for audio reasons (1/6)
Less time on each section so as to avoid drifting and going off track (1/7)
All fine – timing good – tight (re bad weather and getting home) (2/1)
Schools and go to communities that may find you difficult to reach (2/2)
Nothing (2/3)
Everyone should get a chance to talk (2/6)
3D model of Wild Park/interactive (2/7)
Not sure – 3D model (interactive) (2/8)
3D model of area? (2/9)
All went well – Saturday maybe not the best day (3/1)
Perhaps take workshop to pre-existing bodies (3/2)
More publicity of event locally if possible (not sure what there was as was on holiday though!). The Argus/signs in woods/park. (3/3)
Increase publicity (door-to-door leaflets seem to work well). (3/4)

F.5 *What other activities would be useful?*

At a later session show what was said and what was done to follow up those ideas (1/1)

I think the consultation has been sound and interesting. I would have liked more written 'green' and 'white' papers (1/2)
Visit to the park (1/4)
Walk and site visit (1/5)
Shoot the dogs?! (1/6)
Walk to site prior to meeting to gain a clearer perspective (1/7)
Roadshows/displays to schools, in libraries, community centres and different groups and interactive website (2/1)
Think the time spent on activities versus discussion was well timed and well executed (2/2)
Get into schools and old people's social groups – you may get some really good pictures of what it used to look like (2/3)
Briefing notes (2/5)
Good as it was (2/6)
It would be great to have these pictures available digitally ie. On website (2/9)
More council involvement [?] (3/1)
Follow-up workshops to discuss/consult/comment on decisions (3/3)
Continuing consultation (3/3)
Follow-up very important (3/4)

Wild Park update

October 2010

This is the first update for local residents and anyone interested in Wild Park and its management. It is being sent to all houses within about 15 minutes walk of Wild Park.

Wild Park is a very important space and is in the new South Downs National Park. Not only is it a large, green, open area residents can enjoy for recreation and sports, it is also home to rare chalk grassland, woodland and diverse areas of scrub important for wildlife.

With advice from experts including Natural England and the council ecologist, the council started work on restoring the chalk grassland to pasture by removing small trees and bushes (scrub) and introduced sheep grazing two years ago. This work is about conserving a rare habitat with the particular flora, fauna and wildlife that come with chalk grassland, as well as encouraging access to the park.

You may have seen where the scrub clearance has occurred or read about it in advance in City News last year. The need for this work has been questioned by some local residents.

Some also expressed concerns about whether the council had consulted residents enough. We do want to ensure that as many residents as possible shape the way Wild Park is managed bearing in mind all its important aspects – both recreation and conservation of rare chalk land, woodland and scrub. This newsletter begins a new round of consultation which, in response to residents concerns, will be far more extensive. In the meantime, no further work to clear scrub will be carried out. We are going back to the drawing board and new plans will be drafted with the full involvement of residents.

A group called the Wild Park Focus Group has been set up comprising of representatives from the local action teams (Fiveways and Preston Park, Hollingdean, Moulsecomb, and Coldean), Friends of Wild Park, local councillors, Natural England



and local conservationists. This group is helping the council with the consultation process to ensure it is wide and as thorough as it can be.

It is intended to hold a number of workshops to start forming new plans for the park and all residents are invited.

This update has been produced by the council with input from the Wild Park Focus Group.

Wild Park pictured in 1946 and 2007 showing the decline in open grassland



Comment from Natural England

Natural England is the government agency whose responsibilities include biodiversity and access, and we are able to offer funding to protect and enhance both of these. We want to see Brighton & Hove City Council protect all of the important habitats for wildlife in Wild Park, as well as ensuring that local people continue to enjoy the park, be it walking the dog, picking blackberries, or cycling, etc, in the numerous ways that they do now.

There are three important habitats for wildlife in the park - woodland, scrub (hawthorn, brambles, etc) and flower-rich chalk grassland. The key issue here is that over the last few decades, scrub has grown over all but a fragment of the remaining flower-rich grassland, one of the richest wildlife habitats we have in this country, but one that has been

lost at an enormous rate over the last 50 years, through ploughing, or invasion by dense scrub. The wide variety of species that depend on it, including orchids and butterflies, many of which are likely to have thrived in the combe for many centuries, will disappear in the next few years if some management work does not take place.

We believe that by leaving the woodland areas as woodland, and controlling the scrub in specific areas, the flower-rich grassland fragments can be buffered, linked, carefully conservation grazed, and thereby safeguarded for the future. The resulting mosaic of grassland and scrub would benefit all the important wildlife, including birds, and enhance people's enjoyment of the park.

Comments from people who have objected to the work include:

- The scrub clearance work is destroying a valuable habitat for wild birds and other flora and fauna.
- The park is a much-loved, widely-used public resource and should remain unfenced as open space.
- There is no support whatsoever in the area amongst park-users for this widespread destruction within a much-loved and widely-used area.
- Barbed wire has no place in a public park.
- The work is a waste of public resources.
- Oak trees are being destroyed which has shocked and angered people.
- The council should coppice woods and scrub, and not destroy them.
- There was perfect biodiversity across the grassland, scrub and woodland.
- It is not believed the scrub clearance will result in ancient chalk grassland.
- Sheep will curtail people's freedom to use the park.

These are comments from a petition and they may not represent all the objections to the work. Please also note that the council has subsequently removed the barbed wire.

Comment from Dave Bangs, local Downland conservationist

We are faced with the local extinction of many creatures and flowers at the Wild Park – especially those that depend upon the surviving bits of ancient grassland.

Yet the council's recent drastic clearance of trees and bushes, which are encroaching onto the last grassland fragments, distressed many people. The council hadn't consulted properly either with local residents or experts.

The council had gone from doing far too little, to doing far too much.

Yet, if nothing at all had been done, the last fragments of ancient flowery grassland would disappear within years. The special butterflies, moths and wildflowers were crammed onto them like the animals in Noah's Ark.

When the park was founded in 1925 its slopes were open, with scattered bushes. It was a wonderful playground for local children. By 2005 that openness was lost to thorny scrub.

Many of us love the new trees and bushes, though, for their green shade and their birds.

The Wild Park is big enough for all – for those who love trees and bushes and those who love the ancient grassland.

That means:

- No species or habitats should be allowed to go extinct at the Wild Park (grassland, scrub or woodland).
- All habitats should be managed sustainably. For the woodland and scrub that means a combination of non-intervention and coppicing. The ancient pasture fragments should be big enough and sufficiently inter-linked to survive, without constant threat of extinction, and managed by conservation grazing.
- Consultation is made the heart of management.

What next?

We are proposing a series of workshops to be held to establish a common understanding of what is important about Wild Park, the principles for its management, and to plan for the future. We are planning to hold these in the evenings and at weekends, and at four locations (Coldean, Hollingdean, Hollingbury and Moulsecoomb). Please contact us to register your preference for a workshop at a particular time or location, and we will write back inviting you to a workshop. Guided walks with local experts are also being run:

Wednesday 6 October. Wild Park walk with Peter Whitcomb and Dave Bangs. Meet: 10am - Wild Park pavilion café off Lewes Road. Map ref: TQ 329 081. Two-three hours.

Thursday 7 October. Wild Park walk with Phil Beldon and Graeme Lyons. Meet: 5.30pm - Wild Park pavilion café off Lewes Road. Map ref: TQ 329 081. Two hours approx.

Saturday 9 October. Wild Park walk with Peter Whitcomb and Dave Bangs. Meet: 10am - small car park at entrance to Lower Roedale allotments off Lynchett Close. Map ref: TQ 320 070. Two-three hours.

Sunday 17 October. Butterflies of Wild Park guided tour with Dr Dan Danahar, Biodiversity Officer for Sussex Butterfly Conservation, to find out how you can help conserve the butterflies at Wild Park. Meet: 10am - Wild Park pavilion café off Lewes Road. Map ref. TQ 329 081. One and a half hours approx.

Sunday 17 October. Butterflies of Wild Park guided tour with Dr Dan Danahar, Biodiversity Officer for Sussex Butterfly Conservation, to find out how you can help conserve the butterflies at Wild Park. Meet: 12.30pm - car park at Hollingbury Golf Club entrance on Ditchling Road opposite Woodbourne Avenue. Two hours approx.

Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear for walking in the countryside, including some steep slopes. Limited parking. Bring binoculars if possible.

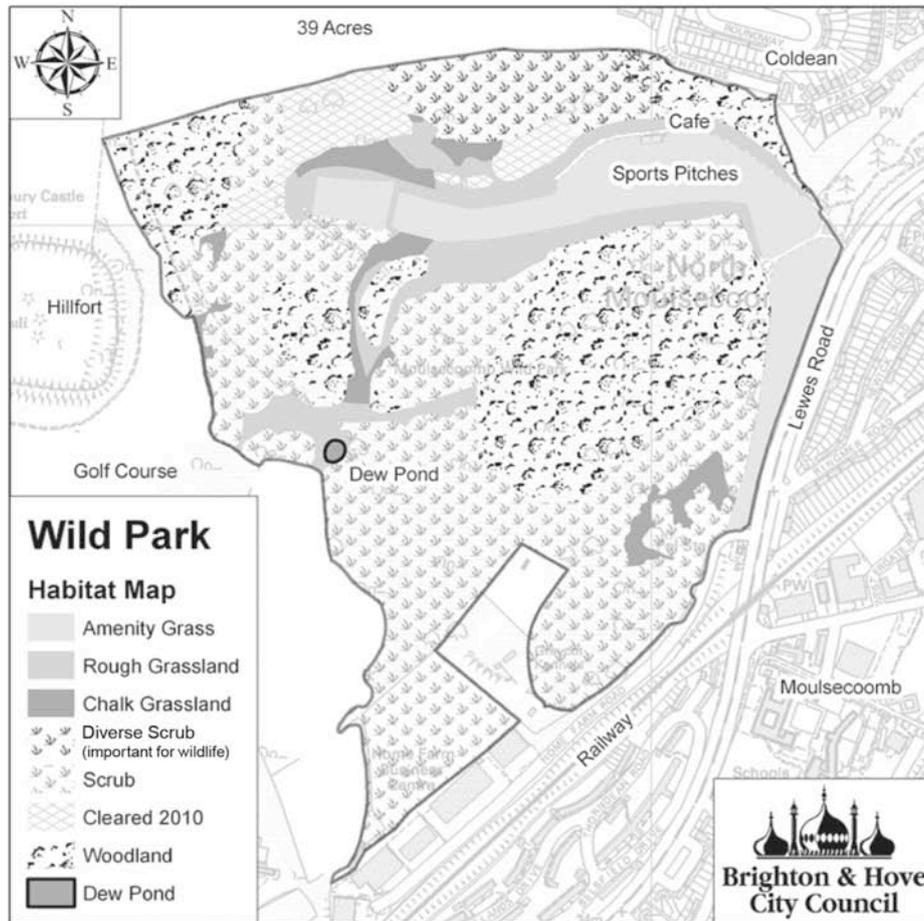
Contact

If you would like to register an interest in a workshop, find out more about an event, make a comment, or receive further updates, please visit www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/wildparkconsultation, e-mail wildparkconsultation@brighton-hove.gov.uk or call us 01273 292929. Or you can write to Cityparks, Stanmer Nurseries, Stanmer Park, Lewes Road, Brighton BN1 9SE.

Please ask to be added to the Wild Park Consultation mailing list and give us your name and address.

This map shows the area of Wild Park we are consulting on, including current habitats and the area cleared in early 2010 before the bird nesting season started. All necessary approvals were obtained, including the full support of the council ecologist, and volunteers removed some of the timber as it had no commercial value.

Please note that there will be specific consultations where any changes are proposed for other areas outside of the boundary on this map.



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Wild Park Public Consultation Workshops

Wild Park is a very important space and is in the new South Downs National Park. Not only is it a large, green, open area residents can enjoy for recreation and sports, it is also home to rare chalk grassland, woodland and diverse areas of scrub important for wildlife.

Workshops are being held to establish a common understanding of what is important about Wild Park, the principles for its management, and to start planning for the future.

- **6pm-8.30pm Monday 29th November 2010**
New Larchwood cafe, Waldron Avenue, Coldean BN1 9EZ
- **6pm-8.30pm Wednesday 1st December 2010**
Hollingdean Community Centre, Thompson Road BN1 7BH
- **9.30am-12noon Saturday 4th December 2010**
Moulsecoomb Leisure Centre, Moulsecoomb Way BN2 4PB
- **2pm-4.30pm Saturday 4th December 2010**
The Gathering Place, Orchid View, Hollingbury BN1 8FN

All residents invited – tea and coffee provided.
Please come along and contribute to the discussion.
If possible please let us know which workshop
you will be attending.

If you are not able to attend there will be
further opportunities to comment
or you can contact us with your views.

Further information: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/wildparkconsultation
Email: WildParkConsultation@brighton-hove.gov.uk Tel.: 01273 292929

APPENDIX

J Workshop plan

Workshop plan for Wild Park, Brighton

Wednesday 1 December 2010 Hollingdean Community Centre, Thompson Road BN1 7BH.

DRAFT. Revised: 30 November 2010 NW / HB

For internal use only.

HB = Hugo Blomfield / BHCC, organisers

NW = Nick Wates, NWA, Facilitator

JF = Jane Freund, NWA, Assistant Facilitator

NB Timing subject to discretion of the facilitator depending on numbers attending and levels of interest.

Photographers: NW and JF

Format: participants seated around tables throughout.

Resources to be provided by HB unless otherwise indicated.

Time	Activity	Time mins	People	Resources
17.30	Set up	30	HB, NW, JF	
	Welcome desk			Attendance sheet Name badges – self completing Facilitator badges (NWA) Newsletters
	Tables and chairs			Table number or letter Post it notes Biros or pencils Felt tip pens Flipsheet
	Presentation equipment			Powerpoint projector & stand
	Display material			Aerial photos Photos – historical and recent Plans of park
	Photography			Photo signs (NWA) Camera (NWA) Batteries (NWA)
	Flipcharts Agenda on flipchart			At least 2, preferably 3. Spare flipsheet pad [one flipchart for other unrelated issues which need to be “parked” or “put on the too difficult pile”, to be dealt with in due course] Marker pens
	Catering			Catering – gluten free option
17.40	Briefing and review	5	All	Refreshments for team (NWA)
17.45	Arrivals	15	NW, JF,	

Workshop plan – page 1

	People sit where they want		HB	
18.00	Welcome and Introduction Thanks for coming Blank sheet	5	Gillian Marston, Head of City Infrastructure	
18.05	Workshop facilitator's intro Introduce NW and JF - CP consultants - Hastings - CP.net - Passionate about landscape This evening's agenda Rules – respect views of others Photos – say if don't want Record everything Introduce to each other	5	NW, JF	
18.05	Context Conservation agenda	15	Matthew Thomas, Ecologist	Powerpoint and handout
18.25	Likes and Dislikes Post its, discuss and sort, prioritise Colour A = Likes = Pink Colour B = Dislikes = Green One idea per post it	15	NW, JF	Flip sheet/s – line down centre Post-its colours A & B Pens/pencils Sticky dots Marker pens
18.40	Report back Most important in each category (more if time) Record on flipchart	10	NW, JF	Flipchart
18.50	Stretch/coffee break Look at post-its of others	10		catering
19.00	Action plan Post-its and felt tips on plan, discuss and prioritise C - Pink = NOW to Easter 2011 D-Orange = SOON Easter 2011-12 E-Yellow= LATER Easter 2012 on	30	NW, JF	Large plans on tables Small post it notes colours C, D, E Pens/pencils/felt tips
19.30	Report back Most important in each category (more if time) Record on flipchart	15	NW, JF	flipchart
19.45	Stretch/coffee break Look at plans of others	10		catering
19.55	Engagement How to get people involved ideas Facilitator to flipchart What next	10	NW,	Flipcharts Materials for people to sign up
20.05	Evaluation So we do the next one better Please complete before you leave (but no pressure) anon if preferred	5	NW	Evaluation forms
20.10	Close Very brief thanks again	0	NW	
	Clear up NWA to photograph and take all	30	All	Portfolio case (NWA)

Workshop plan – page 2

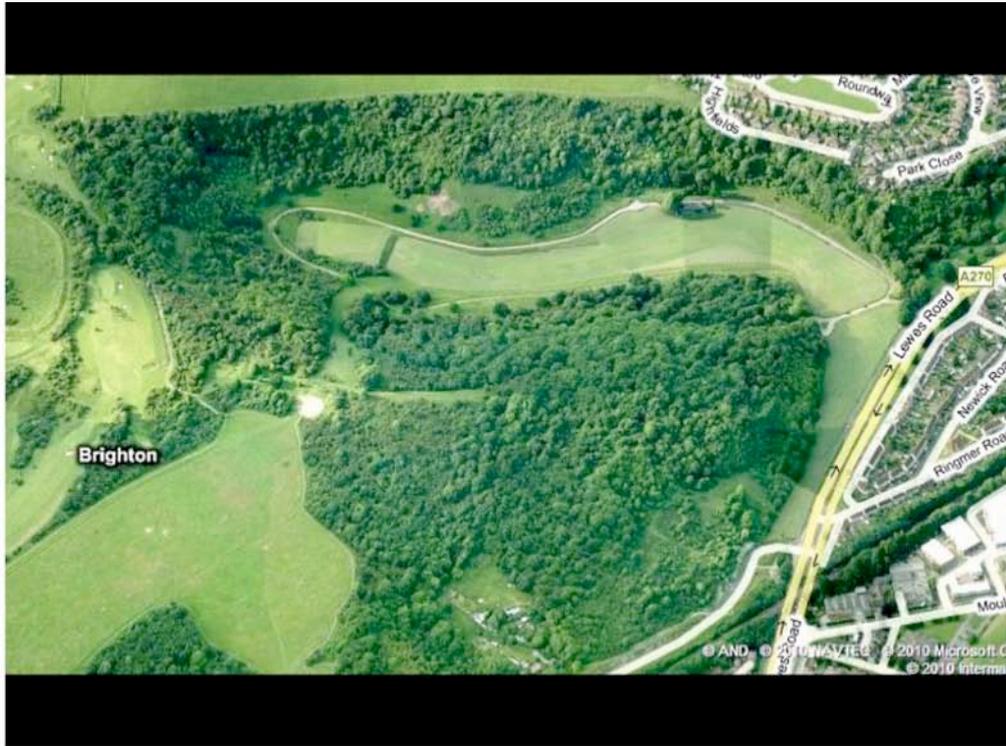
	post its, flip sheets, maps, attendance sheets, evaluation forms HB to supervise clearing up venue. Brainstorm on immediate lessons			
	AFTERWARDS			
	Circulation of lessons for future workshops. Email within 24 hours.		NW & HB	
	Circulate workshop results ASAP		NW	
	Circulate draft report ASAP		NW	
	Comments on draft report		HB	
	Supply final report	31 Dec	NW	

Workshop plan – page 3

APPENDIX

K PowerPoint by Council Ecologist

01



02



03



04



Green Woodpecker

Grassland for feeding, woodland for nesting

05



Whitethroat

Woody vegetation for foraging and tall herbage / bramble for nesting.

06



Song Thrush

Nests in thickets, feeds in the open on the ground

07



Slow-worm

Feeds in long grass, hibernates in scrub

08



Solitary Amanita

Very rare – under trees / woodland edge on dry chalk

09



Orange-tailed Clearwing

Day-flying moth of the chalk grassland / scrub interface

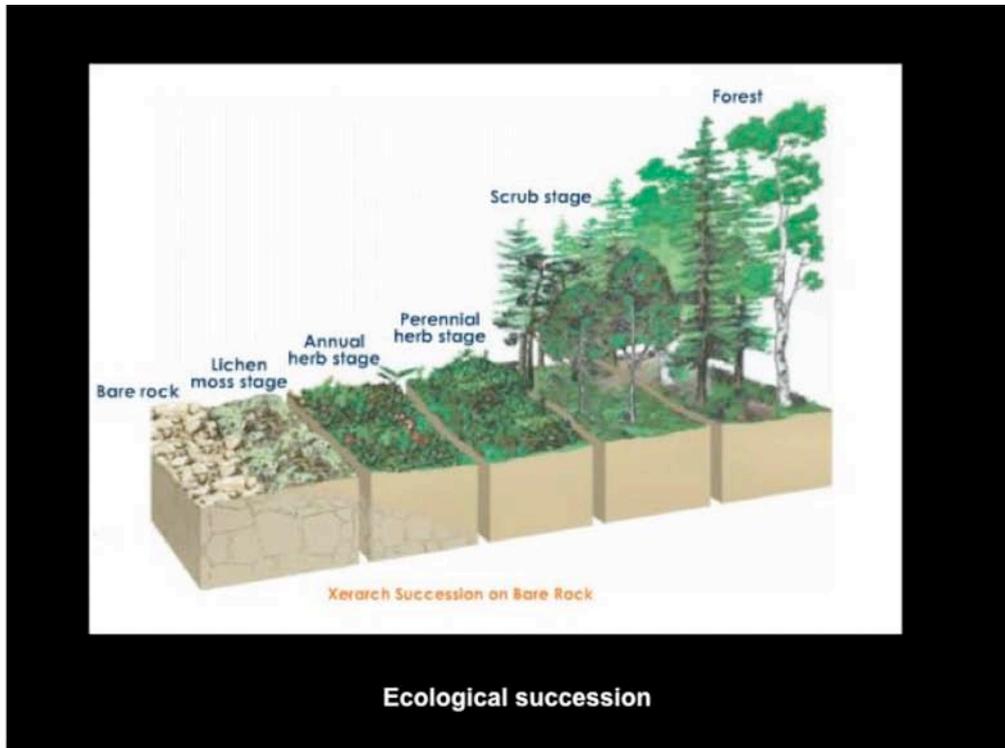
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Green Hairstreak

Very wide range of chalk grassland & scrub food plants

11



12

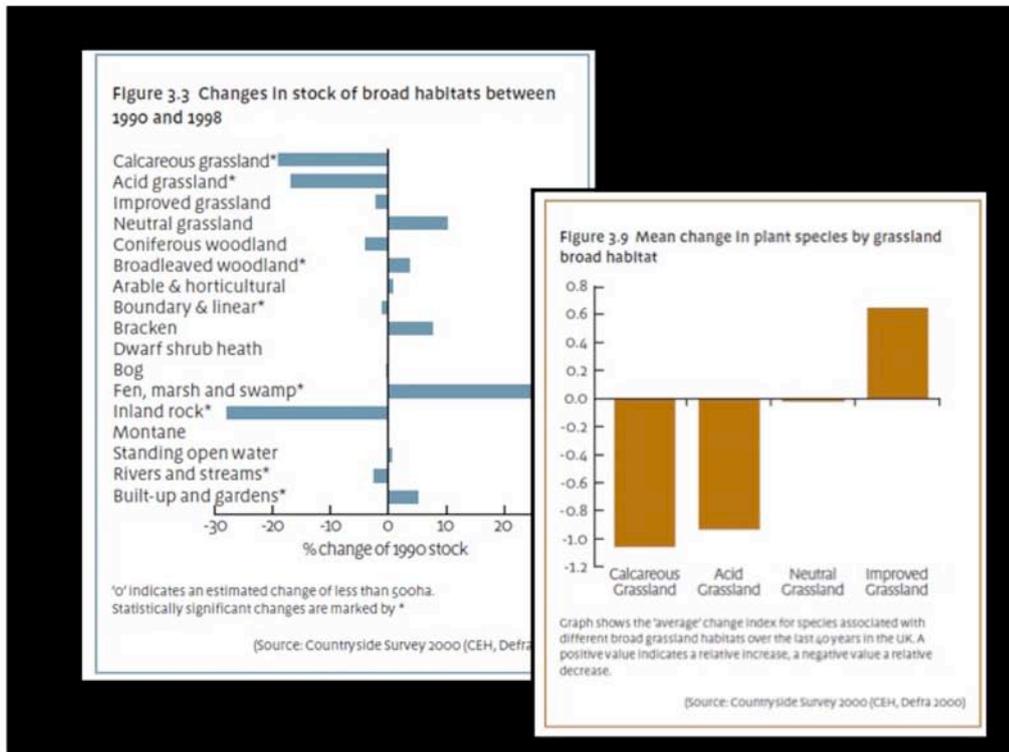


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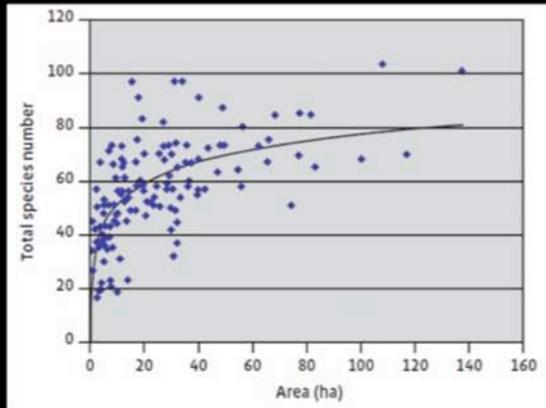
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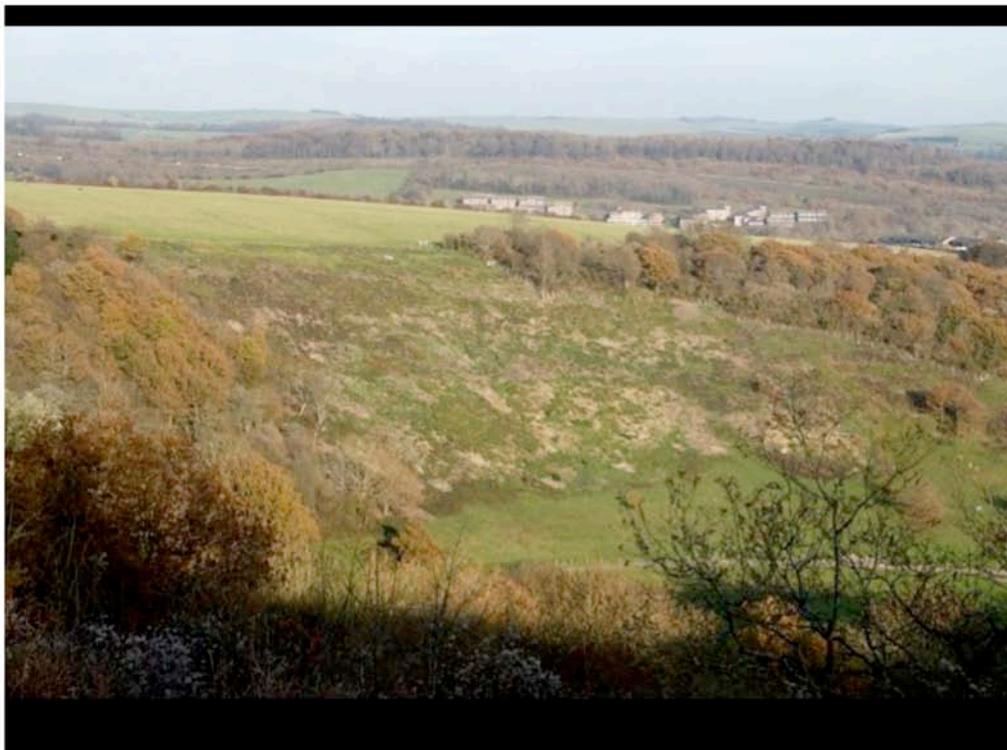
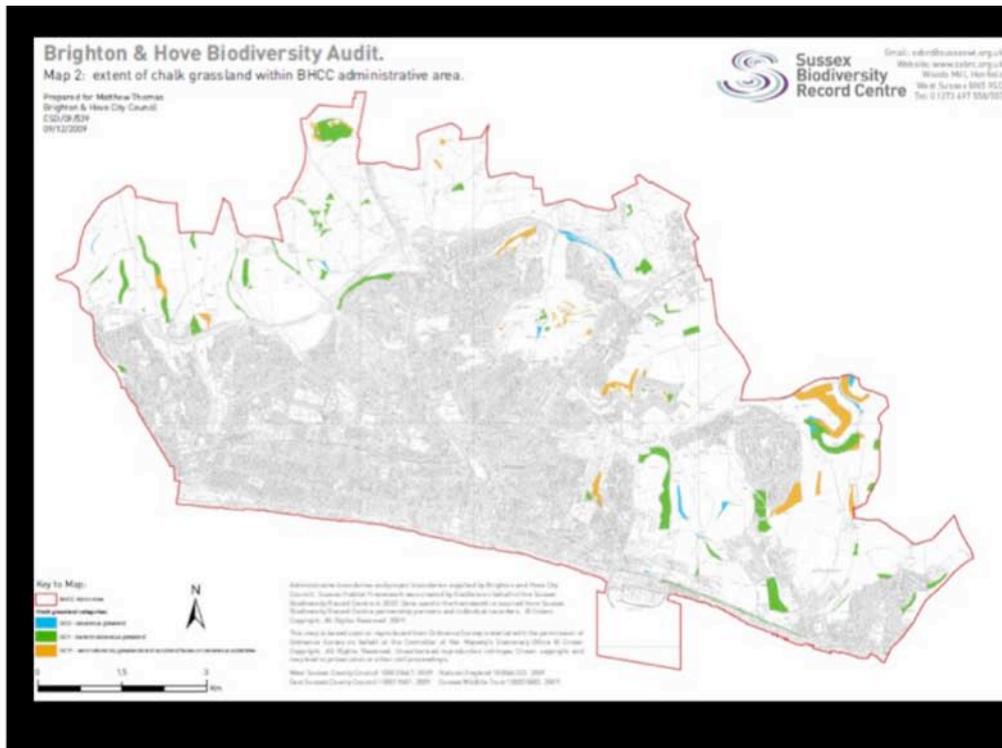
No comprehensive figures, but sharp decline in extent since 1950's.
England-wide sample surveys in 1966 and 1980 showed a 20% loss.
Dorset survey found over 50% loss between mid-1950s and early 1990s.



Brighton University research shows that below a patch size of 100 ha, number of species declines increasingly rapidly

18





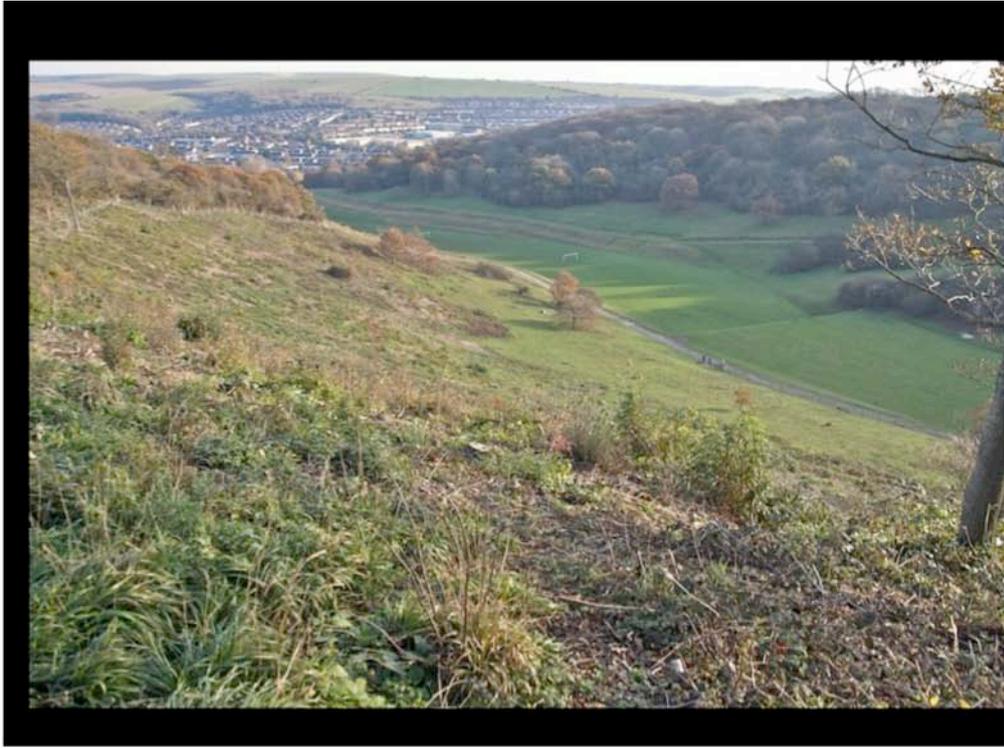
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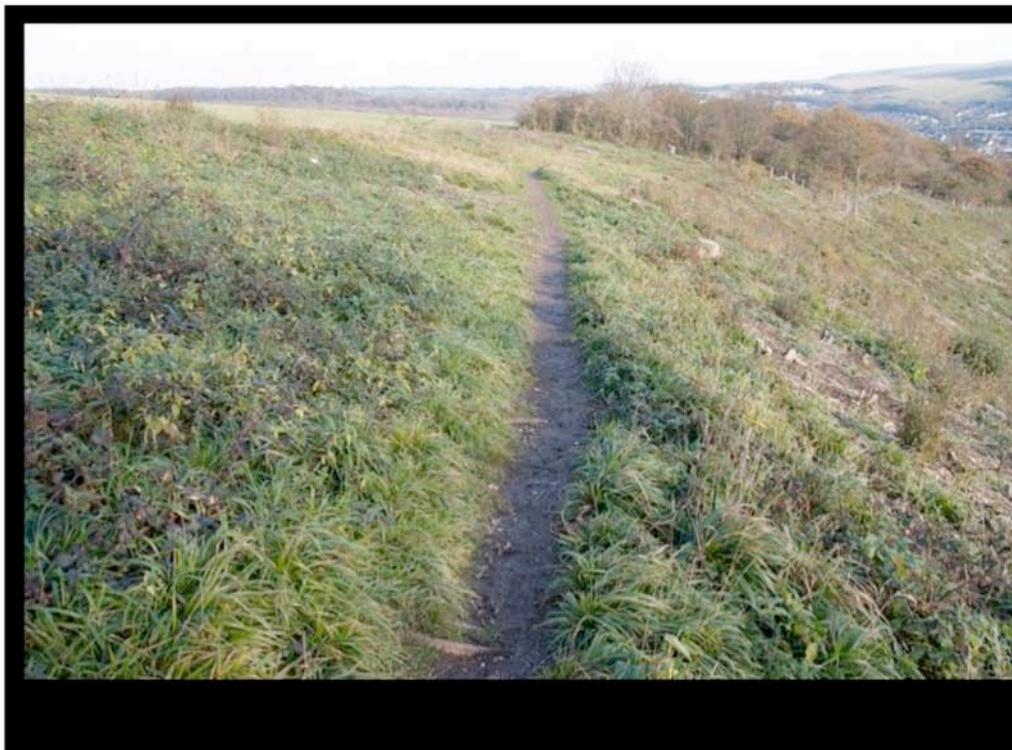
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23



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APPENDIX

L Workshop photographs

Workshop 1





Workshop 2





Workshop 3

