

APPENDIX 5

Highclere Castle Estate Enabling Development Public Consultation – Enhancing Public Access

Comment
Suggest there should be a complete ban on dogs.
Care needs to be taken that increasing access to Highclere does not attract undesirables - quad bikes, motor bikes, litter louts etc.
Turning Highclere into a tourist attraction destroys much of what is special about the site.
Highclere Park and Castle has limited access therefore the benefit to the public of the improvements must be seen in that light. Each building or area to be improved should be considered on the basis to what extent the public will be allowed access to view the building, to determine whether it's in the public's benefit.
Propose the development of cycle paths and improvement of picnic areas.
The present footpath is not user friendly. From the cemetery to the A343 it is difficult to navigate and emerges at an awkward stretch of this busy road with no footway. Other footpaths within Highclere Park are only for use if and when the Castle is open to the public,. i.e. only 2 months a year.
Walkers have never been encouraged and I don't believe it would be any different in the future.
Some parcels of land on the fringe of the estate have been used as open access by local people for many years. This recreational facility will be lost. Some are SINC sites - has BDBC checked these?
Propose a lake which could be utilised with perhaps, fishing licences, to attract extra revenue. Could be a sustainable project, if lake is for other such attractions, as boat trips.
Much of the "fringe land" has provided recreation for local people for many years with well worn footpaths in some areas. Local people have exercised their dogs on this land and will miss this facility.
Do not want street lighting or further pollution.
No charge for use of the amenities afforded by enabling development should be levied.
Concerned utilities mentioned are not worth defiling the area for.

Comment

Concerned that once the precedent has been set, it will be difficult to stop subsequent development changing the entire nature of the area.

Already sufficient access.

Increased public access to the Highclere Estate should be secured without enabling development.

Unaware of existing public access routes.

Need more general access to the parkland.

Propose development of more circular walks.

Allow cycle access to all paved areas.

Suggest access to view the repaired buildings, via suitable footpaths (part of circular heritage walks).

Propose open days to the interiors of the repaired buildings, for example on the annual heritage days each September

Need better publicity, at least within the local community.

More year round access.

If there is concern about 'masses of people' invading the park, one option is to provide a resident's card, that would give preferential parkland access to the local community rather than the public in general. Apparently there was once a VIP card that could be bought for £20 a year that would give unlimited access during the opening times to the Castle. This kind of approach could be extended to a resident's card. There is no reason why some of the additional benefits should not be charged for (e.g. special open days, park season tickets) thus helping to generate revenue.

I'm quite happy to be escorted off the Estate (as locals regularly are) in return for this appallingly managed and extremely one sided plan being dismissed.

Offer local residents a discounted 'season ticket' to events held at the estate.

Make use of under utilised rooms in the castle in some way that would be income generating.

Create new paths linking to existing, thereby creating circular routes.

Where picnic areas and access to sites on the estate for charitable venues are concerned, it would be reasonable for the estate to be able to charge for

Comment

their use.

The road through the park, which is currently designated as a footpath, would make an excellent cycle route, and could be extended to go to Highclere church

Picnic areas in the northern end of the park would be most beneficial.

Suggest the seasonal permissive paths be made much more widely known and be all year round.

The park could be open to the public for nature trails, cycle routes, plantations (on lines of the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park), a steam railway, broad flat paths for the use of people walking with sticks or in a wheelchair, camping and caravan sites, a fairground, pop festival etc.

The footpaths are hardly used anyway.

People would not use car parks and picnic areas if that area is developed and commercialised.

Encourage more people to visit the Castle and open it up more than 2 months in 12.

Enhancing the public access is not required, you would mark the landscape and get no benefit from it.

The existing cycle paths and footpaths are fine as they are and are not used anyway.

It would be fantastic to enable the local community to use the Highclere Estate.

Not interested in having access to the Highclere Estate.

The main house itself should be put on a sound commercial footing. It could be a restaurant, accommodation, business facilities, etc. This would genuinely enhance public access to this national asset and provide support to estate maintenance.

An extra picnic area or similar is trivial and offers no compensation to the local community for such a damaging proposal.

Surely public access is already enhanced? There are already public footpaths which run through the estate, and anyone may visit the cemetery for obvious reasons. Charitable events are already a main feature.

If the National Trust had the opportunity to purchase this property then of course anyone would be able to visit and enjoy the whole castle, as opposed to certain public areas which are open to the public now.

Comment

Highclere is becoming a village with no green areas, every patch of garden or piece of unwanted land has been built upon. Selling land belonging to the estate will spoil the village even further. Not to mention the disturbance to the wildlife. There are many wild flowers, such as orchids and the just as important the wild animals that already roam these areas.

Agree that footpaths, cycle routes, picnic areas, would be welcome.

Access should be year round, not only when Castle open, though necessary curtailment on days when shoots are occurring.

I don't consider increased public access to be anything other than a very minor side issue.

Suggest there should be all-year-round access for pedestrians and cyclists to a small number of the existing roads and tracks, so that walkers and riders could go from each of the main access gates of the Estate to another main gate - including especially, access to the Estate at London Lodge and the Grotto.

We would like to see large, permanent maps at each gate showing which paths are available to the public, with supplies of a smaller leaflet, showing the routes, that walkers and riders could take with them.

It would be useful to have a small car park, and perhaps a picnic area and toilet facility, just inside the Estate near the main gate at Cherrycot Lodge.

It would be useful if a public or permissive footpath were created from the summit of Beacon Hill to the Seven Barrows/Wayfarers Walk area.

If the enabling development is passed then the quid pro quo must be enhanced access which to date the estate has been very poor at publicising.

As to "secure increased public access to the estate" it will surely require more capital outlay – to achieve this by way of improving footpaths etc.

Aren't there enough footpaths? I regularly walk my dogs in there without any problem.

Outdoor leisure is a growing part of tourism and opening more of the grounds would bring people to the lovely area that we live in, benefiting local businesses to sustainable tourism.

The suggestions about public access are all well worth exploring.

Improved walking and cycle routes or enabling right to roam access would be of major benefit.

Care should be taken in extending any public access which might impinge on the normal workings of a traditional Estate from which it secures part of its income and on those sensitive areas such as conservation. Any new access should be flexible and reflect the complex needs of a working Estate.

Comment

Regardless of whether this proposal is accepted the Estate should make sure all the footpaths are formally dedicated to public use for all the year round.

If an exception to normal planning policy is being set then it is imperative that there is more public access. This could include proper access to lakes/fishing, cricket ground, bridleways. Also the allocation of land for allotments.

Currently the Highclere Estate has very limited public access and it is not promoted at all. Cycling is prohibited most of the time and signs prohibiting public access are displayed for most of the year.

The business of promoting Highclere with public activity has been dismal with rare concerts or very expensive country shows.

The castle and grounds need to have year round public access to achieve any kind of democratic spread.

It would be very nice if local people were allowed to walk in Highclere Park, perhaps passes could be issued.

The estate has public footpaths at present.

If changes are allowed, then public access needs to be substantially improved. Current access is minimal, footpaths, cycle paths, picnic areas etc would have to be available - permanently (not at minimal times to suit the estate owners).

Highclere Village has absolutely no facilities for children & teenagers - it is a disgrace compared to other villages in North Hampshire. This should be included also.

If this goes ahead then the public should benefit from having greater access to the park land.

The proximity of major roads (A343, A34 etc.) mean that it's unlikely that any substantive and safe changes can be made to the access to the estate.

I understand that footpaths across Highclere Park were closed to the public by the then Earl in the first half of the 20th Century. These paths should be reinstated.

Sounds like it could be a good idea, but of course it also means increased traffic, both vehicular and human; if it really was such a good idea, the owners of the Highclere Estate would have done it years ago.

The addition of footpaths, picnic areas and cycle routes would make a huge difference to the my local area.

At present the castle does not have ease of accessibility and perhaps an addition to the existing road for a footpath/cycle route could be introduced.

Comment

I am a local cyclist but I do not think Highclere should be open to cyclists.

I don't think cycle routes are appropriate as they become abused by kids on mountain bikes, especially with two housing estates close by.

Cycling is growing fast with recent successes in the Olympics.

Living in the area and working in a local bike shop (Banjo Cycles, Newbury) as I do, I can say that cyclists have few or no way-marked trails in this area.

Developing rights of way and trails, possibly sponsored by local bike shops or other businesses

Would bring more cyclists and families to the area; also holding a few races during the year would be an idea. You only need to look at some of the other places in the country such as Swinley Forest and The Look Out in Bracknell.

I, and other cyclists, would be very grateful if some of these plans were implemented.

Access to the footpaths etc should be close to the main communities.

A car park at London Lodge only encourages use of the car and is of greater benefit to those outside the area.

For health and environmental benefits manageable circular, interlinking walks should be accessible from the villages by foot.

Propose walkers should have greater access to peripheral areas but not the core.

Propose a picnic area and parking at the London Gate by the A34 but with no access to the rest of the park.

Propose a picnic area by the cricket ground but only for pedestrians - no motor vehicles.

Walking is already a big leisure activity, adding picnic areas to the grounds making family days out really enjoyable.

I would welcome a picnic area, especially for families in the summer with perhaps an outdoors catering facility/such as an ice-cream/barbecue area. This would also attract extra revenue, as the present catering facilities, although extremely good, are limited during the busy times and not everyone with children would wish to eat indoors in the summer.

This could perhaps only be available during the summer or on themed evenings such as Summer barbecue nights/bonfire night etc.

The 7th Earl offered a public picnic area around the Temple Folly, but the plans have not been carried out yet, on completion of the road.