

Sent:

27 November 2025 12:29

Subject:

PROPOSAL: 'ENVISIONING THE FUTURE' INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT CONFERENCE 2026 - 'GATWICK NATURE AND HERITAGE PARK - IFIELD & BEYOND' + [PREVIOUS] PROPOSAL TO GATWICK AIRPORT FOR ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR LOCAL NATURE RESERVE ALONG THE UPPER MOLE V...

Attachments:

thumbnail - 2025-11-27T120501.708.jpg

Categories:

Comments Received

Dear London Gatwick Community Team

Thank you for your letter, dated November 10 2025.

Following your [Submission](#) to Horsham District Council, my meeting with [Aspect Nature Reserve's Piers Clark](#), and this week's [West Sussex County Times front page](#), I am writing to put forward a bold proposal: that Gatwick Airport Ltd becomes the lead partner and primary sponsor of an 'Envisioning the Future' International Summit Conference 2026 - Gatwick Nature and Heritage Park - Ifield & Beyond'.

This would be the world's first global airport conference dedicated to nature, heritage, biodiversity, cultural landscapes, and community protection.

Airports across Europe, North America, Asia and Australasia are now undertaking pioneering environmental and heritage work - including Gatwick - yet there is no global platform for 'show-casing' of shared learning to shape best practice.

Gatwick is uniquely placed to lead this.

The landscapes especially west of the airport and beyond - Ifield Brook Meadows, the River Mole corridor, the moated Ifield Court Farm site, and the wider 1000-year-old Parish of Ifield - offer an exceptional opportunity to demonstrate how an international airport can champion biodiversity, heritage, ecological recovery and community wellbeing.

What is proposed:

1. Gatwick as Lead Sponsor and Partner

Supporting the development, logistics and financial framework of the summit conference.

2. Gatwick Hilton – International Conference Centre as Venue Host

With Gatwick's partnership enabling international delegates to attend and participate.

3. Gatwick's Global Network to Help Invite Delegates

Particularly airport environment teams, sustainability leaders, global aviation organisations, and international conservation bodies.

4. A Long-Term Legacy: Gatwick Nature & Heritage Park - Ifield

A flagship environmental and cultural landscape neighbouring the airport — and a global model for airport-region stewardship.

Why this matters

The summit conference would bring together:

- Airport sustainability & environmental teams worldwide
- Global bodies (IUCN, UNESCO, Ramsar, WWF, Bird Life International)
- Government agencies and regulators
- Academics and research institutes
- Heritage and ecological NGOs
- Airport-adjacent community groups
- UK councils and national organisations

Gatwick would be positioned as a world leader in sustainable airport-region management — at a critical moment for aviation, environmental, ecological and community trust.

Request for a Meeting

An opportunity would be welcomed to meet with you to explore:

- Gatwick's leadership role
- Funding / sponsorship options

- Support for venue logistics
- International outreach
- How this summit conference could shape a long-term environmental legacy west of the airport and beyond.

I believe Gatwick has a unique opportunity to host something historic, ambitious and internationally significant — and it would be a delight to work with you to make this happen.

Thank you for considering this bold initiative.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

The Ifield Society - Founder

2 Lychgate Cottages
Ifield Street, Ifield Village
Crawley, West Sussex
RH11 0NN

[Redacted Contact Information]

[Redacted Contact Information]

On Monday, November 10, 2025, 12:38 PM, DD - Community wrote:

[REDACTED],

Proposal for an Upper Mole Valley Ecological Emergency Partnership

Thank you for your email below relating to your proposal for a local nature reserve along the Upper Mole Valley. We are also aware of the 'open letter' which was recently placed in the Sussex Express.

In terms of background, as you may know, London Gatwick has a longstanding commitment to biodiversity and environmental conservation. This is reflected in our Sustainability Strategy (setting targets out to 2030), and in our long-term partnership with the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership, which works locally on the Gatwick estate as well as in the surrounding areas and which is secured through our current legal agreement with local authorities. We are also pleased to have been awarded the Wildlife Trust Biodiversity Benchmark Award for ten consecutive years.

In terms of our Northern Runway Project – there are significant areas of landscape and ecological mitigation proposed as part of our plans and located within the airport boundary. In addition, the Northern Runway Project itself includes nearly 20% Biodiversity Net Gain which goes further than the BNG that is required for national infrastructure projects. However, we need to make it clear (and contrary to your statement in the rationale below) that the Development Consent Order **does not** give us any powers of land acquisition outside the Order limits and neither does Gatwick Airport own any land in the area outlined in your vision. The Northern Runway Project (NRP) legal agreement does though provide West Sussex CC a landscape and ecology fund (see schedule 6 para 3 [here](#)) which can be used (in consultation with adjoining authorities) for '*delivering a Local Nature Recovery Strategy to provide enhanced habitat connectivity within the wider landscape*'.

Over the next few years Gatwick Airport will be focussed on our Northern Runway plans, enhancing our support for the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership (also in the NRP legal agreement), seeking to maintain our Biodiversity Benchmark Award and discussing plans with the local authorities for proposals for the landscape and ecology fund. We are therefore unable to offer you any support at this time, however, if the local authorities agree that your proposal is a project they would like to take forward as part of the landscape and ecology fund outlined in the NRP legal agreement, then this is something we could discuss at the time.

I'm sure you are also aware that there are proposals near Ifield being promoted by Homes England, who you may want to contact as well as other landowners in the area who will no doubt have a specific interest in your ideas if involving their land.

Thank you for getting in contact and we trust the above explains what we are doing to support nature conservation generally and the opportunities through the NRP legal agreement.

Kind Regards

London Gatwick Community Team

Sent: 29 October 2025 16:24

Subject: [EXTERNAL] PROPOSAL TO GATWICK AIRPORT FOR ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR LOCAL NATURE RESERVE ALONG THE UPPER MOLE VALLEY

CAUTION - this is from an external sender

Dear Gatwick Airport Team

Proposal for an Upper Mole Valley Ecological Emergency Partnership

Supporting Gatwick Airport's Ecological Mitigation and Community Commitments

Submitted by:

[REDACTED]

Founder, The Ifield Society



2 Lychgate Cottages

Ifield Street, Ifield Village

Crawley, West Sussex

RH11 0NN

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Date: October 30 2025

1. Vision

To create a continuous Nature and Heritage Corridor along the Upper Mole Valley — from Willoughby Fields Local Nature Reserve (LNR) through Ifield Brook Meadows Local Green Space (LGS) and Ifield Mill Pond Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) to Ifield Golf Club (celebrating its centenary in 2027) — linking directly with Gatwick’s ecological mitigation zones north of the airport.

This corridor would serve as the ecological and cultural heart of a joint response to the climate and ecological emergencies, supporting both nature recovery and community well-being in the Mole catchment — which literally flows beneath Gatwick Airport.

2. Rationale

The recently approved Northern Runway Project DCO empowers Gatwick Airport Ltd to acquire land and deliver “ecological mitigation and new landscaped public open spaces.”

This provides a rare opportunity to extend that mitigation beyond the airport perimeter and integrate it with existing protected sites along the Upper Mole.

By working collaboratively with local councils and community organisations, Gatwick can:

- Deliver measurable biodiversity net gain in a wider connected landscape.
- Enhance flood-risk resilience through natural flood-management solutions.
- Strengthen corporate environmental responsibility and community trust.
- Leave a lasting legacy for West Sussex communities through stewardship of the Mole Valley’s natural assets.

3. Objectives

1. Support Gatwick’s ecological-mitigation programme through a partnership-based nature recovery corridor.
2. Promote an Ecological Emergency Declaration covering the Upper Mole Valley, aligning Gatwick’s commitments with local authority climate strategies.
3. Secure formal Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designation for Ifield Brook Meadows and adjoining green spaces.
4. Create a model of airport–community collaboration that demonstrates how major infrastructure can coexist with ecological restoration.

5. Develop an educational and visitor engagement framework celebrating the area's wildlife, heritage, and the Mole's vital role beneath Gatwick.

4. Key Partners

- Gatwick Airport Ltd – Community Relations & Sustainability Teams
- Crawley Borough Council – Environment & Planning Departments
- Horsham District Council – Ecology and Heritage Teams
- West Sussex County Council – Environment & Highways
- Sussex Wildlife Trust / Gatwick Greenspace Partnership
- Environment Agency – Upper Mole Catchment Partnership
- CPRE-Sussex
- Natural England
- Historic England
- The Ifield Society and local community groups

5. Proposed Actions

1. Hold an initial round-table meeting (early 2026) between Gatwick, councils, and community representatives to define scope and governance.
2. Commission a rapid ecological audit linking Gatwick mitigation areas with Willoughby Fields, Ifield Brook Meadows, and Ifield Mill Pond.
3. Identify biodiversity corridors and hydrological connections supporting both flood resilience and species migration.
4. Develop a joint communication plan highlighting Gatwick's proactive role in regional nature recovery.

5. Launch the project formally in 2027 as part of Ifield Golf Club's Centenary Legacy Celebration.

6. Anticipated Benefits

- Contributes to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) targets under the Environment Act 2021.
- Enhances ecosystem services – water quality, pollination, carbon sequestration.
- Provides educational access for schools and community groups.
- Offers positive media and PR outcomes for Gatwick Airport.
- Builds public trust through visible environmental leadership.

7. Next Steps

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Sustainability and Community Relations Teams to discuss how this proposal might align with Gatwick's ecological-mitigation programme and CSR priorities under the Northern Runway DCO.

Together, we can help make the Upper Mole Valley a beacon of collaborative stewardship — a living demonstration that economic growth and ecological recovery can coexist.

I hope this proposal will be favourably received.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

The Ifield Society

Ancient Parish of Ifield [boundary outlined in black] - showing Willoughby Fields Local Nature Reserve-LNR, Ifield Brook Meadows-LGS, Ifield Millpond SNCI and Ifield Golf Club (across the centre of the picture)

Map creation by Ian Mulcahy

www.gatwickairport.com



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