

Sent: 17 December 2025 11:21
To: Jason.Hawkes
Cc: Planning; MILNE John (MP); LAMB Peter (MP); Strategic Planning
Subject: INSTITUTIONAL LUNACY WEST OF IFIELD - IS THIS RATIONAL?
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Categories: Comments Received

INSTITUTIONAL LUNACY WEST OF IFIELD - IS THIS RATIONAL?

Dear Jason Hawkes

Philosopher and political analyst Noam Chomsky once observed: *“If you accept the institutional lunacy, then the policies are rational.”* Few recent planning controversies illustrate this more clearly than Homes England’s conduct at West of Ifield [‘Golf club must make way for development’, Crawley Observer, Front Page, Dec 17].

Viewed from within Homes England’s institutional framework, the decision to close Ifield Golf Club and to propose private management of Ifield Brook Meadows can be presented as sensible, efficient, even responsible. Land is treated primarily as a financial asset and a 'gambling chip'. Community use is reclassified as under-performance. Democratic objection becomes a technical obstacle to be managed rather than a signal to be heeded. Once those assumptions are accepted, the resulting policies appear rational.

But step outside that framework and the picture changes sharply.

Ifield Golf Club is not merely a parcel of land awaiting “unlocking”. It is a long-established community asset embedded in the historic fabric of an ancient parish. Its closure, pursued in advance of a sound and legally compliant Local Plan and in the face of serious objections from both Gatwick Airport Ltd, Crawley Borough Council and major environmental and ecological bodies, raises fundamental questions about governance, accountability, and the proper use of public land - and public money..

The same institutional logic underpins suggestions that Ifield Brook Meadows - a much-loved, CBC-designated Local Green Space [LGS] - could be placed under private management. This is framed as professional stewardship. Yet for local people it feels uncomfortably like control without consent: the gradual enclosure of a public landscape through management structures, access routes, and oversight mechanisms imposed from above, rather than through community-led stewardship.

None of this is accidental. It reflects a deeper pattern in which strategic control is secured first, with democratic consent expected to follow later - if at all. Within such a system, policies are not irrational errors. They are the predictable outcomes of an institutional mindset that reduces heritage, ecology, and community life to secondary, low-priority considerations.

That is why the debate about West of Ifield cannot be confined to planning technicalities alone. The real issue is whether a government agency should be permitted to operate within a framework that treats living communities and ancient parish landscapes as expendable variables in pursuit of abstract targets and financial assumptions.

Chomsky's warning matters here because it reminds us that the most dangerous decisions are often those that are procedurally rational but morally hollow. If the institutional lunacy goes unchallenged, the policies will continue to make sense — right up until the damage is irreversible.

Yours sincerely

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INSTITUTIONAL LUNACY AT WEST OF FIELD



HERITAGE IGNORED • COMMUNITY SIDELINED • NATURE CONTROLLED

IS THIS RATIONAL?



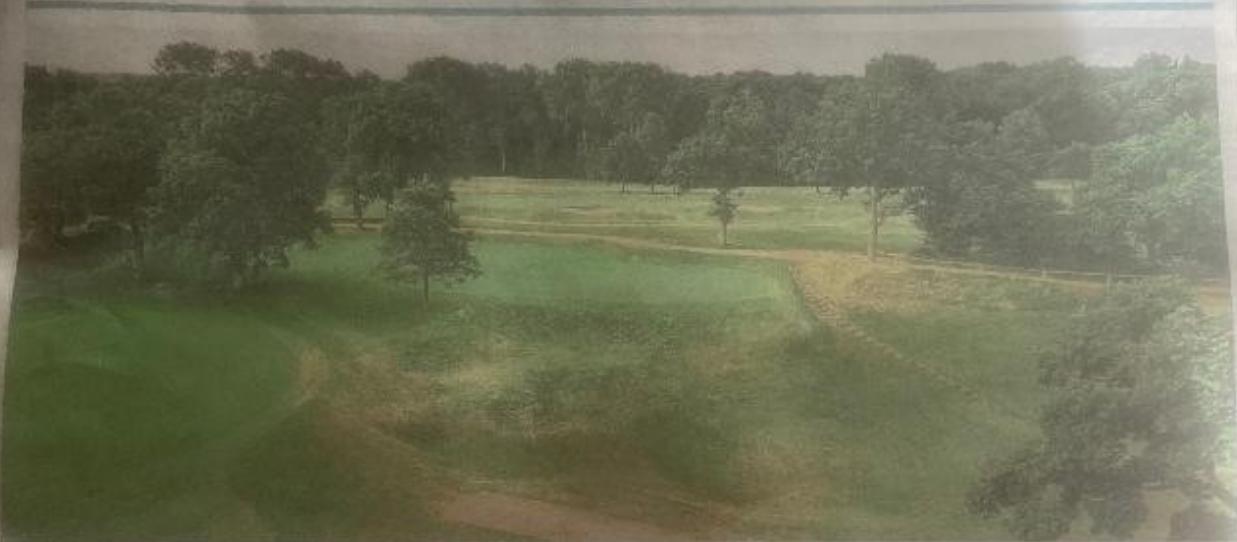
Trust offers festive fun

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Measures to fight flu rise

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Homes England has owned On The Field Golf Club land since 2020

Photo: LDNS

Golf club must make way for development

On The Field Golf Club has been told to vacate its site to make way for development.

Homes England submitted a planning application to Horsham District Council for

3,000 homes West offield, on land which includes the golf course, in August.

The plans are due to be considered by the council in the spring, but the govern-

ment's housing agency has given notice to the golf club to leave by April 2027.

Homes England has owned the golf course land since 2020, with the club

agreeing to a five-year lease, which was renewed earlier this year.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework, Homes England does not have

to replace the golf course. Instead, 'alternative sports and recreation provision' is allowed.

Full story on page 2

Backing for town council

Results from a consultation into the creation of a town council in Crawley have revealed strong support from residents.

Crawley Borough Council's Community Governance Review (CGR) consultation received 1,000 responses.

More than two thirds of respondents said 'yes' to proposals, with almost all agreeing it should cover the whole town.

Council leader Michael Jones said: 'This was just the first part of our extensive consultation, and a second one will be launched in mid-February.'

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Drop-off fees set to rise again

Gatwick Airport has announced it will increase price to use its drop-off re-

again in the new year.

The fee allows motorists ten minutes to drop passengers outside the airport terminal. A Gatwick spokesman said passengers will still be able to get dropped at long-stay car parks but where they can catch a shuttle bus to the terminal. Blue Badge holders remain exempt from the charge.

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