


To: Jason.Hawkes [REDACTED]



<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/opinion/letter-to-the-editor-seven-human-implications-of-the-west-of-ifield-planning-application-and-the-closure-of-ifield-golf-club-5457074>



SEVEN HUMAN IMPLICATIONS

OF THE WEST OF IFIELD PLANNING APPLICATION

and the Closure of Ifield Golf Club

PLANNING IS NOT ONLY ABOUT PLACES
IT IS ALSO ABOUT PEOPLE



WHAT IS AT STAKE

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Psychological security | 4 Community identity and belonging |
| 2 Freedom to speak and be heard | 5 Precedent anxiety for other assets |
| 3 Trust in public institutions | 6 Wellbeing and morale. |
| 4 Trust in public institutions | 7 Long term reputational harm |



THE PRINCIPLE

Ownership must not override fairness.
Closure must not pre-empt planning.
Human impacts matter.

WHY THIS MATTERS IN IFIELD

*A long-established community asset has been closed
before planning has been lawfully determined.*

*That affects not only land use, but
people, trust, and community confidence.*

A CALM CALL FOR A PAUSE

Pause the closure

Pause the decision

Let democratic planning work properly

PEACEFUL PARISH WALK & PROTEST

Walk from Ifield Village – 9.45am

Passing Ifield Barn Theatre

Protest at Ifield Golf Club – 10.45am

Monday 5 January



SEVEN HUMAN IMPLICATIONS OF THE WEST OF IFIELD
PLANNING APPLICATION AND THE CLOSURE OF IFIELD
GOLF CLUB

Jason Hawkes

Chief Planning Officer

Horsham District Council

Dear Jason Hawkes,

I write in my professional capacity
as a **Member of the Chartered
Institute of Personnel and
Development (MCIPD)** to set
out, in concise form, what I
consider to be the **seven
principal human implications**
arising from the West of Ifield
planning application and the
associated closure of Ifield Golf
Club.

Planning decisions of this scale do not affect land alone. They have direct and lasting consequences for people, organisations, and community confidence, all of which are relevant to the integrity and sustainability of decision-making.

1. Psychological security

The premature closure of a long-established community asset generates uncertainty, anxiety, and a loss of stability among members, staff, volunteers, and residents. Such effects are well recognised in people-management and organisational change contexts.

2. Suppression of voice

The use of Non-Disclosure Agreements affecting Golf Club officers and staff has the effect of silencing those with direct knowledge. Decisions made under conditions of enforced silence carry heightened risk of mistrust and grievance and undermine transparency.

3. Erosion of institutional trust

Where outcomes appear pre-determined before lawful planning determination, confidence in institutions — including the planning authority and the planning system itself — is

weakened. Once lost, trust is difficult to restore.

4. Impact on community identity

Community assets are not interchangeable facilities; they form part of local identity and social capital. Their removal without a clear democratic mandate damages belonging and cohesion, particularly in long-established parishes.

5. Precedent anxiety

Closure of one community asset by a public landlord without transparent justification creates anxiety across other cultural, sporting, and voluntary

organisations, which begin to question the security of their own future.

6. Organisational wellbeing and morale

Abrupt closure undermines morale, dignity, and professional wellbeing for those involved.

From a people-centred perspective, this conflicts with principles of responsible stewardship, fair process, and respect for people affected by change.

7. Long-term reputational consequences

Decisions perceived as procedurally unfair may achieve

short-term objectives but carry enduring reputational risk for promoters, landowners, and decision-making authorities, complicating future engagement and delivery.

Taken together, these human implications reinforce the importance of **procedural fairness, transparency, and democratic confidence**. They are not peripheral to planning; they go directly to its legitimacy.

While the land may now be owned by **Homes England**, ownership should not override the need for decisions to be demonstrably fair, proportionate,

and trusted by the community affected.

I respectfully submit that these considerations strengthen the case for **pause, deferral, further scrutiny - or withdrawal**, before irreversible steps are taken.

2 Lychgate Cottages

Ifield Street, Ifield Village

Crawley, West Sussex

RH11 0NN

[REDACTED]

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NB For these reasons, and many others, residents will be taking part in a peaceful parish walk from the Plough in Ifield Village at 9.45am on Monday 5 January, leading to a protest at Ifield Golf Club at 10.45am.

Yours sincerely



The Ifield Society