

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Acquisition of Stanmer Park

The 4,500 acre Stanmer Estate was purchased by Brighton Council in 1947 under powers provided by Section 280 of the Brighton Corporation Act 1931. Subsequently, some 205 acres of parkland and Great Wood were appropriated for use as ‘public walks and pleasure grounds’. (See Item 330, Council, October 1953) This changed what had previously been a private estate, with very limited access, to an area that was freely available to all at no cost. What is now proposed in introducing day-time access controls and car-parking charges will severely limit that free unrestricted access, to the detriment of its users and contrary to the principles of the appropriation.

The expression ‘public walks and pleasure grounds’ originates from the Public Health Act 1975, which was the culmination of a series of Victorian statutes dealing with the then appalling social and moral conditions of that age. Lands held in this manner are now considered to be ‘trust land’ or ‘land held by an authority in trust for its townspeople’ and are therefore deemed to be inviolate. (These statutes and more recent ones have never been consolidated into modern legislation but remain viable.)

Stanmer Park, since its acquisition, has been recognized by successive Councils as Brighton’s ‘Country Park’ and as such attracts substantial numbers of events, residents and visitors annually. These come from many parts of this country and over the years, internationally. The Park has too important a role as a one of the City’s major ‘green lungs’ to allow Grade 2 historic landscape listing to be used as an excuse to restrict access and stop unrestricted free use. To the contrary, its annual income from tenancies, events and concessions should be used to provide funding for proper management, enhanced levels of security and visitor facilities. In private ownership, from the 18th Century, it was this very revenue that helped sustain the estate.

There is no doubt that the purchase of the Estate and the subsequent appropriation of the Park and Great Wood as an open space was a conscious supplement by the then Council to the existing stock of urban open space areas, being the last major acquisition of this size and one that could give a real ‘country’ flavour, incorporating open parkland/woodlands in a downland setting that included a working farm. It was also able to provide an excellent site for a new central nursery for the Parks Department, since enjoyed by many thousands of visitors and in its prime, along with a visit to the sewers; the most well supported tour associated with the Brighton Festival. The move allowed the release of land nearer the town centre for housing development.

1.2 Friends of Stanmer Park

The Friends of Stanmer Park was formed as an Open Spaces Community Group in April 2004 to represent the views, wishes and aspirations of those regular park users who had become alarmed at what was clearly identifiable as a decline in the standard of management, security and maintenance resulting from years of under-investment and the spiralling level of criminal and anti-social activity. There are, to date, 84 paid-up members with a further 150 or so supporters who have asked to be kept informed of developments in the Park.

The Management Committee comprises nine members with extensive skills and experience in environmental academia, land, parks, estate, business and recreational management and

consultancy. Most importantly, all are residents of Brighton and Hove and many have known the park since childhood, one lives in the village and all use it for recreational or business purposes three to seven days a week.

1.3 Purpose

To promote, enhance and conserve the well-being of the Public Open Space area of Stanmer Park estate as a recreational, educational and wildlife facility of Special Historic Interest as defined by English Heritage and to assist Brighton & Hove City Council with planning, development and the effective management of the estate by representing the views and opinions of the users, residents and visitors. To this end, the Friends of Stanmer Park will work in close consultation with The Stanmer Preservation Society and The Stanmer Park Residents' Association.

1.4 Mission Statement

It shall be the mission of the Friends of Stanmer Park to actively support and encourage Brighton and Hove City Council to achieve:

- the restoration of Stanmer Park Estate to the very high level of local management, maintenance and control in evidence prior to 1990.
- the urgent implementation of such security measures that will end the cycle of criminal, anti-social and vandal behaviour that currently diminishes the quality of life and enjoyment of the users, residents and visitors.
- the elevation of Stanmer Park to its rightful place as the City's principal wildlife and recreational park and eventual Green Flag status by reversing its decline through the careful, sympathetic and consensual implementation of the Stanmer Estate Historic Landscape Study and Restoration Management Plan proposals, having regard to the needs and aspirations of all its users in the 21st Century.
- the allocation of sufficient financial resources to achieve these aims.

1.5 Our Submission

This report is submitted in response to the Council officers' public consultation exercise that we found wanting in its objectivity and purpose for the implementation of the short term recommendations of the Colson Stone Historic Landscape Survey and Restoration Management Plan. The questionnaire sought only endorsement of a single preferred option and not a broader, more open-minded, examination of other methods to fulfil the three most pressing needs; Management, Security and Traffic Control.

2.0 THE COLSON STONE REPORT

2.1 Overview

The Historic Landscape Survey and Restoration Management Plan for Stanmer Park was commissioned from the respected landscape architectural consultants, The Colson Stone Practice, as a result of a public survey in 1998 entitled, "A Vision for Stanmer." Colson Stone's report took a year to complete and was published in October 2003. We are agreed that the report represents a thorough, professionally researched and important document illustrating the historic background to the estate and that it has identified the most pressing of the acknowledged shortcomings in its present management and investment. In making our case, we have drawn upon the manuscript of

the report that is a very lengthy 271 pages and have annotated or elaborated those extracts with our own comments. We have been at pains to study the work in detail but appreciate that many members will simply not have had the time to do so, hence our methodology.

2.2 Short Term Recommendations

Under Chapter 13, the report recommends both short term (1-5 years) and long term (5-15 years) improvements to the management and structure of the park. At a subsequent presentation to the Open Spaces Forum, one of the authors of the report illustrated his priorities as:

- Management
- Traffic and Parking
- Visual and physical intrusion
- Vandalism and crime
- Investment
- Agricultural activities
- Recreational activities

Whilst broadly agreeing with this, we would take issue with the prioritisation based on our more intimate knowledge of affairs in the park and their impact upon the quality of life and enjoyment of its users and residents. Our most urgent priority is:

- Crime and vandalism
- Management
- Traffic and parking

3.0 THE FRIENDS' PRIORITIES

3.1 Priority One – Crime and Vandalism

The Colson Stone report said that

‘In the absence of any form of control over access into the park at night, it has become a favoured area for joy riders. Cars are frequently raced around the park and woodlands before being dumped and often set on fire.’ (p177)

Park users are well aware of the serious problems that car crime has been causing. In 2002, twenty five cars were burned in Great Wood and the parkland, each taking an average 56 days to remove; twenty in 2003, taking 9 days each to remove and five to date in 2004, taking up to 96 hours to remove.

‘This not only results in direct physical damage (one of the mature Turkey Oaks in the park has recently been damaged by fire) but has also led to the installation of physical barriers in an effort to prevent future incursions.’ (loc cit)

The damage to the Turkey Oak that occurred on the night of 21/22 September 2002 is perhaps the most well-known case, but further fire damage and debris can be found throughout Great Wood. The Colson Stone authors continue:

‘In certain instances these measures are in themselves visually intrusive. They also have

implications for existing landscape features. This is particularly the case with bunding which has been installed alongside the Dukes Car Park and in front of Coldean Belt in the south of the park and alongside the Ditchling Road to the north. Quite apart from being unsightly, sections of this bunding have been installed immediately adjacent to existing mature trees and is, therefore, likely to have an impact upon their roots – which is likely to reduce their potential lifespan.’ (loc cit)

The question of whether bunding is attractive or unsightly is a value judgement made by Colson Stone, and members of the public are likely to have varying views upon it. As far as the Friends are aware, the Council continues to use bunding to control parking on open land. Further expert opinion needs to be sought as to the likely damage to trees.

‘Motorcycles are frequently joy-ridden along the rides, footpaths and tracks in the woodlands and across the open parkland. This results in significant wheel rutting damage to the woodland and grassland flora. Officers report frequent incursions by travellers into the park which results in damage to the grasslands, loss of use of sports pitches and accumulation of large amounts of rubbish.’ (loc cit)

The question of “joy riding” (in fact car theft and criminal damage) has been tirelessly raised by a member of the public who now sits on the Management Committee of the Friends. In 2002 the park was occupied by travellers intermittently for 122 days, starting on 3 March and ending on 5 November. The year 2003 saw a marked improvement in the police response to council requests for the implementation of Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and the much speedier removal of unauthorized encampments. The Council is to be congratulated on its overall management of traveller issues. One of its Traveller Liaison Officers is currently on a six months secondment to East Sussex County Council where she is promoting a County-wide approach and systems for the management of unauthorized encampment, based on the very professional procedures developed within the City.

‘... unauthorised “rave” parties have occurred in the site periodically, most recently in the fields around Piddingworth involving around 600 people.’ (loc cit)

The event mentioned caused the tenant farmer and his staff to have to round up escaped and terrified cattle from the Ditchling Road in the middle of the night.

‘It is also apparent that theft from parked cars is prevalent within the study area. This may be leading visitors to prefer the more open and visible locations to leave their cars whilst they go off for a walk instead of using the more unobtrusive and enclosed formal facilities provided at the Duke’s and Village Car Parks. Rubbish is also a problem in the peripheral car parks where fly-tipping is common.’ (loc cit)

The presence of Travellers adds to park visitors’ concerns about safe parking. The Friends would point out that security for those who park legitimately should be a major feature of whatever parking strategy is followed in the Park. Theft of vehicles, abandonment and burning of vehicles, theft from vehicles and illegal disposal of rubbish are all serious criminal activities, that the Council and Police have a duty to control, not just for the sake of visitors to the Park, but in order to keep down crime in the City generally. A successful prosecution in a fly-tipping case has recently been achieved through the close cooperation of the Friends of Stanmer Park and Council officers.

3.2 The Night Security Proposal

The proposal to close the park to vehicular access between dusk and dawn daily was conceived as a means of dramatically limiting, if not altogether eliminating, the tide of traveller incursions and the culture of criminality that had grown increasingly over the past decade or so. The cost of clearance after traveller encampments, regular fly-tipping and car crime had escalated to quite insupportable levels. Furthermore, the environmental impact of these activities was seriously affecting the quality of life of park users and the residents of Stanmer village alike.

At a meeting of the Travellers Forum in July 2002, a committee member of what is now the Friends of Stanmer Park stated that the increasing incidence of traveller and criminal activity in the park had reached a level where positive action had to be undertaken and recommended closing the main access to the park from dusk to dawn each day as happens to the Ditchling Road entrance to the village [and historically in Richmond Park]. He had taken informal soundings from some of the residents and found there to be agreement that some form of action was necessary. He pointed out that we do not leave the public libraries, swimming pools, museums and Pavilion open 24 hours a day unattended and questioned why we should leave an asset of such cultural, recreational and historical importance open to vandalism and criminal and anti-social behaviour. The residents of the village were sick to death of these activities but had largely become reconciled to the fact that nothing would be done. Many instances of previous representations to the Council and Police were quoted.

There was unanimous agreement from the members of the Forum that something more pro-active should be done as a matter of urgency.

Extracts from the Minutes of the Travellers Forum for 18 October 2002 record:

- A resident said that over the last five years her parents, who live close to the Lewes Road entrance to Stanmer Park, had lived in fear. She catalogued an appalling tale of anti-social behaviour. She also stated that nobody from the police had ever visited her parents to inform/re-assure them. Peter Coll said this would be rectified and Trudy McGuigan also said she would visit them.
- Another resident also told a similar tale of distress that all those living at Stanmer Park had been suffering
- Chris Morley, Chairman of the Environment Committee, raised the issue of barriers at the Lewes Road entrance (first proposed at the July meeting) and it was accepted that this was the only practical way of protecting the residents and the site.
- The Friends member agreed regarding the need for a barrier and emphasised that Stanmer Park had suffered from almost continuous traveller occupation and joy riders/torched cars.
- The second resident stated that there was total police inaction when breaking in at Stanmer Park had been reported.
- Heather James, Chairman of the Forum and Deputy Chairman of the Environment Committee, said she would give priority with Pat Foster, Assistant Director Environment (Quality of Life and Open Spaces), to securing the site.
- It was agreed that a separate meeting would be convened to find an urgent solution to the problem. The meeting would probably include the new East Brighton District Inspector and all other interested parties and stakeholders.

The Stanmer Park meeting was scheduled for 18 November 2002 although this was subsequently changed to 19:30 on 20 November 2002 at the request of the Police. It was now to be a public meeting for the residents of Stanmer Village and other key stakeholders and would be chaired by Councillor Pat Hawkes.

The first public meeting took place in the Victoria Rooms at Stanmer Park on 20 November 2002 attended by the interested residents of the village, the local ward councillors, responsible officers of the Council, Mike Holland of Cherrywood Investments Ltd, the co-founders of the Travellers Forum and with the new East Brighton & Hove District Police Commander represented by Inspector Steve Curry.

Our member circulated illustrated copies of his Travellers' Incursion Log showing 122 days occupation of the Park, his Criminal Activity Log that showed most of the 25 wrecked and burned out cars for the year, the ram-raiding and deliberate attempt to set fire to Stanmer House and the criminal fly-tipping that had occurred in the previous week. He also illustrated that 37% of all Traveller incursions across the City had been borne by Stanmer Park.

Inspector Steve Curry stated that there never were, and never would be, sufficient police resources to maintain a twenty four hours watch on the park. He produced the results of his research into a suitable hydraulic barrier for the South Lodge entrance and announced that Cherrywood Investments had agreed to fund the equipment whilst the Council would be responsible for bearing the cost of installation. It was stressed that the park would never be closed to pedestrian visitors, only to vehicular traffic from dusk to dawn daily on a seasonal basis.

A Liaison Group of village residents was formed to review and monitor progress.

There were a number of subsequent meetings in 2003 to report and review the progress of the security barrier proposal.

3.3 BHCC Press Release dated 27 February 2003

A night-time barrier is to be installed at the entrance to Stanmer Park in an effort to stop illegal activity and acts of vandalism.

The move is likely to be approved by councillors at Environment Committee on 13 March. Residents and park stakeholders voted in favour of the barrier at a public meeting last week.

Lead councillor for parks, Heather James, says: "We want to ensure the natural beauty of the park is protected for the enjoyment of residents and therefore we will be increasing security and limiting access by vehicles at night."

"Recently this beautiful park has been plagued by anti-social and criminal behaviour including joy riding, the irresponsible dumping of rubbish, stolen cars being burnt out, invasions of travellers. In many instances sports pitches have been rendered useless after being vandalised and local people have been denied leisure facilities," she adds.

The council has spent tens of thousands of pounds this year alone to evict travellers and clear the rubbish left behind. There have been several burglaries from the council's nursery area and thefts from other organisation totalling around £50,000 over the past year. The villagers and farmer have also experienced thefts and vandalism. Most of these acts occur at night when there is no one on site.

3.4 BHCC Press Release dated 27 August 2003.

“Better security and improving parking at Stanmer Park is essential,” says Councillor Gill Mitchell, chair of the Environment Committee.

“When the committee meets on 4 September, I hope councillors will start the ball rolling by agreeing that officers carry out detailed research into the financial and legal implications of introducing security at the main entrance to the park so that we can control vehicular access, she says.

Officers will be asked to consult widely about restricting car parking to a space adjacent to the main entrance and charging for it. There will need to be a method of controlling vehicle access to the village and the nursery, and to ensure that there is appropriate space set aside for disabled parking.

A gateway to the proposed South Downs National Park is my aspiration for Stanmer Park. I would like to see it managed similar to Seven Sisters Country Park where car parking is contained and parking charges are ploughed back into the upkeep of the park.

An open country setting not dominated by vehicles is a vision I would like to turn into a reality. In future I hope to see better use of buildings within the park for uses such as visitor information, exhibitions, lectures or other leisure activities,” says Councillor Mitchell.

“There have been increasing problems with damage and vandalism at Stanmer Park. In recent years the park has been subjected to traveller encampments, joy riders and a spate of thefts. These anti-social activities infringe local people’s rights to enjoy recreational pursuits and Stanmer’s natural and historic beauty.”

3.5 Final residents meeting 15 September 2003

There was no indication at this meeting that priorities had changed and that the Council was no longer looking principally at securing the park at night, despite the press release of 27 August. The change of emphasis from protection and crime deterrence to revenue garnering through parking charges at a centralised car park was not mentioned once by any Council official and those attending left in the belief that the night-time security they had been discussing at successive public meetings for a year was still the top priority promised by Councillor Heather James in the February.

The proposal to proceed with security for the park was carried with only two dissenting stakeholders who were dissatisfied that their request for greater clarification of its operation had remained unanswered.

3.6 Priority Two – Management

Again in this section we will quote from the Colson Stone report and add our own comments.

‘Following numerous internal reorganisations within the Council, responsibility for the park is now divided between just two departments, Environment and Corporate Services. However, a brief study of the table [attached as an Appendix to this report] ... shows that

within each department there are a number of different teams which have an interest in Stanmer or which have responsibility for a particular aspect of its management.’ (p176)

Currently, some 27 different officers fulfill these roles which, by any management criteria, is cumbersome, bureaucratic and impractical. The results of this incoherent management are clearly evident in the present condition of the estate.

‘There is, therefore, no longer any one person or department with overall control of the site and through which each management decision must pass before it is enacted. Likewise, there is no longer an overall budget allocated for the site.’ (loc cit)

‘This means that there is no longer an holistic approach towards the management of the estate as a whole. This situation has been compounded by the absence of an overall management plan to guide the individual interested parties within a unified framework. Previous studies have tended to concentrate on either single, or at best a narrow range of issues. This has the potential to lead to important management decisions being made in isolation without necessarily having consideration for other aspects of the estate.’ (loc cit)

The centralised car park and associated parking charges, plucked from the report, are a classic example of this criticism. In making the parking proposals in the way that has been done, the Council is not actually following the advice given by their consultants, but going against it. In the view of the Friends there will be no progress made in relation to Stanmer until a co-ordinated, and participative approach to management is adopted.

In April 2003, before the completion of the Colson Stone report, one of the committee members of the Friends of Stanmer Park privately submitted an illustrated presentation of his concerns about the maintenance of the woodland, its public safety and the overall management of Stanmer Park to senior members and officers of the Environment Department. This presentation went unacknowledged but has subsequently been vindicated by these conclusions made by Colson Stone. Despite this, it must be recorded that a very commendable amount of woodland clearance and maintenance has taken place in Great Wood during the past autumn and winter months for the first time in very many years and that the three most dangerous trees reported by the same person have been pruned and lopped. This is unlikely to be pure coincidence.

‘Much of the historic infrastructure at Stanmer is in poor condition.’ (p177)

‘... the continued decline in the condition of the buildings and structures within the study area is the result of insufficient financial investment ... over a long period of time.’ (p178)

We endorse these trenchant criticisms of the neglect of Stanmer and call for an about-face in the attitude towards the management of this important historic park. We are confident that Brighton & Hove residents, as well as visitors from further afield will wish to see this asset once more under a coherent management system.

3.7 Priority Three – Traffic and Parking

The Colson Stone report places the traffic and parking issues in the general context of neglect of the park.

‘The large number of vehicle movements through the park leading to the village, the walled

garden, the nurseries complex and by users of the park in general are highly intrusive. The volume of traffic is likely to be increased once the developments of the House and Stables have been completed.’ (p176)

On the other hand, their use of the word “intrusive” is a purely subjective judgement. The Friends of Stanmer Park do not see the public as a general nuisance spoiling the ideal 18th Century landscape. Instead we think that the various pressures on the park need to be balanced and managed properly.

‘Despite the extensive provision of formal parking areas for the public, many visitors park alongside the South Drive. This parking is randomly strung out alongside the drive, sometimes utilising the surviving concrete areas constructed for parking tanks during the war, elsewhere cars are parked directly onto the grass verge. Council Officer’s (sic) report that on busy weekends during the summer, some visitors drive someway (sic) off the road and park at impromptu picnic sites along the base of the slopes of Great Wood.’ (p143)

Frequently the Council has only been aware of abusive parking after receiving reports from members of the public. Despite the some-time presence of Council officials, no bye-law enforcement action has ever been witnessed. At midday on Sunday 10 August 2003, 126 vehicles were parked all over the grassland; Sunday 17 August 2003, 147 vehicles and Sunday 31 August 2003 some 40 vehicles. The “do not park on the grass” signs are ignored to an extent that visitors assume that parking is tolerated everywhere. This is not in our view an argument for the construction of a large new car park, but an argument for improvement of existing arrangements and in particular for effective enforcement.

‘This informal parking is an unsightly element which effects (sic) the character of much of the parkland area. It also causes significant damage to the grassland through wear and tear. Some of the worst effected (sic) areas have been semi-formalised by the spreading of shingle in order to form a firm base during wet conditions.’ (loc cit)

This is incorrect. These car parks are not semi-formalised but were the long established car parks, delineated by posts that have not been replaced as they rotted away. This is another sign of the general neglect of the park that does little to encourage visitors to treat the park landscape with respect.

‘These areas have continued to be damaged, and are unsightly in their own right, even without cars parked here. These areas are not defined by barriers and have a tendency to grow in an uncontrolled manner. As the central sections become muddy or potholed so visitors park around the edges developing new areas of wear. In some instances these parking areas have surrounded, or are edging towards the mature parkland trees, with the result that compaction of the roots will almost certainly be taking place to the detriment of the health of the tree.’ (loc cit)

We suggest that the Council take further expert advice on protection of the trees. It is ironic that Colson Stone are concerned here to protect trees but suggest elsewhere (p207) that trees on the South Drive should be removed. If parking damages mature trees, then it can be controlled by delineating the existing car parks carefully.

‘Attempts have been made in the past to control this random parking. One or two of the informal parking areas have been removed and reinstated grass over the last year or so.’ (loc

cit)

In fact, only one, midway between South Lodges and Old Lodge Clump on the University side of the road, has been removed and has taken three years to grass over.

‘Following the introduction of the No 78 bus ..., new signage and road markings were introduced along with signs directing visitors not to park on the grass. This was largely ignored and the signs were vandalised and removed (although they have subsequently been replaced).’ (loc cit)

In an age and society where there is so little respect for authority, a sign that says, “Please do not park on the grass, use the car parks provided,” is tantamount to placing a sign in a department store that says, “Please do not steal from this shop.” Without robust enforcement, the signs are worthless.

The proposal is now to take some four acres of flat grassland, currently available as two football pitches and one cricket pitch. The reinstatement and levelling of the southernmost football pitch was included as part of the A27 Brighton By-pass accommodation works, being paid for by the Department of Transport. However, the pitch has not since been used, and so the adjacent pavilion has been under-used. To allow the construction of a major car park with 290 spaces, in an area that is not easily disguised by planting given that it will be overlooked by most views as a result of the considerably higher surrounding land, cannot be justified on either landscape grounds or as reasonable provision for the open space. Whilst the current area may be underused as pitches, it is well recognized that flat, grassed areas are of inestimable value for recreational purposes and in a town as hilly as Brighton, must not be discarded lightly. The several smaller car parks that this construction is to replace cover only approximately half the proposed area and, being smaller, can be more easily landscaped to blend in with the surrounding treescape.

The plan to build a single 290 space pay car park appears to contravene government policy on the disposal of playing fields for other uses and those associated with car parking within 1.5 km. of the proposed Falmer football stadium. It also seems certain that there is no way it could be prevented from becoming a Park and Ride site for the north-east side of the conurbation to the certain detriment of Stanmer Park, whether by design or by default.

The bus service to Stanmer is not a new introduction as Colson Stone seem to suggest. Recent deliberate monitoring of the No 78 bus over nine Bank Holiday and weekend days has shown the maximum number of passengers entering the park on any single journey to have been three. In a letter to the Argus, the Chairman of the Environment Committee has said, “The council is also committed to a long-term subsidy for its award-winning ‘Breeze Up To The Downs’ route which services the park.” The three-year ‘Breeze Up to the Downs’ programme is funded by the Countryside Agency, and supported by Brighton & Hove City Council, Sussex Downs Conservation Board and The National Trust.

We believe the No 78 bus to be a waste of valuable financial resources so desperately needed elsewhere in the park, especially when other bus services stop within metres of the main entrance. An alternative worthy of consideration would be that one of the services that already passes the gates should at times to run up to Stanmer village and back and then continue its route. The Colson Stone report barely mentions the public transport question, although this is absolutely crucial in solving the long-term traffic management issues in the Park. The Council’s commitment to improving sustainable transport would be better addressed by improving bus services around the periphery of the City. At present there is no, or very difficult, public transport access from large neighbouring areas of population such as Bevendean, Woodingdean, Rottingdean, Ovingdean and

Saltdean. This is a question that the Council needs to discuss urgently with the bus companies, as part of the co-ordinated approach to management of the Park.

4.0 VISIONS AND COMPARISONS

4.1 The Vision for Stanmer Consultation

In 1998, six years ago, a public consultation was conducted and the “Vision for Stanmer “ was prepared. Despite this, nothing substantive has been witnessed on the ground in all the intervening years that would indicate a genuine will and determination to remedy the ills that bedevil the Estate and move forward to a positive and recognisable regeneration.

4.2 Public Consultation Duty of Local Authorities

The Public consultation report for the creation of a South Downs National Park (Countryside Agency, November 2001) states under Issue 7 Involving local people (p32) that:

‘The Government’s Rural White Paper proposes that communities could play a much bigger part in running their own affairs. Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to produce “community strategies” for the promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of their areas’.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), in their 2003 Manifesto calls for public spaces to become:

‘the glue that holds society together’, and that ‘the most popular parks and public spaces have local communities, businesses and politicians working together to look after them and making them a source of local pride’, ‘vibrant places that help to create sustainable communities’

In the Colson Stone report, Stanmer Park has been called a future ‘gateway to the South Downs National Park’ when the new Authority comes into being in 2006. As such, it seems essential that it, itself, be the subject of a comprehensive community strategy based on its own study, report and management plan. We take the view that this has not yet been achieved.

The two analyses below show where the process of public consultation and community strategy building has been found wanting so far.

4.3 Analysis of the Vision for Stanmer consultation

The Vision for Stanmer public consultation of 1998 is a first building block in the process described above, though certainly no more than that. The extremely low return, 457 completed questionnaires out of over 120,000 distributed, or less than 0.25%. For a Park that services a population very much greater than the City’s 250,000 and adding the fact that the survey is now six years old, this result does not give the Council a plausible mandate to proceed with sweeping implementation without further study and up to date consultation with key stakeholders and representative associations and groups. Other methods of community consultation such as more extensive focus groups, phone/internet canvassing, academic research surveys and interview methods, electronic democracy sites and debate forums, active consultation with existing local associations, and a dedicated Park management team taking the pulse of user feedback on an on-going basis, all need to be used. It is worth mentioning that our own recent questionnaire survey, presented in this report, produced 557 returns out of some 4000 copies distributed or over 13%.

Here is a selection of the main findings of the Vision for Stanmer survey, 1998:

- 70% of respondents got to Stanmer Park by car and were mainly families (at least 45%).
- Only 15% went by bus or combination of bus and cycle.
- 22% visited weekly, over 66% monthly.
- The single highest request was for more control of dogs (48%) and dog fouling (48% of the 23% who chose to mention something they liked least). Only 23% complained about the presence of cars and motorbikes, and 16% wanted control of car parking, whilst 20% were more aggrieved by the state of toilets!

It is hard to understand in view of these statistics why the report repeats twice that people are ‘expressing the greatest overall concern with issues connected to the control of cars and motorbikes’. Point 7.2 of the Vision for Stanmer analysis of results gives a much more correct and nuanced rendition of the data:

‘The concerns of specific groups varied. Those people who visited the park with their dogs wished to see the control of bicycles and motorbikes improved (32%), whereas those people who went to the park with their families and children wished that the control of dogs could be improved (27%). Improvement to car parking was required by people going to the park on their own (21%) and by those who met a friend there (31%).’

People’s own most consistently proposed solutions to cars parking on grass and speeding problems were *more signing, speed bumps, wardens, low barriers, better surface ground maintenance*. Positive signing giving information on where to go, park history and wildlife/land use was the third most desired thing.

Park and Ride is just one of several proposed solutions to the City’s traffic problems. If the Council does see Stanmer Park as a suitable location for a Park and Ride site, then few people in the City would agree. Our opinion is that such facilities should only be on brownfield sites, constructed as underground or multi-storey car parks and not become a blot on the landscape.

Only one Abacus Research-led focus group workshop was held, with presentations by just the Council officers of the relevant departments, the Stanmer Preservation Society and the Stanmer Residents Association. Amongst invited participants there were ‘no under 30’s’, and 40% of participants were 55 or older. This gave rise to a bias, mentioned in the Abacus Research written Workshop results as:

‘As well as enjoy aspects of nature such as the trees and birds, many come to walk their dogs. Rather fewer go to take their children or go to attend organised events (this finding may reflect the fairly high average age of participants).’

We know from both the statistical response analysed above, and now from the results of our own survey presented in 5.1 of this report (and the associated comments reproduced herein) that young families with small children coming by car are in fact the greatest single users of the Park.

This age group bias, unawareness of the needs and pursuits of the younger generations, was also reflected in the opposition voiced then to the Essential Music Festival, in spite of the fact that it generated £20,000 revenue to the Council (not re-allocated to Stanmer Park’s budget however) and much economic spin-off for the local shop and village as a whole.

Still, this workshop discussion, as well as a Summary of responses by letter to the Vision exercise, emphasises people’s desire that Stanmer remain ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘unspoilt’ without any ‘over-management’. This wish is not met by the idea of creating a major modern paying car park. Also, the call for the House to be redeveloped in a self-funded and income generating manner as the seat

of Park management, education, 'Art in the Park' events, markets, weddings and general public use was unanimous.

'Someone mentioned that it had been used as a place for nature education for 18 months and raised £5000.'

This wish has not been met by the subsequently implemented plan for the redevelopment of Stanmer House.

Here is the exact text of the Vision for Stanmer as adopted by Council in the autumn of 1998:

'To preserve and enhance the park's natural beauty, including its wildlife, archaeology and historic landscape. To ensure the park remains a place for everyone to enjoy. This will be achieved through professional management, control of activities which detract or destroy its natural features and by provision of information to help the community and visitors to understand, protect and enjoy these features.'

The Action Plan for implementing the Vision for Stanmer presented at the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-committee of 15th January 1999 lays out overall 29 Actions, reproduced with their known outcome to date below. When these are reviewed against their given target dates, all set in 1999 or 2000, it can be seen that 13 of these are not achieved or started to date, a further 9 are still undecided in outcome, 3 outcome unknown, and just 4 have been completed. Furthermore, of these, 4 crucial goals behind the action list or actions themselves appear to have been forgotten, indefinitely deferred or re-interpreted:

- 'Goal: Professional management of the park, an individual to act as a focal point, co-ordinator and communicator both within the council and with members of the public for the park.'

We see a link between the lack of action ability evidenced above and the absence of a management team dedicated to the Park, with clear leadership and the ability to both liaise with stakeholders and knowledge holders, and raise a viable budget.

- 'Goal: to maximise the resources available to achieve the Vision for Stanmer.'

There is still no budget for Stanmer, and no provisions by Council to plough back income generated by the Park into the Park. Besides which the strictness of the Outdoor Events Policy endorsed by the four main Council committees concerned (Arts Recreation and Tourism; Consumer Services; Highways Management; Environmental Services) in January 1998, in stipulating an upper limit of 8,500 participants or 5,000 if ecological damage is feared, has in effect curtailed all major music events in Stanmer, in spite of their uniquely high income generation capability and though the same Policy recognises the many benefits of events to the Borough and sees Stanmer as 'the most viable venue for large music events'. Clearly this conflict of interests, as well as many others uncovered above, would call for extensive application of conflict resolution techniques and community building exercises both sponsored by Council and/or business interests.

- 'Continue progress on finding a company to manage the house in a way that is compatible with the Vision.'

The redevelopment of the House and Stables into up-market Town housing was not what people consulted asked for. We understand that there was no alternative and viable alternative to this.

- 'Seek to meet car parking needs through improving existing car parks at the entrance to the park (Lower Lodges), Upper lodges, the church car park and one other.'

No mention of a single centralised paying car park by the entrance then. Why and when did the change of strategy occur?

4.4 Cursory Analysis of the Colson Stone Report as implementation of the Vision for Stanmer

The Colson Stone report is most certainly another very important building block in the process of creating a comprehensive community strategy. Its strength lies in coalescing into one document what is known of the parameters defining and constraining the Park's life past present and future, ecological, environmental, agricultural, historical, legal, financial and relevant to the public use of it. It also presents great maps and illustrations. Yet it also suffers from some insufficiencies, biases, lack of clarity, or understanding of local issues and shortsightedness in some areas when compared with management planning handbooks such as that used at the Lea Valley Park in London.

4.5 Points We Query

- The Report mentions (point 1.4) that the Local Nature Reserve Status for the Stanmer Study Area, indispensable for National Park status upgrade, and displayed on the entrance sign to the Park, had not yet been fully secured by the Council at the time of writing the report. We would like to be clear as to the present situation.
- A great imbalance in content and focus of documentation and research towards landscape analysis and conservation, and away from Education, Research, Interpretation and Recreational uses, which are woefully under-researched, under valued and under represented in the Report. In all, only 2 double-sided pages are devoted to it. Yet the Park has been described by respondents to the Vision for Stanmer consultation exercise as:

'The town's lung', 'peaceful, green, quiet, an escape from urban life', 'known for its wildlife, history, festivals, events'. 'Favourite and only large dedicated area of the B&H city and surrounding area for family outings, dog walking, horse riding.

This is a glaring oversight, and reveals a very insidious bias of conservationists in perceiving people as a potential nuisance.

- An over emphasis and bias towards the 18th century designed landscape notion of '*ferme ornée*', steeped into the highly developed, recognised and accepted subjective approach to landscape assessment favoured in the 18th century. However, during the 18th century *the public was not allowed in private parks such as Stanmer Park*. It was the more enlightened 19th Century that opened private estates to the public. Besides, even the 1987 Secretary of State ruling which now guides much landscape assessment states that:

'The Secretary of State shares the Inspector's view that assessment of landscape quality necessarily involves a subjective assessment and that *within the consensus of informed opinion* allied with the trained eye, *and common sense*, the matter is one of aesthetic taste.' (Management Planning Handbook CCFW, 1994, page 57)

- It is our assertion that neither the consensus of informed opinion, nor common sense would support the 18th century aesthetic taste bias of the Report. We hold that all historical features of the Stanmer landscape be viewed with equal value, whether pre or post 18th century, the remarkable continuing integrity and integration throughout the ages of succeeding visions being the most unique feature of Stanmer estate. Indeed the authors of the report

involuntarily acknowledge this fact when they write in section 11.0 Significance of Stanmer (p182):

‘Much of the study area was the subject of a charter in AD765 which granted the estate from Aedwulf, King of Sussex, to the Cannon and Monks of St Michael in South Mailing. The Chartered land corresponds to the parish boundary which extends northwards from the study area to include Stanmer Down. The survival of the charter is significant in its own right *but the fact that a large proportion of the land to which it refers remains within a single ownership and to a large degree undeveloped is remarkable, particularly given the passage of nearly 1300 years.*’

- Neither the prize winning 20th century University of Sussex architecture, the people-donated trees (cherry orchard, lime tree avenue), nor the Stanmer Organics gardens, sculptures and Earthship, excellent, widely acclaimed and courageous example of sustainable living using refuse materials and voluntary work, nor the pines planted because they are more adapted to climate change, deserve to be called ‘visual intrusions’, ‘cluttered and uncoordinated’ to be ‘rationalised’. They are all the glorious expression of the local community making use of the land, as much as is the Victorian church of St Laurence.
- Lastly this 18th century bias implies a schedule of clearance that is massive, unnecessarily costly and likely to prove unpopular with some of the public. It also implies a curtailing of excellent community activities in the Nursery complex, and a draconian new traffic policy leading to *the introduction of car parking charges, which, with 70% of users coming by car, is tantamount to imposing an entrance fee and has been roundly rejected by park users.*
- Scant provisions for the following essential processes: Differentiating Long term or Ideal management objectives from purpose and methods to achieve them; Determining factors influencing the achievement of the long term management objectives; Analysis of internal man induced factors; External factors to the Park influencing management decision and implementation; Factors arising from traditional (and in some cases legislative) uses of the Park; Physical consideration/constraints; Availability of resources; Operational objectives such as: management options, limits of acceptable change.
- No comprehensive Action Plan leading to project prioritisation and description and then to work programmes.
- No provision for project record and review.

All these last three points are expected to be done by a hypothetical New Management Structure, helped by a Consultative Forum to Promote Community Involvement (see section 13.1 Management and Implementation, 1 1/2 pages). All three things the present Council structure of management have shown no signs to be willing to bring into effect, support or promote, moving instead into arbitrarily prioritised, piece-meal implementations of the Outline Proposals of the Report, only willing to consider further consultation on one point at a time, taken out of context, and without a budget.

4.2 The Comparison with other Country Parks (Seven Sisters v Richmond Park)

Any comparison with Seven Sisters is purely geographical. Whilst a lovely site, complete with working farm, it does not begin to compare in historical importance and magnitude with Stanmer. A more realistic and apposite comparison is Richmond Park with its rich history, enclosed perimeter, listed buildings, road access, wildlife and beautiful woodland.

The largest Royal Park in London covering an area of some 1000 hectares, approximately 2,500 acres, it has changed little over the centuries and although it is surrounded by human habitation, the varied landscape of hills, woodland gardens and grasslands set among ancient trees abounds in wild life. The royal connections to this park probably go back further than any of the others, beginning with Edward (1272-1307), when the area was known as the Manor of Sheen. The name was changed to Richmond during Henry VII's reign. In 1625 Charles I brought his court to Richmond Palace to escape the plague in London and turned it into a park for red and fallow deer. His decision, in 1637, to enclose the land was not popular with the local residents, but he did allow pedestrians the right of way.

The Isabella Plantation is a stunning woodland garden which was created after World War II from an existing woodland, and is organically run, resulting in a rich flora and fauna. Richmond Park has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a National Nature Reserve. This is a classic example of how country estates evolve with the times and the needs and wishes of their owners/users. The Royal Parks management has developed Richmond within the requirements of the 20th Century and not allowed it to wallow in a 17th Century time warp.

There are six car parks and parking on the roads or grassland is strictly prohibited and vigorously enforced. There is a disabled, badge holders only, car park for the Isabella Plantation. The park is open from 7am in the summer and 7.30 in the winter, and closes at dusk all year round.

5.0 THE FRIENDS OF STANMER PARK CONSULTATION

5.1 The Questionnaire and Results

Approximately 4000 questionnaires were distributed by volunteers of the Friends of Stanmer Park to visitors to the Park and by email to those supporters who had asked to be kept informed. This was done in the period 12 June to 12 July 2004. A total of 557 completed questionnaires were returned [13%] and the collated results are as follows, where N= is the number of responses to each individual question:

- 5.1.1 Would you support greater involvement in the future management of the Park by local residents through groups such as the Friends of Stanmer Park, Stanmer Preservation Society and Stanmer Residents Association?
[N=542] **Yes 93%** **No 7%**
- 5.1.2 Is it practical for you to visit the Park by walking, cycling or taking public transport?
[N=549] **Yes 30%** **No 70%**
- 5.1.3 Do you want the existing formal and informal car parks removed?
[N=550] **Yes 3%** **No 97%**
- 5.1.4 Do you agree with the building of a 200 space pay car park
[N=552] **Yes 4%** **No 96%**
- 5.1.5 Are you willing to pay car park charges in Stanmer?
[N=539] **Yes 15%** **No 85%**
- 5.1.6 To prevent criminal damage, do you wish to have a night-time only barrier?
[N=531] **Yes 80%** **No 20%**

5.1.7 Would you visit Stanmer Park if you HAD to park near the entrance but the car park was free?

[N=536] **Just as often 24%** **Not as often 37%** **No 39%**

5.1.8 To prevent car parking on grass areas, would you agree with placing tree stumps or low earth banking or some alternative to protect these areas such as at Sussex University, Richmond and Windsor Great Parks?

[N=546] **Yes 81%** **No 19%**

5.1.9 Which parts of the Park do you visit? (You may circle more than one)

Great Wood [N=409] 73%. **Village/Café/Farm [N=516] 93%**

Areas by Stanmer House [N=417] 75%

Sports Pitches [N=144] 26% **Church [N=256] 46%**

Museum [N=182] 33%

Stanmer Organics [N=202] 36% **Nurseries [N=313] 56%**

5.1.10 Would it be practical for you to continue visiting those areas if you had to use a shuttle bus?

[N=540] **Yes 20%** **No 80%**

5.1.11 Do you support our wish that all options are offered by council officers together with detailed costings to all Councillors serving on the Environment Committee?

[N=464] **Yes 94%** **No 6%**

5.2 A Summary of the Results

5.2.1 An overwhelming number of respondents wish to see greater involvement in the future management of the park by local community groups.

5.2.2 Only one third of respondents find it practical to visit the park by public transport, cycling or walking.

5.2.3 An insignificant minority of respondents wish to see the existing car parks removed.

5.2.4 A virtually equal insignificant minority of respondents agree to the building of a large centralised car park.

5.2.5 A very clear majority is not willing to pay car parking charges in Stanmer Park.

5.2.6 Four out of every five respondents wish to see criminal activity prevented by closing the park to vehicular access at night.

5.2.7 If compelled to park at the entrance, over one third of visitors would stop using the park altogether and another third would visit less often.

5.2.8 Four out of five respondents want cars prevented from parking on the grass.

5.2.9 The parts of Stanmer Park most frequently visited are the village, café and farm, the areas around Stanmer House and Great Wood.

5.2.10 Only one in five respondents would find it practical to visit the areas they like most by shuttle bus.

5.2.11 An unchallengeable majority of respondents support our wish that all options for change in Stanmer Park are presented to all members of the Environment Committee.

Analysis of cases where respondents included a full, valid postcode (N=405) showed that the median distance from respondents' postcodes to Stanmer village was 4.7 kilometres. This indicates that many visitors who come by car have a short drive of perhaps 10 minutes. However, the majority of respondents said that it was not practical for them to visit by public transport, walking or cycling. This is in part because they are visiting as families, including young children, elderly people and those with mobility difficulties, and bringing dogs, picnic equipment and other necessities. It is also a reflection of the very poor bus services from most outlying parts of the City and lack of safe walking or cycling routes from many areas (notably along the route of the Falmer Road). Despite the relatively short distances from their homes, those travelling by bus would have to change buses at least once. Responses indicated high levels of concern for the needs of visitors who found it difficult to walk far or stand for long periods but were not necessarily registered disabled.

The completed questionnaires and their collated results are available for independent scrutiny. A random selection of comments is shown at Appendix 7

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Brighton and Hove is essentially an urban authority but with substantial rural land holdings. For the most part, these are let to tenant farmers who understand rural land management and practise it as second nature. Stanmer Park is a large and very important country estate that traditionally had the hands-on daily management essential to best practice but that has been abandoned. The land is dynamic and the emphasis on its management changes not only with the seasons but also with the prevailing weather conditions on a daily basis. Rural land cannot be managed efficiently by disparate groups of staff officers from headquarters buildings six miles from the site. There needs to be a fully qualified and experienced estate manager on the site with his or her supporting staff.

There have been two days of extreme weather in the past few weeks when wind speeds have reached gale force 7 to 8. This is sufficient to cause major damage to woodland and we have been surprised not to see any member of Council staff carrying out routine storm damage assessments in Stanmer Park. We are able to assure them that, despite a thick carpet of predominantly Beech leaves and branches, no major structural damage has been caused in Great Wood.

Stanmer Park was managed effectively and efficiently in the past but has undergone a change stemming from an urban mind-set. It is not a municipal park and, although the experiment was a brave one, it has manifestly failed. The Vision for Stanmer, the Colson Stone report and now our submission all illustrate that.

A measurement of good leadership is the ability to carry out a post-change assessment and evaluate the effects, reverting to the tried and tested procedures or implementing further functional change as necessary. We urge the Council to carry out a root and branch overhaul of its country estate management system as a matter of great urgency.

6.1 Public Consultation

There is a statutory requirement to consult publicly but such exercises must be a means to an end and not an end in themselves, as appears to be the case at present. Some of us took part in the 1998 Vision for Stanmer consultation, the night-time security consultation throughout 2003 and have now read the Colson Stone Report which we see as the only tangible thing to emerge from the first

process. The single, centralised car park has been overwhelmingly rejected in our survey and, we suspect, in the Council's survey too.

Implementation of essential consensual change in Stanmer Park is what is now wanted.

6.2 Cost of the Proposed Car Park

Having regard to the fact that the Council was unable to find the balance between the £20,000 offered by Cherrywood Investments Ltd and the £64,000 we have been told the hydraulic barrier would have cost, we were amazed to learn of the preferred option of building a 290 space all-weather car park on a greenfields site. We have, therefore sought the professional advice of a firm of chartered surveyors and civil engineers. They would normally work on an average of £1,500 per space but have observed that the spaces are approx 30% larger than average supermarket spaces (5.5m x 2.75 as opposed to 4.8 x 2.4). This is a sloping site that will require some levelling and the construction of retaining walls, a substantial element of landscaping covering a large ground area and what appears to be a lot of circulation space. Our advisors have estimated the total cost to be in the region of £450,000. There are still unknowns such as CCTV, lighting, drainage etc. There will also need to be petrol interceptors and such like.

In order to employ 24 hours security/car park attendants there will need to be a minimum of four, preferably five, to allow for shift working, days off and holiday rostering. The proposed shuttle minibuss and continued subsidy for the No 78 bus will be a further demand on revenue. At the Open Spaces Forum we learned that parking income is expected to come from 125,000 cars per annum. This represents an average of 342 cars per day, every day of the year. This might be attainable from a Park & Ride site but certainly not from a recreational area car park. We were further alarmed to read from a recent press release:

'There are big plans to improve integrated transport in the city. The council is currently looking at a rapid transport system, **a possible park and ride site** and improving new technology to ease traffic flow.' (our emphasis)

We attach a first year projected Profit & Loss account at Appendix 3.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

7.1 Stanmer Estate Management

We are deeply concerned that no messages are being learned and no remedies implemented from the plethora of consultations and discussions concerning Stanmer Park. The problems the park is suffering, and so clearly identified time and again, all stem from the simple lack of sound management. The present system is unworkable in the context of rural land management as both we and Colson Stone have identified elsewhere in this submission. Criminal activity and irresponsible behaviour have increased sharply in the past decade because the park is perceived to be abandoned and neglected. The woodland is littered with the debris of fifty cars torched in the past three years.

We strongly recommend the immediate recruitment of an experienced rural estate manager and a supporting staff that must include a head forester and at least four forestry workers for a woodland holding the size of Stanmer. This will entail some hard management decisions but should not be delayed any further.

7.2 Budget and Funding for Stanmer Estate

There is apparently no dedicated budget for the upkeep and maintenance of Stanmer Park, yet it generates substantial annual revenue from tenancies, rents and events in the park. Whilst we applaud any and every means of obtaining additional grant funding, we believe that an end must be put to the cap-in-hand, begging bowl approach that seems to underlie any resourcing. When in private hands, these revenues would have been used to sustain the fabric of the Estate. Now in public ownership, it should benefit from the additional local taxation. We understand that a very desirable plot of land in the village is to be auctioned in the autumn and would like to see the proceeds allocated to the Park.

Stanmer Park must have a formalised annual budget to sustain it as the City's crowning recreational asset.

7.3 Security in Stanmer Park

There is none and this needs to be remedied as a matter of the utmost urgency. The formation of the East Brighton Police District has resulted in a dramatic improvement to visible policing throughout the estate but its day to day, and especially night-time, security is a matter for the landlord. We have been discussing this for well over a year and it is twice that time since it was first proposed. The residents want it, the key stakeholders want it and 80% of our survey respondents want it. May we please have urgent action?

7.4 Traffic Management in Stanmer Park

Ninety six percent of the people we canvassed do not want a single, centralised car park blighting the visual beauty of Stanmer Park. We, and they, recommend the resurfacing and landscaping of the existing car parks so that vehicles may be staggered throughout the park and users are able to retain the choice they have enjoyed for some fifty years. The indiscriminate and irresponsible parking on grassland must be controlled by enforcement against the guilty and not by corralling the innocent against their wishes. It didn't happen in the days of established management.

7.5 Public transport

Access to the Park needs to be considered in the context of cross-City planning for sustainable transport. The subsidy to the 78 bus should be discontinued and the money used for management in the Park. However, Stanmer village needs to be served by bus transport. One of the services that passes the gates of Stanmer, probably the 25, should run into the Park, up to the village and back before continuing the rest of its route. Urgent discussions should be held with the bus companies about routes from all peripheral areas of the City, so that all residents can reach Stanmer Park without time-consuming changes, even at weekends.

7.6 Stanmer Park Liaison Panel

"We recommend the immediate formation of a Liaison Panel, the purpose of which would be to assist Council officers with getting Stanmer Park back into sound management. It will help fulfil the requirement in the 1998 Vision for Stanmer proposals to consult with stakeholders, and the "Management and Implementation" recommendations of the Colston Stone report (p194). A suggested composition for the Liaison Panel is:

- one Member from each political group on the Environment Committee and one local Ward Councillor. We would suggest that meetings be chaired by the Chairman of the Open Spaces Forum. [6]
- one member each from the Friends of Stanmer Park, Stanmer Preservation Society, Stanmer Residents Association, City College, Cherrywood Investments Ltd, Stanmer Organics and the Sussex Downs Conservation Board. [7]
- a member of BHCC Legal Team. [1]
- a nominated officer of the Environment Department to act as Secretary to the Panel. [1]

We suggest that the Liaison Panel should monitor the progress of tasks and decisions that have been delegated to officers by the Environment Committee and that it should meet four times a year.