

Friends of Wigmore Park 20038785

The following contains two subject. The replacement park and the County Wildlife Site.

At the hearing held on September 26th 2023 the Planning Inspectorate asked the applicant to provide information whether the proposed exchange land was already being used for recreation.

Friends of Wigmore Park would like to provide evidence in a series of photographs that the replacement exchange land, to be used as a new Wigmore Valley Park, has been used informally for a number of years. Talking to members of Friends of Wigmore Park, the claim is that many, but not all of the informal paths in the following presentation, have been used for 40 years when the fields grew crops. This has grown considerably since the land was taken out of food production and was replaced with grassland. Depending on the season, established tracks are used or random routes are taken depending on the grass length.



A group nature walk along the western edge of the replacement open space that follows the existing Wigmore Park boundary to the right. The photograph marks the approximate edge of the new Wigmore Park. The area in front of the camera will see the majority, if not all of the trees removed with car parking to the left and in the distance. The wide track is an indication of the amount of foot traffic that runs the length of the boundary.



This photograph was taken inside the new Wigmore Park on the western edge. Friends of Wigmore Park organises a monthly group dog walk that follows the same route every month. The event takes place on the first Sunday of every month and started in 2018/19



The organised dog walks take place regardless of season and weather conditions. This photograph was taken heading towards the new Wigmore Park on an established track. The walks can attract around 50 people who spread out as the walk progresses.



This photograph is taken from public footpath FP43 on the central section of the combined new and old park and shows the proposed new Wigmore Park on either side of the hedge. The footpath marker on the right indicates that the official path continues in the adjoining field towards Eaton Green Road, but the public walk either side of the hedgerow. The path to the left heads towards the existing Wigmore Park.



For reference, the airport can be seen in the far distance. This camera point is inside the proposed replacement Wigmore Park. In this direction, the public footpath turns left towards Winch Hill House via a small wooded area. The track on the right is a more popular route that later offers different unofficial path options outside the proposed new Wigmore Park. These paths lead to Winch Hill

House, Wigmore Park via the airport's fire training ground boundary fence, using a long established field crossing point that goes back 40 years. There is also a path that ends by at public footpath at Winch Hill Wood by the end of the runway.



This photograph is of the same public footpath post marker, but taken looking in the direction of the new Wigmore Park. With careful examination three unofficial paths are taken by members of the public plus the official route to the right. Wigmore Valley Park is indicated by the treeline in the distance.



Photograph taken from Wigmore Park looking through one of many entry points onto the proposed replacement open space with unofficial paths running left, right and straight on.

The following page contains two photographs of Luton Rising's public notices placed along unofficial informal paths that lead to the new Wigmore Park. The second photograph shows a blue soil survey access location. This location is by the escarpment seen in the distance of the first three photographs



County Wildlife Site

After the hearings, Friends of Wigmore Park still have concerns that the destruction of the County Wildlife Site will be a major loss to Luton and surrounding areas, as it cannot and will not be replicated. This is a significant permanent loss. We provide photographic evidence of our concerns.



The photograph was taken on high ground inside the County Wildlife Site and shows open rural views to the east. This view will be lost to park users who will not be able to access this location. This view will not be replicated in the replacement open space.



A view from the new Wigmore Park showing the hillside that will become a car park, so undermining the visual value of the new park. This will make the replacement park feel urban together with the remains of the existing park that will overlook development. In the far distance on the left can be seen Winch Hill Wood. The trees shown in the middle and to the right will be removed so allowing more views of the airport and its infrastructure.

It should be noted that every plant, bush and tree in the following photographs will be lost, as this public access land will become airport operational land with permitted development rights.



The County Wildlife Site consists of large areas that cannot be accessed due to dense undergrowth allowing wildlife and biodiversity to thrive while also having open areas for park users to enjoy.



As there are no proposals for a replacement County Wildlife Site in the substitute open space this will diminish the new park's value.



The County Wildlife Site has a public footpath running through it, which will be closed.



Part of the public footpath passing through the heart of the County Wildlife Site.



This location marks the eastern edge of the proposed Terminal 2 in phase 2a. The photograph was taken during an orchid hunt.



The transformation from County Wildlife Site to park can be seen in this photograph. All this will be lost with no adequate replacement or mitigation put in place that can replicate this view. Everything that makes this area special will be destroyed.



While the County Wildlife Site will not be replaced, tree planting will take place in the new Wigmore Park, as a form of mitigation. The above photograph shows what tree planting looked like when Wigmore Park was first laid out. This photograph was taken behind Wigmore Park's allotments looking over the park towards the airport. As can be seen, in the early years the existing park had no visual appeal and was little used.

Our membership has now grown to 3149 members since our first submission. They prefer what we have now and dismiss what the applicant is proposing, as it does not mitigate the loss of the County Wildlife Site while also inflicting buildings, roads and car parks up to the existing park's proposed new shrunken boundary, so further diminishing its appeal. There is also the issue of close proximity new noise from the airport from additional taxiing aircraft plus arriving and departing aircraft. New noise will also be generated from the new road network that will border the park.