

Firstly may I thank Cllr. Sansom and team who were very engaged and helpful at the Brockwell Meadow Consultation (Minutes of Last Council Meeting noted).

During the Consultation, Cllr. Sansom advised that, regarding the pathway/access, a further on-site visit would be undertaken with our involvement to best consider the detailed practical aspects and existing tree/shrub management/retention.

I'm mindful that the Pre-school contractors are still working on the site and there is restricted access presently, but can you confirm what the various next steps are with this project and indicate when this meeting is likely to take place please.

Further to previous email and ongoing conversations re plans, we wondered whether a further idea could be put forward?

Since the consultation meeting, the PreSchool works have opened up quite sizeable access from Knight's paddock onto Brockwell Meadow through which diggers and wide dumper trucks have been operating with ease.

Would an option now be to put in a lockable, appropriately-sized gate in the space thus allowing maintenance-vehicle access in the future? This could also act as the gate access for the PreSchool on the basis previously proposed, albeit now to the eastern side of the Ash tree.

This would seem to have many merits over the footpath option and we offer it up for consideration/discussion.

With reference to the Brockwell Meadow informal consultation held on 3 October 2021. The information provided prior to the event suggested that the Parish Council had already made a decision on the way forward and this event was to consult with affected residents and share its plans. However, at the event it became clear that many of the Parish Council ideas were at a very early stage and the Parish Council were seeking information to assist in the formulation of a proposal. The following comments are therefore made to assist in the formation of that proposal.

The paperwork provided clearly identifies the Parish Council's ideas but fails to specify that it is possible to do nothing. Brockwell meadow is currently used by local Oakley residents. With the exceptions of barbeques and fireworks it provides a great local space that is enjoyed by a wide range of people. Any alteration may affect the open space nature of the site and remove existing uses.

Brockwell access to the meadow.

The proposal provided suggests widening the access to the meadow from Brockwell to a width of 3m apparently to facilitate access for larger machinery, such a tractor/mower. To do this the proposal suggests removing an established Laurel shrub.

Points

- A width of 3m is sufficient for a caravan to be towed through. It is disappointing given the range of caravan deterrents that have been installed at most of the green areas of the Oakley that this risk was not considered and that relevant deterrents have not been included in the proposal.
- A width of 3m also increases the risk of fly tipping. It is not clear what consideration the Parish Council given to this risk.
- The current grass cutting organisation manage to cut the grass in Brockwell Meadow using the current access width. The argument that widening is needed to facilitate mowing access is therefore not supported. Any alternative rationale for the proposed widening of the access was sadly not made available at the informal consultation on the 3 October 2021.
- Link this to the stated objective of a wildlife friendly wildflower meadow that requires minimal maintenance the widening this entrance to facilitate larger machinery contradicts minimal maintenance and therefore the rationale for widening the entrance needs to be fully and robustly articulated by the Parish Council.

- In widening the entrance, the proposal indicates that an existing Laurel, that has been in situ for some time, is removed. This removal will potentially eradicate an existing wildlife habitat. Directly contradicting the Parish Council's stated objective to create a naturalised and wildlife friendly meadow.

Pre-school access to meadow

The proposed layout suggests that access from a locked gate will allow pre-school children to access the meadow directly on to a naturally wet grassland or the term used on the 3 October was a pond.

Points

- The wisdom of this layout is questioned bearing in mind pre-school children and the inherent risk to their welfare.

Parish Councillors present indicated that the Parish Council had already given permission for the pre-school to access to the meadow via that gate. It is therefore conceivable that this gate could be used by parents delivering or collecting children. If this use was enacted then the meadow would see an increase in footfall (and with a 3m access way it is possible that some parents may try to drive their cars onto the site).

Proposed meadow layout

A simple viewing of the meadow clearly highlights that the site is on a slope. The plan provided by the Parish Council suggests that Brockwell meadow be split into three zones. A naturally wet grassland at the top of the slope, wildflower grassland in the middle and shrub/tree zone at the bottom of the slope.

The proposed meadow layout, from information provided on the 3 October 2021, appears to be based upon the premise that a pond used to exist in a particular location at the top of the slope when Brockwell was farmland. Much has happened in the 40 or so years and compression of land by builders may have a significant effect and it may not be feasible to simply replicate what was there in years gone by.

The proposal to site a wet grassland/pond to the top of a slope is questionable. Water will naturally run down a slope and on the 3 October 2021 the soil where the trees are proposed (i.e., at the bottom of the slope) was already waterlogged.

Points

- Given the slope of the land it might be prudent to re-look at the location of the zones, placing any wet area at the bottom of the slope.
- Additional information provided by Parish Councillors on the 3 October 2021. The plan clearly shows a walkway round the meadow (2m wide). This was explained as needed to allow two adults and one child to walk round the perimeter of the area. Do people only wish to walk round the perimeter?
- Currently in a number of locations around Brockwell Meadow shrubs/trees have grown up close to the perimeter which would prevent the image on the plan being delivered.
- The assumption of three per family group is just that an assumption. Many families in Oakley may not conform to that size and therefore the walkway needs to be either wider or narrower. Given that the Councillors had little information it might be prudent to identify the size of family group that may use the site.
- Linked to this it should be noted that the Parish Council proposal puts a cut grass area close to resident's fences. In some locations the fences are secluded or have/will have obscured vision and are protected/obscured by mature shrubs/trees or ones being planted. The removal of mature trees and shrubs to create the walkway will involve the removal of existing habitats it will also increase the risk of crime as it will ease access to properties which were formally protected by the plant growth. It appeared from the responses that Parish Councillors had not considered that the actions of the Parish Council could present these risks to specific residents.
- It was clearly suggested by the Parish Councillors present that the grass cuttings taken from the mown areas would be collected and composted. A location for the composting is not shown on the plan. Is this an oversight? Composting can be odorous. Siting near to fence lines should thus be avoided.

Additional observations

Based upon the proposal the stated aim of the council proposal is to create a wildlife friendly meadow. The pond by its nature will attract insects and other wildlife. However, ponds are static water bodies and anaerobic decomposition within the pond leads to sulphurous smells. Such smells are unpleasant for those nearby and may prevent people from peacefully enjoying their gardens.

The presence of water will provide a water source and potential breeding ground insects/animals. Any breeding ground will result in an increase the number of insects/animals seen on a daily basis. Residents might be affected by the hatching of insects although this is not covered in the proposal I have seen. Therefore, clarification as to whether this has been considered by the Parish Council is sought as is the outcome of those considerations.

It was suggested by Parish Councillors that the cost for cutting grass areas was one of the largest expenditure items of the Parish Council. It was suggested by Parish Councillors present that adoption of the current proposal would reduce the Parish Council's maintenance commitment. If cost are the main driver then this information should be known and used to make the decision and therefore available for a consultation. Sadly, this information was not available.

The contractor who attended clearly has some local knowledge and already provides services to the Parish Council at Lynch Furlong. From the conversation taking place it seemed as if the expectation was that the Lynch Furlong contractor would undertake the works at Brockwell Meadow. This smacks of nepotism. The Parish Council should undertake a proper tendering exercise for this service so that Parish residents can be assured that the Parish Council is achieving best value in the letting of any contract/financial commitment

The Lynch Furlong contractor was putting forward Parish Council views at the informal consultation. This places the Parish Council in a difficult position as it appears it has already fettered its discretion and may not be in a position to take an independent view on the appointment of a contractor.

The proposal provided indicates that it is not the intention to encourage more people to visit the site. This is potentially a circular argument. By doing this work people will be drawn to something new and it will therefore encourage more people to visit. The issue of litter being left by visitors to the site has not been addressed. What plans does the Parish Council have for ensuring that litter is removed from the site?

I am a little disappointed that from the plans it looks like there will no longer be a place suitable for the young children to play out there, there is always children playing teenagers picnicking and families playing rounders during the summer months which is lovely to see and join in with.

When the new lamppost was put in my house looked a bit like the Blackpool illuminations at night I have purchased black out curtains but the light was still getting in so was very pleased when the trees that were cut back grew as they provide some covering towards the house. I can see from your letter and the letter received from playschool these are now being cut back, is there any reason there are 2 lampposts next to each other? I am not looking forward to us being disturbed by the light again every night.

Wants to say
to see large tree
go for access
if needed.

Learn
an artist's
point of
view
areas.

Space for
playing ground

I would like
a few climbing

I would like
A Pond

- ① Want prefer a larger central area of grass for games play
 - ② Support biodiversity areas/wildflower etc.
 - ③ needs mowing/maintenance more regularly - got missed this year
- ④ prefer to have kids that to black light. PTO

⑤ PLs continue "No dogs"

A bit of field to kick a ball around, fly a kite

A Pond Please

Let us access to being able to maintain my hedge & buddleia w/ number 19.

- If we can keep the trees on the footpath, we know you need 3m for the tractor but please try to keep as much trees as possible (they are lovely old trees).

I feel that being able to explore in the nature and wildlife will be a good and fun experience for me and my friends.

I think a pond
would be a good
idea.
A pond.

I would love to
have more places to
play but I would like
some green spaces free
to kick a foot ball about
maybe in the middle.

Boards / beds of
flowers to attract
children space to
play.

- need green space
for kids to play,
have picnic.
- foot-bath to start
after the shrubs
not close to our
back garden fence.

Some remaining
green space for children
to safely play ball games / picnic

Some
field to
play
Not more grass in the middle



ALERT + 4 OF SPACES TO
PLAY BY THE METLAND
AND A FLOWER BERGA

Trees one end
are a great idea!
😊

I love the idea of more
biodiversity with flowers &
trees. But also with some
space to play for children
in the middle or one end.

(Burgal)
Reiteration
of planting
of trees as
as for grass
- natural vegetation

We love the idea
of a pond or
wet area.

• Areas for children
to sit and have
picnics.

We feel it is really important for our children to be able to play in this area.

Swatches of long areas of grass mixed with shorter areas.
Paths round the edges could be more flowing, however need to ensure grass is cut/stripped next to fences. 3m

Fantastic idea as a resident I see very little certainty with present.

Open space so children can ride their bikes around.

Water feature good idea but needs to be nearer the bottom of the hill so water does not drain away.
Current position under tree where ground is dry.

I like the idea of trees and gloves on one side. With space in the middle to play.

the school
entrance - car
parking along
school opening.

Minister of screening
to 23 x 36

- o path too narrow
at 2m
- o open space
for children
- o Wet area is
of concern.

Apple, plum
pears -
trees
Please.

entrance from
Brickwell -
prevent cars etc
entering -
concern over access
being too wide for
cars + vans

I live @ [redacted] Reves
the trees at the
bottom of our garden
are surrounded by
rubbish. Also the
trees need to be
cut right back as
they overtake our
garden.

balladed entry
needed to minimise
any unauthorised access