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Date: 9th June 2020
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Dear Geoff,

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the 23 June 2020 meeting of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee.

We are writing in support of the planting of 8,000 trees on the slopes above Carden Park in Hollingbury to create a new woodland area. It is currently open chalk grassland with a few mature trees. Part of the area lies within the western side of Wild Park Local Nature Reserve.

On the 7th February, we wrote to ETS Committee with Cllr. Lee Wares outlining these plans and their importance. We write in this instance to reconfirm our desire for this project to progress, and to support the Notice of Motion being presented today Cllrs. Lee Wares and Vanessa Brown.

The Council's Conservation Manager assessed the area as species rich grassland and worthy of preservation, and the rest suitable for extensive tree planting.

The following is deemed possible, and is reflected in information provided to the committee:

1. 8000 trees can be planted on the slope with paths cut between and around areas of tree planting.
2. Old Boat Corner Community Centre are planting a small orchard at the rear of the building. This would link up with trees planned for planting along the northern boundary to help screen the industrial estate from the park and housing development.

3. The species-rich grassland at the very top of the slope would be encompassed within the adjacent grazed area. Fencing costs can be met from s106 funds for Crowhurst Corner, with volunteers carrying out the work.
4. There would be extensive landscaping on the embankment separating the playing field and slope to establish bee banks, wild flowers and increased biodiversity. This cost can be met from the Changing Chalk HLF partnership led by the National Trust.

This project would tie together numerous other conservation efforts in this part of Patcham & Hollingbury. Next to Carden Park is Carden Avenue, which is subject to the SCAPE sustainable drainage system project. Opposite is Carden School which will be part of the Brighton Chalk Management Project. Woodbourne Meadows, south of Carden Park, has been transformed by a local conservation group resulting in the sightings of rare butterflies.

The initiative would also bring the local community together. Patcham & Hollingbury Ward has an active conservation group, dozens of keen residents, a trained tree warden, and Brighton & Hove's only UN climate change qualified teacher. Schools are very enthusiastic about this tree-planting project, and the community centre would like to have an educational area, and perhaps organise guided tours of the area. Children would grow up alongside this woodland creating a strong sense of belonging.

This initiative will be a clear sign the Council is committed and willing to act on tackling climate change. With this proposal, the council has an extremely rare opportunity to create a new woodland and wildlife sanctuary which will conserve and increase biodiversity. It will bring a wealth of flora and fauna right into the heart of a large urban area.

Officers have advised that this project is achievable with minimal impact on the Council's budget. We are also allocating most of our ward budget to this project. Time is of the essence, not just regarding climate change, but for organising and making purchases in order to begin planting this November. We hope that Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee take this fantastic opportunity to leave a lasting legacy, and approve the planting of this woodland.

Yours sincerely
Cllrs Carol Theobald and Alistair McNair