THE CASE FOR ROOKWOOD
Rookwood Golf Course...

...is well used – it provided an average of 34,000 rounds per year from 2015 to 2019

...hosted 40,000 rounds in 2020 despite 14 weeks of lockdown

...is Horsham District’s only local authority owned pay-as-you-play golf course

...is a net financial contributor to HDC that has provided over £180,000 in the 4 years to 31st March 2021

...will be protected by Sport England using NPPF paragraph 97, unless HDC can evidence that the course is surplus to sporting need
Residents want Rookwood to remain a golf course

*Petition: over 10,000 signatures, 1,254 survey responses... to date*

"Quality of life cannot be overlooked and the local green spaces are inherent to mental health and air quality"

"Spaces such as Rookwood can't be replaced once destroyed"

"It's a green space and a wildlife corridor linked to the nature reserve. A very precious space for people and wildlife"

"We need to keep Rookwood green as Horsham is fast running out of green space"

"If nature were really at the heart of your plans for Rookwood you wouldn't be thinking of building on it at all"

"It is a valuable, affordable, fully utilised golf facility open to all who might not relish a traditional golf club"
Horsham’s large green space

- In total, Rookwood is 33% of Horsham’s large green space
- HDC’s revised proposal suggests that about 75% of the site will be developed
- We want HDC to protect our green spaces for a future larger Horsham Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Area (Hectares)</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHESWORTH FARM</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HORSHAM PARK</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARNHAM LOCAL NATURE RESERVE</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEECHPOOL &amp; OWLBEECH WOODS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROOKWOOD SOUTH (SHELAA SA394)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROOKWOOD NORTH (SHELAA SA395)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rookwood is highly biodiverse

- Rookwood has been well managed in a wildlife friendly way
- Golf courses can provide up to 60% greater biological diversity than farm land
- Plans do not take account of the existing but unrecorded biodiversity – HDC consultants only spent 3 days on site
- January 2020 - No data in Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
- December 2020 - 420 SPECIES IDENTIFIED... AND COUNTING!

Will developing Rookwood really increase biodiversity?
Rookwood is a public asset

- 1986: Land purchased by HDC for public use and designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1987
- 1991: Half the land undesignated to create the golf course and, in 1996, build luxury housing

2021: Rookwood is held in trust by HDC on behalf of Horsham residents
The 1986 purchase agreement

The original owners must be given a share of any increased land value if HDC grants planning permission on the land

Covenant on Rookwood land north of Warnham Road:
- Cannot be used other than for agriculture, forestry, public open space, country park and/or public recreation without written consent of the original owners
- Only permits development of a hotel, motel, travel lodge or golf course

Covenant on Rookwood land south of Warnham Road:
- Permits residential, shop, office or industrial development subject to normal planning procedure
Is Rookwood deliverable?

Rookwood is the **ONLY PUBLIC** pay and play course in Horsham

There has been a **SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION** in local 18 hole courses

There is a **GROWING DEMAND** both nationally and locally

Sport England can **PROTECT** Rookwood under NPPF 97 unless HDC can clearly demonstrate that it is now surplus to requirements

*Where is HDC’s evidence that the course is surplus to requirements?*
Is building on Rookwood fiscally responsible?

HDC invested £2M (on top of the land purchase price) to create Rookwood Golf Course, why write off this investment?

If HDC sells now, 50% of sale proceeds have to be given away to the original owners, the Lucas Trust.

The Golf course generates annual income for HDC (£35k in 2019-20, projected to be £50k in 2020-2021).

At a future time HDC can retain the whole value – what is the hurry?
HDC *does* have a choice

- HDC’s three housing build rate scenarios will deliver 18,000 to 25,200 dwellings.
- The plan sets out delivery options for a maximum of 30,650 dwellings.
- The draft plan’s excess capacity is between 12,650 and 5,450 dwellings.
- Rookwood contributes just 750 dwellings.

*In all scenarios HDC can meet its building target AND choose not to build on Rookwood.*
Rookwood should not be developed

Retaining Rookwood Golf Course:
- Generates long term benefit for 60,000 residents’ wellbeing
- Future proofs access to green space for Horsham’s growing population
- Protects Horsham District’s natural capital

HDC has large financial reserves for use in difficult times
- 50% of the sale profit goes to the Lucas Trust and does not benefit residents
- Rookwood only contributes 3% to 4% of the Local Plan’s requirement

Local Plan targets can be achieved without building on Rookwood at all...

Horsham District Council does have a choice!
The Local Plan is about the **CHOICES YOU MAKE** for **OUR COMMUNITY**... over 10,000 petition signatures show that our community wants HDC to **PROTECT OUR GREEN SPACES** to future-proof this unique green space for Horsham's **GROWING POPULATION**

Our children will be forever thankful that we didn’t build on this irreplaceable natural space.

We don’t want the Local Plan to fail.

We just need the “Right” Local Plan.
This report was created by the Keep Rookwood Green Alliance, working together with the following groups...

...and the residents of Horsham