

**TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, DELIVERY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**  
September 2021

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**PARKS AND OPEN SPACES QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AT THE CHESTNUTS**  
Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval for the allocation of S106 funding (£23,991.08) to support improvements to recreation, biodiversity and heritage features at The Chestnuts green space in Warfield Harvest Ride.
- 1.2 To confirm which financial contributions secured from developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be applied to the project (see Annex 1).
- 1.3 If approved, the S106 monies will be used to restore a historic icehouse, provide information to visitors about this important heritage feature, improve public access to the site and carry out improvements to wildlife habitats.

**2 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 That £23,991.08 of S106 contributions (as summarised in Annex 1) are allocated to fund improvements at The Chestnuts.

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 3.1 Developer contributions are collected through S106 agreements to support “providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or outdoor recreational facilities (which may include the acquisition and/or improvement of land and/or buildings and/or carrying out or assisting in the carrying out of nature/landscaping conservation projects) within 3 kilometres of the Site.”
- 3.2 The justification for requiring developers to supporting the improvement of open space and outdoor recreational facilities is given in The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

***'8. Promoting healthy and safe communities***

*98. Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change...’*

- 3.3 The improvements deliver key objectives in The Council Plan 2019-2023:
  - *continue to provide easy access to the natural environment*
  - *protect our highly valued green spaces and strategic green gaps*

- 3.4 The borough council has adopted a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2012) and the improvements at The Chestnuts are in accordance with delivering the following two priorities:

1. *Monitor and assess quality standards across parks and open spaces.*  
*Manage sites to a high standard; carry out improvement works to sustain and improve quality in line with the Bracknell Forest Council 'Plus One Principle' and relevant national guidance.*
6. *Enhance the natural qualities of parks and open spaces. Protect and enhance biodiversity.*  
*Positively manage trees and woodlands, to include new planting to provide for future generations.*

- 3.5 Historic England explain the importance of our historic environment in their report Heritage Counts 2014: THE VALUE AND IMPACT OF HERITAGE:

*'The majority of people in England visit heritage sites and believe that they are important to local communities. The historic environment is valued for its contribution to our knowledge and sense of identity, and because it helps to make places feel 'special.'*

#### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Not carrying out these enhancements could lead to a failure to meet the objectives in The Council Plan and Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. It would also be a missed opportunity to preserve an important heritage feature that could bring value to the local community.
- 4.2 Not using the s106 development monies could result in a failure to mitigate the impact of development and be a missed opportunity for '*providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or outdoor recreational facilities.*'
- 4.3 It could lead to funds being returned to the developers if no other qualifying scheme was located through which to deliver enhancements in the time available.
- 4.4 The wide range of S106 open space and recreation contributions available in the borough have been assessed to eliminate those lying outside the distance constraints of the developments as set out in the respective s106 agreements.
- 4.5 The Chestnuts site is managed as part of the Bullbrook Countryside Corridor Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). This provides an alternative place for recreation away from the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. There is insufficient funding available from SANG contributions to complete these comprehensive works to the level they are required, which is why s106 funding is the only viable option.

## 5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Chestnuts and connecting Chestnuts Lane, are green spaces that comprise 1.7 hectares of land in Warfield Harvest Ride. The sites are remnants from the Warfield Park estate and comprise a mixture of shrubs, grassland and veteran Sweet Chestnut trees that are thought to be approximately 200 years old.
- 5.2 The sites form part of a green corridor running west to east, following the line of an old track which used to offer access to the cottage gardens. A tarmac cycleway runs along its length. This can be used by pedestrians, cycles, wheelchairs and prams as a form of access or passage to and from the Whitegrove Housing Estate, the surrounding areas of Public Open Space and the Tesco's shopping complex.
- 5.3 The brambled, scrubby and long grassed areas offer habitat for smaller mammals, birds, butterflies and insects. The veteran trees on-site contain a lot of dead wood, which is important for species such as beetles and fungi and is retained where it is safe to do so. Other species that are dependent on ancient trees include noctule bats and bullfinches, species within Bracknell Forest's Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 5.4 The site's name, The Chestnuts, is derived from one of the main features of the site, which is the line of Sweet Chestnut trees, preserved for their age, beauty and conservation values.
- 5.5 The icehouse, part of the old Warfield Park, would have been traditionally used to store ice throughout the year, before the invention of the refrigerator. It is a man-made underground chamber and ice was transported from other sites and stored here. The structure underwent small renovation works in 2015 to include lintel replacement over the archway, a new door and repair work to the dome. See photo in [Annex 5](#).
- 5.6 The proposed project plans to undertake further works to this historic building, to both promote the heritage of the area and Warfield Park, and create a visual attraction for members of the public and site users. This feature has been underutilised over recent years and needs improvements to prevent the building falling further into disrepair. Alongside this, improvement works offer a fantastic opportunity for increased education and site enjoyment for locals and residents of the area.
- 5.7 The planned works will include the removal of encroaching vegetation on the exterior of the building, installation of fencing and interpretation boards to further emphasise the building, and some repair works to be done to the viewing area (the main entrance of the building). A more detailed description of the works to be undertaken can be found in [Annex 5](#).

- 5.8 S106 funding is secured in accordance with adopted planning policy. Of significance is Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2015) (ref. section 5.11 Open Space of Public Value and the 'Plus One' Principle whereby works are prioritised towards improving quality of existing open spaces over time.
- 5.9 In addition to being secured to fund quality improvements, there is a requirement that developer contributions are allocated to open spaces capable of serving the development from which the contribution was paid. This means that available funding needs to be allocated to a site within close proximity of the contributing development. The contributions to be allocated are set out in [Annex 1](#).

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Borough Solicitor**

- 6.1 The allocation of funding proposed in this report complies with the requirements of the s106 agreements.

The approval of the recommendation in the report falls within the decision-making remit of officers in consultation with the Executive member pursuant to the Bracknell Forest Council Constitution 10 March 2021 Part 2, section 6 paragraph 6.2 (a)(vi).

### **Director: Resources**

- 6.2 The financial implications are set out in the report.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 6.3 An EIA scoping assessment has been carried out for this project and included in [Annex 3](#). There are no negative impacts resulting from the proposed project.

### **Strategic Risk Management Issues**

- 6.4 S106 contributions will need to be refunded should they not be allocated in accordance with the respective legal agreement. The project is designed in such that a way that there are no significant increases to maintenance costs and site management can still be accommodated within existing revenue budgets.

### **Infrastructure and Implementation team manager**

- 6.5 The proposed improvement to The Chestnuts is in compliance with the terms of the relevant S106 agreements. This will help to improve the quality and capacity of outdoor leisure in the area, thereby mitigating the impact of the relevant development in this regard.

## 7 CONSULTATION

### **Principal Groups Consulted**

- 7.1 Historic England Residents.

### **Representations Received**

- 7.2 We have consulted Historic England on this project, who are positive / supportive of the work to restore the icehouse.

Residents have been consulted more widely on their three favourite things about living in the borough, and the support they'd need to recover from the pandemic. Parks and countryside feature were listed as one of the three favourite things about living in the borough, and residents feel they are far more likely to need access to green spaces and walking, cycling opportunities.

See [Annex 6](#) for findings from the Coronavirus phone survey of Bracknell Forest residents - July 2020.

### **Background Papers:**

- ANNEX 1: S106 Allocation details
- ANNEX 2: Application form
- ANNEX 3: EIA Scoping assessment for project
- ANNEX 4: Site maps
- ANNEX 5: Details of improvements
- ANNEX 6: Coronavirus phone survey - July 2020

### **Contact for further information**

Charlie McNish

Email: [Rangers@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Rangers@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

Tel: 01344 354441

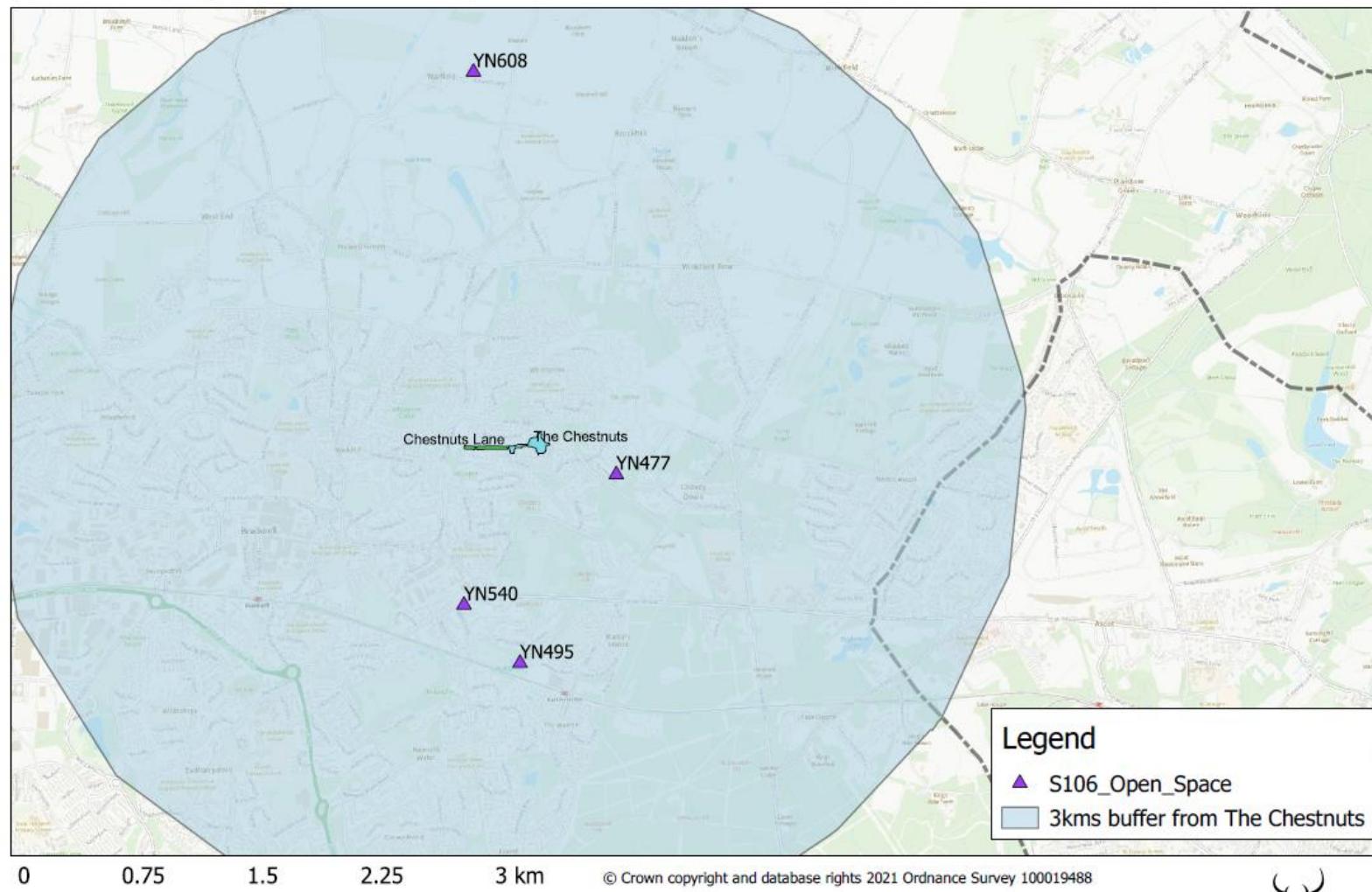
Revision V1 19.09.2021

**ANNEX 1 S106 Allocation details**

YN CODE	PLANNING REF.	PLANNING SITE NAME	WARD	AMOUNT AVAILABLE	AMOUNT TO ALLOCATE	TERMS	SPEND APPLICATION DATE
YN477	13/00229/FUL	Land at Former Touring Park Area, Warfield Park, Warfield	Ascot	£13,652.08	£13,652.08	For providing, expanding or improving open space and/or outdoor recreational facilities within 3km	27/02/2022
YN495	13/00583/FUL	Land Adj The Cottage, Allsmoor Lane, Bracknell	Harman's Water	£1,006	£1,006	As above	11/12/2021
YN540	13/00296/FUL	Broughs, Broad Lane, Bracknell	Harman's Water	£7,210	£7,210	As above	13/11/2022
YN608	13/00303/FUL	Church Farm House, Church Lane, Warfield	Binfield with Warfield	£2,123	£2,123	As above	15/10/2021

Total: £23,991.08

S106 funded project at The Chestnuts open space.



**ANNEX 2: Parks and Countryside Service Application Form**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Project 7</b>
<b>1: Contact Details</b>	<b>Name</b>	Charlie McNish
	<b>Contact</b>	Charlie.McNish@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
<b>2: Organisation Information</b>	<b>Name of organisation</b>	Bracknell Forest Council
<b>2: Project Description</b>	<b>Other</b>	
	<b>Department/service area/section</b>	Parks and Countryside Service
	<b>Lead officer</b>	Stephen Chown
	<b>Lead member</b>	Cllr John Harrison
	<b>Lead director</b>	Andrew Hunter
	<b>Decision maker</b>	Cllr John Harrison
	<b>Date of decision</b>	TBC
	<b>Reason Key</b>	
	<b>Making representations</b>	
	<b>Financial impact</b>	
	<b>Consultation carried out?</b>	Yes
	<b>Consultation details</b>	Park visitor questionnaire <u>Covid-19 Residents' Survey 2020 (see annex 6).</u>
	<b>Equalities scoping report completed and provided with the application?</b>	Yes – see annex 3
	<b>Document(s) to be considered</b>	
	<b>Background papers</b>	
	<b>Open/exempt?</b>	
	<b>Explanation for exemption</b>	
	<b>Key decision</b>	
	<b>Exempt report</b>	
	<b>Type of project</b>	Blue and Green Infrastructure - Active Open Space of Public Value (Active OSPV)
	<b>Other</b>	

<b>Section</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Project 7</b>
	<b>Project Address</b>	The Chestnuts, Warfield, Bracknell RG42 3UN
	<b>Accompanying map</b>	Yes – see annex 4
	<b>Parish</b>	Warfield
	<b>Ward</b>	Warfield Harvest Ride
	<b>POSS reference number</b>	134
	<b>Brief description of scheme</b>	Restoring historic icehouse and carrying out improvements to public access and biodiversity.
	<b>Policy / Strategy Objectives Being Delivered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy</li> <li>• The POSS Study</li> <li>• Council Plan – protecting and enhancing our environment</li> </ul>
	<b>Total estimated cost of scheme</b>	£23,991.08
	<b>Estimated amount of s106 funding required</b>	£23,991.08
	<b>Existing funding</b>	Yes
	<b>Timeline</b>	The work is expected to start this autumn, with the work expected to run for at least six months.
	<b>Details of previous improvement projects</b>	The icehouse structure underwent small renovation works in 2015 to include lintel replacement over the archway, a new door and repair work to the dome.
	<b>Additional information</b>	
	<b>Project finished?</b>	No.

**Lead Contact:** Charlie McNish

**Position (Officer / Member):** Ranger

**Date:** 12 August 2021

## ANNEX 3: Equality Impact Assessment Scoping

### Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

<b>Date of Screening:</b> <b>12.08.2021</b>	<b>Directorate:</b> Place, Planning and Regeneration		<b>Section:</b> Bracknell Forest Council Parks and Countryside Service
<b>1. Activity to be assessed</b>	Quality improvements to outdoor facilities at The Chestnuts		
<b>2. What is the activity?</b>	Project <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>3. Is it a new or existing activity?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>4. Officer responsible for the screening</b>	Charlie McNish		
<b>5. Who are the members of the screening team?</b>	Charlie McNish and Rose Wicks		
<b>6. What is the purpose of the activity?</b>	The aim is to conduct works to the exterior of the historic 'Icehouse' building, to enhance the educational and visual opportunities that the building provides, in accordance with Planning Obligations SPD (section 5.11) and the BFC Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2012.		
<b>7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?</b>	The improvements will benefit all users of the site.		
<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	<b>Please tick yes or no</b>	<b>Is there an impact?</b> What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both?  If the impact is neutral, please give a reason.	<b>What evidence do you have to support this?</b> E.g. equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc  Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
<b>8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities including conditions such as dementia.</b>	<b>Y ✓</b>	<b>N</b>	Positive impact.  Access is going to be improved to the Icehouse heritage feature for all to enjoy, including those in wheelchairs.  <a href="http://sensorytrust.org.uk">How to make greenspaces more inclusive and accessible (sensorytrust.org.uk)</a> In order to optimise use for people, greenspace must be both accessible and worth visiting. Good accessibility is fundamental although there

Unrestricted

			<p>Site lines will be improved by vegetation clearance, making the site feel more secure.</p> <p>Interpretation will be designed so that it's easy to understand and accessible for visually impaired people.</p>	<p>has, in the past, been a tendency towards an exclusive focus on one or two forms of disability (for example wheelchair users) and the physical aspects of site design (ramps and paths). However, accessibility is also to do with other factors such as distance from home and sociocultural factors – do people want to go there and do they feel safe and comfortable there? Social factors are sometimes overlooked but are often very significant in making people with disabilities feel excluded from landscape</p>
<b>9. Racial equality</b>	Y	N ✓		
<b>10. Gender equality</b>	Y	N ✓		
<b>11. Sexual orientation equality</b>	Y	N ✓		
<b>12. Gender re-assignment</b>	Y	N ✓		
<b>13. Age equality</b>	Y	N ✓		
<b>14. Religion and belief equality</b>	Y	N ✓		
<b>15. Pregnancy and maternity equality</b>	Y	N ✓		
<b>16. Marriage and civil partnership equality</b>	Y	N ✓		
<b>17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on promoting good community relations.</b>	N/A			

<b>18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?</b>	N/A		
<b>19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?</b>	Yes.		
<b>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</b>	Y	N ✓	
<b>21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?</b>	N/A		
<b>22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?</b>	Y	N ✓	
<b>23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.</b>			
Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria
Ensure that the interpretation is designed so that it's inclusive for all (plain English/colour/contrast/large print/installation etc.)  Consider alternative formats such as large print and braille.	March 2022	Charlie McNish and Rose Wicks	People can easily access and enjoy the new facilities.

Create new paths to provide better access in and around the site.	March 2022	Charlie McNish	People can easily access and enjoy the new facilities.
<b>24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?</b>	<p>Parks and Open Spaces Strategy - S106 quality improvement programme, based on the Plus 1 Principle.</p> <p>Bullbrook Countryside Corridor Open Space Management Plan.</p>		
<b>25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?</b>	<p>When carrying out site quality improvements, the following actions are undertaken to ensure that any new / improved site features are made accessible to all park users:</p> <p>Follow guidance from the Sensory Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Advice and guidance – Sensory Trust Guides</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Developing inclusive communication - Sensory Trust</a></li> </ul> <p>Provide appropriate specifications to contractors, which include the need to adhere to equalities best practice guidelines.</p>		
<b>26. Director's signature.</b>	<p>Signature: Date:</p>		

When complete please send to [abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) for publication on the Council's website.

## ANNEX 4: Site maps

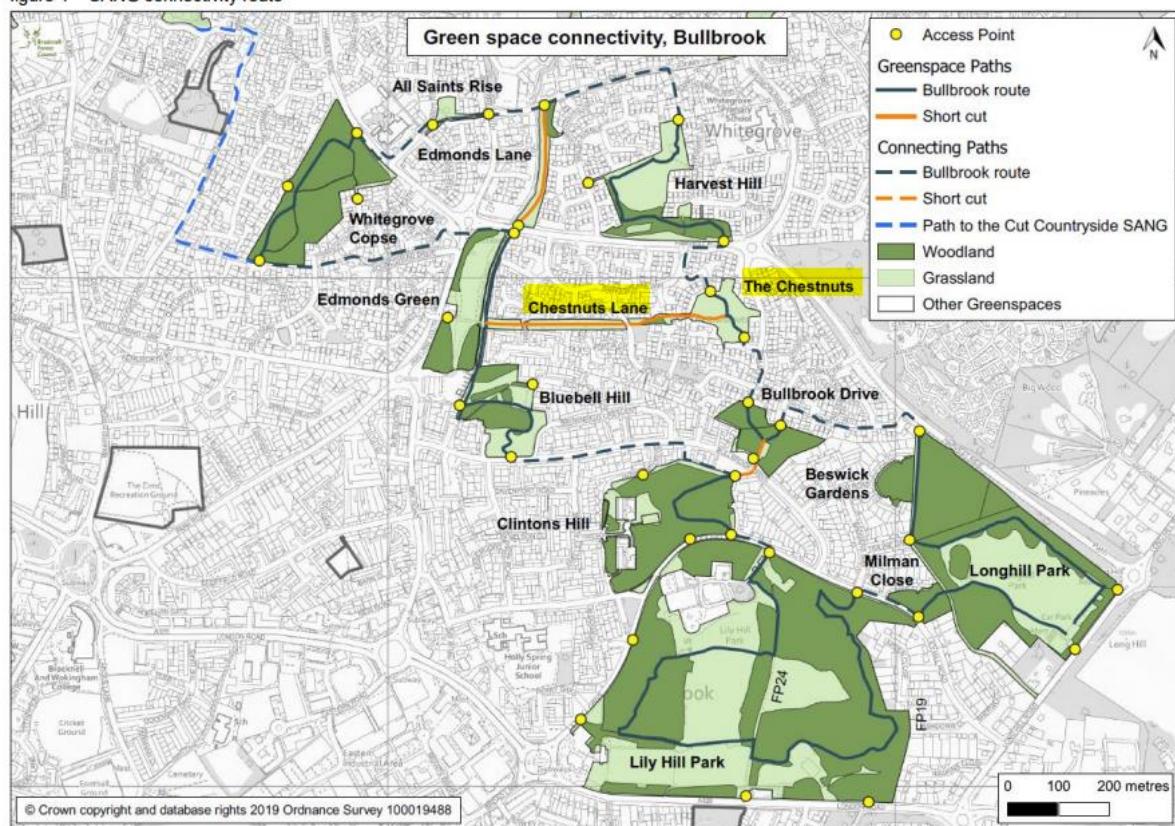


### Legend:

- BF\_TR\_CYCLEWAYS
- BF\_PC\_POSS (green space)
- BF\_AB\_WARDBOUNDARIES
- Parks & Countryside Service



figure 1 – SANG connectivity route



## ANNEX 5: Details of improvements

The proposed project plans to create a more appealing educational and visual feature for residents and visitors. This will be achieved through various works to the exterior of the Icehouse, all of which will have to be performed delicately to avoid any damages to the building itself.



The exterior of the building, and its 'dome', is currently overgrown with brambles and is unrecognisable as an icehouse or historic building from the main path to the south of the building.

An important part of the project would be to remove this external vegetation and allow the dome shape of the building to be more easily seen, attracting interest from members of the public using this path.



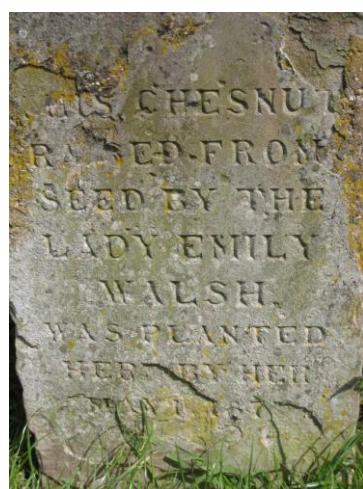
Opening some of the shaded areas at the entrance of the icehouse would help with the security of the building and avoid people breaking the gates.

Once this vegetation is cleared, which will be completed outside of bird nesting season, new estate-style fencing around the building will further emphasise and protect this important historic feature.

A new interpretation board will be provided to educate readers on the building's former use, as well as Warfield Park.

Establishing a new pathway leading from the main path around to the north side of the building where the main entrance is, and the visual access into the building, will open access to this feature for more people to enjoy

Sympathetically renovating the existing gate/ entrance to the building, which is currently in a poor state of repair, would open up this feature for even more people to enjoy.



Chestnut Tree and stone plaque

## **ANNEX 6: Coronavirus phone survey - July 2020**

In July 2020 we asked 1,800 residents about their experiences during the coronavirus pandemic through a phone survey.

All responses were confidential and the results are now being used to help us plan for the borough's recovery from coronavirus over the next 3 years.

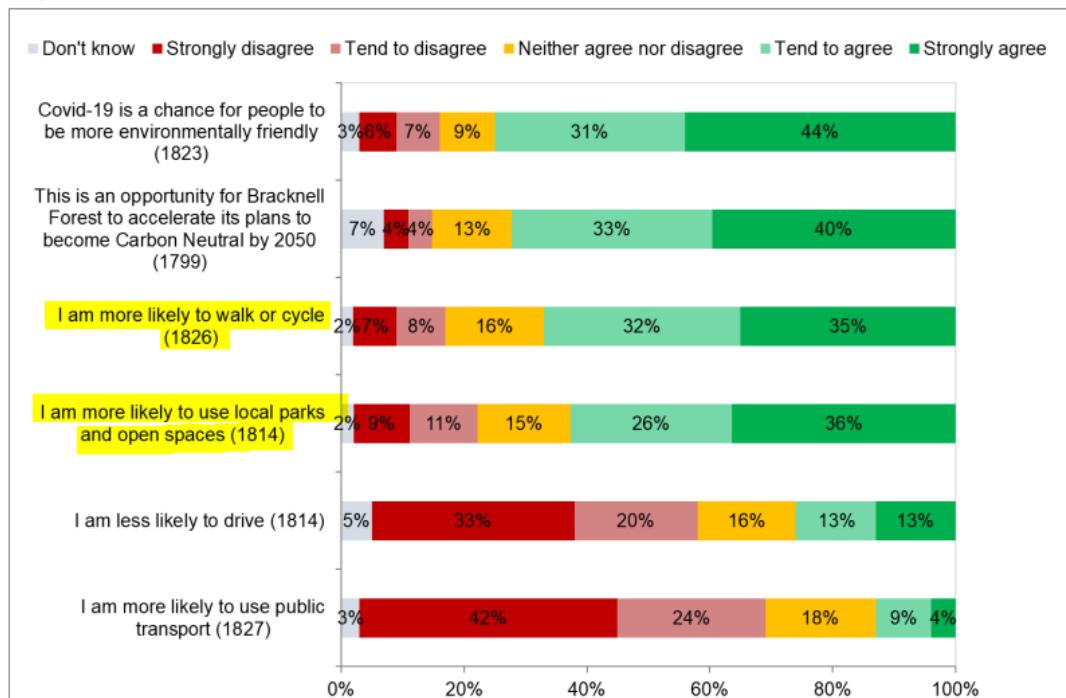
The survey was carried out by independent company Public Perspectives. It included a range of questions on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on residents, their family and the local community. Residents were asked to list their favourite 3 things about living in the borough. The main things residents enjoy are:

- the borough's parks and countryside
- council run sports and leisure facilities
- highways

As part of this survey, residents provided views about accessing healthcare and the support they need to recover from the experience of the pandemic. Around six-in-ten residents spent more time in nature, visiting open spaces since lockdown began on 23 March and about half of residents tried a new form of exercise or exercised more, while smoking and drinking levels remained about the same.

Of the residents surveyed, 67% agreed that they are more likely to walk or cycle and 62% agreed they are more likely to use local parks and open spaces.

**Figure 2: The views of residents about travel and the environment in the future**



Numbers in brackets are the number of respondents to each statement.

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about travel and the environment in the future, due to your experience of Covid-19?