

Benfield / Hangleton Foot Paths.

The two footpaths identified in aerial photo number 1 of the area clearly show how the foot paths have been used by leaving a clear definition in the landscape over the last twenty years or more by foot traffic. The second photo numbered 2 clearly shows the relationship of the two desired paths as outlined in photo 1 between the Public footpath to the left of centre (FP H8a) and the Restricted Byway (RB H11b) running at the rear of the property in Warene Road and covered by vegetation.

I also include a copy of a map dated 1951 and numbered 3 together with an enlarged version (4) of the area in question in this submission that clearly shows the provision of footpaths going north towards the Dyke that ran alongside Benfield Farm.

In the enlarged version of the map, a path is indicated by a dotted line clearly establishing a link between FP H8a and RB H11b in 1951, being the same path as annotated 2 in photo number 1.

The original paths FP H8a and RB H11b were interrupted by the construction of A27 By-Pass in 1992. They were resurrected and subsequently joined together to utilise a new footbridge spanning over the A27. The bridge was placed equidistant between the two established paths and linked on the southern side of the A27. When the bridge was completed the paths now north of the A27 diverged and returned to their original courses both heading North towards the Monarchs Way and the South Downs.

At around the same time Benfield Nature Reserve was established and is now a Site of Natural Conservation Importance (S.N.C.I). This truly exceptional Reserve is an important example of Sussex Downland and a jewel in Brighton & Hove`s natural crown.

Both FP H8a and RB H11b had been actively used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders for many years but the relocation of the gateway to Benfield Hill and the byway/ bridleway now passing West Hove Golf course led in my opinion to the path indicated 1 on photo 1 being established because the byway to the rear of Warene Road become fairly unused due to the steepness and the surface of the newly created path to the footbridge. This byway quickly became redundant by walkers since the route from the level path at the rear of Warene Road toward the bridge is excessively steep and slippery both in summer and winter by virtue of the scree surface that is set on a very steep incline. The situation is further worsened by poor sightlines when turning 90 degrees rising toward the bridge which is potentially a point of conflict and danger with both horse and cycle riders descending the path, especially in winter when its surface is icy.

The paths annotated 1 & 2 on photo 1 have clear sightlines and an easier gradient for those wanting to visit the SNCI and since its inception the South Downs National Park. Both footpaths being in open space offer the vulnerable more security because of better vision for the way ahead.

When the use of both paths annotated 1 & 2 on photo 1 were denied by the present occupier of the Golf Course, walkers had to go back to the byway to reach Benfield Hill and its use has sadly declined although there is clear evidence of a larger use by horses.

By keeping and maintaining the paths outlined in photo number 1 it will encourage more outdoor activity which in turn will lead to improved health benefits for all users and reduce the number of deaths a year, slash the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, alzheimers, strokes and cancer by 20-50%.

Together, Public Health and National Parks England have set out to get everybody active and jointly they hope to develop the nation's health by improving access to green spaces thus leading to a healthier nation. By encouraging the use of usable footpaths to Benfield Hill and the South Downs National Park it will bring greater health benefits to a wider number of people.

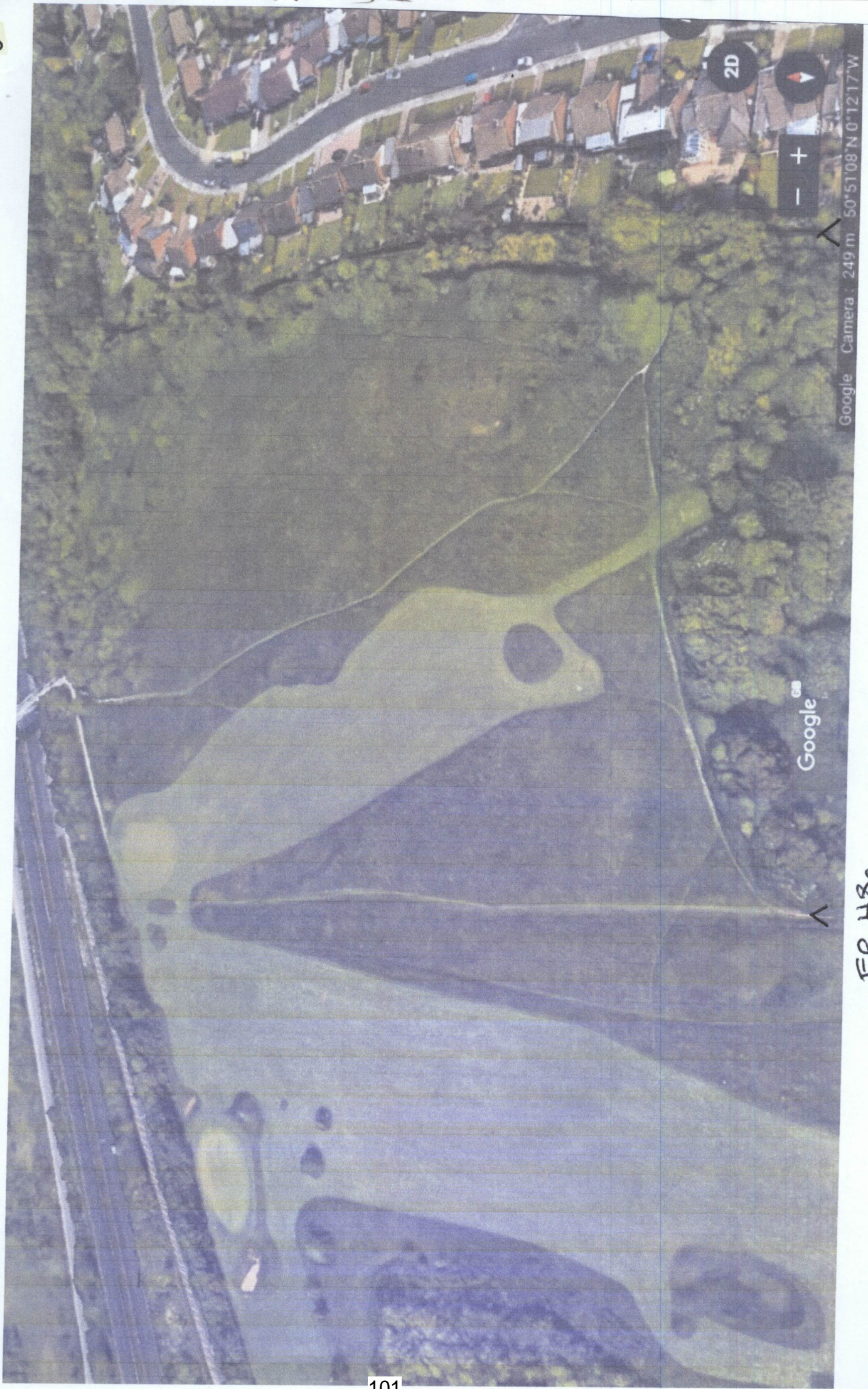
The greater number of available and accessible footpaths will also have a knock on effect with tourism by people choosing areas with greater opportunities to be active outdoors.

As part of the Unesco Biosphere Region we should encourage Councils in maintaining access to green and open spaces and improved rights of way will give us greater contact with nature and help to create and maintain the Open Space Strategy for the Region

The Council's City Plan also actively promotes access to outdoor spaces and I believe the old golf course is often referred to as the City's "green lung". People with restricted mobility, the elderly, the visually impaired etc., a wide range of users that represent 20% of the population and increasing will benefit by using these paths to reach the great outdoors like the South Downs National Park and our own Benfield Nature Reserve.

Finally a new footpath/byway has now been constructed (not open at present) that links the old Dyke Railway footpath and the byway that passes the present West Hove Golf Club. If this new path is to be reached from the bridge over the A27 and the money used to finance its construction not wasted, then access to this location must be made easier for all and approving this application will go a long way to help

3



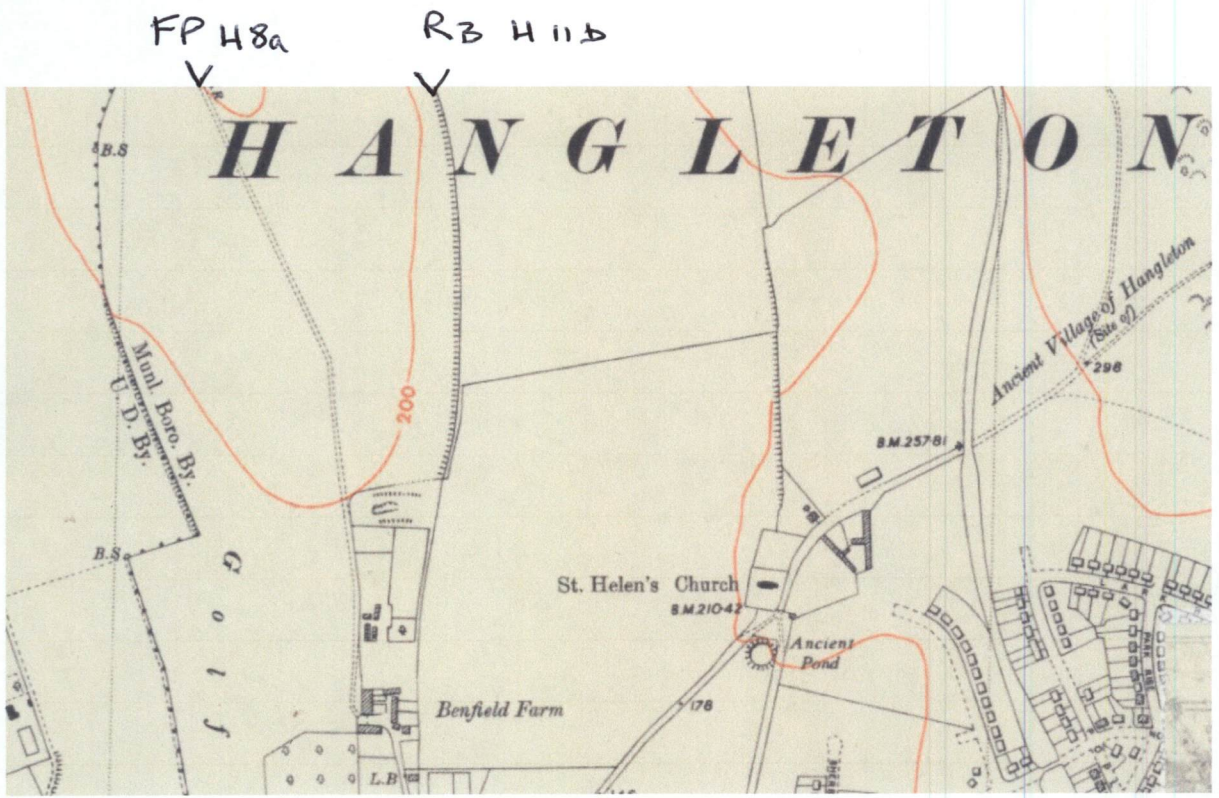
Google Camera : 249 m 50°51'08" N 0°12'17" W

Google ©

FP H8a

PR 1111





Enlarged area of 1951 map showing the link between the footpath and bridleway.

