

# LOCAL NEWS

## WILDLIFE

# Locals win wetland project privacy bid

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**The controversial plan to turn what is left of the Malling Brooks wetland into industrial units has been amended after months of consultation by developer Santon with local residents' associations and Lewes Community Land Trust.**

The variations to the original approved plans were agreed at the Lewes District Council's recent planning meeting.

Although the residents of Orchard Road, Spences Lane and The Spinneys will no longer look out onto what was the natural wilderness of Malling Brooks, the new plans have been sensitively changed to minimise the negative impact on adjoining properties.

The 'buffer zone' between the end of gardens and the industrial units has been expanded by exclusion of an unnecessary public car park. This allows for more natural ground soakaway to reduce the risk of groundwater levels affecting gardens, and gives back the privacy that residents feared they would lose.

The special design of the buildings and land drainage system will retain the important function of the underlying geology in holding and discharging ground water. Potential noise and light pollution from the new units has



Part of the Malling Brooks wetlands, where plans to build industrial units were amended

Photo: Susan King

been addressed by realigning the buildings and surrounding the site with acoustic fencing.

Rita Ellis, chair of RAID (Residents against Inappropriate Development), said: "Clive Wilding, lead developer for Santon, has consulted intensively over the last nine months with local people to come up with an amended planning application which addresses our concerns.

"Obviously we would have preferred the site to be left as it was, but we understood that that was not going to happen.

"Once the buildings are up and the landscaping completed, we are confident that our peaceful rural outlook and privacy will be restored. Santon's collaborative work to address our concerns has made a huge difference to how we feel about the development."

Rather than opposing the

plans, residents spoke in favour of the variations at the planning meeting.

Pru Rowntree, chair of Lewes Community Land Trust, said: "It has been a positive experience to work with a developer who is concerned enough to really listen to the genuine concerns behind objections to inappropriate development, and to arrive at consensus through positive community engagement."

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