

Barcombe: Former railway bridge saved from infilling plan

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HISTORIC RAILWAYS ESTATE

Campaigners say the former railway bridge is important to wildlife

Proposals to infill a former railway bridge with concrete have been halted following a campaign by the community.

Campaigners had described National Highways proposal for Barcombe Bridge as "like a wrecking ball".

The agency has now confirmed the work will not go ahead, along with other proposed demolitions and infills across the Historic Rail Estate it is responsible for.

Local MP Maria Caulfield has described the decision as "good news".

Lewes District Council had also written to the Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, calling for the plan to be scrapped.

Campaigners said the bridge, which was built in the 1880s in East Sussex on the Lewes to East Grinstead line, had become an important wildlife corridor for animals such as badgers and deer.

They also said it could be an asset for future sustainable transport projects.

'Repaired sympathetically'

National Highways confirmed the infill plans had been halted in a letter to Ms Caulfield.

It said it had met with Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council to discuss the bridge's structural condition, "along with wider considerations for potential repurposing and ecological value".

Local campaign organiser Hazel Fell Rayner said: "We now need to ensure the bridge is repaired sympathetically, and prevent any reduction in the 20-tonne weight limit currently imposed on vehicles using it."

A similar infilling scheme carried out in Cumbria **may have to be reversed**, after the local council ruled planning permission should have been sought first.

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