



Midhurst Town Council

**A Meeting of The Midhurst Town Council took place
on Monday 20th December 2021 at 7:00pm at the Midhurst Town Council Office, Old
Library, Knockhundred Row, Midhurst GU29 9DQ**

MINUTES

Present: Cllr C. Lintott (Chairman), Cllr J. Sutton, Cllr D. Coote, Cllr G. McAra, Cllr M. Richardson, Cllr R. Watts and Cllr D. Fraser

Officer: Julian Quail, Assistant Town Clerk

C/163/21 - Apologies for Absence – Cllr Travers, Cllr Purves, Cllr Upjohn, Cllr Procter, Cllr Yeo, Cllr Smallman and Cllr Jefferies

C/164/21 – Declarations of Interest

None.

C/165/21 - Public Participation Session:

Kathryn Thomas expressed her concern regarding the noise from private bookings at the Old Library. This concluded with loud music being played past midnight on 18th December and she has written to CDC with regard to noise pollution. She is concerned that nobody from the Town Council has the role of caretaker for any events. It was noted that Cllr Fraser had stopped the party at just gone midnight.

Phillipa McCullough from the Midhurst Vision Group was not available and had asked Cllr Lintott to read out her report. This is available at Appendix A to these minutes.

Meeting reconvened.

C/166/21 - Minutes of the Previous Meeting

These were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting held on 15th November 2021. Proposed Cllr Coote, seconded Cllr Watts, all agreed.

C/167/21 - Matters Arising from those Minutes

None.

C/168/21 - Report from County and District Councillors

West Sussex County Councillor Kate O'Kelly - Report previously circulated.

District Councillor Gordon McAra - Report previously circulated. Cllr Coote thanked Cllr McAra for all his hard work regarding the condition of the collapsed wall between the Post Office car park and the Spread Eagle and the two wooden fencing panels that have been installed. Currently CDC officers are trying to establish ownership of the wall and its subsequent maintenance but the collapse could possibly be down to a line of Leylandii trees planted by the hotel. Separately, the two fencing panels require planning permission and do not have officer support.



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C/169/21 – Finance, Asset and Policy Committee

Minutes of 25th October 2021 were adopted by Council. Proposed by Cllr Fraser, seconded by Cllr Sutton, unanimously approved.

C/170/21 - Planning and Infrastructure Committee

Minutes of 8th November 2021 were adopted by Council. Proposed Cllr McAra, seconded Cllr Watts, unanimously approved. It was noted that the letter to Southern Water about the pollution of the River Rother was now with the Town Clerk.

C/171/21 – Community and Environment Committee

Minutes of 8th November 2021 were adopted by Council. Proposed Cllr Sutton, seconded Cllr Watts, unanimously approved.

C/172/21 – Boiler at the Old Library

The boiler has been installed and heating is now working. The cobbles that were dug up to allow for SSE to attach the three phase adaption to be fitted will not be replaced until the New Year due to Covid. Cllr Richardson explained that the boiler should never be switched off. Cllr Lintott thanked the Town Clerk for project managing the implementation.

C/173/21 - Actions

The actions were provided to the committee before the meeting. Three actions were complete. Cllr McAra explained that it had not been possible to convince CDC that a deep clean was necessary, given the town looked very clean on the day he walked round with CDC representatives. It had also not been possible to convince Central Government to fund a Glutton cleaning machine.

Cllr Fraser and Cllr Watts kindly offered to cover the Grange Market in February.

C/174/21 - Reports from Outside Meetings

Cllr Lintott informed the committee that she and Cllr Coote had attended a meeting with representatives from WSCC regarding the Community Highways Partnership (CHP). A CHP provides a framework for town or parish councils to have services devolved to them to focus on local needs, without burdening them with total responsibility for these services. This could assist the Midhurst Green Volunteers (MGV) who often contact WSCC to discuss their upcoming work schedule and to gain approval from WSCC to undertake the work. Frequently they are disappointed that they cannot progress work on areas that require traffic management etc due to the costs involved the work is too low on WSCC's priority list to grant authority. A paper will be presented to a future Planning meeting. A working party needs to be formed, possibly with the inclusion of Graham Pooley from the MGVs, who will take this forward with WSCC.

During the meeting, it was noted that Midhurst are part of a WSCC/SDNPA led bio-diversity project which involves the grass cuttings from verges to be picked up rather than left as previously, this is to encourage wild flower growth.



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C/175/21 - Matters of Report

Cllr Fraser asked if the Old Library booking terms and conditions could be discussed again following the concerns of local residents regarding the noise from parties. He also informed the meeting that he had photographs and videos from his visit to Cowdray at Christmas – The Light Up Trail, which the Town Council may wish to use.

Cllr McAra informed the meeting about the new App “Shopappy”, which works by enabling local independent shops and businesses to show information, products and services they have for sale in your town or city in one place. Shopappy aims to encourage you to go into town and use the shops and businesses nearby. The site brings all of the products and services together into categories so you can search for items easily or you can choose to look at the products in your favourite shops instead.

Cllr Coote had received very positive feed back from his neighbours regarding their visit to Cowdray at Christmas – The Light Up Trail.

C/176/21 - Date of Next Meeting – The next meeting will be Monday 17th January 2022 at 7pm.

There being no further business the Chairman wished all members a Happy Christmas and declared the meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Signed:.....

Dated.....

Chairman



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Appendix A

Summary of Deacon Design Midhurst Field Survey Document **Assets, Challenges and Opportunities**

These findings have identified the characteristics of the town that are special to Midhurst. They include:

1. Townscape characteristics – Assessment of the architectural qualities.
2. Urban Greening – What planting provision is currently available and how does this contribute to the sense of place.
3. Streetscape / Wayfinding – Quality of street materials / cohesiveness for pedestrians / cyclists to manoeuvre through the Town / Signage / sense of arrival.
4. Key Views – Important views of key buildings (cluster of buildings), views to the South Downs / Cowdray Estate that reinforce the Town sense of place.

Whilst the main purpose of the overall report will seek to create a cohesive sense of place and improve the 'wayfinding' experience through the Old Town from the Grange Car Park to North Street Car Park, the inclusion of the LCWIP project has extended the study area to identify the physical and perceptual arrival points. This covers the sense of arrival experienced by road users, cyclists, and pedestrians.

The report identifies a number of opportunities varying in complexity and cost. The intention is to prioritise them – however the initial priority remains the areas that form the wayfinding route around the town and any relatively easy improvements in high visibility areas, i.e. planting outside police station.

The study area stretches from the River Rother bridge crossing in the north to the St Mary & St Francis Church and they have been split into the following character areas which are largely informed by the Town's historic settlement pattern set out below:

- North Street
- Rumbolds Hill
- Old Town
- Bepton Road
- Grange Road
- Southern Edge (Grange Community Leisure Centre / South Pond / The Wharf)

Stage 1 – Site Analysis

For each area we have identified a series of sub character areas and assessed the assets and challenges to improving the streetscape. At this stage we are just looking to put forward opportunities for improvements to the public realm which will support the wayfinding strategy. They have been formatted into the pdf document and are summarised below:



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1. North Street

- Improve sense of arrival setting to River Rother – possibility of widening the bridge road by removing the footpath outside wall (Stakeholder suggestion)
- Improve setting to Rother Weir particularly for footpath walkers using the Lipchis Way - scope for pocket park;
- Explore opportunity to improve tree planting south of North Street whilst maintaining important views to Cowdray Ruins;
- Possible opportunity for boardwalk through floodplain to improve cycle connections from Greenway to North Street / College (tie in with improved pedestrian crossing for students);
- Stag Garden Gateway feature;
- Redesign Bus Station and associated buildings (possible loss of some parking) to create public square / children's play area /or area for MRC students?
- Consider extending North Street C/P south eastwards (Stakeholder suggestion)
- Scope to reduce road width to high street /avoid u-turns (where feasible) to include:
 - Rationalised loading bay /on street parking;
 - Urban greening – tree planting opportunities, Rain gardens (linked to drainage improvements), planters, planting beds
 - Improve consistency/quality of pavement materials (paving / street furniture / cycle storage / lighting) to aid legibility;
- PM to undertake loading review in Jan/Feb for North Street and Rumbolds Hill.

2. Rumbolds Hill / Roundabout

- Potential rearrangement of 'The Wheatsheaf' frontage – rationalise tarmac area to provide greening/scope to address air quality (check deliveries to Hampshire Electrics);
- Consideration given to exploring if removal of vacant Nat. West building would reduce, if not remove pinch-point (Stakeholder suggestion);
- Better Signage;
- Improved Greening (Ground Cover) to large areas of pavement;
- Potential to reroute West Street traffic via Grange Road, lifting pressure from mini-roundabout. (Temporary option to include planters / seating / cycle storage) - subject to highways input;
- Review Street Lighting - to be more consistent with North Street;
- Safer Crossing Points;
- Cycle storage especially at corner of Bepton Road and Petersfield Road with the Cycle Repair Shops.

3. Old Town (Knockhundred Row to South Street / West Street)

- Explore scope to turn Knockhundred Row to one way eastwards-only to enhance pedestrian experience (subject to highways input);
- Wayfinding / public realm improvements to be implemented in this area, promoting the market square and features of the old town and hidden gem character;
- Provide improved al fresco dining for Cafe's/Pubs;
- Review shared space between Spread Eagle and Swan Inn to create breakout space for both (subject to highways input);



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- Possible review of road materials for speed management.
- 4. Bepton Road
 - Utilise exterior of Police Station to improve town greening, potential space for trees;
 - Opportunity to utilise island crossing / white lining for low level urban greening (subject to highways input);
 - Scope to utilise Grange road as alternative route for local traffic, pedestrians & cyclists;
 - Consistency of style, including pavement and lighting, to be addressed;
 - Reduce Street Clutter with coherent signage design strategy;
 - Scope to reduce road widths to provide central planted islands, better accessibility and cycle routes;
 - Create better / feature signage and sense of arrival to the GCLC;
 - Utilise St Mary & St Francis landscape frontage to enhance urban greening.
- 5. Grange Road
 - Link planting to North Street / Old Town palette.
 - Review of road arrangement to redirect West Street traffic via Grange Road.
 - Wayfinding to be implemented to enhance footpath network between Old Town and GCLC / South Pond.
- 6. Southern Edge (Grange Community Leisure Centre / South Pond / The Wharf)
 - GCLC / Car Park
 - Car Park is the largest and most under-utilised car park in town
 - Improved GCLC entrance landscape from Bepton Road to reinforce legibility & surrounding signage;
 - Improvements to Car Park: electric car charging provision and covered cycle racks.
 - Enhanced landscape treatment to entrance and café amenity environs.
 - Redesign unused square north of GCLC to support public realm needs without effecting resident's amenity; and
 - Potential use of area in front of development site – using some parking spaces to create linear park to support children's / youth activities.
 - South Pond
 - Scope to review public realm to incorporate new art sculpture;
 - Liaise with Midhurst Greenway project group regarding planned shared path route and links to footpaths around GCLC and Grange Road
 - Link South Pond to the wider footpath network – strong connection to the GCLC and Grange Road; and
 - Scope to review current strategy for biodiversity and information boards with South Pond Group.
 - The Wharf
 - Resurface road materials to match South Pond / cycle route;
 - Address Street lighting inconsistency;
 - Scope to reduce road widths to create wider pavement and / or cycle lane treatment;



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- Any future redevelopment masterplan should seek to activate the relationship with the watercourse; and
- Improve consistency of wayfinding /signage implementation throughout Town – links to wider footpath network.

With the above in mind, we only need to know at this stage from key stakeholders if there are any 'no-nos'. The opportunities identified in the Stage 1 works will then inform how we progress with the **Stage 2** Masterplanning / Wayfinding Strategy. Stage 2 will seek to create:

- An overview masterplan for the Town centre identifying (aspirational) public realm improvement areas linked to a wayfinding route;
- A series of diagrams of North Street to assess how the streetscape could be reconfigured/adapted to provide greening/pedestrian/cycle improvements;
- A hierarchy / palette of landscape materials (with supporting images) linked to the identified character areas / wayfinding route;

The **Final Stage 3** will introduce some simple concept designs 'vignettes' to explain how some these design ideas may work. We have already discussed a supporting spreadsheet to list the individual recommendations, stakeholders involved, prioritisation and how they might be delivered in the short/mid/long term.