



Midhurst Town Council

A Meeting of the Planning and Infrastructure Committee took place on
Monday 14th February 2022 at 7.00pm at The Old Library, Knockhundred Row, Midhurst.

MINUTES

Present: Cllr D. Coote, Cllr R. Watts, Cllr C. Lintott, Cllr G. Upjohn and Cllr D. Fraser

Officer: Julian Quail, Assistant Town Clerk

Also: Sharon Hurr, Clerk and RFO

P/023/21 – Apologies for Absence – Apologies were received from Cllr J. Sutton.

P/024/21 - Declarations of Interest

Cllr Watts declared an interest in the following planning application: **SDNP/21/05398/TCA**

Notification of intention to reduce south sectors by 2m (overhanging neighbouring properties) on 1 no. Oak tree (quoted as T1) and 1 no. Willow tree (quoted as T2).

Sainsburys Supermarkets Ltd White City Midhurst GU29

P/025/21 - To approve Minutes of Meeting Held on 24th January 2022

These were agreed as a true record of the meeting held on 24th January 2022.

Proposed Cllr McAra, seconded Cllr Watts, all agreed.

P/026/21 - Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24th January 2022

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Southern Water hastening a response to our letter.

Action: Town Clerk to draft a letter to Southern Water.

Meeting halted for Public Participation Session

P/027/21 - Public Participation Session

Mr Griffiths addressed the meeting regarding his concerns over the loss of ancient woodland adjacent to Jubilee Path. Mr Griffiths was particularly concerned about the proposed width (3 meters) of the new cycle route on Jubilee Path and the impact it would have on both ancient woodland and the animals that use the woodland. In national guidance ancient woodland is defined as an irreplaceable habitat which is a valuable natural asset important for wildlife, soils and a number of other things. It is very important to note that it is not just the trees – the wood – but the land and the ecosystem that forms ancient woodland – indeed national guidance clearly states that open ground is an important component. Any ancient woodland has been continuously wooded since at least 1600 AD and is thus well over 400 years old which explains why it is irreplaceable. The National Planning Policy Framework is very clear: Paragraph 180 (c) - Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Mr Griffiths asked for the committee include reference to the NPPF and Natural England's guidance in its response and to ask that the proposal be amended to avoid any impact on ancient woodland.

Cllr Coote thanked Mr Griffiths for his time and explained that a dedicated cycle route was a good idea but not at the expense of the environment.

Cllr Fraser arrived at 6.50pm.

Meeting reconvened.

P/028/21 - Planning Applications

28.1 SDNP/21/06428/LIS

Internal alterations including removal and installation of walls.

Old Surgery Rumbolds Hill Midhurst West Sussex

Decision: MTC has no objection to this application.

P/029/21 – Tree Applications

29.1 SDNP/21/05398/TCA

Notification of intention to reduce south sectors by 2m (overhanging neighbouring properties) on 1 no. Oak tree (quoted as T1) and 1 no. Willow tree (quoted as T2).

Sainsburys Supermarkets Ltd White City Midhurst GU29

Decision: MTC has no objection to this application.

29.2 SDNP/21/05410/TPO

Fell 1 no. Silver Birch tree (quoted as T12, TPO'd as T26) subject to MI/96/00700/TPO.

Holmbush Industrial Estate Holmbush Way Midhurst West Sussex GU29 9HU

Decision: MTC has no objection to this application.

P/030/21 – Decisions

These were noted.

P/031/21 – Actions

The actions were provided to the committee before the meeting. All outstanding actions were closed.

P/032/21 – Midhurst Greenway

The committee discussed the proposal to share off-road path for wheelchair and mobility scooter users, walkers and people on bikes. While fully supportive of encouraging more people to cycle and enabling this a regular venue for Chichester District Council's HeartSmart walks, there does not appear to be an impact analysis of the plan on our local shared space. The committee consider the current consultation by WSCC as unfit for purpose. We recommend therefore that the Infrastructure Group of West Sussex County Council deliver a fully comprehensive and inclusive consultation exercise. The committee believe that WSCC must defer any decision on their plan until after a properly inclusive consultation with all those likely to be impacted has taken place. In addition, the bridge proposed bridge at South Pond is not appropriate. This space is a much loved social space regularly used by young children, families, older people, including those with mobility scooters and the introduction of cyclist is potentially dangerous. It was noted also that bats and stag beetle were at South Pond.

Cllr McAra provided a draft response for consideration by the committee. It was proposed by Cllr McAra and seconded by Cllr Lintott, and agreed that with a few amendments this response should

be send to <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/midhurst-greenway>.. The agreed response is at Annex A to these minutes

Action: Assistant Clerk to provide amended response to Your Voice at WSCC.

P/032/21 – The Grange - SDNP/21/04615/FUL

The committee discussed the recent correspondence between MTC and CDC regarding the proposal to build a care home at The Grange. It was agreed that following the proposal from CDC the committee invite both the CDC lead officer and Montpellier to an informal meeting to discuss the proposal.

Action: Town Clerk to invite CDC lead officer and Montpellier to an informal meeting.

P/033/21 - Matters of Report

Cllr Coote noted that Cowdray had planted a number of trees on the North Street verge between North Mill Bridge and the bus station.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.30pm.

Signed: Date:.....
Chairman

Objections to the current Midhurst Greenway proposal

Midhurst Town Council supports the general concept of cycleways as a means of reducing pollution and emission as well as improved wellbeing.

However, it cannot support the proposed WSCC cycle route through Jubilee Path and South Pond in its present form.

It imposes criteria more suitable for a public highway, rather than a widely used path through a tranquil recreation area and will severely disrupt the use and enjoyment of South Pond. South Pond is a much loved social space regularly used by young children, families, older people, including those with mobility scooters. It is a regular venue for Chichester District Council's HeartSmart walks, for outdoor exercise groups, educational and environmental groups.

Midhurst Town Council makes the following points in their objections to the proposal:

1. We welcome a much-needed pedestrian crossing at New Road, opposite the west entrance to Jubilee Path. We also seek WSCC's assurance that they have consulted with the Fire Service on the location beside the fire station and that the Service finds the proposal acceptable.
2. The route through Jubilee Path is logical in concept but excessively wide. The proposed size creates an urban appearance to a natural environment and is probably contrary the National Parks first duty to protect and enhance the landscape of the park (the area is classed as an ancient woodland so there should be no intrusion on the stream side by the planned path. This was the case in an earlier plan).
3. The pathway should be porous and certainly less wide than the proposed three metres. It might be possible to actually create two more modest paths over some of the distance, to separate pedestrians from cyclists.
4. The signage must be kept to an absolute minimum as this is a recreational park not a public highway; and at no time should WSCC apply Department of Transport regulations to any part of their proposals. Any trees must be carefully replaced, with the permission of the titular owners of the trees. This is especially so at the orchard, created and well maintained by Midhurst and Petworth Rotary Club.
5. We do not see the justification to run the route to the north side of the pond. We understand the 'public highway' arguments for this but cannot accept the reasons as valid. To take the north route will require a much larger and incongruous and visually intrusive four metre bridge over the stream. The cycleway will then run straight through a particularly well used part of the park, removal of two benches into the flood zone, endangering the wildlife of the area and be a danger to both children and older people who use the pond for recreation as well as commuting. It is perfectly feasible to run the cycleway along the south side of the pond and substantially reduce cost and disruption.
6. Using the south route, it should be acceptable to mark out a chicane on the road over the bridge to connect the south route to the Wharf Road this will give any cyclists some protection, with a simple right turn at Wharf Road over just one lane The chicane would give

traffic priority from South to North, thus there should not be any traffic coming south when the cyclist turns right. This suggestion will also reduce the speed of traffic on South Street/Chichester Road.

We are concerned that Department of Transport directions on standards appear to have been used in the projects design, and we do not think these are appropriate in this context. We are also deeply concerned that the project is being used as an enabling project to access funds for other projects elsewhere in the County

We also note that there has been no assessment of pedestrian usage of South Pond and Jubilee Path or indeed the future likely usage by cyclists.

We are keen to avoid seeing an expensive and seemingly over engineered project being implemented within a recreation area of Midhurst; none the less MTC is happy to work with WSCC to design a more suitable cycle path through the area.

Midhurst Town Council