



Midhurst Town Council

A Meeting of the Planning and Infrastructure Committee took place on Monday 13th June 2022 at 7.00pm at The Old Library, Knockhundred Row, Midhurst.

MINUTES

Present: Cllr G. McAra, Cllr C. Lintott, Glyn Upjohn and Cllr D. Fraser

Officer: Julian Quail, Assistant Town Clerk

Also: Sharon Hurr, Clerk and RFO

Member of the Public: Dominic Merritt-Smith and Jenny Anderson

P/120/22 - Apologies for Absence

Cllr David Coote and Cllr R. Watts

P/121/22 - Declarations of Interest

None

P/122/22 - To approve Minutes of Meeting Held on 23rd May 2022

These were agreed as a true record of the meeting held on 23rd May 2022.

Proposed Cllr Fraser, seconded Cllr Lintott, all agreed.

P/123/22 - Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23rd May 2022

None

Meeting halted for Public Participation Session

P/124/22 - Public Participation Session

One member of the public was present.

Meeting reconvened.

P/125/22 - Planning Applications

125.1 SDNP/22/02466/FUL

Development of a residential care home (Uses Class C2) and part reconfiguration of the existing car park.

The Grange Development Site Bepton Road Midhurst West Sussex GU29 9HD

Decision: MTC objects to this application. The rationale is set out at Annex A to these minutes.

P/126/22 - Tree Applications

126.1 SDNP/22/02383/TCA

Notification of intention to crown reduce by up to 2m (all round) and crown lift to 6m (above ground level) on 4 no. Oak trees (quoted as T1-T4). Crown reduce by up to 3m (all round) Midhurst Town Council and crown lift to 6m (above ground level) on 1 no. Oak tree (quoted as T5). Crown reduce by up to 2m (all round) and crown lift to 6m (above ground level) on 3 no. Sweet Chestnut trees (quoted as T6-T8). Crown reduce by up to 2m and crown lift to 5m (above ground level) on 1 no Beech tree (quoted as T9)

Land and Buildings on The North Side of The Wharf Midhurst West Sussex

Decision: MTC has no objection to this application.

P/127/22 - River Rother Pollution

Following the visit to the South Ambersham Water Treatment Plant by Cllrs Sutton, Fraser and Watts visited to learn about the circumstances that lead to the release of untreated sewage into the River Rother, concern was raised that there is still lack of clarity over the strategic intent of Southern Water and further investigation is required.

Action: Cllr Watts and Cllr Fraser to draft a response to Southern Water regarding a 5 year plan.

Action: Cllr Watts to draft a letter to Gillian Kegan MP regarding her position regarding the strategic intent of Southern Water.

P/128/22 – CHC20862: Pre-consultation enquiry for proposed new telecommunications mast Lamberts Lane, Midhurst, Chichester, GU29 9DT

While the committee were generally accepting of this proposal, concern was raised regarding the proximity to Midhurst Rother College.

Action: Cllr McAra to draft a response to Dot Surveying regarding the proposal to place a 5G Mast on Lambert's Lane.

P/129/22 – Decisions

These were provided to the committee prior to the meeting and were noted.

P/130/22 – Actions

All actions are complete.

P/131/22 - Matters of Report

Cllr Lintott reiterated the need for marshals at future events.

Cllr McAra noted that the signs at the entrance of the town had yet to be repainted.

Action: Assistant Clerk to speak with Wayne Osborne regarding the town signs.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.15pm.

Signed: Date:.....
Chairman

SDNP/22/02466/FUL: The Grange, Bepton Road, Midhurst

Midhurst Town Council continues to object to this planning application for a residential care home.

Although the design and material in the revised plan are of better quality and more relevant to the town, we are still concerned at the bulk of the building which continues to be overbearing on its surrounding neighbours.

The Town Council contests the need for such a facility in Midhurst. The applicants' statistics of need are flimsy and do not define in anyway a particular local need for a 62 room care home. Indeed, if consent is granted there is no control over the marketing of the facility and we fully expect that the real target market is London and the whole of the southeast, with any local demand based on the ability to pay rather than any local connection. Given that the applicant has admitted that end of life arrangements is part of the 'offering'; "The intensity of the nursing required on a 24 hour basis has created a specific demand for end of life rather than residential care." This essentially gives up the scenario of 'come to Midhurst for end of life care at only £1,400 a week' (or whichever final price point they decide). Not something that our local community is likely to endorse nor, for many Midhurstians, be able to afford. The following statement was taken from the applicants 'needs statement'; "Affluence brings a quality of lifestyle and these expectations will be transferred to care home environments."

This also raises the issue of the ability to fully staff the building, given that there is a critical housing shortage for key worker accommodation and the in-patient facility at Midhurst Community Hospital had eventually to close as they could not secure local staff. Nursing staff were coming from long distances to work there which became unsustainable.

The facility will provide round the clock medical care for frail patients but this is almost all at a nursing level. The inclusion of such dependent residents will add substantially to the town's already overburdened and fragile medical facilities in the area to everyone's detriment. The above comments are important in a planning context as the essence of good and long-lasting planning decisions must take account of the wider population, a point that Michael Gove is currently pursuing.

The developer is promoting the development as adding a community asset to the town through the use of their facilities. Given the development would be adjacent to a recreation centre that caters physically and socially for older people, we cannot see this aspect of the development being of any relevance and it is essentially a menu of vagueness used to fill up the planning application by the developers in the hope that something might stick.

There is also a wider planning issue involved in the continual unbalancing of the population base as there continues to be a rising increase in retired people into the area, not only placing a strain on facilities but more importantly, squeezing out younger working families who are vital to the economic viability of the town and the future of the National Park's wider planning objectives. The Town Council are deeply concerned about the nebulous and vague proposals to address the important issue of water neutrality. It is clear to us that the developer has no solutions in place and is probably unlikely to do so in the near future. Given there will be over 120 people (residents and staff) using water and producing an extensive amount of black water, talking about offsetting by means of "Upgrade and alterations to existing local authority and business properties such as schools, offices or local authority housing, leisure centres, to reduce water consumption by an equivalent value. This would be subject to approval by the authority" is a form of 'kite flying'.

There has also been a continuing issue of sewage problems in the locality with very close neighbours to this site finding blowback discharges of sewage on their premises. We are not convinced that Southern Water has effectively addressed this problem, so we are concerned of further capacity overload if this water intensive development proceeds. At best, the Town Council asks for the application be continued until full arrangements for offsetting the development's water usage are determined to the National Park's satisfaction, by means of suitable signed contracts with the offset providers.

The Town Council also questions the calculation of individual water usage which is lower than might be expected and which also relies heavily on changes in water usage behaviour. Correct and believable figures will have a major impact on the developments water usage.