



Downland Villages Ward : MSDC

Geoff Zeidler : Councillor's Report – 10th March 2025

MSDC Update

The next MSDC Council meeting is 26th February. There was little of significance decided at the last Council meeting and since the last report the focus has been on Councillor consultation on the 2025 Budget and Business Plan which ends on 3rd February. At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22nd January I received assurance that the budgeted increase in Parking income was a limited estimate of incremental fees in the Villages that would be reviewed after the Consultation was completed. I was informed that the Parking consultation launch would be outlined to Parishes at the update meeting on 23rd January.

There have also been 3 working group meetings on the Sustainable Economy Strategy which is being focused down to fewer, clearer Objectives. I am seeking to get my Carbon Literacy proposals for a residents capture tool incorporated and have identified a number of possibilities with the assistance of some residents.

Literature has been circulated to residents that suggests that WSCC cannot balance the budget which may lead to service cuts; and that the Childrens and Fire Services are Inadequate when more recent inspections show they are not. We hope the Parish can assure residents that these statements do not reflect the current situation so that it does not cause undue concern.

Planning

All the Action Items raised by the Inspector were responded to before Christmas, but MSDC still awaits the Inspector's report on Stage 1 and how to progress. We still anticipate a request for higher housing which could also have a further review mechanism if the Government's support for the Gatwick second runway is confirmed.

On 12th December the Government brought out a revised version of the NPPF with a new standard method and affordability calculation. Under this, the housing target for Mid Sussex is mandatory, not advisory, and would rise from the current target of 1039 dwellings per year to 1356. A requirement to have a 5 year land supply is re-introduced. Outside of the National Park and AoNB categories of land MSDC has no Green Belt so the removal of these protections will not affect numbers.

Under transition arrangements, if our current plan is approved by the Inspector then it will be valid for 5 years and MSDC will not be required to hit the higher targets until the next review. However, until the plan is approved – which may be in the second half of the year - applications will be assessed against the new NPPF targets. The MSDC Planning team will be giving Parishes guidance.

Separately, the Government has also proposed devolution which will have a significant impact when implemented. MSDC and WSCC are likely to be merged with other Councils to create a unitary authority run by a Mayor with greater powers including planning. An application has been made for this to involve all areas in Sussex including WSCC; ESCC and Brighton. Depending on how this is finally configured there is clearly a higher risk of the Downland Villages area being required to take housing for Brighton.

I had a very constructive meeting with the AD Planning & Sustainable Environment and Director of Enforcement which has lead to a number of Enforcement issues being followed up and proposals for change which are being considered. In addition, there is a new team to assist the management of s106 money which should make funds available more visible.



Services

No changes to report.

Infrastructure

I have started to track local Planned Road closures which are already notified to Parish Clerks. If anyone would like to have a wider view of the District you can log onto the [Causeway one.network](#) site as there are some significant closures pending.

WSCC

The Council applied to the Government to be in the first round of devolution by 10th January, and will discover whether any application is successful by the end of January. The County Council elections in May will depend on the Government's decision.

Parish Issues for DC Support

The planning for a new campsite at Springs Smokery in Edburton was not shared to affected Mid Sussex Parishes and I ensured awareness and an extension of time to respond as it risks significant increases in traffic on Poynings Road at peak season.

Albourne (Next meeting – 4th February)

A number of residents were not properly informed about changes in waste collection over Xmas and a bundle of fliers was found in the hedge. We have had a response from the Assistant Director. I provided contact information for the H&S leads at Hurst College to support a TRO at the school.

Fulking (10th April)

Clappers Lane TRO has been implemented. Concerns about the Campsite at Springs required a response by 3rd January. Still awaiting the Inspector's decision in relation to permission at Small Acres which was submitted on 11th December.

I am seeking clarification on responsibility for the removal of abandoned vehicles; co-ordination between MSDC and Operation Crackdown; communications and timescales.

Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common (27th January)

Glendale have confirmed that they are removing the tree by Berrylands Pond and have authorised the PC to progress restoration under the guidance of Michael Nailard and the Flora & Fauna Group and in collaboration with local residents.

The fencing at Meadowview is being investigated as a breach of conditions.

The question was raised as to the definition of "temporary" in relation to planning, with the tent at Hurst College cited as a "permanent" example. This was subject to Planning approval in 2023 with return to original condition required in 2027.

Newtimber (4th February)

No recent meeting.

Poynings (12th March)

Still trying to secure assistance in relation to parking and security issues at the Rec Ground.

Pyecombe (11th March)

There is a further meeting with MSDC relating to the Wyshe on 29th January at which we will seek better alignment between the two councils and clarify a path to a shared vision of the playground. WSCC have taken responsibility for the highway by the BP station and will hopefully progress steps to manage the flooding which is a significant highways risk.



I have assisted a resident in Shared Equity Affordable Housing in the Protected Area to understand their options to extend staircasing.

Twineham (10th March)

Challenges continue around plans for energy facilities based around the Bolney sub-station; and more recently the application at Twineham Court Farm for an events business which would further increase traffic on rural roads.

The need for a signpost for a brown "Tourist sign" for the Twineham Rec which requires a license from WSCC; approval from MSDC and £500 funding from TPC remains under consideration.