Downland Villages Ward : MSDC

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

MSDC Update

The next MSDC Council meeting is 26th March. At the last Council meeting the budget for 2025/26 was approved with two amendments. The first was to provide some further exceptions to car parking charges and provide resident discounts; the second was to agree to improve signage for littering and dog fouling and increase focus on the issue.

Separately, following the conclusion of consultation on parking charges in larger villages on 28th Feb the officer's recommendations were published on 3rd March. They did not appear properly to consider the input from Hurst Parish Council; and no other Parishes were addressed. The recommendation was to introduce charges from 8am – 6pm Monday to Saturday with first hour free (on purchase of an annual disc) and discounts for residents and local workers. This was approved at Cabinet on 10th March but will be subject to Council approval and further consultation before a final decision is made in September. I am not satisfied that the initial consultation has been appropriately managed; but there are alternatives which could be considered.

The Sustainable Economy Strategy was completed and will go to Council for approval. MSDC has adopted the WWF Carbon footprint tool as a guide for residents on their website at A Net Zero Home - Mid Sussex District Council.

Planning

MSDC still awaits the Inspector's report on Stage 1 and how to progress; and the Government's support for the Gatwick second runway has been confirmed. We anticipate an increase in the housing requirement. A Planning Officer has been nominated to ensure that any pre-applications relating to the Sayers Village site are aligned with the District Plan as far as possible.

In relation to devolution, Sussex is in the priority group for Mayoral elections in May 2026. This will bring a longer term financial settlement and greater control over strategic transport and housing; although the numbers will not reduce. Related to this is Local Government Reorganisation and WSCC; ESCC and Brighton & Hove are identifying how to establish themselves as two or three separate unitary authorities. Depending on how this is finally configured there remains a higher risk of the Downland Villages area being required to take housing for Brighton and Crawley. There is an InterParish goup meeting on 8th April to discuss the impact on Parishes which I will attend.

Following a meeting with the Assistant Director of Planning we have some approaches to address parking during construction in rural areas; and also how to address "pre application development" concerns.

Services

I am seeking clarification from Jo Reid as to a regular Street Cleaning rota, specifically in relation to leaf-fall.

Infrastructure

No significant changes to report.

WSCC

The Council has been selected in the first round of devolution by 10th January so County Council elections in May have been postponed.

Parish Issues for DC Support

I am working with those Parishes most affected by the Sayers Village proposal to progress Masterplanning with MSDC and/or the developers.

I am seeking clarification on responsibility for the removal of abandoned vehicles; co-ordination between MSDC and Operation Crackdown; communications and timescales which has been a particular issue in Fulking and Poynings.

Albourne *(Next meeting – 4th April)*

I was unable to attend the last meeting.

Fulking *(10th April)*

Still awaiting the Inspector's decision in relation to permission at Small Acres which was submitted on 11th December; and the camp site at Springs in Edburton.

Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common *(27th March)*

Glendale have completed their work at Berrylands Pond and we are awaiting a plan for nature restoration from the Flora & Fauna Group. This will then be managed in collaboration with the Parish Council and local residents.

I am assisting investigation of potentially unlicensed commercial activities in Oakhurst, Sayers Common

Newtimber (TBC *)*

Seeking to get Church Lane swept for fallen leaves – outstanding request since November 2024.

Also assisting in the change of the "Beggars Lane" bus stop name in support of the church.

Poynings *(12th March)*

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

Pyecombe *(11th March)*

There was a further meeting with MSDC relating to the Wyshe on 29th January which agreed an action plan in relation to a common vision.

Twineham *(10th March)*

No issues to progress, although enforcement remains a concern.