



The Midhurst Society

**1 Gilbert Hannam Close, Midhurst, GU29 9FY
01730-815238**

Community Engagement
Home and Community
Chichester District Council
East Pallant House
1 East Pallant
Chichester
PO19 1TY

10 October 2019

Dear Sirs,

The Grange Development Site, Midhurst

Since the Old Grange Centre was demolished in 2014 we have been living with a boarded-up and derelict site. This does not convey the image of an active and vibrant town, and can act as an impediment to the attraction of visitors and new traders.

The current owner, Chichester DC, has attempted to find a buyer, and in 2018 announced that a 'deal' had been done with Montpelier Estates, who would seek planning consent for a residential care home. The announcement was met with widespread local condemnation, social media campaigns, and an on-line petition against the proposal (gathering over 1,000 signatures). The people of Midhurst made it clear that they did not want a care home on this special site.

In the SDNPA Local Plan two other large sites (Caravan Park and Brickworks) are earmarked for housing. The Grange, at the heart of Midhurst, represents the last opportunity for a major development for the benefit of the community.

CDC were motivated by the possibility of selling an unwanted asset, but Montpelier have yet to make a planning application. If they do it seems highly likely that there will be a large number of objections and there is a real possibility that the site will remain 'derelict' for some time to come. Meanwhile, CDC are stuck with their unwanted asset.

We understand that the arrangements between CDC and Montpelier have not been made public, so we have no way of telling how long it will be before those dreaded hoardings come down. And of course, if Montpelier decide not to proceed, CDC are back at square one.

Matters cannot be allowed to drift – or to stagnate. We propose, therefore, that the site be given Community Asset Status. This would mean that a newly-formed community vehicle could raise funds from the community and purchase the site from CDC. Then the site's future would be in the hands of the people of Midhurst, guided by the Town Council, and an appropriate development - and funding - could be sought.

[Two paragraphs deleted]

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Harvey Tordoff
Vice-Chairman