



The Midhurst Society

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**Letter to the Midhurst & Petworth Observer
with reference to Soft Sand Extraction
in the South Downs National Park**

Sir,

There was disturbing news in last week's Midhurst and Petworth Observer, suggesting that the Government Planning Inspector will remove the extraction of soft sand from the Joint Minerals Plan. As the SDNP Local Plan (in its current draft form) specifically excludes minerals and waste, this would seem to leave the National Park without protection from large-scale commercial quarrying. Not only would this cause distress for the near neighbours of such quarries (in West Lavington, for example) but communities across a broad area (in Midhurst, for example) would suffer daily from the noise, pollution, road damage and congestion caused by quarry traffic.

We urge the SDNPA to follow its own Strategic Policy SD34 on sustaining the local economy (Local Plan – Pre-submission document) which seeks to “promote and protect local businesses without compromising the purposes of the National Park”. The primary purpose as stated in the Local Plan is: “to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area”. Further, we suggest that they apply Section 7.149 when considering specific proposals for sand extraction: “Robust evidence will need to be submitted and approved by the Authority that there will be no adverse effect on the landscape and other special qualities through traffic, noise or pollution. Advice on these matters will be sought from other statutory bodies, particularly the county councils and Highways England on the amount and type of traffic generation and the impact on the National Park’s rural roads.”

This is an opportunity for the SDNPA to demonstrate that it can resist commercial pressures and if necessary stand up to Central Government.

Harvey Tordoff
Treasurer
The Midhurst Society
11 November 2017