

From: Hayley Richardson <hrichardson.planning@gmail.com>
Sent: 07 May 2025 19:12:54 UTC+01:00
To: "Hamish Evans" <hamish.evans@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: DM/25/0958 - Former Methodist Church Hall 42 Cuckfield Road
Attachments: assets-of-community-value-successful-nominations-july-2024-v3.xlsx

You don't often get email from hrichardson.planning@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Hamish,

I hope you're having a great week and enjoying the sunshine!

I just wanted to drop you a quick email regarding my client's Permission in Principle (PiP) application at the former Methodist Church in Hurstpierpoint. As you're aware, due to the nature of the application, the determination period is five weeks, and so the deadline for a decision is next Wednesday (14th). I was hoping to get a steer from you regarding your thoughts on the proposal?

I note that Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council have submitted comments on the application, querying the formal marketing undertaken in relation to the Asset of Community Value (ACV) process. While I do not wish to enter into a back-and-forth, I feel it is important to respond to their remarks. As outlined in the Planning Statement, the ACV process is a formal mechanism requiring extensive marketing of an ACV-listed asset before it can be sold on the open market. In accordance with these requirements, the church was actively marketed to local community groups to provide an opportunity for it to remain in community use.

Unfortunately, during the designated period, no parties came forward who were able to demonstrate the necessary means or funding to purchase the property. As such, the ACV process concluded without a community group or the Parish Council securing the site.

Following the unsuccessful marketing, the property was eligible for sale on the open market. Upon purchase by my client, the property was automatically removed from the ACV list. This has been confirmed by Mid Sussex Corporate Estates and Building Control Support, who worked closely with the church's former owners throughout the ACV process to ensure all procedures were properly followed. Their confirmation is available on the Mid Sussex website, which sets out the dates on which the necessary steps were undertaken to complete the ACV process. I also attach a copy of the Excel file downloaded from the Mid Sussex website, which clearly lists the dates each stage of the ACV marketing and process was carried out. Consequently, the Parish Council's claims are unfounded.

As also set out in the Planning Statement, the property was sold at auction in March 2025, having remained unsold in the February 2025 auction. Both auctions were widely publicised, and all community groups – including the Parish Council – were aware they were taking place. Multiple public viewing dates were also arranged and advertised, including on 17th, 21st, 24th and 31st January; 4th February; and 3rd, 6th, 10th, 13th, 17th and 19th March. Had the Parish Council been seriously interested in purchasing the church, they had ample opportunity to participate in either auction – but did not. In light of this, I hope you agree that the consultee's comments are inaccurate.

The former owners of the church committed to a thorough and extensive marketing campaign to satisfy the ACV process, which unfortunately did not result in a sale to a community group. It is now prudent to secure a viable and appropriate new use for the building to ensure the efficient use of this sustainably located site within the urban area.

As detailed in the Planning Statement, Mid Sussex currently has an acute housing land shortfall, with an appeal-derived figure of a maximum 3.38-year housing land supply. Accordingly, the most important policies for determining the application are considered out of date, and in such circumstances, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework as a whole.

Whilst we believe the proposed development complies with Policy DP25 and that the loss of the church use is fully justified, should the Council take a different view, significant weight should be given to the proposal's contribution of up to six new homes within the urban area of Hurstpierpoint. The proposal aligns with key objectives of the NPPF,

including paragraph 61 (boosting the supply of homes), paragraph 73 (support for small sites within existing settlements), and paragraph 124 (promoting effective use of land).

I hope the above is helpful, and I'd be very happy to discuss this further with you at any point before determination. Please feel free to call me on 07480 791047.

Kind regards

Hayley

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Hayley Richardson MSc MRTPI

Mobile: 07480791047

On 29 Apr 2025, at 13:54, Hayley Richardson <hrichardson.planning@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Hamish,

I just wanted to send another quick email and ask if there is anything further you may need to assist with determining my clients application? Given the application is a PiP I recognise the 5 week timescale is tight and is approaching in a couple of weeks (14th May).

I note a few public comments on the application, but they do not relate to items that are relevant to the 1st PiP stage, all these concerns would be addressed at technical consent stage. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to assist with your considerations.

Kind regards,

Hayley

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Hayley Richardson MSc MRTPI

Mobile: 07480791047

On 14 Apr 2025, at 12:46, Hayley Richardson <hrichardson.planning@gmail.com> wrote:

Good afternoon,

I hope you have having a good week.

I just wanted to email and introduce myself as the agent assisting with the above application. Please let me know if you have any queries or if there is anything I can do to assist you.

Kind regards,

Hayley

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Hayley Richardson MSc MRTPI
Mobile: 07480791047