

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 November 2025 14:27:31 UTC+00:00
To: "Stefan Galyas" <stefan.galyas@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application
DM/25/1185

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 29/11/2025 2:27 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Tennis Courts At St Francis Sports And Social Club Colwell Road Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 4EZ
Proposal:	Temporary (36 months) permission for change of use of existing tennis courts to padel courts and associated works (Further acoustic and lighting information received 04.11.2025 and plans 07.11.2025 and 11.11.2025)
Case Officer:	Stefan Galyas

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Customer Details

Address: Flat 13, Assisi Heights Southdowns Park Haywards Heath

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	Dear Stefan, I am writing to formally and strongly object to planning application DM/25/1185 for the temporary (36-month) change of use from existing tennis courts to padel courts and associated works at St Francis Sports and Social Club, Colwell Road, Haywards Heath. As with most of my fellow residents of Southdowns Park, I'm

objecting for the reasons of primarily 1. noise & disturbance; 2. Traffic and parking impact; 3. Precedent for permanent use; 4. Environmental and light pollution concerns; and 5. Impact on residential amenity.

To summarise the objection letter below; Hurstwood Sports Group Ltd have been either entirely naïve and/or dishonest in their assessment and (lack of-) planning to develop one of the noisiest racquet sports around directly next to a notably peaceful and beautiful residential area. The lack of sensitivity towards - bordering on total disregard for - local residents and paying due consideration to the surrounding area, combined with a lack of optionality in considering other racquet sports (e.g., badminton), are typical of a widespread capitalistic approach of chasing trending 'flavour-of-the-month' activity centres for pure profitable gain. You will note most Southdowns Park residents' objections to this for any and all of the reasons I've noted above. We as residents are not against restoring the quality of the area for community sports; but we are against noisy, poorly planned, ill-governed, profit-chasing approaches that will purely benefit those who do not live directly next to the proposed site, and overwhelmingly disadvantage those within the existing residential community.

See also key examples where padel courts have not been approved, such as Planning Appeal APP/XI 735/W /25/3359465 (Hayling Island, Hampshire) dismissed in August 2025 after the Inspector found that the padel courts would unacceptably harm residents' living conditions through noise and disturbance. Arun District Council (A/100/24/PL, Angmering) - withdrawn following strong objections over noise and setting. Additionally, a recent application in Bath has been turned down after concerns over noise as has an application in Guildford. Both councils acknowledged the noise and lighting as unacceptable for residents.

Regarding 1. Noise & Disturbance: As perhaps the primary objection reason, padel is far noisier than any other racquet sport (including squash, which is at least typically fully enclosed with a roof or within a building like leisure centre), due to the harder ball & ricocheting acoustics - and has a universal reputation for this as one of the primary negative effects (a general search engine check will outline the overwhelming evidence for this - e.g., even from the Netherlands (https://nsg.nl/nl/nsg_richtlijn_padel)). In the submitted 'Noise Impact Assessment and Noise Management Plan (02/07/2025)', the applicants' assessment is so biased towards the supposed 'low decibel meterage' of padel, it is hardly representative of the actual noise generated during the sport (i.e., 65-70Db). Equally, the proposed mitigations are laughably naïve, bordering on dishonest, such as 'asking people to be quiet and avoid profanity' during an active and competitive game.

Given that planning states operational hours between 06:00 - 22:00 , and yet the 'Application for Planning Permission (07/05/2025)' states that the Hours of Opening are not relevant to this proposal; I would argue that they are entirely relevant to the proposal and the general wellbeing of all residents living within audible distance of the proposed site, given actual start and finish times could be more like 05:45 - 22:15.

It is telling that none-to-few of those supporting this proposal live within visual or audible distance of the proposed site; I suspect they would find constant staccato noise of 65-70Db between these hours particularly impacting on their mental health, sleep, and daily activities in their homes. It would be worthy to ask the existing members of St Francis Bowls Club whether they have concerns as to how their currently peaceful games will be impacted by proposed developments. See also the 'Environmental Health' consultation responses dated 10/07/2025, 22/09/2025, by Jane Cooper, Environmental Health Officer - showcasing her professional concerns supporting the above statements.

I do not believe that subsequent responses to these concerns have taken into account the full context of the proposed site (additional noise, parking issues, increased lighting, residential amenity), but rather addressed these in isolation and present clear biases.

Regarding 2. Traffic and parking impact; secondly, the planning for traffic and parking impact by the applicant is similarly poor. The existing infrastructure of boundary road and designated parking for swimming, football, alongside existing Southdowns Park residents is already at its limit. This will force visitors to the site to find alternatives, which will either be in contravention to the Southdowns Park Visitor Parking restrictions (managed by UK Car Park Management) across the site, and/or designated parking for Princess Royal Hospital. The increased vehicle traffic in and out of Southdowns Park will also create frustrations with local residents, alongside increased wear and tear on private grounds which are required to be paid for by Southdowns Park residents - and, tellingly, not Hurstwood Sports Group Ltd nor St Francis Sports & Social Club. No provisions have been made by the applications as preventative, corrective, or compensatory controls - again, showing either a lack of planning or a total disregard for local residents and the wider community.

3. Precedent for permanent use; in support of fellow residents highlighting their concerns for this (23 Cavendish House, 19/06/2025), there is a strong likelihood that, if granted, this will pave the way for a permanent conversion - effectively totally removing the existing tennis provision and permanently altering the character of the site. If this planning were to be approved, the first metrics to be reviewed would be the sheer wave of noise complaints made to the Council (as well as the 'designated community liaison' from Hurstwood Sports Group committee).

It must be reviewed whether the applicants have even considered alternative sites outside of direct residential areas which would be better-suited to padel specifically, or bigger and better-provisioned (e.g., for parking, noise allowances) areas. For example, putting their support behind the proposed padel site at Haywards Heath Rugby Club (<https://padel.tennistonic.com/padel-news/4332/new-padel-courts-in-cuckfield-tipped-for-approval/>).

Finally, both objections 4. Environmental and light pollution, and 5. Impact on residential amenity should be self-explanatory. Padel requires more lighting than for tennis or badminton or other traditional outdoor racquet sport, given the number of concurrent players & additional angled surfaces required for play. It would be prudent to compare existing outdoor padel courts with 'before' and 'after' comparisons of environmental ambient lighting differences, to take into consideration - especially based on the current setting of Southdowns Park.

To summarise again, I steadfastly object to Planning Application DM/25/1185 and strongly believe that the proposed development would be detrimental to Southdowns Park's environment and particularly its current and future residents. I would implore you, and the wider Council's Planning personnel and Committee, to consider their duties of protecting communities and residents' best interests and rights, and appreciate your collective time in considering these letters of objection.

Kind regards,

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