

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 December 2025 15:37:29 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 02/12/2025 3:37 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 19, Cavendish House Southdowns Park Haywards Heath

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	Whilst I appreciate that padel is becoming increasingly popular as a sport - and I approve of the Council wanting to increase availability in Mid Sussex, Southdowns Park is not an appropriate site for this. In terms of parking, access, noise and light pollution, detrimental impact in a quiet residential area, this is not a good place to locate such a facility. Many councils up and down the country are refusing such applications because they are noisy and

have an adverse impact in the wrong setting. This application conflicts with some of Mid Sussex Council's District Plan - including noise, air and light pollution; character and design; leisure and cultural facilities - the proposals are incompatible with the peaceful enjoyment of neighbouring homes and gardens. The National Policy Planning Framework also requires planning decisions to avoid noise that would give rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life. And requires that new uses are integrated effectively with existing communities. That is not the case in the currently proposed location.

Key concerns

Noise - padel generates noise equivalent to slamming doors 20 times per minute (x3 courts), plus shouting and background music. Currently we hear only birdsong throughout the year

Acoustic report - takes no account of the impact on the neighbouring flats - the sound carries up to properties right at the top of Cavendish House, Park West and Park East (football is already intrusive)

Lighting - the floodlighting required would be very intrusive for the neighbouring flats (as are the football lights)

Operating times - 14 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round - a relentless assault on residents' mental health and use of gardens

Lack of soundproofing or any containment of the noise

Impact on the Bowls Club - a sport which requires peace and concentration

Location - why build a facility there 'temporarily' - why not in its ultimate location? Is this just a way of subverting the planning process and any appropriate mitigations?

Access and parking - the road around Southdowns Park is privately maintained and inadequate for increased usage, and there are already issues with residents' private parking being regularly infringed by swimming pool and football users.

Lack of the provision of facilities like toilets - will people be relieving themselves in the local shrubbery?

Residents are unable to protect themselves from increased noise - ours are Grade II listed buildings and no double or secondary glazing is permitted

In more detail:

Noise - impact on gardens and residences

Padel is a loud sport. The noise of ball against hard bats and walls is akin to gunfire - or slamming doors about 20 times per minute.

The gardens which are enjoyed by residents (it is our communally owned 'back garden') would no longer be peaceful and quiet.

Currently the only sound we hear is birdsong and the occasional gentle clack of bowls.

The tennis courts were taken out of commission at least 7 years ago, the gate locked and nothing maintained. So any comparison with noise or traffic for that is irrelevant. The Bowls Club would be adversely impacted (and would in all likelihood be forced out of

existence) if this proposal were to proceed as competitive bowls as a sport warrants quiet and concentration.

My flat at the top of Cavendish House gets quite a lot of noise already from the football pitch which is located far further away. The acoustic report for the planning application does not take any account of how sound is amplified and carried up to the flats in Cavendish House, Park West and Park East. As someone with significant hearing loss, the shouting, swearing and refereeing noises from the football carry into my flat. But that is only usually one or two evenings a week for a limited period of time, and day times at the weekend. I can just about cope with that.

Padel courts however would destroy the entire ambience of Southdowns Park. It would render our gardens unusable for normal peaceful sitting. It would cause extreme distress to those of us with south-facing flats. There are regular prevailing winds from the south-west which also increase the carrying of noise from the playing field areas.

Is the Council aware that no resident here is allowed to have double glazing as Southdowns Park is a Grade II listed complex? So there is nothing we as owners or residents can do to mitigate the horrendous impact of the sound coming from the padel courts? And yet the proposal is not to use any soundproofing materials, or enclose the facility with a soundproofed roof to contain the impact of this noise within the facility?

Proposed usage times

Given the enormous increase in noise, to be subjected to 20 slamming doors per minute for 14 hours a day, every day of the year, is indescribably horrific. There would be no respite from this. Quite a lot of residents here work shifts at the hospital and elsewhere - how can people be expected to sleep with this level of disturbance? Or listen to music, watch TV, or hold conversations with this constant level of noise and disruption?

'Temporary' change of use

If the intention is to move these courts after three years, why is not possible to put them in their ultimate location now? Unless this is a complete lie, and this is a means to subvert the planning process it makes no sense at all. If the Council is minded to give planning consent, there must surely be a requirement to implement as much soundproofing as possible within the building in order to reduce its detrimental impact on the 400 or so people who live here (even more, if the surrounding newer housing developments are taken into account).

Access and parking

Southdowns Park is a privately maintained road, not a public highway. It is paid for by residents via our service and maintenance charges. Access for the sports facilities should only be via the hospital entrance to the Bowls Club. Yet swimming and football traffic is constantly using the very narrow parts outwith this route - coming in to our mini roundabout, turning right and using

the narrow stretch of road where we have a blind bend with two children's playgrounds, one either side. And there is limited space for cars to pass. It is a grave safety concern - these are our private gardens and walking areas as residents and owners of these roads and amenities. Local public roads are also heavily congested - Colwell Road is used for parking for hospital staff that can't be accommodated at the hospital itself.

The car parks all around Southdowns Park are for residents and their visitors only. These are regularly infringed by people using the swimming pool. If more people are to use the sports site then non-resident traffic must be kept away from private parking areas and directed to the paying car park next to the Bowls Club. To protect residential parking any development should pay for the installation of barriers and an ANPR system.

If the Council is serious about using this area to develop a wider sports offering then it MUST create proper, genuine public access for the bypass and/or via the newer developments off the bypass if it wishes to open up that space.

Conclusion

Whilst I appreciate the desire to create padel courts for public use, Southdowns Park is not an appropriate location for these. It is a concentrated residential area and the proposals offer no realistic mitigation to the impact such a noisy sport will have on the welfare and wellbeing of the hundreds of people this planning application will affect. I respectfully urge the Council to refuse this application.

Kind regards