

Mid Sussex Partnership – Minutes

Thursday 29th January 2026

Attendees:

Councillor Anne-Marie Cooke (AMC)

Nicola Walker – Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office (NW)

Douglas Denham - St Pinnock– West Sussex Association of Local Councils (DDP)

Jim Bartlett – West Sussex County Council (JB)

Suzy Downe – Sussex Community Transport (SD)

David Derrick – Inspector Sussex Police (DD)

Councillor Peter Williams – Burgess Hill Town Council (PW)

Sarah Thorley – Savills (ST)

Eliza Hobbs – Savills (EH)

Gina Diamond – Savills (GD)

Cinzia Fontana – Mid Sussex Food Partnership (CF)

Katie Rabone – Community People (KR)

Paul Turner – Mid Sussex District Council (PT)

Lucy Corrie – Mid Sussex District Council (LVC)

Nick Hurley – Mid Sussex District Council (NH)

Daniel Greenwood – Mid Sussex District Council (DG)

1. Savills Presentation (Sarah Thorley and Gina Diamond)

Savills presented on the community artwork and placemaking plans for Burgess Hill, including three strands of public art and the early development of a sensory trail to support older people and those with additional needs.

They outlined early engagement with community organisations and explained that The Hill Group is trialling spaces which could support the sensory trail and community art installation once new community spaces are created.

Discussion:

- PT advised that Savills had already attended the Community Development Subgroup to connect with local partners.
- PW asked whether any buildings had been identified for artwork; Savills confirmed they were happy to explore options with Burgess Hill Town Council.
- LVC welcomed the sensory trail concept and asked about timescales. ST confirmed they were seeking to bring this forward as opportunities arise.

2. Mid Sussex Food Partnership (MSFP) (Cinzia Fontana)

CF outlined the origins of MSFP, its 2024 strategy, and its work across five thematic areas. Key achievements included:

- Developing emerging community food provision and educational programmes.
- Supporting organisations with equipment such as fridges and IT systems.
- 120,000kg of food redistributed via Burgess Hill Pantry, now operating district-wide.
- Establishment of the Local Food Growth Plan in 2025.
- Practical support provided to East Grinstead Food Bank and other groups.

The next phase focuses on:

- Creating districtwide local storage capacity for up to 25 organisations.
- Promoting local food and farming.
- Expanding nutritional education and community empowerment.

MSFP thanked MSP for its £25,000 core funding and expressed the need for further support.

Discussion:

- PT noted that food and nutrition issues extend into wider community wellbeing and that local need remains acute.
- KR highlighted evidence of significant poverty in Bentswood and praised MSFP's integrity and partnership working.
- PW updated that BHTC had invested £52,000 over three years into the Pantry, helping families in transition.
- **LVC asked JB whether WSCC may have funding available; JB agreed to explore this through the Crisis Resilience Fund.**

ACTION 1:

CF/MSFP to produce a detailed funding bid for assessment. An SLA will be required for any further funding.

3. Volunteering in Mid Sussex (Katie Rabone – Community People)

KR explained national and local changes in volunteering, noting declining formal volunteering but increased informal support since Covid. Organisations face recruitment challenges, slower response times, and rising complexity of need.

KR proposed:

- An 18-month “Year of the Volunteer” campaign from June 2026.
- A Volunteer Passport to streamline DBS, training, and accreditation and to support volunteers such as young people, NEET residents and those seeking structured pathways.

The intention is to improve volunteer experience, widen accessibility, and ensure representation from under-served communities.

Discussion:

- PT noted that volunteer recruitment has been challenging for several years and that this project has the potential for strong partner buy-in.
- LVC, SD and other members expressed support for the VP concept.
- JB also supported progressing the proposal given its alignment with resilience and LGR.
- The Partnership agreed that the proposal should be developed further.

ACTION 2:

KR to produce a *funding bid* for the Year of the Volunteer and Volunteer Passport proposals, based on the meeting discussion. An SLA will be required if funding is approved.

4. Community Development, Local Community Network and Community Safety Updates

4.1 Community Development (PT)

PT provided updates on:

- Savills’ progress on the Burgess Hill art and placemaking project.
- Budget allocations and bids received for the Community Development Sugroup.
- The Mid Sussex Active project.
- Brookleigh Residents Forum activity.

PT also gave a detailed update on the NEETs project, explaining that the original organisation had struggled to deliver and that WSCC stepped in and delivered under budget, achieving all KPIs by Q3 2025–26.

ACTION 3:

The Partnership agreed to extend the NEETs project for a further period, delivered by WSCC (subject to MSDC legal approval). Members will be notified in writing of the agreed approach.

4.2 Community Safety Partnership (NH)

NH provided a comprehensive update including:

- Purchase and use of VR headsets to raise awareness of knife crime.
- Support for businesses through funding of the DISC online portal and administration via Littoralis across 2026/27, with long-term funding to be explored.
- PSPO covering ASB car cruising in Burgess Hill, Job’s Lane alongside the A2300 and the Birch industrial estate in East Grinstead, with consultation open until the 2nd of February 2026 and a proposal for increased signage to aid enforcement.
- A multi-agency community safety event held at Clair Park on the 11th of December, supported by local partners including WSCC and Community People.
- Over 200 online consultation responses; key concerns included lighting, CCTV and park patrols.
- Positive youth activities delivered in partnership with WSCC, VRP and WBC Cares UK.

NH formally thanked David Derrick for his service and support ahead of his retirement.

5. MSP Budget Update (PT)

PT reported that the underspend from the Covid period remains at £107,000. Partners agreed to maintain the existing funding model for 2026–27 pending national settlement information in March 2026.

6. Any Other Business

- **Sussex Community Transport requested an extension to their 2025–26 project.
This request was agreed by the MSP Board Members.**
- The Partnership agreed to receive further information and discussion on the NHS Mental Health Service restructure at a future meeting.
- **The existing MSPB meeting model will continue for 2026–27; dates to be circulated.**
- The High Sheriff mental health event outcomes can be shared with members who were unable to attend.
- LVC placed on record formal thanks to David Derrick for all his support ahead of his retirement.
- DD confirmed his retirement in 50 working days.

Meeting Closed

Date of next meeting: To be confirmed