

Council

Agenda Item 37

Subject: Deputations from members of the public

Date of meeting: 13 October 2025

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the council, nominated by the mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the mayor and voted on without discussion that the spokesperson for the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification that four deputations have been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

1. Deputation concerning Biodiversity vs Microplastics Pollution

Supported by:

Suzanne Mitchell
Sven Jaworski
Mike Jacks
Mark O Hare
Henri Palmer
Helena Roberts
Alan Edwards
Terry Skinner
Angela Thompson
Lisa Collings
Terrence Rose

Summary of deputation:

Microplastics pollution is a 100% man-made crisis. Its persistent accumulation, global invasiveness, longevity and inability to remove it, makes it a serious ecological threat to all biodiversity and ecosystems.

Professor Fiona Mathews research statement: (Sussex Uni. May 2025)
“Microplastics are ubiquitous at every level of the food web.” 580 invertebrates sampled from 51 sites across Sussex – with fragments of plastic found in the stomachs of beetles, slugs, snails and earthworms, which in turn make their way up the food chain into birds, mammals and reptiles. Traces of microplastics are also found in our drinking water as well as various seafoods but current research has yet to establish a direct threat to human health.

However, the Marine Conservation Society has access to laboratory research on marine organisms exposed to SBR solutions. Studies revealed the following findings: impaired immune & reproductive systems, deformed organ development and shortening of life span.

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SBR rubber crumb comes from repurposed car tyres in a granulated form & gives 3G pitches a grass like feel & performance. But with over 2000 pitches just in England, it also creates a huge environmental crisis with mounting pollution created either by casual escape or disposal at its end of life cycle. (10 yrs) October 2019 - FIDRA stated that 3G pitches were on average, losing between 1 to 5 tonnes of SBR per annum. (Hence 16 to 80 tonnes annually for the sixteen 3G pitches in Brighton & Hove)

2019 - European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) report to the EU that the widespread losses of SBR rubber crumb across Europe was uncontrolled and threatened most ecosystems if left unchecked. In October 2023, the EU issued a directive under a REACH Agreement that from 2031, SBR rubber crumb would NO LONGER BE PERMITTED as infill for new synthetic pitches. In June this year, Sport England and DEFRA acknowledged "SBR rubber crumb was the PRIMARY SOURCE OF MICROPLASTICS POLLUTION in the UK, from intentionally added microplastics." Intentional because each 3G pitch used between 120 to 200 tonnes of SBR infill. (12200 car tyres) Sport England responded further by issuing measures to improve containment and reduce the levels of accidental escape. (Caused by wind, rain, clinging to players' boots and clothing, brushing and pitch maintenance.)

A greater concern however is what happens to the disposal of pitches after their 10 year life span? Disposal is not only very expensive, the huge volumes removed mean that only a small fraction of the total volume is actually recycled with the majority of it still ending up in landfill or licenced waste storage. (With a further 120 to 200 tonnes added for the new replacement pitch.) Councillors!! Participation in sport, promoting physical and mental health are really important targets BUT a way must be found to drastically reduce microplastics pollution from SBR rubber crumb.

CONSIDER the city's BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY & how its policies are bound to our unique status as – the only urban UNESCO LIVING COAST BIOSPHERE in the UK.

CONSIDER our city's CLIMATE CRISIS commitment to be CARBON NEUTRAL by 2030.

CONSIDER COUNCILLORS that you are the custodians charged with a duty to ensure that you protect our UNESCO BIOSPHERE for future generations as well as the biodiversity that exists in and around Brighton and Hove and beyond.

New green alternatives exist that are flood resistant, resilient, sustainable, carbon friendly and don't require removal after 10 years. Please consult with ground / drainage engineers who can explain more about how grass pitches can benefit from Biochar, grit and SuDS technologies and how these solutions can become an environmental model that other authorities in the UK may choose to follow. IN OTHER WORDS COUNCILLORS

When 3G pitches with SBR infill reach their end of life use

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Become the 1st UK "Back to Grass Council"

Supporting Information:

- 1) Life span of micro plastics from MDPI October 2023 publication
- 2) BBC News 23rd May 2025 Professor Fiona Mathews – An environmental biologist at Sussex University
- 3) Risk of microplastics to human health: NIH National Library of Medicine "Synthetic turf pitches with rubber granulate infill"
- 4) Marine organisms study sourced from Steve Bryce at the Marine Conservation Society.
- 5) SBR Rubber crumb is short for STYRENE BUTADIENE RUBBER and is known to contain Poly Aromatic Hydrocarbons, Volatile Organic Compounds and other metalloids.
- 6) DEFRA is the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- 7) Sport England is one of this country's sports statutory bodies.
- 8) ECHA is the European Chemical Agency
- 9) FIDRA is an environmental charity named after Scottish island of Fidra. It focuses on preventing plastic & chemical pollution & supporting sustainability through evidence-based solutions.
- 10) REACH AGREEMENT was an EU law /regulation (The acronym being Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation & Restriction of Chemicals.)
- 11) About the deputation author: Dirk Mitchell Brighton resident since March 1969. Retired Physical Education and Mathematics teacher with all 36 years of teaching in local Brighton schools.

BIOCHAR can improve grass pitches by enhancing soil structure, increasing water and nutrient retention, and promoting beneficial microbial life, leading to healthier, more resilient turf that recovers faster from wear and tear. By improving aeration and water management, it helps prevent waterlogging and reduces the need for excessive irrigation and chemical treatments, making it an environmentally friendly and cost-effective solution for sports turf.

How Biochar Improves Pitch Health

- **Enhanced Soil Structure:**
Biochar's porous, honeycomb-like structure improves soil aeration, allowing for better oxygen flow to roots and preventing compaction from intense foot traffic.
- **Improved Water Retention:**
The soil's ability to hold water is increased, which helps maintain consistent moisture, reduces the risk of patchy areas, and lessens the need for frequent watering.
- **Better Nutrient Availability:**
Biochar's chemical properties enhance the soil's cation exchange capacity, leading to better nutrient retention and increased availability for plant roots.
- **Increased Beneficial Microbes:**
The microscopic structure of biochar provides ideal habitats for beneficial microbes, which help defend roots and contribute to overall turf health.
- **Faster Recovery:**

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Biochar-treated pitches show improved resilience, enabling the turf to recover more quickly from the heavy use and damage caused by athletes. Application for Pitches

- **New Pitches:**
Incorporate biochar into the soil at the rate of about 1 kg per square meter before laying new turf or planting seeds, then water it in.
- **Existing Pitches:**
For existing fields, mow the grass short, then use a mechanical aerator or garden fork to create holes. Sweep the biochar into these holes at about 1 kg per square meter, and water it in.
Benefits for Greenkeepers and the Environment
- **Reduced Costs:**
Improved water and nutrient retention means less spending on irrigation and fertilizers.
- **Environmental Advantages:**
As a carbon-rich material, biochar sequesters atmospheric carbon dioxide, contributing to carbon storage in the soil and a lower carbon footprint for the pitch.
- **Organic Solution:**
Biochar offers a natural, organic alternative to chemical-based treatments, making it suitable for organic growing practices and promoting overall environmental health.



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2. Deputation concerning will you support us?

Supported by:

Susan Sheftz
Judith March
Kim Gordon
Pieter Hemsley
Sheila Baker
Yoram Allon
Joy Youngman

Summary of deputation:

Councillors, thank you for giving us these minutes.

We are British Jews, representing our voices and our perspectives. We speak to all 54 councillors in this chamber, and we ask you directly: will you support us?

The government's recognition of a Palestinian state has been a profound shock. For Jews locally, nationally, and worldwide, it feels like a betrayal — a failure to understand the war between Hamas and Israel, the history of the Middle East, and the long, painful history of the Jewish people. At a time when Jews and Israel are fighting for survival, this decision has been felt as a blow — and yes, by many, as antisemitic.

Every year, you stand with us at Holocaust memorials. You say, "Never Again is Now." And you mean it. But this is the "Now." Jews again face an existential threat — and too often we feel we do not have your support.

Bias against us, expressed as Antizionism, is visible in the police, the judiciary, the Arts, education, universities, the media, local and central government, even the NHS. Social circles that once welcomed us are closing. Many in our community are even making plans to emigrate to safer countries.

Councillors, we know politics is complex, and we respect the humanitarian impulses at work. But we ask you to hear us — your Jewish constituents. Hear our fear, our grief, our memory, our limits.

Stand against rhetoric that paints Jews or Israel as having genocidal intent. Reconsider calls for divestment from Israeli companies — which unfairly single out one nation and, in practice, isolate Jews. Above all: ensure your words and actions do not push an already vulnerable community further to the margins — or embolden antisemitism in this city.

We are not asking for blind loyalty. We are asking for fairness. For accuracy. For sensitivity. Most of all, we are asking plainly: will you support us?

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3. **Deputation concerning why devolution matters for skills and opportunity to the next generation**

Supported by:

Harry Walsh-Black (Speaker)

Ida Greenall

Henrik Berry

Noah Groenewoud

Iris Neale

Becca Trebble

Adem Serttas

Linus Allen

Summary of deputation:

Devolution means decisions being made closer to the people they affect. For young people in Brighton & Hove, that matters. We want a city where opportunities match our talents and ambitions, where decisions are shaped by local voices, not just by people in Westminster and where we are genuinely listened to and involved in shaping our future.

One of the most exciting changes is the transfer of powers over Further Education and skills training. This directly affects us as young adults. We welcome funding that can be tied to the jobs and industries that matter in our city and across Sussex, from the environment and health to creative work and digital skills. It also means better support for adults who need a second chance at learning, and clearer pathways for school leavers into apprenticeships, training, and local jobs. This isn't just about courses for us, it's about creating a joined-up system that gives people the tools to thrive.

Our hopes are simple, more chances to learn new skills, to build careers without having to leave Brighton & Hove, and to be part of a political system that feels open, fair and relevant to us locally. We want real action to tackle inequality, so no community in our city is left behind.

But we also have concerns. Too often, young people's voices aren't heard, and we don't always know who is making the decisions or how to influence them. Our message to the Council and to national government is that devolution should be about hope. Hope in a system that delivers locally, that invests in education and work, and that connects young people to politics. We want Brighton & Hove to lead the way in showing how devolution can give communities and the next generation a stronger voice.

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4. Deputation concerning Green Spaces

Supported by:

Lynn Weddle
Nova Cookson
Hazel Baxter
Luke Meredith
Ian Wilson

Summary of deputation:

We are bringing this deputation on behalf of residents of West Saltdean regarding two green spaces known locally as The Greens (Sites 2 and 3), both covered by the 1938 Covenant between the Saltdean Estate Company Limited ('the Owners') and the Borough of Brighton ('the Corporation', now Brighton & Hove City Council). The covenant explicitly identifies these plots as "open spaces" and gives the Council the power under Clause 4 to designate them as public open spaces.

For more than 80 years, these areas have been treated as community open spaces. Since 2007, they have been maintained entirely by residents at zero cost. Volunteers have cared for their ecology and ensured they remain valued community assets.

Earlier this year, the landowner of Site 2 erected barriers, blocking community access for the first time in living memory. This action undermines both the spirit and purpose of the covenant and shows why Clause 4 was included: to give the Council the power to safeguard them as public open spaces.

Our community has developed a stewardship and biodiversity plan with environmental scientist Dr Richard Stow, supported by Saltdean Climate Action Network and CPRE volunteers. This plan guarantees long-term care of the land at zero financial cost to the Council, while:

- Increasing biodiversity and protecting wildlife, including a potential badger sett confirmed by the Badger Trust;
- Reducing carbon emissions by using local volunteers rather than petrol machinery;
- Strengthening community involvement, health, and wellbeing.
- We respectfully submit that:
- The land has already been successfully maintained by the community for decades at zero cost;
- Clause 4 exists as a safeguard for situations such as this, where landowners are no longer treating the plots as open spaces;
- Invoking Clause 4 would protect access, resolve disputes about covenant interpretation, and provide a replicable model for other wards across the city.
- Our request: That Brighton & Hove City Council invokes Clause 4 of the 1938 Covenant to designate Sites 2 and 3 of The Greens in West

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Saltdean as public open spaces, secured for the community and future generations.