

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Adur District Council**

28 March 2024

QE2 Room, Shoreham Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea

Councillor Joe Pannell, Chairman
Councillor Joss Loader, Vice-Chairman

Councillor Tony Bellasis	Councillor Gabe Crisp
Councillor Julia Watts	Councillor Angus Dunn
Councillor Dan Flower	Councillor Emma Evans
Councillor Jude Harvey	Councillor Jim Funnell
Councillor Julian Shinn	Councillor Jeremy Gardner
Councillor Ann Bridges	Councillor Paul Mansfield
Councillor Carson Albury	Councillor Andy McGregor
Councillor Carol Albury	Councillor Steve Neocleous
Councillor Robina Baine	Councillor Carol O'Neal
Councillor Vee Barton	Councillor Neil Parkin
Councillor Kevin Boram	Councillor Sharon Sluman
Councillor Mandy Buxton	Councillor Debs Stainforth
Councillor Lee Cowen	

Absent

Councillor Rob Wilkinson

C/58/23-24 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence

C/59/23-24 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

C/60/23-24 Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public

C/61/23-24 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2023 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

**C/62/23-24 Announcements by the Chairman, Leader of the Council,
Executive Members and / or Head of Paid Service**

The Chairman made the following announcements

It hasn't been that busy over the last month or so on civic engagements.

On 16 December I had a joint Christmas Carol Service with the Boundstone Choir which was held at St Michaels and All Angels Church in Lancing. The service was well supported and went well. I also received a lovely comment from Barbara, the MND representative who was at the service, which is worth a mention. This is what she said:

"I should just like to thank you all for your very generous donation to the Motor Neurone Disease Association West Sussex South Branch and for the amazing support from the congregation of St Michaels and All Angels Church on 16th December. What a really lovely evening we all had being royally entertained by Boundstone Chorus, beautiful music & carols and I loved the alternative '12 Days of Christmas' reading. I am sure you know that your generosity will go towards helping local people living with Motor Neurone Disease and to make their lives as comfortable as is possible. We also support research into finding treatment and, maybe eventually, a cure for this devastating disease. Thank you for choosing the MND Association as one of your charities, it is very much appreciated by us all."

On the 25th January I attended the opening of the new Forest Row with the Mayor of Worthing. It was great meeting with business owners and networking and meeting some interesting contacts. I'd like to wish this new venture all the best over the coming year.

Saturday 27th January, I attended the Holocaust Memorial Day Event which is held in Buckingham Park by the Holocaust Memorial Tree. There was a good gathering at this sombre event, a time to reflect and remember. Fr James Grant led the prayers and myself and other councillors did readings and I laid a wreath.

On Thursday the 22nd February, I attended the opening of the new council houses in Sylvan Road, Sompting that have already been handed over to new tenants.

On Wednesday 6th March I attended the Lancing Parish Council community awards where myself and the Lancing Parish Chairman Mike Mendoza handed out awards to individuals and organisations that have helped the Lancing community.

On Monday 11th March, myself and other councillors and council officers attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the new homes to be built at the old civic centre site in Ham Road.

On behalf of the Council and people of the District we would like to send our thoughts and prayers to the Royal Family. We wish both the King and the Princess of Wales a speedy recovery and send our very best wishes.

Finally, I would like to also thank Liz McCarthy for all her help organising my events and checking in on me. I'd like to wish her all the best in her retirement.

C/63/23-24 Items raised under urgency provisions

The Chairman announced that there were no urgent items.

C/64/23-24 Recommendations from the Cabinet and Committees to Council

7(a) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 7 March 2024

JOSC Work Programme update and Work Programme setting for 2024/25 - Work Programme

The Chairman of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee introduced the recommendation to the Council which was seconded and was unanimously supported following a vote.

Resolved: That the draft JOSC Work Programme for 2024/25 be approved

7(b) Licensing Committee - 11 March 2024

Approval of Licensing Fees 2024/25

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee introduced the recommendation to the Council which was seconded and was unanimously supported following a vote.

Resolved: That the fees be ratified and they come into effect on the 1 April 2024

7(c) Joint Audit & Governance Committee - 21 March 2024

Creating a positive complaints culture: a new code for complaints handling

The Chairman of the Joint Audit and Governance Committee introduced the recommendation to the Council which was seconded and was unanimously supported following a vote.

Resolved

1. that the new (Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (HOCHC) be adopted
2. That it be noted that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code (LG&SC Code) was launched in February 2024. And that work is underway to ensure compliance with this, which will be required by April 2026.
3. That it be noted that the Monitoring Officer will recommend two councillors to be complaint handling Members to the Joint Chairs of the JAGC for approval and recommendation to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council meetings
4. That it be noted that the senior responsible person for complaints will be the Head of Resident Services.

7(d) Joint Audit & Governance Committee - 21 March 2024

Amendments to the Constitution

The Chairman of the Joint Audit and Governance Committee introduced the recommendation to the Council which was seconded and was unanimously supported following a vote.

Resolved:

1. That the revised Constitutions be approved with the following additional recommendations
2. That no ordinary meeting of Full Council should be scheduled during the pre-election period, without the approval of the Proper Officer, who will take into account whether the forthcoming election was in respect of the Borough or District elections, or other election, and the level of political sensitivity around each election which should impact on Council business;
3. That the value of a Key Decision under the Council's Financial Regulations and Article 12.03 of the Constitution remain at £100,000 on the basis that Officers will publish Decision Notices and Consult in writing with the relevant Cabinet Members
4. That the proposed amendments to Paragraph 6.1 of the Budget Procedure Rules presented to the Committee be postponed pending a review by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee of its involvement in budget strategy and review.

C/65/23-24 Report of the Leader on decisions taken by the Cabinet

Before the Committee was a report by the Leader, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 8.

A Member asked a question about the Joint statement of community involvement and the wider complexity of public engagement, the Cabinet Member responded that the document was statutory in nature, however there was a wide range of engagement being undertaken on various related issues.

A Member asked a question about the rejection of the care leavers motion. Members were reminded that the primary authority responsible for care leavers was West Sussex County Council who had significantly more resources. It was felt that it was best for the district to work with West Sussex and signpost to services where necessary. The matter would be reviewed further to make sure that responses were as efficient and appropriate as possible.

A Member asked a question about the AQMA and whether these should be suspended. The Cabinet Member informed council that the authority was tied by the calculation methodology set by DEFRA, under those calculations the amounts were not enough to maintain the AQMA under DEFRA calculations. It was related that the equipment would stay in place to monitor the situation.

A Member asked a question about simpler food waste collection service and what would happen if sufficient funding was not provided from central government. Members were told that scenario planning was currently being undertaken given that currently sufficient funding was not being made available.

C/66/23-24 Schedule of Meetings 2024/25

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Sustainability and Resources, a copy of which had been circulated to all members, a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes as item 9

Having been proposed and seconded the schedule for 2024/25 was approved

Resolved: That the schedule of meetings for 2024/25 municipal year be approved

C/67/23-24 Members question time under Council Procedure Rule 12

Cllr Shinn asked the following question

What more can be done to compel Southern Water to come to committee to face questioning by Adur and Worthing Members?

It is now over one year since you made a decision to explore a hybrid-surface solution for the Meads Recreation Ground. Local parents, children and other residents have yet to see any significant progress. Could you please update residents and members on the situation?

Response

The Council has been working with specialist contractors to prepare a design and provide up to date costings. There is a Project Manager assigned to the project who is holding monthly meetings with the School, West Sussex and the Head of Governors. West Sussex is currently resolving the necessary governance approvals to release the ring fenced s106 funds so that the project can commence on site. Ideally work during the summer months would be preferable with better weather and less impact on the school but this is dependent on timings around the governance and procurement processes

Cllr Shinn asked the following question

You may be aware of recent problems in relation to the management and maintenance of new housing developments in our district. For example, there have been criticisms levelled at Hyde Housing by residents of the Waterfront development in Shoreham, which have been brought to the attention of our local MP and cabinet members. Could you please indicate what steps could be taken by this council going forward to hold Hyde and other preferred developers to account for the management and maintenance of developments following completion?

Response

Generally, the management and maintenance of new developments is the responsibility of a Management Company set up by the developers, with occupiers of new properties contributing to the ongoing management costs. This can include on-site drainage, roads and open spaces unless transferred to the District Council or County Council with a commuted sum payment to cover future maintenance costs. This is usually stipulated in the s106 planning obligation signed at the planning application stage.

In terms of the issues identified with the Waterfront development (north of the Ropetackle development), following complaints Hyde did investigate the flooding issues and identified that the issue is not with the on site drainage system but with the outfall to the River. The outfall pipe has been inspected by a local Civil Engineering Company and they have identified that it is blocked by silt.

The responsibility to clear the Chamber rests with the Environment Agency and it is hoped that the problem will be rectified as soon as possible. In the meantime Hyde is continually to over pump into the river at periods of low tide to avoid any further flooding issues on site or to neighbours.

The Council does have enforcement powers against either the developers or appointed Management Company if developments are not built in accordance with approved plans or areas not maintained in accordance with agreed management plans. At Mariners Point in Shoreham the developer was threatened with enforcement action to remedy a number of breaches with the implementation of various flood protection matters as well as a failure to implement an agreed landscaping scheme. At New Monks Farm the Country Park and off site drainage scheme have to be maintained in accordance with an agreed management plan and this is a requirement of the s106 agreement that binds the developer in perpetuity.

Cllr Crisp asked the following question

A resident has been asking me about the voids situation for several months. She has emailed both me and Cllr Carson Albury on many occasions. I have emailed Cllr Albury to ask him to respond directly to her. But unfortunately this has not yet happened. So, since my resident is currently undergoing surgery she has asked me to put this question to Cllr Albury on her behalf.

How many voids do we currently have? How many households in Emergency and Temporary accommodation? How many households are on the AH waiting list? What is the mean average turnaround time for void properties? And most importantly what is being done to bring these figures down?

Response

Officers have been reporting on the progress of AHs to council over the last year including our work on voids and so this information is something that we invite all of our members to read and engage with, including the available statistics that have been included. We have also just updated the Joint Strategic Committee in March about the latest numbers of households on the waiting list and emergency accommodation and again I would invite Members to look at this report in more detail

For the specific purpose of this question:

As at the end of February 2024 Adur Homes had 132 void properties.

There is a significant amount of work underway to address the voids issue and this is reported back to council through the improvement plan reporting. We have gone through a contract process to employ two contractors to solely concentrate on the voids work and this is now working well and effectively. It is envisaged the impact of this is starting to be seen

and subject to the number of new properties coming into the process and the number of “new” residents are housed through these, it is planned the overall number will start to reduce.

We don't yet have an average void turnaround time due to the issues around some of the voids which have significant issues. It does depend on the amount and complexity of works required with many requiring asbestos removal and major works that take added time when compared. The simplest voids can be turned around within 10-15 days.

As at 29th February 2024 there were 124 Adur households placed in temporary accommodation which is an increase of 9 households from the previous month and an increase of 28 households since this time last year. There are now 959 households on the Adur housing register, which is an increase of over 50 since this time last year.

Cllr Crisp asked the following question

We have heard much about the Restructure, new ways of working and the changes to responsibilities, officer and management posts. This has recently been flagged on public social media posts from Adur and Worthing councils. This has been a thorough and lengthy process, but has not been shared with most opposition members. At what level has this been discussed? How will the new structures be shared with councillors and the public so we can understand where responsibilities lie post-restructuring?

Response

While designs are discussed in advance with the cabinet that will share details with all members, residents and partners after the staff consultation period for each of the changes. This is to ensure that we run a fair process for staff.

The first group of consultations will be complete early in the summer with further updates later in the year.

C/68/23-24 Motion on Notice

Before the Committee was a motion on notice proposed by Cllr Gabe Crisp and seconded by Cllr Julian Shinn.

There was support for the motion and the council referred the motion to the Joint Strategic Sub-Committee for determination.

Resolved: That the motion be referred to the Adur Joint Strategic Sub-Committee for consideration and determination

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.15 pm, having commenced at 7.00 pm

Chairman