

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

18 July 2024

QE2 Room, Shoreham Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea

Councillor Adrienne Lowe, Chair
Councillor Andrew Harvey, Vice-Chair

Councillor Becky Allinson	Councillor Pauline Higgins
Councillor Tony Bellasis	Councillor Saffa Jan
Councillor Julia Watts	Councillor Nigel Jenner
Councillor Dan Flower	Councillor Joss Loader
Councillor Jude Harvey	Councillor Paul Mansfield
Councillor Julian Shinn	Councillor Steve Neocleous
Councillor Carson Albury	Councillor Carol O'Neal
Councillor Carol Albury	Councillor Neil Parkin
Councillor Robina Baine	Councillor Sharon Sluman
Councillor Lee Cowen	Councillor Debs Stainforth
Councillor Emma Evans	Councillor Nigel Sweet
Councillor Jeremy Gardner	Councillor Gerry Thompson

C/13/24-25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Councillors Nigel Corston, Carolyn Fuhrmann and Andy McGregor were received by the Chair.

C/14/24-25 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests.

C/15/24-25 Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

C/16/24-25 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved, that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2024 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

C/17/24-25 Announcements by the Chair, Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and / or Head of Paid Service

The Chair informed the Council about a number of meetings and events that she had attended since the Annual Council meeting. These included:-

1. 80th D Day commemoration in Lancing;
2. Opening of 2nd Lancing Green Dreams;
3. The Greatest Show - ASNP;
4. St Alban's Women's Knitting Circle;

5. Lancing Royal British Legion 100th Anniversary - attended by Cllr Andy Harvey;
6. Shoreham College Open Day - attended by Cllr Andy Harvey;
7. Invitation to meet with Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex - Lady Emma Barnard - missed due to illness;
8. Meeting with the Mayor of Worthing to discuss joint fundraising for our Charities of the Year.

The Leader made the following announcements:-

- The Adur Homes & Customer Services portfolio was to be renamed The Housing & Citizen Services portfolio to reflect that it covers a wider housing agenda and because citizens have rights, they aren't simply customers;
- The Leader attended the launch of Sussex Energy on the 16th July which was an ambitious mission to achieve a zero carbon electricity system by 2040. A situation where Sussex produces as much energy as it uses by reducing demand and increasing supply of zero carbon energy. This was an initiative of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB);
- Following the General Election on the 4th July, Tom Rutland was the new Labour MP for East Worthing and Shoreham, there was a new government and a King's Speech, all of which had implications for Adur District Council. Among the bills which had the biggest impact on District Councils was English Devolution, Planning & Infrastructure Changes, Renters Rights and Great British Energy.

The Cabinet Member for Housing & Citizen Services updated the Council on the delivery of new housing through a number of projects including Albion Street, South Street in Lancing and the former garage sites in Mash Barn (Daniel Close and Gravelly Crescent).

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure highlighted the brilliant achievement of the Council's Parks and Foreshore Team, that four of Adur's Green Spaces had been recognised again in this year's green flag awards. They were Buckingham Park, Lancing Ring, Lancing Manor Park and Shoreham Beach.

The Leader of the Opposition, Cllr Parkin, advised Council of the following changes to Committee Memberships for the Conservative Group:-

- Councillor Andy McGregor was appointed to the vacant Conservative seat on the Planning Committee; and
- Councillor Neil Parkin replaced Councillor Tony Bellasis on the Joint Audit & Governance Committee.

There were no announcements from the Head of Paid Service.

C/18/24-25 Items raised under urgency provisions

The Chair advised that there had been no items raised under urgency.

C/19/24-25 Recommendations from the Cabinet and Committees to Council

7(A) Joint Audit & Governance Committee - 28 May 2024

Joint Audit & Governance Committee Appointments: Parish Councillors

The Chair of the Joint Audit & Governance Committee, Councillor Debs Stainforth, introduced the recommendations from the Committee, which were seconded by Councillor Carol O'Neal and following a vote, were unanimously supported.

Resolved: that the Council noted

- i. the appointment of Cllr Liz Haywood as a Co-Opted Member for Lancing Parish Council on the Joint Audit & Governance Committee for 2024/25;
- ii. the appointment of Cllr Tim Hicks as a Co-opted Member for Sompting Parish Council on the Joint Audit & Governance Committee for 2024/25.

7B(i) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 15 July 2024

New JOSOC Work Programme for 2024/25

The Chair of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Joss Loader, introduced the recommendations from the Committee, which were seconded by Councillor Nigel Jenner and following a vote, were unanimously supported.

Resolved: that the Council approved the JOSOC Work Programme for 2024/25.

7B(ii) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 15 July 2024

JOSOC Annual Report for 2023/24

The Chair of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Joss Loader, introduced the recommendations from the Committee, which were seconded by Councillor Nigel Jenner and following a vote, were unanimously supported.

Resolved: that the Council approved the Annual Report for 2023/24.

7C(i) Joint Strategic Committee - 17 July 2024

Financial Performance 2023/24 - Capital and Projects Outturn

The Leader and Chair of the Joint Strategic Committee, Councillor Jeremy Gardner, introduced the recommendations from the Committee meeting, which were seconded by Councillor Lee Cowen and following a vote, were unanimously supported.

Resolved: that the Council

- a) Noted the overall capital final outturn for 2023/24.
- b) Agreed the net carry over of General Fund Capital underspends for Adur District Council as detailed in paragraphs 5.4.

- c) Approved the financing of the Adur District Council 2023/24 Capital Investment Programme, including the use of capital receipts as set out in paragraphs 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3.
- d) Approved the carry forward of Council underspends to fund an increased contingency as reviewed in 5.6 and summarised in paragraph 5.7.

7C(ii) Joint Strategic Committee - 17 July 2024

Strategic Property Investment Fund

The Leader introduced the recommendations from the Joint Strategic Committee, which were seconded by Councillor Lee Cowen, debated and following a vote, were unanimously supported.

Resolved: that the Council agreed to adopt the Commercial Property Investment Strategy for 2024/25.

C/20/24-25 Report of the Leader on decisions taken by the Cabinet

The Leader of the Council presented his report on decisions taken by the Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council, which were detailed in Item 8.

The Leader advised that there was a Joint Strategic Committee meeting held the night before the Council meeting with several items on the agenda which could be found on the Council's website. However, the minutes detailing the decisions taken by the Joint Strategic Committee on the 17th July 2024 are not due to be published until early the following week. Therefore, he would be reporting those decisions to the next meeting of the Full Council.

No questions were raised on the remaining decisions set out in the report.

C/21/24-25 Pay Policy Statement 2023/24

Before the Council was a report by the Assistant Director for People and Change, which was circulated to all members and is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 9.

The Leader proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Lee Cowen and following a vote, was unanimously supported.

Resolved, that the Council noted and approved the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

C/22/24-25 Members question time under Council Procedure Rule 12

Rotation One

Cllr Parkin asked the following question:

I was interested to read how the Joint aim of Adur and Worthing councils was "TO MAKE THE AREA GREENER AND FAIRER". This is a great sound bite, but what does it mean? What are you going to do? In other words, what is behind the sound bite.

The Leader replied that the earlier announcements from members of the Cabinet contributed to a fairer or a greener Adur on key issues for local people such as housing, energy and the environment. That was just the beginning.

At the Joint Strategic Committee (JSC) meeting held on the 17th July, a report was received regarding the Council's involvement in the development of the county wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and the work underway by Adur Council to take this much further through the creation of an Adur & Worthing Nature Plan. This would be presented to the JSC in October and would set out further plans to re-nature the area, including the creation of green corridors to allow wildlife to move across the landscape. The new neighbourhood team would pick up these plans and work with the community to deliver as much renaturing as possible, including in people's gardens. The Council was now working with the South Downs National Park Authority to set up systems for biodiversity, net gain payments into local projects and designs for renaturing Pad Farm were progressing. The Adur River Festival was providing the community with a number of opportunities to engage with the Adur River Recovery Project between June and October.

The JSC had also agreed on a priorities document, the priorities of the two councils. In this were a series of priorities around green, active travel, a fair deal for local traders, delivering affordable homes and on homelessness.

In relation to fairer, the continued work on Proactive would ensure both councils continued to focus on identifying and supporting people who were experiencing vulnerability to help maximise their income and access help. It also meant working with partners including the NHS and community partners to address inequalities and improve health and wellbeing, including the work of the Council's social prescribing team and its Wellbeing Programme. Importantly, the Council was developing a new Housing Strategy and working with its partners, would develop a stronger approach to preventing homelessness and the essential work of improving Adur Homes after years of underinvestment. That was giving tenants a fair deal.

Cllr Shinn asked the following question:

When in opposition, you shared our frustration about the lack of progress in achieving the aims and intentions of our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Could you please outline how your new administration intends to make progress in pursuing and implementing the plan?

The Leader replied that a meeting was due to be held with West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) on the 19th July to determine the level of activity in Adur regarding cycling and walking. Whilst the Council was approaching this as a partnership, the Council would hold WSSCC to account if not enough progress was being made across the District. Work was planned around Buckingham Road, a community highway scheme would be progressed at Beach Green Lancing with the Parish Council, and the school streets trial at Swiss Gardens would be made permanent, all of which was good news. The Council was also fully supportive of interventions that aimed to encourage more active travel, including the

installation of additional cycle racks right across the District as well as the continuation of the bike share scheme.

The plan was to meet with WSCC on a regular basis, probably every 6-8 weeks, to monitor progress of work associated with the LCWIP. This regular meeting, which wasn't in place before, would hopefully generate more partnership work as a result.

In addition, and most probably linked to the aforementioned meetings, the Council was extremely keen to work with community groups who had an interest in this space to learn from them and listen to them, ensuring that the 'community voice' was also prevalent and guiding decision-making. For example, the Council had already engaged Shoreham-By-Cycle with their community highway scheme application but there were many groups that would have an interest in improving cycling and walking across the District. Its early days but the Council was extremely keen to progress or initiate work where resources allowed.

Cllr Neocleous asked the following question:

In April of this year, after some considerable wrangling, I managed to secure the sum of £500,000 from WSCC from their Capital Growth Fund for improving the public realm in Lancing.

Could Cllr Allinson please advise the council as to how that is progressing and when Lancing Residents might expect to see some consultation on the options?

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning replied that the new Administration was supportive of this proposal and of course the financial commitment made from West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to invest £500k in Lancing. The Cabinet Member understood this commitment was made as part of the Growth Deal and WSCC had given no indication that this capital investment was no longer available since the change in Administration. The Council had an Adur Growth Board meeting scheduled in mid-September where confirmation of the investment and the plan for public realm changes in Lancing would be sought.

As for the scheme itself, following a review with WSCC highways officers, the Council was currently considering an additional step that would allow testing of the ideas associated with the scheme ahead of full implementation. Officers were working on the final consultation design with Project Centre (the external design team) to ensure the Council could approach the next stage with a robust visual interpretation of what the scheme may look like.

The Council was looking at the possibility of an Experimental TRO that would allow closure of the roads identified; observe how this changed the dynamics of the village; consult with the community in a meaningful way; run a series of engagement events, all of which would help shape the detailed design of the scheme, or, if the trial wasn't successful, provide an understanding of where investment should be in Lancing. This approach met with the principles of being a Council for the Community. As for timings, the Council was looking at the Experimental TRO being in place from October onwards, following the Growth Deal meeting in September.

Cllr Jenner asked the following question:

I receive frequent complaints from residents concerned about the height and extent of grass along road verges and the general maintenance and upkeep of verges.

Issues raised include:

- *The public perception is that verges have been deliberately left uncut without consultation.*
- *Failure to collect grass clippings when cut; this impacts the immediate highway, blocking drains and settling in kerbs where it decomposes - allowing weeds to establish.*
- *Shredding of litter that accumulates in tall grass when it is cut - adding micro plastic pollution to the surface drainage system.*
- *The use of herbicide to kill weeds on pavements.*
- *The spraying of herbicides at the base of street trees.*

What is your strategy to address these concerns?

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure replied that the Council was happy to review these concerns, however, it was equally supportive of the creation of increasing biodiversity and the establishment of creating more natural environments for wildlife.

The Cabinet Member agreed to raise these concerns with WSCC as they were the highways authority and, in the main, were responsible for roadside verges and the strategy that sits behind that, including the use of materials.

For all Members, it's worth noting that the Council had recently introduced a 'Report It' function on the front page of the Council's website that allowed Members and residents to report any concerns in their neighbourhood, including grass verges. In reference to the grass verges link, this redirected to the WSCC website as they were the lead authority for this matter.

The Director for Sustainability & Resources had recently met with his counterpart at WSCC and a workshop was being organised to explore better coordination between teams, enabled by the new neighbourhood model.

Rotation Two

Cllr Carol Albury asked the following question:

I have received a number of complaints and photos of the current unkempt state of our cemeteries particularly our North Lancing Burial Ground.

I need to be able to reassure our residents.....Is this a temporary issue?

This is causing a great deal of distress to residents that cannot even find their family grave and in many cases with the grass so long feel unsafe underfoot to walk in this area.

We need to make sure as a Council that these areas are kept to a high standard of cutting, that they remain safe and an area families feel is well tended and comforting when visiting.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure replied thanked the Councillor for their question, and acknowledged that this was a sensitive issue.

To date the area had experienced a very wet and warm spring and summer, which had encouraged significant vegetation growth. This could be seen in our gardens, parks and

open spaces. It presented a particular challenge in cemeteries because the team had to manually trim and mow around individual graves.

The bereavement and parks team were working as fast as they could on their rotas to stay on top of the mowing, fitting it in alongside burial operations.

This was a temporary issue, and the Cabinet Member gave an assurance that the Council was committed to maintaining high standards across all of its sites.

Cllr Higgins asked the following question:

An election pledge was made to support our high streets and local businesses with a clean-up of our town and village centres. Can you tell us how this is progressing?

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning replied that the Council was extremely committed to working with partners to make sure that high streets and town centres were clean and welcoming. Officers had been working together to determine what and how this could be achieved, however in keeping with the Council's commitments to listening to the community, the first step was to undertake 'walkabouts' across the District to determine which areas should be targeted.

These walkabouts were planned for August / September, which would include relevant Ward Members, community groups and, where feasible, local businesses. This would help to identify any areas that needed cleansing or improvement and, from there, an implementation plan would be developed as to the best way to tackle any issues. The Cabinet Member anticipated that any work would take place from the Autumn onwards.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.55 pm, having commenced at 7.00 pm.

Chair