



West Sussex ALC Ltd.
Minutes of the Virtual Board Meeting of West Sussex ALC Ltd. Held
remotely by Zoom on
Friday 13th October 2023 at 2:30pm

Attendance

Cllr Douglas Denham St Pinnock, Chairman, Mid Sussex District Association

Cllr Andrew Shaxson, Chichester District Association

Cllr Amanda Tait, Chichester District Association

Cllr Charles Britton, Chichester District Association

Cllr Val Court, Horsham District Association

Trevor Leggo, CEO WSALC Ltd.

Sarah Norman, Clerk's Representative, Society of Local Council Clerks (Sussex Branch)

Anna Beams, Secretary to the Board

1. Apologies for absence

Received and accepted from Cllrs Michael Tu, Martin Sheldon, Mike Mendoza, Alison Cooper and Malcolm Eastwood, Julie Holden, Clerk's representative, Mark Mulberry and Alun Alesbury, SDNPA representative.

2. To approve the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th July 2023

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as a true record to be issued to the Chair for electronic signing.

3. Financial update

- a) Management Accounts for Q2: In the absence of Mark Mulberry, the Management Accounts and report for Q2 as circulated with the agenda were noted ([Appendix A](#)). The CEO added that he had recently met with Mark to discuss the accounts and that he had nothing of note to bring to the Boards attention.
- b) Budget review: The Chair explained that both bank accounts held by WSALC exceed the £85k FSCS (Financial Services Compensation Scheme) threshold potentially putting the funds at risk.

It was AGREED that the Chair, CEO and Mark Mulberry will investigate options of alternative deposit accounts and report back to the Board.

The matter of subscription rates for 2024-25 was deferred from the previous meeting and the Chair recommended that the increase remain at 2% based on the healthy financial situation of the association.

It was AGREED that the subscription rate is increased by 2% for 2024-25.

- c) Outstanding debtors: The CEO reported that all outstanding debtors have been contacted and Anna Beams added that 6 debtors have paid within the past week. The remaining debtors have advised that they will make the payment as soon as they have the payment approved by council.

A discussion was held regarding the budget allocated for advertising and whether it should be allocated to an alternative budget by virement.

It was AGREED to delegate the matter to the Chair, CEO and Mark Mulberry to report back to the Board.

4. CEO Update

The CEO updated the Board in the following matters:

Chairs Forum: the recent Chairs forum was very well attended with over 40 Chairs and Vice-Chairs present.

Civility and Respect: To date approximately 30% of West Sussex councils have signed and adopted the Civility and Respect Pledge. It is important to establish which councils have and have not signed the Pledge and why. WSALC and ESALC will therefore be jointly embarking on a short survey to gather the relevant information.

WSALC office: WSALC have settled into the new office in Hurstpierpoint and are happy to welcome visitors.

Martyn's Law: the law is currently in draft and going through Parliament. The intention is to ensure that venues are safe from terrorism and the Law will need to be recognised by all local councils. Further information is available on the Government website and will be circulated to member councils.

New Fire Safety Regulations: came into effect on 1st October 2023 and affects non-domestic units. West Sussex Fire & Rescue were invited to attend the WSALC Conference on 20th October but are unable to send a representative.

Planning enforcement: member councils continue to have issues with planning enforcement across the county, the CEO will take the issue up with NALC to establish where the Government stand on the matter.

Landline phones: The CEO has been informed that landline phones will no longer feature after 2026 and VPI (Virtual Path Indicator) will need to be used. He suggested that a guest speaker should be invited to the clerks and chairs forums to provide an update on the situation.

The Chair proposed that the matters of planning enforcement and landline removal be adopted by the Board as ongoing issues to take to NALC – it was AGREED to take this forward.

Cllr Shaxson queried whether guidance on Martyn's Law and whether it affects village halls would be issued by NALC or other. The CEO will investigate.

Cllr Shaxson further queried the effectiveness of the Civility and Respect Pledge. The Chair suggested that the Pledge indicates the style in which the adopting council wishes to operate and be viewed and furthermore supports the plea for re-introduction of sanctions. The Chair encouraged all Directors to ask their councils to sign the Pledge.

The CEO concluded his report by reminding the Board that the next round of Police Focus Groups take place in November.

5. Training report

Anna Beams referred to a report circulated to the Board prior to the meeting ([Appendix B](#))

The Chair added that he is pleased with the attendance figures. Anna agreed to circulate a list of those councils that have not booked on any training this year with the Chairs of each of the relevant district associations to encourage more councillors to receive training.

6. Reports by District Associations

- a) **Adur:** In the absence of the representative there was no update.
- b) **Arun:** In the absence of representation from Arun, the CEO advised that a Management Committee meeting had been held on 10th October where the future of ADALC was discussed. It was agreed at the Committee meeting to call all parishes together to discuss critical matters to parishes and invite local MPs to attend. Cllr Douglas Denham St. Pinnock will attend in his capacity of Chair of WSALC.
- c) **Chichester:** Cllr Andrew Shaxson reported that no CDALC meeting has taken place since the previous Board meeting in July. A Working Group was formed to establish a way forward for CDALC, however, to date only 2 members of the Committee have responded to Cllr Shaxson's requests for input.

Communications with Chichester District Council are progressing slowly. Cllr Shaxson has invited CDC to submit some suitable dates to meet with him and Trevor Leggo and will report back to a future Board meeting the outcome.

- d) **Horsham:** Cllr Val Court advised that a joint meeting of the Horsham District Association and Horsham District Council was held on 26th July. The meeting was in-person and included a update from HDC on the Local Plan and climate change.

Anna Beams reported that the meeting on 26th July was also the HALC AGM and that Cllr Malcolm Eastwood was re-elected as Chair and Cllr Val Court was elected as Vice-Chair and both were appointed as representatives on the WSALC Board.

- e) **Mid Sussex:** Cllr Denham St. Pinnock, WSALC Chair and Chair of MSALC, reported that he had attended a meeting with officers of Mid Sussex District Council along with Trevor Leggo and that he is in the process of reviving the Mid Sussex District Association of Local Councils.

7. SDNPA Report

In the absence of Cllr Alun Alesbury, Cllr Andrew Shaxson delivered a written report circulated prior to the meeting ([Appendix C](#)).

There were no further questions.

8. Matters for discussion not on the agenda.

The Chair invited Sarah Norman, the Clerks representative to provide an update. Sarah advised that she had recently attended an SLCC branch meeting and that no problems or issues had arisen.

No further matters were raised.

4. Future meetings

Friday 19th January 2024 @ 2.30pm by Zoom.

15:43 Meeting closed.

Signed (Chair):

D D PINNOCK
D D PINNOCK (Feb 5, 2024 12:42 GMT)

Dated: 05/02/2024

APPENDIX A

WSALC Limited – Management Accounts Reporting for the quarter to 30th September 2023.

The association continues to move firmly forward through 2023/24 with a strong financial footing, I don't anticipate any significant costs for the remainder of the year unless the board makes other plans.

Looking to the future I continue to propose only 2% nominal increase in subscriptions, which politically our members will appreciate in these times of rising costs and financial uncertainty.

I know in the past the board has muted the point of subsidising training for councillors – with our increasing reserves the association is certainly in the position of being able to implement some top down project work.

Income

Subscription income is £95,569 (2023: £93,615) of which £18,641.97 (2023: £661.89), 18 councils (2023: 7 councils) remains unpaid as at the management accounts date. Statements have been issued and the CEO/office will call the councils concerned after the board meeting. Please note that whilst this level of debtors is higher than prior years – this is not a cause for any significant concern.

Expenditure

The costs incurred to date are £65,876 (2023: £63,337) against a total year end budget of £114,493. We are currently forecasting a year-end expenditure total of £121,955. The largest cost item is NALC fees at £33,080, followed by salaries and Ni at £12,556 (2023: £12,790.)

The reason for the additional forecast is expenditure of room rental, grants paid to DALCS and travel; however compensating this is income for training and room rental reimbursement of c. £3,600 not budgeted for.

All costs are listed within this pack.

Bank & Cash Balances

At the 30th September 2023 there was £75,090 in the current account and £50,509 in the deposit account.

A copy of the bank statement is provided with this pack.

Year End Forecast

It is anticipated that there will be a surplus of £10,833 (2023: £13,699) at the year-end date. This will be subject to change as the year progresses and depending also on board decisions re future spending.

Future Forecasts

Based on an annual 2% increase, the surplus would be circa £8kk each year after allowing for £10k on special projects spending for the benefit of the membership.

I would therefore propose the following charges per elector

2024/25 £0.3185p per elector	{income circa £97.4K}
2025/26 £0.3248p per elector	{income circa £99.3K}
2026/27 £0.3313p per elector	{income circa £101.3K}

Reserves

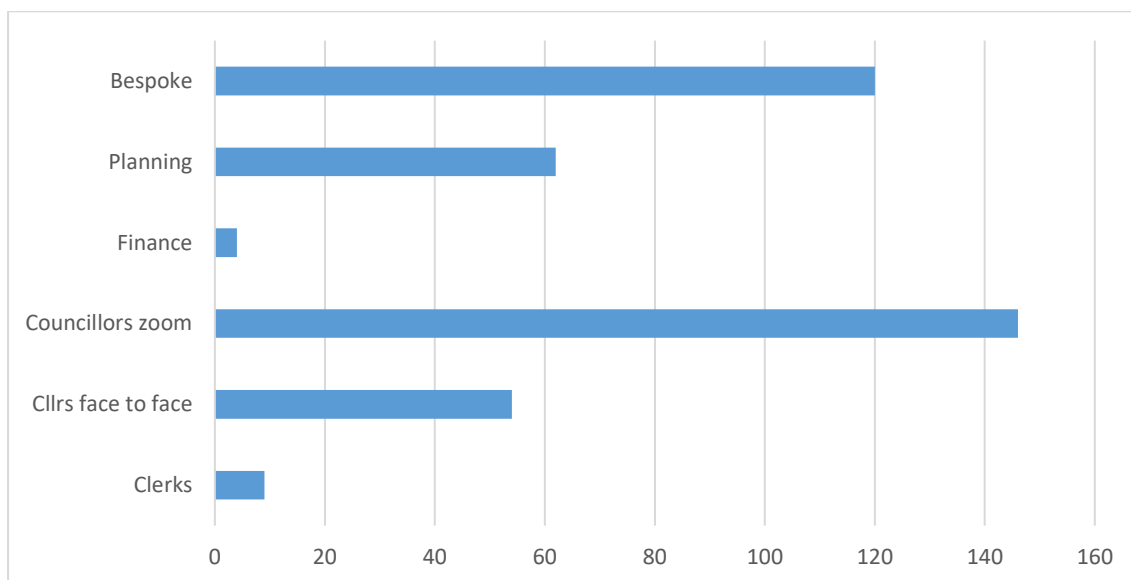
The association carries forward into the 2023/24 year £82,085. This is with in the new recommend guidance issued by Jpag as between 3 and 12 months of net revenue expenditure. It is anticipated that the year end reserves will be in the region of £92,968

APPENDIX B

Training Analysis

1st April - 30th September

Topic	total attendees	total no of councils
Clerks	9	7
Cllrs face to face	54	27
Councillors zoom	146	49
Finance	4	2
Planning	62	29
Bespoke	120	12
Total	395	31



Appendix C

13/10/2023 South Downs National Park update

Apologies that this update is VERY late, I was not anticipating having to prepare it. There has been the anticipated change to the membership as a result of the May elections. Whilst Alun Alesbury and I were re-elected by West Sussex Parishes (thank you to them, even though only 25 out of 87 bothered to vote) many of the Districts have new reps. Fortunately for the NPA they appear to be knowledgeable and interested in what they must do, as in the past there have been some placemen and women appointed. This was borne out by the sense talked by the newbies, who were half of the Planning Committee that met in Lewes yesterday to deliberate on the very large application there to redevelop the North Street industrial site into nearly 700 homes and 3,500 sq m of business use. This is a highly complex application; there are many issues to take into account not least the fact that the site has been prone to flooding every few decades, and the need to take into account the idiosyncratic views of Lewes residents. In spite of us voting to defer the decision for 4 months to get some further work carried out, will we appear in effigy on 5th November? Otherwise the planning delivery moves on better than many LPAs are experiencing, though aspects of enforcement remain a worry, and we have just seen a surge in appeals lost to 50%. We are understandably investigating this.

Further to this there are, as ever, legislative changes to planning in the pipeline, and of course the housing target figures announced by Labour might mean that anything done now will be under review post-election. Numbers of parishes are working up Parish Priority Statements. Whilst these will not have a statutory function, they will help to both provide guidance to the SDNPA, and concentrate the minds of parish councils and their parishioners on what their priorities are, including new housing and its possible location.

There was an online Zoom meeting for all the parishes in the SDNP on 4th October. There is no such thing as a perfect meeting, but it was quite well attended and the revisions to the format appeared to work. It started with the 6 parish appointees individually explaining what they were bringing to the job, who they are etc. There was then an update on Landscape, followed by planning issues and then a long Q and A session. The latter proved most useful, indeed in spite of 40 minutes being allocated it 'happily' overran by more than 15 minutes.

Compared with other such meetings where there are usually too many set-piece papers on topical subjects and too little time for Q and As, this format enabled Communication. We are 'washing up' on 18th October; I anticipate positive comments all round.

Seven Sisters Country Park is now very different to the way it was two years ago. The buildings that house the facilities have been renovated, there are three holiday lets that put many of our homes to shame, and visitor numbers at that honeypot are increasing. Now we have to ensure it is a commercial success; funds have by necessity been pumped in and it is pay-back time. Park-wide, other than when it is involved in a specific local scheme, the SDNPA has little direct input into the work of parishes, other than via the planning function. The SDNPA is obliged to concentrate on endeavouring to make the National Park an attraction for all, encouraging an appearance by groups of people who have traditionally stayed away. They also are concentrating on specific re-naturing projects, including facilitating landowners to do this. In short, there is a lot of behind the scenes work being carried out to ensure the SDNP is and remains special in landscape and nature terms, and is a great place to visit.

I will of course be happy to expand on this at the meeting in just over 6 hours time.

Andrew Shaxson

WSALC Board Minutes 13 Oct 2023

Final Audit Report

2024-02-05

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