



West Sussex ALC Ltd.
Minutes of the Virtual Board Meeting of West Sussex ALC Ltd. Held
remotely by Zoom on
Friday 26th April 2024 at 2:30pm

Attendance

Cllr Douglas Denham St Pinnock, Chair, Mid Sussex District Association
Cllr Mike Mendoza, Adur District
Cllr Alison Cooper, Arun District Association
Cllr Michael Tu, Arun District Council
Cllr Andrew Shaxson, Chichester District Association
Cllr Amanda Tait, Chichester District Association
Cllr Charles Britton, Chichester District Association
Cllr Val Court, Horsham District Association
Cllr Graham Watkins, Horsham District Association
Cllr Martin Sheldon, Mid Sussex District Association
Trevor Leggo, CEO WSALC Ltd.
Julie Holden, Clerk's Representative, Society of Local Council Clerks (Sussex Branch)
Sarah Norman, Clerk's Representative, Society of Local Council Clerks (Sussex Branch)
Mark Mulberry, Company Secretary
Cllr Alun Alesbury, SDNPA representative
Chief Inspector Will Keating-Jones, Sussex Police
Anna Beams, Secretary to the Board

1. Welcome by Chair

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. He welcomed Cllr Graham Watkins, newly elected Chair of the Horsham District Association and WSALC Board member.

2. Apologies for absence

None received.

3. Previous Minutes

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

At the discretion of the Chair, agenda items 7. Police officer numbers in West Sussex and 10. SDNPA report were brought forward on the agenda.

7. Police officer numbers in West Sussex

The CEO introduced Chief Inspector Will Keating-Jones, Divisional Commander of Arun and Chichester, who had been invited to speak following issues in Barnham and Arundel and the reporting of low policing numbers.

CI Keating-Jones reported that an incident had occurred at Barnham railway station involving a group of youths and that the incident occurred on a bank holiday. Following the incident, CI Keating-Jones attended a meeting of the parish council at which there was a large level of fallout from the public in respect of the police response. He explained that reported numbers of response officers available in West Sussex on the day in question was not inaccurate however, in addition to response officers there are many other department officers available on any given day available to respond should they be required. Incidence responses are graded according to the level of threat and each incident is considered by contact centre officers. In the case of the Barnham incident, the level of threat was considered low.

CI Keating-Jones clarified that they police work closely with the Safer Arun Partnership.

The CEO queried the police position in respect of E-scooters. CI Keating-Jones offered to provide the CEO with a contact within the Roads Policing Unit. The Chair and CEO will liaise with Sussex Police and report back.

15:14 CI Keating-Jones left the meeting.

10. SDNPA Report

Cllr Alun Alesbury reported that personnel within the authority remains in a period of flux following the retirement of the CEO. Director of Planning, Tim Slaney, is currently interim CEO. A recruitment exercise is underway.

East Sussex has had a representative vacancy for some time and the election process is now underway.

Progress is beginning to be made to update the Local Plan and potential sites for development are being investigated to meet the needs of the inhabitants of the park.

15:25 Cllr Alesbury left the meeting.

4. Financial Update

a) Management Accounts for Q4 and year end

Mark Mulberry referred to his report circulated prior to the meeting.

He suggested the Board consider utilising some reserves on projects.

Mark highlighted that four subscriptions and one CiLCA invoice remain unpaid from 2023/24 and proposed that the Board discuss how to proceed.

Mark recommended that the Board agree to move more funds to the deposit account as subscriptions for 2024/25 are now being received.

Mark requested that the Board consider the budget and subscription fee for 2024/25 and email the CEO with their thoughts, copying in the Chair, Mark and Anna.

Julie Holden suggested that some reserves could be used to encourage member councils to move to a .gov.uk email. The CEO explained that despite NALC having a strong relationship with the Cabinet Office, there is scope to promote this further. The Chair added that he would like to suggest that all parishes are encouraged to use .gov.uk emails.

Following discussions it was **AGREED**:

Mark Mulberry has discretion to move funds between the NatWest current and deposit accounts to maximise money management, leaving not less than £20,000 in the current account at any one time. **All in favour.**

The CEO will follow up on outstanding subscriptions from 2023/24 and Julie Holden will follow up on the remaining outstanding CiCLA invoice. **All in favour.**

The Annual Accounts were **APPROVED** for signing by the Chair.

The CEO asked Mark for clarification on the launch of Mulberry Local Authority Services and the implications for member councils.

Mark explained that the local authority work has been part of Mulberry & Co for the past 20 years. As Mulberry & Co is an accountancy practice, insurances have to be paid based on turnover. The turnover was therefore being inflated by the inclusion of the local authority work and it was prudent to separate it. Having a dedicated business for local authority work also benefits the clients as it is not confused by the accountancy label. Mark assured the CEO that the services provided have not changed in any way and that the business is simply operating under a different name. The CEO stated that he was reassured by Mark's explanation.

b) Discuss and agree options for a company debit or credit card.

Anna Beams advised that, following a discussion with the CEO, it was suggested that WSALC have a company debit or credit card. She explained that all purchases are currently processed on the Mulberry & Co credit card and WSALC recharged.

The Chair proposed that the company apply for a debit card – **AGREED, all in favour.**

c) To agree 2x signatories for CCLA account.

Anna Beams advised that, following the Boards agreement to open a CCLA account at the previous meeting, the Board need to appoint two signatories.

The Chair proposed the Chair and Vice-Chair – **AGREED, all in favour.**

5. DALCs: to discuss and finalise arrangements for the incorporation of DALC bank accounts into WSALC.

Anna Beams reported that Horsham, Chichester and Mid-Sussex District Associations have agreed to incorporate their bank accounts and administration into WSALC. Arun has not held a meeting since the last WSALC Board meeting.

It was **AGREED** to begin the process of incorporating the bank accounts and await the decision of ADALC.

6. CEO Update

The CEO updated the Board on the following matters:

Contact Improvement Group – Chaired by the CEO, the purpose of the group is to ensure that all who contact the police receive good service. At the next meeting on 16th May, a visit to the control room will be incorporated. If anyone would like to attend, please advise the CEO.

Recruitment – there are currently 5 clerk vacancies in West Sussex, the largest of which is Burgess Hill Town Council, and 1 deputy clerk vacancy.

NALC – NALC are reassessing their priorities for the coming year and have suggested that the counties let them know their top three priorities. Clerks and Chairs were asked to raise any issues at the recent WSALC forums. Topics picked up were reinstatement of sanctions and compulsory training for councillors. The CEO requested that the Board contact him with their thoughts.

NALC have formed a peer group review panel with the LGA which is aimed primarily at larger councils. There has been no progress on hybrid meetings for parish councils which will require Parliamentary time.¹

16:08 Mark Mulberry left the meeting.

Safety and security of councillors – a national security programme – Operation Bridger - has been established, headed up in Sussex by Inspector Ollie Fisher. Member councils have received a video on safety and security.

Register of Members Interests – the CEO has approached NALC for clarification as the rules conflict with advice received from the police about the disclosure of personal information. NALC have stated that they have no policy line. The Chair and CEO will approach the Monitoring Officers on the matter and report to the next meeting.

Civility and Respect – members have been encouraged to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge and a survey was circulated to establish the response. To date, 40 councils have indicated that they have signed the Pledge, 4 have indicated that they will be signing the Pledge and 5 have stated that they will not sign the Pledge.

Julie Holden added it is important to highlight that the Civility and Respect Pledge is a complete approach which includes poor behaviour of the public towards councillors and council staff.

The Chair added that he encourages all councils to sign the Pledge and review it annually.

16:25 Sarah Norman left the meeting.

8. Reports by District Associations

¹ Following the meeting it was confirmed that the implementation of the Standards in Public Life Committee report to reinstate sanctions simply needs Parliamentary time.

At the Chairs discretion and as a courtesy to Board members who have not previously provided an update, the list was reversed.

Mid-Sussex – Cllr Douglas Denham St. Pinnock, Chair of MSALC reported the following:

- A hybrid meeting was recently held at Hurstpierpoint and on Zoom at which over half of member councils attended.
- Agreement was reached regarding incorporating the bank account into WSALC.
- The CEO and Cllr Denham St. Pinnock have reached an agreement with Mid-Sussex District Council that an officer will attend each MSALC meeting.

Horsham: Cllr Graham Watkins advised that he was appointed Chair of HALC in February. He reported on the following:

- A survey was sent to all member councils to establish their views on the Local and Neighbourhood Plans. 13 parishes responded and results were fed back to Horsham District Council.
- Cllr Watkins attended a meeting with Horsham District Council to discuss content of a joint HDC/HALC meeting taking place on 28th April. The meeting will be attended by the HDC CEO, Jane Eaton, the Leader, Cllr Martin Boffey along with other senior officers.

Chichester: Cllr Andrew Shaxson, Chair of CDALC reported the following:

- There has been no meeting since the previous Board meeting.
- A meeting of a steering group will take place next week to discuss ways of re-invigorating CDALC.

Arun: Cllr Micheal Tu, Chair of ADALC reported the following:

- A meeting was scheduled for earlier in the month however, due to issues with finding a suitable venue, the meeting was postponed.
- A meeting of the three towns has taken place but no details have been received.

a) **Adur:** Cllr Mike Mendoza, WSALC representative for Adur reported the following:

- Lancing and Sompting Parish Councils have elections in May and there has been no shortages of candidates.
- Lancing Parish Council will be recruiting a new clerk.

9. Clerks Update

Julie Holden reported that the main focus for clerks is processing their year-end paperwork but that councils are also busy planning D-Day commemorative events.

She added that Sarah Norman will be stepping down as clerk's representative for the SLCC and this was her final WSALC meeting. Celia Price was appointed as the replacement representative at the last SLCC meeting with Julie remaining as the second representative.

The Chair extended his thanks to Sarah for her contribution to the WSALC Board meetings over the last couple of years.

Julie also reported the following:

- The SLCC have launched two new qualifications; PIALC, Principals of internal Auditing for Local Councils, a qualification for clerks that wish to undertake internal auditing and a level 7 qualification in Community Governance.
- The SLCC have launched a video explaining the benefits of membership.
- The SLCC Sussex Branch are holding a social networking day on 11th July at Ridgeview Vineyard with the intention to encourage informal conversations and to build networks.

11. Matters for discussion not on the agenda

No further matter.

12. Future Board meetings

TBC.

16:47 Meeting closed.

Signed (Chair): *Douglas Denham St. Pinnock*
Douglas Denham St. Pinnock (Sep 27, 2024 15:31 GMT+1)

Dated: **27/09/2024**

WSALC Board Minutes 26 April 2024

Final Audit Report

2024-09-27

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