



West Sussex ALC Ltd.
Minutes of the Virtual Board Meeting of West Sussex ALC Ltd. held on
Friday 28th July 2023 at 2:30pm by Zoom

Attendance

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

Cllr Andrew Shaxson, Chichester District Association

Cllr Amanda Tait, Chichester District Association

Cllr Malcolm Eastwood, 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 & Charles Britton, Julie Holden, Clerk's representative, and Mark Mulberry. Not present, Cllrs Mike Mendoza and Alison Cooper.

2. To approve the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st April 2023

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as a true record.

3. Financial update

- a) In the absence of Mark Mulberry, the Management Accounts and report for Q1 as circulated with the agenda were noted. ([appendix A](#))
- b) It was **AGREED** to sign the Statutory Accounts.
- c) It was **AGREED** to submit the accounts and associated tax returns to HMRC and Companies House.
- d) The CEO advised that income was as expected for the current year. Anna agreed to circulate a list of outstanding debtors to the Board. As Mark was not present at the meeting it was suggested that a 2% subscription increase is reasonable but that the budget review should be deferred to the next Board meeting.

Cllr Eastwood queried whether some funds in the business account should be moved to other accounts in order to fall under the £85k protected threshold and whether a £6k advertising budget is necessary. The Chair suggested that the Board should consider both matters and it was **AGREED** to delegate discussions to the Chair, CEO and Mark Mulberry who would report back to the Board.

4. District Association Grants: to agree grant allocations for the financial year 2023-24

The CEO explained that the County Association donates an annual grant to the district associations to assist with secretarial and administration costs. The agreed sum for the past two years was £500.

The Chair proposed an increased grant of £1000 to help revive the district associations and help to make them more effective.

Following a full discussion, it was **AGREED** to allocate each district association – Arun, Chichester, Horsham and Mid Sussex – a grant of £1000 along with communication from the Board. The communication should state that the increased sum has been allocated to help facilitate dialogue with the District Councils and that it should be used for that purpose and regularly reported back to the WSALC Board.

5. CEO Update

The CEO updated the Board in the following matters:

NALC: the focus has been on Martyn's Law, a ruling that will have an impact on all parish councils that are responsible for premises that can hold organised events with more than 100 attendees. Final details are yet to emerge from Government however, it is important that parish councils are aware and are ready and equipped for the Law coming into force. NALC are pressing Government on the implications on the local council sector. It is currently unclear how the district councils will administer the legislation however it is understood that the Law could be in place before the end of 2023.

TREATMENT OF CLERKS: The CEO reported that there is an increase in instances of councils failing to exercise a duty of care towards clerks and officers and that the majority of his time is spent dealing with conflict resolution. He advised that he has approached NALC requesting a clear statement from Government as to why sanctions cannot be re-instated.

Cllr Eastwood added that a discussion was held at the HALC AGM on how parish councils can recruit and attract enough candidates to prompt an election and subsequently how they can be trained so that instances of conflict can be reduced.

Following a full discussion, it was **AGREED** that a paper is prepared by WSALC, and ESALC if agreeable, containing specific, anonymised examples of cases of conflict and poor treatment of clerks and officers to be presented to MPs at the NALC Lobby Day. Monitoring Officers will be invited to sign the paper and to provide anonymised examples for inclusion.

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 in June when it was agreed that a joint ADALC/ADC meeting would be held in the Autumn following a successful first conference which took place earlier in the year. Relationships with the District Council have improved with the Chair having regular dialogue with the Leader and officers.

- c) **Chichester:** Cllr Andrew Shaxson reported that the CDALC AGM had taken place on 29th June when he was elected Chair and Cllr Charles Britton was elected Vice-Chair. He advised that 18 out of the 60 town and parish councils in the district attended the AGM with 6 being from the 'north corridor'.

3 representatives to the WSALC Board were appointed at the AGM, namely Cllrs Andrew Shaxson, Charles Britton and Amanda Tait. Anna Beams was re-appointed secretary and treasurer.

The association holds a balance of £1,065.

A Steering Group has been appointed to establish a way forward for the association which consists of representatives mainly from the south of the Downs.

Matters of concern to councils raised at the meeting include the ability of councils to manage the scale of proposed CIL receipts and how to encourage more people to stand for council.

Cllr Shaxson added that, as Chair, he hopes to move the association forward in a positive manner.

Cllr Amanda Tait explained that Chichester is a big district geographically and suggested that the association needs to justify where subscriptions will be spent if they are to be levied. She suggested that there is a need to encourage and engage more members to attend meetings.

The Chair offered to attend CDALC meetings and explain the functions of WSALC and to help encourage members to support CDALC which was accepted by Cllr Shaxson.

- d) **Horsham:** Cllr Malcolm Eastwood advised that the HALC AGM had taken place on 26th July followed by the annual joint HALC/HDC meeting, both were held face to face in Horsham.

Cllr Eastwood reported that both meetings were well attended and that he was re-elected as Chair, Cllr Val Court of Nuthurst Parsh Council was elected Vice-Chair and Anna Beams was re-appointed secretary and treasurer. As per the HALC Constitution, the Chair and Vice-Chair, himself and Cllr Val Court, were appointed as representatives to the WSALC Board.

Two Motions were put forward at the AGM. The first received from Storrington & Sullington Parish Council to give HALC members the opportunity to vote on whether to support the Local Plan when a draft version is available. It was agreed at the AGM to hold a recorded vote by Zoom when the Plan is available for HALC representatives to indicate whether their council support the Local Plan or not.

The second Motion was received by Billingshurst Parish Council that parish councils who can demonstrate that they have a public question time at all meetings be excused of their obligation to hold an Annual Parish Meeting of electors each Spring. It was explained that this would require primary legislation and the Chair suggested that an alternative would be for Billingshurst Parish Council to call an Annual Parish Meeting on some day between 1st March and 1st June instead of holding its usual Parish Council Meeting. The Motion was therefore withdrawn.

The Local Plan was the primary focus at the joint HALC/HDC meeting which followed the AGM along with climate change and ecology. The Leader and officers presented and engaged with members and it was a positive and constructive meeting.

The association holds a balance of £2,190, has full membership and subscriptions have been paid in full.

Cllr Eastwood advised that members regularly contact and engage with him.

- e) **Mid Sussex:** The Chair and Chair of MSALC reported that a hybrid meeting was held in July which 20 people attended in total. Many attendees were new and enthusiastic parish councillors.

A Steering Group was appointed to discuss and progress initiatives regarding re-engagement with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). The Group consists of 6 members, including Jenny Nagy, Clerk to Worth Parish Council.

A complaint was submitted to MSDC by 3 town councils regarding a contract withdrawn and the manner in which town and parish councils are treated by MSDC in general. The 3 clerks received a personal response from the CEO.

Following the district association updates, Sarah Norman, Clerk representative, spoke on behalf of clerks and thanked the Board for their continuing support with the issues that they experience and the lack of support from their own councils. She suggested that mandatory training for councillors would be welcomed along with the re-introduction of sanctions.

Cllr Eastwood queried whether there was a way of reaching out to councillors that have not received any training and advised that his own council have a system where all new councillors have an induction with the Clerk and Chair and that training is agreed at that meeting.

It was suggested it could be included in Standing Orders that training is mandatory for councillors however, the CEO advised that it would not be enforceable.

Anna Beams was asked to compile a report of training statistics in West Sussex to be discussed at the next Board meeting.

15:58 Sarah Norman left the meeting.

5. SDNPA Report

Cllr Andrew Shaxson referred to his report circulated prior to the meeting ([appendix B](#))

Cllr Shaxson reported that the SDNPA election results have been announced and that he has been re-elected as parish representative for West Sussex along with Cllr Alun Alesbury of Stoughton Parish Council. He added that they are not officially members until DEFRA ratify their appointments which they have not yet done at the time of this Board meeting.

Cllr Shaxson explained that there is a 3-month grace period post-election to allow members not elected to continue as representatives until the new members appointments are ratified.

Officers at the SDNPA are trying to persuade DEFRA to ratify the appointments as the grace period ends on 4th August.

25 of the 87 eligible West Sussex parishes voted in the election compared with 25 of the 30 eligible East Sussex parishes.

The Chair agreed to invite Cllr Alun Alesbury to attend the WSALC Board meetings as the SDNPA representative to provide future updates to the Board.

6. Matters for discussion not on the agenda.

The CEO explained that Ashurst Wood Village Council have been campaigning for a 20mph speed limit through the village for the past 8 years. The Chair of Ashurst Wood has requested that WSALC use their influence to assist with the ongoing campaign.

Cllr Shaxson suggested that a Community Highways Scheme application could be submitted as a more favourable route to the scheme being approved, the CEO will suggest this to the Chair of the council.

It was concluded that WSALC approach the County Council on the basis that they are aware of the campaign and that it appears to be taking an inordinately long time to reach a conclusion.

The CEO explained that a clerk of a parish council in West Sussex has submitted a grievance through their union and that a panel will need to be formed to assess the grievance. For various reasons a panel cannot be appointed from members of the council and will therefore need to comprise of volunteers from the West Sussex, East Sussex and Surrey Associations as has been the case in the past. The Chair volunteered to serve on the panel.

The CEO advised that the SLCC Sussex Branch has nominated WSALC for the NALC Star Councils County Association Award this year. The nomination includes what WSALC offers and does for its members councils, overcoming difficulties during the breakdown of the 3 counties arrangement and the positive relationship that WSALC has with the SLCC, including allowing representation at Board meetings and the CEO's attendance at SLCC meetings.

The Chair thanked Julie Holden and the SLCC for the nomination.

7. Future meetings

AGM provisionally booked for 24th November 2023.

16:22 Meeting closed.

Signed (Chairman) 
D D PINNOCK (Oct 25, 2023 13:00 GMT+1)

Dated Oct 25, 2023

APPENDIX A

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

Income

Subscription income is £95,569 (2023: £93,432) of which £20,292 (2023: £15,644.95) remains unpaid as at the management accounts date.

Expenditure

The costs incurred to date are £40,634 (2023: £17,983) against a total year end budget of £114,493.

All costs are listed within this pack.

Bank & Cash Balances

At the 31st March 2023 there was £97,222 in the current account and £50,287 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 £12,404 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 £94,490

APPENDIX B

SDNP report June 2023

As I write this report, and in common with many local district councils, the membership of the South Downs National Park Authority is in flux. There are 27 members, and at present only 11 are guaranteed to be the same people who represented their organisations before the elections. As Chichester District parishes within the National park will know, they have just had the opportunity to nominate and then vote for parish representatives. Included in this number is the current chair of the Authority, Vanessa Rowlands. The results for East and West Sussex will be announced on 26th June, so on the 29th I might well be presenting this report having not been elected.

Whilst the location of the unfortunate news on the planning front is just in Hampshire it could well affect all National Parks. An Inspector decided to allow the appeal for 60 eco lodges, a farm shop and electric car charging location adjacent to the A 3 (SDNP/21/06431/FUL). Whilst there is a need for such facilities, the National Park argued that it should not use that location, not least because of the detrimental landscape impact. The Inspector fundamentally disagreed. He said that as the area is degraded by the A3 and its junctions that part of the National Park is of lesser quality; it does not contribute in any meaningful way to the landscape of the SDNP. The National policy gives equal protection to all land in the National Park. We are not only upset about this ruling, but concerned that an appeal having driven a planning horse and cart through an important national policy, other sites in other parks – and AONBs - could well be vulnerable.

The controversial topic for many people has been the outcome of the fire at the Angel in Midhurst on night of 15th / 16th March. There has been a great deal of local anger about the way the way the outcome has been handled. The SDNPA, WSCC and CDC have been hamstrung by legislation that protects listed buildings, and it is only because they over-rode the inaction of the owner and their insurers that the work was put in hand by those authorities using public money which they hope to recoup from the insurers. The road will open this Friday 23rd June, 10 days ahead of schedule. Is there a lesson to be learnt; should relevant legislation be scrutinised and amended? Should the preservation of a Victorian façade in front of a burnt-out 400 year old building outweigh the impact of the road-closure on dozens of businesses, the inconvenience to many thousands of local people, and tens of thousands of motorists?

I referred to the Glover report a year ago, and the fact that there was no movement on the recommendations. That remains the case; arguably the government has many more pressing matters to consider. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that so much constructive work has been shelved. Whilst there isn't much movement on the required revision of the SDNPA's Local Plan, those Parish Councils who do not have a Neighbourhood Development Plan are being encouraged to create Parish Priority Statements. Regardless of the outcome, and noting that they will not have any planning policy weight, the process will make Parish Councils look to the future, to effectively forward plan. Many already do to some extent, but with our limited resources much of our time is spent on fire-fighting 'events', as they occur.

Many other long-term issues remain, not least the Water Neutrality issue that also affects areas north-east of Chichester District. Many ways are being found to 'officially' reduce water usage, but in the long run will it solve the issues of too much water use and too little of it available in this area? And don't mention sewage.....

Andrew Shaxson

WSALC Board Minutes 28 July 2023

Final Audit Report

2023-10-25

Created:	2023-10-25
By:	Mark Mulberry (mark@mulberryandco.co.uk)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAZM_3BmWsZofLhYmq3cOcG2KpXurX-HIB

"WSALC Board Minutes 28 July 2023" History

-  Document created by Mark Mulberry (mark@mulberryandco.co.uk)
2023-10-25 - 8:35:48 AM GMT- IP address: 213.129.74.45
-  Document emailed to ddp@westhoathly.gov.uk for signature
2023-10-25 - 8:36:15 AM GMT
-  Email viewed by ddp@westhoathly.gov.uk
2023-10-25 - 11:59:39 AM GMT- IP address: 84.71.15.68
-  Signer ddp@westhoathly.gov.uk entered name at signing as D D PINNOCK
2023-10-25 - 12:00:38 PM GMT- IP address: 84.71.15.68
-  Document e-signed by D D PINNOCK (ddp@westhoathly.gov.uk)
Signature Date: 2023-10-25 - 12:00:40 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 84.71.15.68
-  Agreement completed.
2023-10-25 - 12:00:40 PM GMT