



WEST SUSSEX ALC LIMITED

Dogflud House, Eastgate House, Farnham, GU9 7UD
Company No. 8500914 Registered in England

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
West Sussex Association of Local Councils Limited
held on Monday 4th November 2024 at 10:30am
AMEX Stadium, Village Way, Brighton BN1 9BL**

Attendance:

Presidents:

The Rt. Hon. Earl of Lytton DL
Dr John Godfrey DL

Directors:

Cllr Douglas Denham St. Pinnock (Chair), Mid Sussex District Association
Cllr Alison Cooper, Arun District Association
Michael Tu, Arun District Association
Cllr Charles Britton, Chichester District Association
Cllr Val Court, Horsham District Association
Graham Walkins, Horsham District Association
Cllr Martin Sheldon, Mid Sussex District Association
Cllr Paul Mansfield, Adur District Association

Officers:

Trevor Leggo: CEO

Paul Richards: Clerk to the Board

Members – There were 71 representatives present and 44 appointed voting representative (including 3 proxy) - full list available on request.

1 (a) Election of Joint Presidents.

Cllr Denham St. Pinnock took the Chair and opened the meeting by explaining that under the WSALC Articles of Association the AGM should be chaired by one of the two joint Presidents; he then proposed the re-election of the two Presidents, the Rt.Hon. Earl of Lytton, DL, and Dr John Godfrey DL.

The motion was **CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION** and Dr John Godfrey DL duly took the Chair.

1 (b) Welcome by the Joint Presidents.

Dr John Godfrey DL welcomed all present and expressed his concern that local councils face uncertain and difficult times. He added that the new Government have an active agenda that will impact on the work of town and parish councillors.



2. Apologies for absence.

Received and accepted from Cllr Andrew Shaxson (Director) and representatives from East Preston, Bepton, Loxwood, North Horsham, Cowfold, Turners Hill, Boxgrove, Bramber, Heyshott, Barnham & Eastergate, Twineham, Bersted, Worth, Billingshurst and Broadbridge Heath Parish Councils.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20th October 2023.

The minutes were **APPROVED** as a true record of the previous meeting.

Total votes: for – 44; against – 0; abstain – 0

4. Report from the CEO of West Sussex ALC Limited on the Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 followed by a verbal report from the Chair

Cllr Denham St, Pinnock, Chairman of WSALC, presented a verbal report to members attached at Appendix A.

5. To Adopt the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

In the absence of the Company Secretary, Cllr Denham St. Pinnock presented the accounts and moved that they be accepted.

The accounts were **APPROVED** and **ADOPTED**.

Total votes: for – 44; against – 0; abstain - 0)

6. To note the Directors appointed by the District Associations.

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Paul Mansfield | Adur District Association |
| Alison Cooper | Arun District Association |
| Michael Tu | Arun District Association |
| Charles Britton | Chichester District Association |
| Andrew Shaxson | Chichester District Association |
| Amanda Tait | Chichester District Association |
| Charles Britton | Chichester District Association |
| Graham Watkins | Horsham District Association |
| Val Court | Horsham District Association |
| Douglas Denham St Pinnock | Mid Sussex District Association |
| Martin Sheldon | Mid Sussex District Association |

7. Election of Representatives to the National Association (NALC) 2024/2025.

Cllr Douglas Denham St. Pinnock, Cllr Andrew Shaxson and Trevor Leggo were proposed as representatives to NALC.



Cllr Douglas Denham St. Pinnock, Cllr Andrew Shaxson and Trevor Leggo were duly **ELECTED** as representatives to NALC for 2023/2024.

Total votes: for – 44; against – 0; abstain – 0

8. Any other matters.

No other matters raised.

The Rt. Hon. Earl of Lytton DL thanked all those that attended and closed the meeting by extending his gratitude to Cllr Denham St. Pinnock, the Board of Directors, all Officers and Councillors within town and parish councils, Trevor Leggo, Emily Simpson and the SALC team for their hard work and dedication to the sector.

10:56am meeting closed.

Signed

Name

Date



APPENDIX A

Chair's Report to WSALC AGM, 4th November 2024

Welcome to you all. For the first time since I became Chair of WSALC in March 2021, we have brought together both the East and West Sussex Associations in one location. The AGM's of both Associations are occurring concurrently before we combine for the Conference part of the proceedings.

Trevor Leggo is CEO of both Associations and so if you see him moving between our meetings do not be surprised. I have also asked him to greet our first guest, the Chief Constable Jo Shiner, who is here under a tight time frame so I would be grateful if we could all move swiftly back into the main room after this meeting ends.

As usual, Trevor has submitted a full annual report and it is available on the WSALC website with other supporting papers for this meeting. I would like to thank Trevor on behalf of everyone here for the tremendous work he does for all our Town and Parish Councils.

This time last year The House of Lords amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, allowing remote and hybrid meetings of Councils at all levels, was defeated by the Government. Ten days ago, at the Local Government Association Conference, the Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, announced that she was setting up a short consultation period on hybrid and remote meetings with the implication that she supported the flexibility offered. She also stated that she was working to restore sanctions against Councillor misconduct, in particular bullying. Finally, she also stated it was her intention to remove the requirement for Councillors to identify their home addresses in publicly available Council nomination documents and registers of interests.

It is now approaching four years since I was first elected Chair of WSALC. The Board has seen further changes. The Vice Chair, Malcolm Eastwood from Horsham District, very sadly and unexpectedly passed away late last year after a short illness. Malcolm had transformed the Horsham District Association, had built up a relationship with the District Council second to none and left a noticeable void in the WSALC Board. Trevor and I attended the funeral in his Parish of Henfield where he had also done great work. Graham Watkins and Val Court both joined the Board from Horsham District Association since the last AGM. Julie Holden continues to represent Clerks, having moved from Town Clerk of East Grinstead to Burgess Hill but we said goodbye to Sarah Norman and welcomed Celia Price, Clerk of one of the largest parishes in West Sussex at Lancing. Andrew Shaxon, who has long attended Board meetings on behalf of the South Downs National Park, and became a Board member in June 2023 from Chichester Association, kindly agreed to step in to Malcolm Eastwood's shoes as Vice Chair of the Board and has been of considerable support especially attending National Association meetings.

Although WSALC was nominated by the Society of Local Clerks for the NALC Council of the Year, Trevor and I, attending the ceremony at the House of Lords, were not surprised to be



runners up, given that the NALC Chair is the East Sussex Chair and is here today to address you all later.

The District Associations are a little bit of a curates egg. They should be the beating heart of the County Association. Horsham continues to work well under the Chairmanship of Graham Watkins, Chichester, Chaired by Andrew Shaxon and with three Board members, is showing promise in terms of relationships with the District Council, as is Arun where Michael Tu divides the Chair with Amanda Worne and where the District now has a resident Chief Executive who is engaging with the Association. In Mid Sussex, Trevor and I have worked hard on the relationship with the District Council but it is fair to say that we are a long way from being received with the same respect and access as Horsham. The District is tightly controlled by a CEO in post for 14 years and overall over 21 years at the District. Meetings with the 3 Towns and 21 Parishes are ongoing and I still hope for a break through. Adur District, which is made up of the Parishes of Lancing and Sompting has been barely represented at WSALC Board meetings throughout my time as Chair. Hopefully the Lancing Clerk's attendance at Board meetings will go some way to change this position.

Talking of Trevor. For some time I have been working with Trevor on a succession plan. Trevor has not indicated that he wishes to discontinue his executive leadership of WSALC, but I recognise that that day will eventually come. Trevor is also the CEO of ESALC where, since early 2021, Emily Simpson has been employed directly to manage ESALC's affairs.

At its meeting on 26th September last, the WSALC Board unanimously agreed that Emily Simpson will takeover the day to day management of WSALC, from Mulberry & Co..

Trevor and I met with Mark Mulberry on Thursday 24th October and agreed a timetable for such changes. These will be completed by 31st December 2024 following a transition period, the details of which will be sent to you all as soon as I have completed the associated formalities. Mulberry & Co will remain as WSALC's Company Secretary, Accountant and attend Board meetings.

WSALC will continue to provide Training, Clerk/RFO employment placings and other facilities, all as part of the subscription service available to all WSALC member Town and Parish Councils.

Mulberry & Co was invited to continue to provide each of the District Associations with Secretary/Treasurer support but has decided to step aside from these roles. Replacements for these roles are identified and each District Association will be contacted directly.

Other changes agreed by the Board during the year, in addition to continuing financial support for the District Associations thereby enabling them to actively engage with their District Councils, is to takeover the running of each of their bank accounts whilst maintaining each Association's funds separately identifiable. This takes the burden of administering the bank accounts away from each Association.



To repeat the two pleas I made last year. Firstly, if every Town and Parish in all four District Associations was to attend its Association meetings and work to gain the confidence and the trust of the District Council, the Associations would become much stronger and act collectively on issues that impact upon each Parish individually whether it be planning, recreation, waste collection and at County level roads, education and library services.

Secondly, please always include your Clerks in these District Association meetings. There is nothing worse than a Clerk receiving a notice of an Association meeting and simply acting as a post box to the elected Association reps yet knowing that as Clerk it is not their business ... take it from me it is absolutely the Clerk's business and they should be heard.

In conclusion, as we shall hear, West Sussex Association is in a good position financially. It plays its part in supporting its members from the smallest rural Parishes to the largest Town Councils, it is actively supporting a renaissance of its District Associations and it is working both with 40 plus County Officers around the country and with the National Association to do its best for all its members. I thank you all who have taken the time to attend today; please continue to spread the word amongst your neighbours that once a year it is worth coming to the West Sussex Association AGM.

WSALC CEO Report

Membership of SALC and NALC is at the discretion of a Council and I am pleased to report that in East Sussex there is only one parish council that chooses not to subscribe out of the 100 councils; in West Sussex there are five non members out of 140.

It is a sad indictment on society today that a larger proportion of my time is being spent seeking to resolve conflict of one kind or another. One can only speculate on the causes of such unrest but it is tempting to lay the blame at the door of social media. Parish councils are easy targets and if a resident makes an incorrect statement on Facebook, obtains a dozen ticks in the 'like' box, they immediately feel empowered; unless the PC has a robust communications and media strategy they are likely to be in difficulty. We have examples of some parish councillors feeling threatened, do not suffer in silence, Sussex Police has assigned an Inspector to look at the safety and security of elected officials at all levels.

As an employer, towns and parishes will need to be aware of the Employment Rights Bill when it becomes enacted. It may well be amended as it passes through Parliament but current provisions include abolition of zero hours contracts, unfair dismissal will exist from the first day of employment rather than the two years as at present, the right to sick pay and parental leave will accrue from the first day of employment. There are also proposed changes to maternity provision and the creation of a Fair Work Agency. On a similar theme there will be a statutory duty on employers to prevent workplace sexual harassment from October 2024. This applies to the workplace or any social situation connected to it.

SALC is fortunate to have a working relationship with Worknest to offer guidance on contentious employment matters.



Another piece of legislation to monitor is 'Martyn's Law', named after Martyn Hett who was killed in the Manchester Arena terrorist attack. The likely effect of the legislation is that in planning events, a thorough risk assessment will need to be produced although details are not yet finalised. This will undoubtedly have an impact on local councils.

Town and Parish Councils will be aware of the extreme pressure on County and District Council budgets for the coming year and the impact on some local services. No doubt this will be taken into account when local council budgets are being considered. It will be recalled that in the winter of 2023 a number of towns and parishes facilitated 'warm hubs' in their communities; with the removal of the winter fuel allowance for most pensioners it might be argued that the need this year is greater.

We are tracking changes to the National Planning Policy Framework with the extremely valuable support of Steve Tilbury, SALC's Planning Consultant and SALC members will be kept informed as information emerges.

Across Sussex there are some 60,000 armed forces veterans and in many towns and larger villages an Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club has been established. These tend to meet on a monthly basis with the support of the District or Borough Council's Armed Forces Champion. It is a sad fact that many of our veterans are lonely and look forward to a couple of hours of 'banter' with those who understand service life. SALC fully supports the setting up of such clubs and the CEO is a point of contact if you wish to know more.

Trevor Leggo, CEO