

Chichester District Association of Local Councils

Chair: Cllr Alistair Spencer (West Itchenor PC)
Clerk: Anna Beams, Mulberry & Co, 9 Pound Lane, Godalming, GU7 1BX
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Minutes of the Meeting of Chichester District Association of Local Councils held on Thursday 10th February 2022 at 6pm via Zoom.

Present:

Cllr Timothy Firmston	Birdham PC
Cllr Stephen Johnson	Chidham & Hambrook PC
Cllr Anna Gaymer	Donnington PC
Cllr John Stant	Earnley PC
Cllr Charles Britton	East Lavington PC
Cllr Edward Cottrell	East Marden PC
Cllr Helen Marshall	Fishbourne PC
Cllr Andrew Shaxson	Harting PC (Vice Chair)
Cllr David Betts	Hunston PC
Cllr Tim Russell	North Mundham PC
Cllr Annie Maclean	North Mundham PC
Cllr Nicholas Taylor	Plaistow & Ifold PC
Cllr Colin Field	Sidlesham PC
Cllr Deborah Harwood	Singleton PC
Cllr Amanda Tait	Southbourne PC
Cllr Andrew Brown	Stoughton PC
Cllr Christopher Mead-Briggs	West Itchenor PC
Cllr Christopher Watson	West Itchenor PC
Cllr Alastair Spencer	West Itchenor PC
Cllr Nicolette Pike	West Wittering PC
Cllr Keith Martin	West Wittering PC
Cllr Adrian Hearle	Woolbeding with Redford PC
Peter Hughes	Harbour Conservancy Ecologist
Alison Wakelin	Chichester Harbour Conservancy
Trevor Leggo	WSALC, CEO
Anna Beams	Secretary

1. Chairman's Welcome

Cllr Alastair Spencer warmly welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Received and accepted from Cllr Sheena King (Funtington PC), Cllr Jean Barrett (West Wittering PC), Cllr Richard Hitchcock (Westbourne PC) and Cllr Henry Potter (Boxgrove PC).

3. **Approval of previous meeting Minutes**

On a proposal from Cllr Andrew Shaxson and seconded by Cllr Keith Martin it was **AGREED** that the Minutes are a true and correct record of the meeting held on 4th October 2021.

4. **To receive an update from Trevor Leggo, CEO of WSALC**

Trevor Leggo updated members on the following items:

[a] **Levelling Up White Paper:** The Levelling Up White Paper is a 312 page document in which parish and town councils are mentioned twice. NALC has produced a 12 page summary of the paper which has been circulated to clerks.

[b] **Remote Meetings:** Trevor reported that he has written a letter to the Minister of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and all local MPs regarding the need for parishes to have discretion over the holding of remote meetings. He has been advised that Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, is looking favourably upon the matter but that no decision is forthcoming. He further explained that any changes to the Local Government Act 1972 would require primary legislation.

[c] **Civility and Respect:** Trevor advised that the behaviour of some councillors has deteriorated resulting in difficulties within councils and a higher turnover of staff. Little action can be taken by Monitoring Officers under the current Code of Conduct other than recommending training for reported Members. Standards in Public Life submitted a report in 2019 which recommended that sanctions were reinstated however no action has been taken to date. NALC and the LGA are currently reviewing the model Code of Conduct.

[d] **Clerks Pay Award:** Trevor explained that clerks are entitled to an annually agreed pay award in April. The pay award is agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) made up of employer and trade union representatives. The employers rejected an original claim of a 10% pay increase submitted for April 2021 and subsequently offered a 1.75% increase in October 2021. The trade union representatives have rejected the counter offer and therefore no agreement has yet been reached. Clerks should be referred to Trevor if they require further information regarding the 2021/22 pay award.

[e] **Elections Bill:** The Elections Bill has reached the second reading stage in the House of Lords. Important items to note are:

- Voter ID will be a requirement
- Following Brexit only citizens from Spain, Portugal, Poland and Luxembourg can stand for election

WSALC will provide full elections briefings in late 2022 in association with Chichester District Council.

[f] **Policing:** The half yearly Police focus groups will resume in May when parish and town councils meet with Trevor, the PCC office and a local Police Inspector to review policing in their local area during the previous six months. The next meetings in the Chichester district are due to take place on 27th May in Midhurst and Selsey. Clerks have been notified of the dates and invited to send representatives.

Jo Shiner, Chief Constable Sussex Police, will be delivering a Zoom presentation to West and East Sussex parishes on 'Big Data' and how the use of data informs decision making. Each parish may nominate one representative to attend by contacting Anna Beams.

Sussex Police formed a Rural Crime Team in July 2020 with a local Superintendent as operational lead. The team are holding a Rural Crime Conference on 13th April at which WSALC have been allocated 12 places. Trevor is particularly keen to hear from working farmers or those with an interest in land management who may be interested in attending.

[g] **NALC Lobby Day:** Each year NALC hold a Lobby Day where county association representatives are invited to meet with local MPs to discuss or highlight local issues. This year the Lobby Day will be held virtually on 23rd March. Trevor has written a letter of invitation to all local MPs but, to date, has not received any responses. The most pressing matter in West Sussex appears to be a lack of understanding of how the new algorithm for calculating housing numbers is working.

Cllr Deborah Harwood expressed concern regarding high levels of water pollution within the district and a lack of useful communications or responses received from Southern Water. She suggested that the matter should be high on the agenda for local MPs.

5. SDNP Report

Cllr Andrew Shaxson referred to his report previously circulated (*Appendix A*).

Cllr Charles Britton queried why parish councils were not approached to comment on the Agency Agreement and suggested that the SDNPA could be approached by CDALC as a collective group. Cllr Shaxson responded that the Agency Agreement is still under discussion and that members of the National Park have had minimal input. The Chairman suggested that he would discuss CDALC making contact as a group with Cllrs Shaxson and Britton following the meeting.

6. Chichester Harbour Conservancy Report

Cllr Keith Martin referred to his report previously circulated (*Appendix B*).

He added that he is a member of a small task force that will be preparing a response to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and that he would be happy to feed any comments on any of the points raised within his report to the task force for incorporation into the response.

Cllr Martin referred to agenda item 8 and added that he will be standing down from his role as the CDALC representative on the Advisory Board. He added that it has been a privilege to stand as representative and that he has enjoyed his time in the role enormously.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Martin for his 10 years of excellent service as the CDALC representative.

Cllr Timothy Firmston thanked both Cllr Shaxson and Cllr Martin for their reports and queried whether the proposal by Government to rename AONBs and National Parks as

'National Landscapes' is likely to take effect. Cllr Martin responded that it is unlikely to and that National Parks have pushed back significantly on the proposal. He added that there are moves to give AONBs greater power, in particular to give them an objective to increase their engagement with, and encourage, visitors.

7. Environment Presentation by Peter Hughes, Harbour Conservancy's Ecologist

Peter Hughes, Ecologist with the Harbour Conservancy, delivered the attached presentation (*Appendix C*)

He added that he would be happy to deliver the presentation to any groups that would like him to do so.

8. Call for Nominations of the CDALC Representative on the CHC Advisory Board

The Chairman referred to the Person Specification previously circulated with the agenda and invited nominations to be sent to Anna Beams by Monday 28th February. Nominations should be accompanied with the names of a proposer and seconder and nominees should prepare a short statement setting out their interest in the position, their priorities for the Conservancy and their relevant skills. In the event of more than four candidates the Chairman may set up a small group to meet candidates and assess their strengths. The election of the Conservancy representative will take place at the following meeting of CDALC, to be not later than the end of May. It will be conducted in accordance with the constitution of CDALC.

Alison Wakelin thank Cllr Martin for his work over many years and stressed the importance of the position. She added that appointing someone with the relevant skills and priorities would strengthen the Conservancy and Planning Committees.

9. Finance Update

The Chairman reported that £1,088.76 has now been transferred from the dormant bank account and that a £500.00 grant has been received from WSALC. The total funds held by the association are therefore £1,588.76.

10. Matters of Concern to your Council

Cllr Timothy Firmston (Birdham PC) queried whether the WSCC vehicle charging scheme in partnership with Connected Kerb is a sensible initiative for parish councils to take part in. Trevor Leggo explained that there is no cost or revenue to the parish councils that choose to take part in the scheme.

The meeting closed at 7.42pm

Signed: Approved and signed 4th April 2022

Dated:.....

Chairman

South Downs National Park report

10th February 2022

The National Park Authority, and the work it does, has inevitably been affected by the Covid pandemic. With outbreaks of the virus stabilizing hopefully prior to receding, the organisation is carefully returning to face-to-face meetings and more direct contact with the public. In any case day-to-day, strategic, and budget planning work will continue.

Concerning strategic it is 4 years since the government commissioned the independent **Glover Review**, to consider whether the way that National Parks AND AONBs are protected and managed remains fit-for-purpose, and if not what changes should take place. The report was published in September 2019, and for reasons beyond the impact of Covid the long-awaited Government response wasn't published until 15th January 2022. Much of the wording appears quite bland - perhaps intentionally - and whilst there is reference to nature and the need to make changes to ensure resilience, considering the accelerating impact of Climate Change the response could have been more vigorous. With the encouragement, if not possibly statutory need, to undertake more responsibilities suggested the critical issue of 'where will the money come from' arises? This year all National Parks have suffered a real cut in their government grant. There is an unsustainable situation at present, a 'wild west' position whereby the government is encouraging private companies to invest in 'landscape' projects which will probably entail long term costs after any donors have long gone, that money will have to be found from the NPA's budget and in any case donations cannot be used by the SDNPA to underwrite the day to day running of the organisation. It should also be borne in mind that the world has moved on since the report was written

There are of course many details to consider in the report. The SDNPA, both as an individual organisation and a member of the umbrella organisation representing English National Parks, is considering its response which needs to be submitted by 9th April. A Task and Finish Group is going to consider the implications of changes to the Governance of the NPA. Any organisation or interested individual can respond, and the SDNPA have noted that the need to for the Southern England voice to be heard, to counterbalance the 'moor and mountain' lobby. The final point is that whatever happens no major change is likely to occur for some years.

We are VERY fortunate that there are no Byways Open to All Traffic (**BOATs**) in Chichester District. Hampshire is cursed by their existence; four-wheel-drivers and motor cyclists travel considerable distances to indulge their hobby beating up tracks at the expense of all other users, landscape, nature and tranquility. Fundamentally they are legally allowed to do it, so it very expensive for Local Authorities to curtail and manage the activity. Hampshire parish councils tear their hair out in frustration. With the severe restraints on LA budgets HCC are loathe to tackle the menace. The SDNPA has recently had a workshop on the issue, and noting the conflict of the use with the statutory purposes of the National Park and the reputational damage of doing nothing, it was decided that rather than kick the issue into the long grass a report containing all relevant facts will be brought to a meeting of the SDNPA.

Having touched on **Climate Change** above, the 15 UK National Parks are taking a coordinated approach to address the matter, including taking a steer from the Glover report and exploring the potential of working with AONBs. A recently commissioned study has shown that per head, residents of the South Downs National Park produce an average of 15.3 tonnes Co₂ per annum, 24% more than the National average. This is largely the spin-off result of the residents being wealthier than the national average and because the 2nd Purpose of National Park status encourages people to travel to the National Park – they bring Co₂ in their wake. Figures indicate that the National Average figure is made up of four nearly equal headings – 27% travel, 25% home / accommodation, 25% food, 23% everything else. Travel is proportionally higher in the National Park, noting that the average personal flight figure for the whole country is an average of 0.93 tonnes Co₂/annum, yet in the SDNP it is 2.61 tonnes Co₂/annum -3 times more. We also drive 26% more than the National average – though both figures are likely to be a South East rather than specifically a National Park issue. With a government commitment for the county to half our net carbon output within 15 years there is the need to do a great deal more than tinker round the edges ASAP. The challenge is ‘how’? Amelioration is currently considered to be a pivotal measure, with an emphasis on land use. Whilst planting trees will have long term benefits, landowners need to be persuaded that taking their land out of long-term agricultural production is the right approach both for them and their bank manager.

The September 2021 **Water Neutrality letter** dealing with the issue of the protection of International wetland designations in the Arun Valley has effectively embargoed most new development in the area served by Southern Water. This is having an impact on development in the SDNP, though it is not anything like as drastic as the impact on the rest of Chichester District, and Horsham and Crawley supplied by Southern Water. It is of course one of the factors spinning off from over-extraction of the water in this area, including from under the Downs by the Portsmouth Water Company. It might be raining hard by the time you read this, but thus far we have experienced a very dry winter, and with just 38mm of rain where I live in Elsted in January it is no surprise that the flow is reducing from streams running north from the South Downs – the streams that feed Southern Water’s Hardham extraction works. How this is resolved is something to watch very hard.

The **Agency arrangement** by which CDC planners have dealt with most planning applications in the area since 2011 on behalf of the SDNPA is currently being re-considered and subject to a few outstanding issues a new contractual arrangement will be resolved soon.

I have touched on a few topical matters, and am very happy to answer questions at the meeting,

Andrew Shaxson

1. CDALC MEETING – 10th FEBRUARY 2022

2. Chichester Harbour report

Port Marine Safety Code Compliance

An excellent report was received from an independent audit of the Conservancy's Marine Safety Management System and Safety Plan. No major issues were highlighted. There were a few minor recommendations such as improved record keeping. The joint and several liability of Conservancy Members as Duty Holders was emphasised and the need for their training.

The annual review of incidents showed some increase. This has been experienced by other harbours and is thought to be related to the late starting season after lock-down and the increased boating activity, perhaps because of curtailed foreign travel

Landscapes Review

Since the Glover Review's final report in September 2019 (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>) little has been heard. The General Election occurred in the same month as Defra was due to respond. No doubt Covid-19 was also a factor. Defra has now issued a further consultation which "traffic lights" for some of the Glover recommendations whilst others have been dropped. Four broad areas are listed below. I have set them out in some detail as I am member of the groups advising on the Conservancy's response and would welcome any input from members.

A more coherent National Network

*Strengthen AONBs (Green)
Strategic Direction (Amber)*

Nature and Climate

*Nature Recovery Network (Green)
Stronger mission for nature recovery (Green)
Setting ambitions and monitoring progress (Green)
Agriculture transition*

People and Place

*Landscapes for everyone (Amber)
Stronger mission for connecting people and places (Green)
Supporting local communities (Red)
Sustainable transport (Green)
Open access land (Amber)
National trails (Green)
Sustainable tourism (Green)
Planning reform (Amber)
Affordable housing (Red)*

Supporting local delivery

*Local governance (Green)
Management plans (Green)
Sustainable finance (Amber)
General powers of competence (White - omitted)*

New jetties at Itchenor

Both Itchenor Sailing Club and the Conservancy have plans to move and extend their jetties. In the case of CHC the objective is to increase the number of “walk ashore” berths for visiting boats and to ensure that the pontoons work at all states of the tide. At present it can be flooded at the land end of the jetty at Springs. Both applications are dependent to some extent on the accommodation of the other. Discussions continue.

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL)

In July 2021 the Chichester Harbour FiPL Local Assessment Panel were awarded £125,589 to spend on projects this financial year. The table below shows the progress made to-date.

Location	Project	Status	Value
West Wittering Estate	Hedging	Approved	£2,900
Itchenor Park Farm	Fencing and gates	Approved	£24,054
Rectory Farm, Bosham	Hedging	Approved	£2,330
Manhood Peninsula	GPS fertiliser spreading technology	Approved	£14,600
Eames Farm	Geo-tagging cattle	Pending	£7,214
Eames Farm	Electric fence	Pending	£1,212
Lowerhouse Farm, Bosham	Fencing	Pending	£3,034
Pitlands Farm, Up Marden	Sprayer and Wash Down	Pending	£35,064
Chichester Harbour	Coastal Grazing Marsh Feasibility Study	Pending	£3,784
Total	£97,192		
Remaining (if all pending projects are approved)	£30,808		

The Conservancy has appointed a Farming & Grants Officer who is to start work next month.

Salterns Way

The resurfacing (much of it essential maintenance) of the section between Westlands Farm and Itchenor Park Farm is now completed. The new surface is a fit-for-purpose cycle track that will cope with the increasing popularity of the route.

A planning application for the re-routing of Salterns Way on the land west of Itchenor has been validate and is open to consultation. See [21/03533/FUL](#).

Planning Committee

The Conservancy is taking on additional planning officer hours with the part-time return of a highly regarded planning officer. This should help to relieve the recent struggle to keep abreast of the flow of applications highlighted in my last report.

A handful of controversial planning applications make disproportionate demands on officer time through multiple variants of similar plans, appeals and public inquiries.

This is my final report as CDALC’s representative on the Conservancy’s Advisory Committee. I was appointed in June 2011 with little idea of the scope of activity managed

by the Conservancy nor of the additional demands of being a member of its Planning Committee, Finance and Audit Committee and for the last six years a member of the main board. As the job has grown so has the satisfaction of learning a lot and making, I hope, a more effective contribution to this excellent organisation. CHC has understandably been cited as a role model for AONBs and small port authorities. It has been a privilege to be part of their team and I would like to thank CDALC for their trust.

K S Martin