

Chichester District Association of Local Councils

Chair: Cllr Andrew Shaxson (Harting PC)
Clerk: Anna Beams, Mulberry & Co, 9 Pound Lane, Godalming, GU7 1BX
Tel: 03303 450597
Email: anna@mulberryandco.co.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of Chichester District Association of Local Councils held on Monday 4 October 2021 commencing at 7pm via a Zoom video/audio conference.

Present: Timothy Firmston (Birdham PC)
Henry Potter (Boxgrove PC)
Jacky Sheppard (Chidham & Hambrook PC)
Anna Gaymer (Donnington PC)
Charles Britton (East Lavington PC)
Andrew Shaxson (Harting PC)
David Betts (Hunston PC)
Robert Newman (Lavant PC)
Annie Maclean (North Mundham PC)
Tim Russell (North Mundham PC)
Nicholas Taylor (Plaistow & Ifold PC)
Andrew Brown (Selsey TC)
Colin Field (Sidlesham PC)
Deborah Harwood (Singleton PC)
Christopher Mead-Briggs (West Itchenor PC)
Keith Martin (West Wittering PC)
Jean Barrett (West Wittering PC)
Richard Hitchcock (Westbourne PC)
Sharon Burborough (Westhampnett PC)

Trevor Leggo (WSALC)
Anna Beams (Clerk)

1. Welcome

Cllr Andrew Shaxson introduced himself as the Chairman of the meeting in the absence of Cllr Alistair Spencer and welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Received and noted from Cllr Alistair Spencer and representatives from Chichester CC, Cocking PC, Earnley PC, Fishbourne PC, Heyshott PC, Loxwood PC and Tangmere PC.

3. To confirm and sign the Minutes of the AGM held on 26 April 2021

On a proposal from Cllr Tim Russell, seconded by Cllr Colin Field (Sidlesham PC), it was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the AGM be confirmed as a true and correct record of the meeting and they be signed by the Chairman.

4. To confirm the appointment of Anna Beams (Mulberry & Co) as Secretary and Treasurer

The Chairman explained that the previous Secretary and Treasurer is unable to continue in the role and that it has been proposed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of CDALC that Anna Beams of Mulberry & Co be appointed.

On a proposal by Cllr Deborah Harwood, seconded by Cllr Christopher Mead-Briggs it was **RESOLVED** that Anna Beams be appointed as Secretary and Treasurer.

5. To approve amendments to the constitution for CDALC

The Chairman reminded members that the constitution had been adopted at the AGM in April in its then format with a caveat that comments received from Plaistow & Ifold PC be reviewed by the working group and, if appropriate, be incorporated and presented at the next CDALC meeting.

Cllr Keith Martin of the working group thanked Plaistow & Ifold PC for the considered and useful suggestions. He then shared the constitution and explained the amendments.

The amendments were adopted with the exception of the below paragraphs where the number of days was discussed and altered as shown.

*11.5. Notices of all meetings including subgroup meetings shall be sent to Member Councils and their Representatives by the Clerk at least **21 days** before the meeting.*

*12. RESOLUTIONS: Member Councils wishing to have a resolution discussed at a meeting shall notify the Clerk **IN WRITING 14 days** before the Meeting, including the full text of the resolution, and shall ensure that a Representative attends the Meeting ready to propose the resolution.*

It was **RESOLVED** that the constitution be adopted as appended to the Minutes (*Appendix A*).

6. To receive an update from Chris Mewse, MD of Geosphere on the use of Parish Online

Trevor Leggo explained that as Chris Mewse was not in attendance he would provide an update under item 7.

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

Trevor Leggo updated members on the following items:

[a] **Parish on Line:** WSALC has secured a 65% group discount against list price from Geosphere, they are planning to organise a briefing session on 26th October for users to remind them of the features of the digital mapping product and introduce it to new users.

[b] **Recruitment of Clerks:** Recognising the shortage of applicants for many of the advertised Clerk vacancies, the WSALC Board has set up a Working Party to find ways to address the issue. At its meeting on 5th October the Board will receive the initial Report.

[c] **Management Committee:** From discussions with Cllr Alastair Spencer it is clear that the work of CDALC is growing in quantity and complexity. The Wealden District Association faces similar problems in terms of size and geography and has a Management Committee to assist its Chairman with work between meetings. It is understood that Keith Stevens, Chairman WDALC, will be speaking to Cllr Spencer to explain how it works.

[d] **Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs:** These exist on the coastal strip at Worthing, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis, with others at Crawley and Horsham but none within Chichester District. Two possibilities are to be examined

[i] to use the Thorney Island / Baker Barracks mini bus to pick up veterans in and around Chichester and take them to the club at Bognor Regis, subject to Covenant Grant Funding from MoD to purchase the vehicle, and

[ii] to look at the feasibility of establishing a club in the Midhurst area serving the rural north of the District.

[e] **Health and Wellbeing, opportunities for parish council involvement:** A report commissioned by WSALC in 2017 won the NALC Project of the Year. It was circulated to all member councils and reviewed in 2019. With the experience of the pandemic the WSALC Board has suggested that the report be revisited, updated and shared with councils to ask what steps were taken in their communities to support residents.

[f] **Community safety advisory groups:** these are being set up by Sussex Police and are clusters of parishes that will enable the local inspector to engage more effectively in a given area.

[g] **Focus groups:** operated jointly between WSALC and the Police & Crime Commissioner. The groups meet every six months and are asked how policing has improved or deteriorated in their area since the last discussion. The next round of meetings will start in November. Trevor Leggo suggested that if any parishes have not been included in the groups and wished to be that they contact him directly.

[h] **Bournes Forum:** at a recent meeting confusion was aired regarding face to face and remote meetings. Trevor reminded members that lawful decisions may only be made by councillors attending in person and that a councillor's attendance may not be recorded if they attend a meeting remotely.

8. To receive a report from CDALC's representatives of the WSALC Board and consider any recommendations made

Cllr Charles Britton began his update by thanking the WSALC Board, CEO and support team and stated that they have overcome recent issues very well, re-establishing a worthwhile organisation. He is happy to say that the Board has had excellent support from its member councils within the Chichester district.

He reported that the WSALC finances are healthy and that the Board are considering a small increase in subscription levels for the following year.

The training programme provided by Mulberry & Co is very good and he is pleased to see that the people delivering the training are familiar and known to member councils.

Cllr Britton suggested that CDALC meetings might be held following the WSALC Board meetings in order to provide an update.

Cllr Tim Russell echoed Cllr Britton's views regarding WSALC and is relieved that the organisation has been successfully re-established. He expressed concern at the low attendance at CDALC meetings and suggested that options should be explored in order to attract members to the meetings.

Cllr Keith Martin endorsed the point that the WSALC Board and team are doing an excellent job and stated that his clerk regularly utilises all services provided.

Trevor Leggo suggested that he raise the matter of holding WSALC Board meetings before district association meetings with the Board.

9. To receive a report from the CDALC representative on the Harbour Conservancy and consider any recommendations made

Cllr Keith Martin referred to his report circulated with the agenda (*Appendix B*).

He added that as well as the Conservancy being awarded a £161,000 grant by DEFRA, Friends of Chichester Harbour have been awarded £136,700 by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the Green Recovery Challenge.

He reported that income is healthy in the short term.

Cllr Martin further added that a suggestion has been made by the Planning Committee to no longer respond to major development applications immediately outside of the AONB with a 'no comment' which may be construed as 'no objection' Instead it is suggested that they issue no comment at all where they have no major objection in order to avoid misinterpretation.

Discussions continue with the Local Planning Authority regarding houseboat policy with an enforcement notice having been issued.

At the Budget Committee, Cllr Martin requested an audit be carried out on Bird Aware Solent, a scheme providing mitigation for the disturbance of bird habitat from development. The scheme involves numerous councils along the south coast and Cllr Martin would like an understanding as to the benefit of the scheme to the Chichester area.

Cllr Keith Martin added that meetings of the Harbour Conservancy are due to take place on:

1st November 2021

24th January 2022

4th April 2022

20th June 2022

7th November 2022

10. To receive a report from the South Downs National Park Authority

Cllr Andrew Shaxson referred to his report circulated with the agenda (*Appendix C*).

He added that in his report he had stated that the Agency Agreement was due for renewal but that this is now well under way and that town and parish councils will have no input.

He further added that a webinar is scheduled to take place on the evening of 13th October to provide an update on Nature Recovery Areas that are being set up within the Park. The webinar may be viewed at any time following the 13th October and Cllr Shaxson will provide a link to be circulated.

The budget arrangements are becoming increasingly challenging and the Authority is giving proper consideration for all outcomes and how to address them.

The next meeting of the Authority is due to take place on 28th October.

11. To receive a report on the CDALC accounts

Cllr Andrew Shaxson reported that the CDALC funds are currently held in a dormant account and therefore, until the account is re-activated, it is unclear of the funds held in the account.

He added that a new account has been set up and that a £500 annual grant has been transferred to the account by WSALC this week.

Trevor Leggo explained that the grant was an annual sum awarded to all eligible district associations in West Sussex.

12. To consider any items raised by member Councils in writing to the clerk by 27th September 2021

No items were forwarded to the clerk.

Cllr Richard Hitchcock suggested that Neighbourhood Planning is included on a future agenda to which Trevor Leggo responded that the WSALC Board will be discussing the matter at the next Board meeting. It was agreed that Trevor Leggo would attend future CDALC meetings to provide updates on relevant matters including Neighbourhood Planning.

13. To accept items and dates for future meetings

Future dates to be confirmed.

It was noted that a meeting previously scheduled for 22nd November will be postponed.

The meeting closed at 8.37pm

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

Chairman

Approved at meeting 10th February 2022

Constitution of Chichester District Association of Local Councils

1. **NAME:** The name of the Association shall be the Chichester District Association of Local Councils ("CDALC").
2. **OBJECTIVES:** The aims and objectives of the Association are to take such steps as may be necessary or desirable in the interests of Member Councils consistent with the objectives of the National Association of Local Councils ("NALC") which are:
 - 2.1. to advance Member Councils' interests;
 - 2.2. to promote a widespread and well-informed interest in Local Government and to disseminate good practice;
 - 2.3. to receive reports from CDALC representatives on other bodies and keep Member Councils informed;
 - 2.4. to consult at least annually with Member Councils regarding the services provided by WSALC and NALC.
 - 2.5. to provide Member Councils with the opportunity to exchange views on current issues.
3. **MEMBERSHIP:** Every Parish/Town/ City Council in the Chichester District shall be entitled to membership of CDALC. A Council shall become a Member Council upon the appointment of at least one Representative.
4. **REPRESENTATION:** Each Member Council shall be entitled to appoint ONE Councillor as Representative to CDALC and ONE Councillor as his/her Deputy. In the absence of the Representative the Deputy shall be held as the Representative of the Member Council. Councils must inform the Clerk to CDALC of the names of their appointed Representative and Deputy, and of any changes. Other Councillors and Parish Clerks may attend CDALC meetings as observers.
5. **CODE OF CONDUCT:** The conduct of Representatives and Deputies shall comply with the Model Guides published by the National Association of Local Councils as amended from time to time.
6. **VOTING:** Voting shall be by a show of hands. Each Member Council shall be entitled to ONE vote on any motion. In the event of an equal number of votes being cast for or against a motion, the person presiding at the Meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
7. **REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES:**
 - 7.1. CDALC shall appoint annually directors to the Board of West Sussex Association of Local Councils ("WSALC"). The number appointed shall be determined from time to time by WSALC. These representatives shall be elected each year at the CDALC Annual General meeting.
 - 7.2. CDALC shall appoint a representative to Chichester Harbour Advisory Committee for the period determined by that body (currently three years). Details of this appointment are available from the Clerk.
8. **SUBSCRIPTION:** CDALC shall be entitled to charge each of its Member Councils an annual subscription to cover its expenses. This sum shall be fixed at the Annual General Meeting and may be revised at an Extraordinary General Meeting. The CDALC Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving, banking and accounting for such funds and shall present audited accounts made up to March 31 annually to the Annual General Meeting for approval.

APPENDIX A

9. OFFICERS: At the Annual General Meeting of CDALC, a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer shall be elected from among the Members. The Treasurer may be a Councillor or a Clerk or any other person approved by the Annual General Meeting. The names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of all Officers shall be sent to WSALC and Member Councils as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting. Where Officers have resigned there shall be an election to replace them at the next appropriate meeting.
10. CLERK: The Clerk shall be appointed annually by the Officers of the Association and will be paid an honorarium to be reviewed and agreed at the Annual General Meeting.
11. MEETINGS:
 - 11.1. A quorum shall be Representatives from EIGHT Member Councils.
 - 11.2. CDALC shall hold its Annual General Meeting not later than 30 June of each year and hold as many meetings during the year as the Representatives shall decide. There shall be at least THREE meetings per year including the Annual General Meeting. In the event of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman being absent the Meeting shall appoint a person to take the chair for that Meeting only.
 - 11.3. The Chairman may call an Extraordinary General Meeting if he/she considers it necessary and shall call one as soon as is practical while being consistent with clause 11.5 below on the written representation of FIVE Member Councils.
 - 11.4. Member Councils shall be entitled upon notification to the Officers to form a temporary subgroup to address specific shared issues. Any such sub group shall last for the duration of the issues being addressed.
 - 11.5. Notices of all meetings including subgroup meetings shall be sent to Member Councils and their Representatives by the Clerk at least 21 days before the meeting. Accidental failure or omission to give notice of a meeting of CDALC (or a subgroup) to any Member Council or person entitled to attend, or the non-receipt of such notice, shall not invalidate the proceedings of such a meeting.
 - 11.6. Meetings shall take place either virtually, or in person at a venue convenient to Member Councils. All decisions shall be declared valid whether they are made at a virtual meeting or a face-to-face meeting. An ordinary resolution shall be a decision passed by a simple majority of Representatives present and entitled to vote.
 - 11.7. Meeting Dates for the ensuing year shall be distributed to Members and Member Councils in November each year.
12. RESOLUTIONS: Member Councils wishing to have a resolution discussed at a meeting shall notify the Clerk IN WRITING 14 days before the Meeting, including the full text of the resolution, and shall ensure that a Representative attends the Meeting ready to propose the resolution. The Chairman of the Meeting may accept a resolution of an emergency or urgent nature but the matter shall only be discussed and voted on if at least TWO THIRDS of the Member Councils represented and entitled to vote, agree to such a debate and vote.
13. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION: Any amendment to the Constitution may be moved at a General Meeting of CDALC but must be approved by a majority of TWO THIRDS of the Member Councils represented and entitled to vote. No amendment shall be made which would invalidate CDALC's membership of WSALC or its right to appoint representatives to the Board of WSALC. Any notice of a proposed amendment shall be given to Member Councils 21 days before the date of the Meeting.

APPENDIX B

CDALC MEETING – 26th JULY 2021

Chichester Harbour report

Annual Statement

The final accounts for 2020/21 have been approved and audited. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is on the website at

https://www.conservancy.co.uk/assets/files/cms_item/279/d-AGAR_Unaudited_20-21-F558PAFVfS.pdf. In spite of the pandemic the outcome has been close to budget.

Farming in Protected Landscapes and CHaPRoN

Defra is providing the Conservancy with £161,680 for the appointment of an officer to liaise with farmers in the AONB and for making grants to farmers to assist in protecting landscapes and wildlife habitats.

The Conservancy has set up a steering group with Environment Agency, Natural England, Sussex IFCA, Coastal Partners, Southern Water and others to draw up a vision and delivery framework for the AONB in 2030 and 2050. It is named the Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN) initiative. It will look at improving and enlarging habitat for saltmarsh, sea grass and oysters although its ambition is wider to create wildlife recovery areas stretching from Langstone Harbour to Pagham Harbour and linking to the South Downs National Park. A new post has been created, funded jointly by the Harbour and AONB budgets, to manage CHaPRoN. This person will work closely with the new farming officer.

Water Quality

This remains an issue, particularly in respect of nitrate levels and storm discharges from waste water treatment plants. Ofwat has been active in getting Southern Water more engaged with the issues. There is evidence however that the majority of nitrates come from run off from agricultural fields. The recent report from Natural England on the state of the harbour emphasised the need to improve water quality. A “water summit” with all the relevant parties in May was seen as encouraging. The event was hosted by Southern Water who announced the creation of a £5 million environment fund. The chairman was Professor Sir Dieter Helm responsible for the philosophy underpinning Defra’s 25 - year environmental plan. The concept of “natural capital” is central to the water quality plan as it is to the CHaPRoN initiative.

Statutory Consultee Status

The Conservancy’s request for statutory consultee status has hit the buffers for now. Letters of support were provided by both county and district councils. Gillian Keegan MP and others met with the DEFRA to discuss the matter but the proposal was declined, at least for now. One of the reasons given was that changes involving all AONBs were under consideration following the Glover Review. The Conservancy has been advised that the decision of the Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Affairs is final and cannot be appealed.

Planning Committee

The Conservancy is struggling to respond to all relevant planning applications. The number has increased this year including more major developments with only two part-time planning officers to

APPENDIX B

address them. The Planning Committee has argued for additional resource and this is likely to happen with an imminent appointment of a full-time officer.

The committee is concerned at the lack of support from Natural England in respect of developments within or adjacent to the protected areas (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar etc.). This has been critical in a few high-profile cases. Whether it is lack of resource or central government guidance is not clear. It would be far better for NE to say “no comment” if they do not have the time for a full study of a proposal rather than “no objection”, so often interpreted as “support”.

The consultation on a houseboat policy received a good response with an expected divergence of view between local residents, berth holders and marinas. It has been decided to delay creating a new policy until further discussions with the Local Planning Authorities has taken place. There appears to be a range of opinions about whether or not a new houseboat requires planning permission.

Royal visit

Chichester Harbour Trust hosted a visit by Anne, Princess Royal on 12th May. HRH was given presentations on the work of the Conservancy, CHT, and the sailing clubs and the pressures on the harbour. A reception at Bosham Sailing Club was followed by a trip around the harbour in a Patrol RIB.

Keith Martin

South Downs National Park report – 26th July 2021

Apologies for the lateness of this report; until Thursday I anticipated giving a verbal report. As you will no doubt anticipate there is a great deal happening behind the scenes, but here are some current issues. If you want to know more about the topics I have raised or any other aspect of the SDNP please let me know.

The government is moving forward with consideration of the 168 page 2019 Glover Report on the future Management of Nat Parks and AONBs, and this is taking up a lot of officer time. The changes could be quite noticeable, though the greater they turn out to be the greater the time scale until they can be implemented. Aspects of it are currently being debated by the House of Lords. The outcomes of this report could have wide ranging impacts on both Nat Park and AONB landscape designations, including improving and strengthening the status of AONBs. Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 requires all local authorities, statutory undertakers and other public bodies to have regard to the 2 purposes of National Park designation. They are 'To Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the NP', and 'To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the NP by the public'.

There is strong indication that the Section 62 duty requirements on local authorities and others will be strengthened and extended to AONBs. If this happens it should provide much more legislative power to improve many habitats located within 80% of the land area of Chichester District. I would like to believe that it will, for example, put greater pressure on Southern Water Services, the Environment Agency and others involved concerning the pollution not just of the Lavant valley but also Chichester Harbour. A consultation on this document is due to be published quite soon; it would be well-worth all parishes giving it consideration - and not just out of curiosity, as 57 of the 67 parishes in Chi District are partially or wholly in one of the two protected landscape areas (Westbourne is in both) or are otherwise located close to them. Your comments could have an impact.

The SDNPA launched a 'Renaturing' project on 5th July, to create a further 13,000 hectares of woods, heaths, ponds and nature reserves within the SDNP, fundamentally to address the biodiversity crisis. This is most unlikely to be the Knepp Estate extreme version, with beavers rampant in every river valley, but noting the forthcoming changes to agricultural payments, based on good land management rather than food production, there is huge scope to make the necessary changes and improvements on a large scale. To do this, the SDNPA will work with all interested parties, and are aiming to raise £100m from a variety of sources over the next 10 years. The SDNP will continue to put a lot of effort into habitat enhancement and renewal.

The SDNPA purchased the Seven Sisters Country Park from ESCC on 15th July. Having been rather a Cinderella for East Sussex, it will now be fully staffed for 364 days a year. A £1.6m investment and improvement programme is being set in motion, not only at the visitor centre at Exceat but affecting the whole 280 hectare land-holding that not only includes Cuckmere Haven and the westernmost Seven Sister cliffs but rolling chalk grassland, numbers of farm cottages and 2 groups of hidden away large traditional farm buildings.

National Parks are the local planning authority for their areas. In most National Parks very little development takes place, but the SDNPA in terms of planning applications received is one of the largest planning authorities in the country. This includes Minerals and Waste matters. As you are probably aware the majority of SDNPA planning delivery in Chichester District is carried out via an agency agreement on behalf of the NPA by CDC. This arrangement comes up for renewal and renegotiation next year. The SDNPA is the only National Park that has been able to implement a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) system. Whilst the income raised is appreciable, parish councils and others have made funding requests from the National Parks central pot which add up to many dozens of times the available amount. Divvying up the money and handling any disappointment is a major challenge.

There is usually at least one major infrastructure project in the offing that the SDNPA has to give proper consideration to. This has included the Chichester and Arundel by-passes and Rampion 1 windfarm off Brighton. Currently consultation has just commenced on Rampion 2, which not only has a visual impact from many viewpoints but if the burying of the cabling to join the Dungeness to Exeter 400kv line is through the SDNP that could affect sensitive areas. Also, on the road front, the proposed major reconstruction of Junction 8 of the M3 (Winnall roundabout), is being given serious consideration as it has quite an impact on the SDNP north of Winchester.

The SDNP is well-aware that it is fortunate not to be under the planning development pressures that assails Chi District outside the protected landscapes. But this was the case when the South Downs was an AONB; MORE development is now taking place in the National Park than occurred when the area was an AONB.

Andrew Shaxson

APPENDIX C