

Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils

Meeting held on Thursday 18th November 2021 by Zoom.

Minutes

Present

Councillors: Tony Steer (Bolney Parish Council), Chairman
Graham Stafford (Albourne Parish Council)
Kathryn James (Ardingly Parish Council)
Annabel Moir (Bolney Parish Council)
Martin Sheldon (Cuckfield Parish Council)
Mark Hind (Fulking Parish Council)
Rodney Jackson (Hurstpierpoint Parish Council)
Douglas Denham St Pinncock (West Hoathly Parish Council)
Michael Curties (West Hoathly Parish Council)
Ian Gibson (Worth Parish Council)

Also present: Trevor Leggo, CEO West Sussex Association of Local Councils
Anna Beams, Secretary

- 1. Welcome**
The Chairman welcomed all those present and opened the meeting.
- 2. Apologies**
Received from Councillors Jenny Forbes (Ashurst Wood Parish Council), Bruce Forbes (Turners Hill Parish Council) and Jon Millbank (Balcombe Parish Council).
- 3. Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th April 2021**
Pending the addition of Councillor Mark Hind to the attendance list, the Minutes were approved as a true record.
- 4. To confirm the appointment of Anna Beams, Mulberry and Co. as Secretary and Treasurer**
It was unanimously **APPROVED** to appoint Anna Beams as the Secretary and Treasurer of the Association.
- 5. To receive a briefing from Insp. Oliver Fisher, Sussex Police Rural Crime Team**
Due to unavoidable Policing matters and operational duties neither Inspector Oliver Fisher or his replacement, Sgt Attfield were able to attend the meeting.

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

Trevor Leggo reported that the Police bi-annual Focus Groups are currently taking place. The Groups are a joint initiative between the Police, the Police & Crime Commissioner and WSALC who meet with clusters of local town and parish councils. This year the PCC, Katy Bourne, would like to hear the views regarding an increase in precept and local councils will be asked to prioritise ten specific areas in order from greatly affecting the local area to not at all.

The Mid Sussex meeting will take place by MS Teams on Monday 29th November at 2.30pm and any councils that would like to attend should contact Trevor directly or respond to the invitation issued by Mandy Jameson from the office of the PCC.

7. To receive a report from WSALC's representatives on the WSALC Board and consider any recommendations

Councillor Douglas Denham St. Pinnock and Chairman of WSALC reported on the following matters:

Health & Wellbeing Report: the WSALC Health & Wellbeing Report was originally published in 2018 and the WSALC Board have agreed to fund an update.

Parish Online: an agreement has been negotiated with Parish Online by WSALC to offer a discounted license to all of its member councils. Parish Online held a briefing for all member councils in West Sussex to explain the functions and benefits of the system.

Clerk recruitment: A Working Group has been established by the WSALC Board to investigate how the recruitment and retention of clerks can be improved.

SERCAF (South East Regional County Officers Forum): SERCAF is a useful forum used to share information and updates from each county in the region, Councillor Denham St. Pinnock attended and Chaired a recent meeting.

Queens Green Canopy: the WSALC Board strongly support the initiative and would encourage all town and parish councils to take part, the minimum requirement is to plant one tree and mark it on an integrated map. Although it is a celebration of the Queen's Jubilee it is very much an environmental initiative and as Chairman of WSALC, Cllr Denham St. Pinnock would like to see every member council in the County with a mark on the map.

Trevor Leggo added the following:

Health & Wellbeing Report: A follow up survey was circulated in 2019 regarding the report which resulted in a low response. A further questionnaire will be issued in early 2022 and Trevor hopes that, following the pandemic, there will be a much higher response.

Parish Online: As a benefit of membership of WSALC, members can now receive a 65% discount on the usual cost of a Parish Online license.

SERCAF: The recent meeting focussed on the safety and security of those in public office. It was attended by Chief Inspector Hugo Conway, Sussex and Surrey joint lead on MP security, who delivered a presentation and issued a guidance paper.

In response to the update by Councillor Denham St. Pinnock regarding the recruitment of clerks, the Chairman, Councillor Tony Steer, added that he believes it is important that councillors are reminded of the importance of supporting and valuing their clerk.

8. To receive a report on the MSALC accounts

Councillor Ian Gibson advised that he is in possession of all MSALC finance documents and that he and Councillor Rex Whittaker are the current signatories. Councillor Gibson would like to handover the documents and would like new signatories to be appointed. He reported that he has also been advised by the bank that the account will be closed if it remains dormant.

It was agreed that Trevor Leggo would collect the documents from Councillor Gibson in order to complete a handover to Anna Beams who will then arrange to complete the relevant mandates.

Councillor Gibson further advised that there is currently £1200 in the bank account.

9. To review signatories to the bank account and, if necessary seek replacements

Following a request by the Chairman, the following members volunteered to be appointed signatories:

Councillor Tony Steer
Councillor Annabel Moir

Councillor Jon Millbanks was nominated to become a third signatory.

Councillor Douglas Denham St. Pinnock suggested transferring bank accounts from HSBC to Unity Bank to ease the process of setting up online banking as the Unity Bank are familiar with parish councils. He volunteered to assist with the process and make further enquiries.

The following were proposed:

- To remove the current signatories and appoint new signatories as named above.
- To set up a new bank account with Unity Bank
- To close the current HSBC bank account

On a proposal by Councillor Tony Steer and seconded by Councillor Graham Stafford the above proposals were **AGREED**.

10. To consider any items raised by member councils in writing to the Secretary by Friday 12th November – admin@wsalc.co.uk

No questions were submitted.

11. Date and format of the next meeting

Thursday 24th February 2022.

The preference is face to face although this will be reviewed in the new year.

Meeting closed 19:14

Signed:

Date:

Approved at meeting 24th February 2022