



West Sussex ALC Ltd.
Minutes of the Virtual Board Meeting of West Sussex ALC Ltd. held on
Thursday 13th October 2022 at 2:00pm by Zoom

Attendance

Clr Douglas Denham St Pinnock, Chairman, Mid Sussex District Association
Clr Alison Cooper, Arun District Association
Clr Charles Britton, Chichester District Association
Clr Malcolm Eastwood, Horsham District Association
Clr Donald Mahon, Horsham District Association
Clr Martin Sheldon, Mid Sussex District Association
Mark Mulberry, Company Secretary
Trevor Leggo, CEO WSALC Ltd.
Julie Holden, Clerk's Representative, Society of Local Council Clerks (Sussex Branch)
Anna Beams, Secretary to the Board

Clr Andrew Shaxson, SDNPA Representative
Camilla O'Brennan, Multi-Agency Officer, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

1. Apologies for absence

Received and accepted from Cllrs Tim Russell and Mike Mendoza and Sarah Norman.

2. Rural Engagement Presentation

Camilla O'Brennan, Multi Agency Officer, WSFRS, delivered a presentation on behalf of herself and Samantha Barber, Rural Engagement Officer, WSFRS. ([appendix A & B](#))

Camilla explained that local councils can assist the Service by advising them of vulnerable members of the community that they can link with, either by visiting them at home or by telephone call.

Camilla advised that the Service are currently carrying out approximately 4000 home visits per year but have the capacity for 8000.

3. To approve the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th July 2022

The Chairman advised that the date and venue of the AGM has been moved to Friday 25th November at Billingshurst Community Centre.

The Chairman requested that Board Members send photographs for the WSALC website to Anna as soon as possible if they have not already done so.

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as a true record of the meeting held on 15th July 2022.

4. CEO update

The CEO updated the Board in the following matters:

- a) WSALC Forums: both the clerks and chairman's forums continue to be well attended.
- b) Cost of living and warm hubs – the CEO asked clerks and chairmen at the recent forums to provide examples of what their councils are doing to help their local communities. 8 member councils responded that they are looking to offer support. The CEO explained that parishes can consider giving grants to village halls to help with fuel bills and could collaborate with neighbouring parishes to share costs.
- c) Resilience planning – member councils are being encouraged to produce a resilience plan or to ensure that current plans are regularly updated. Dee Thornton is available to assist parishes with their plans.
- d) Police Focus Groups – the next round of focus groups commences in mid-November; clerks can request to be included on the contact list by contacting the CEO.
- e) Clerks pay – the CEO reported that the recruitment and retention of clerks is becoming increasingly difficult and that pay should not be a barrier for either. Councils are advised to follow market forces and pay clerks accordingly as the loss of a clerk can often be more costly than increasing their pay.
- f) Clerks and chairmen are encouraged to sign, and ask all councillors to sign, the Civility and Respect Pledge.
- g) NALC have produced a publication called 'Points of Light', a recommended catalogue of examples of good practice by local councils.
- h) Members allowance – councils can resolve to pay a Councillors allowance to elected Members. Previously councils have had to have a regard to recommendations by the remuneration panel at the District Council. From communication with member councils, it appears that the districts have abolished the parish council remuneration element. The CEO will investigate further.

5. Financial update

Mark Mulberry referred to his report circulated with the agenda ([appendix C](#))

He highlighted the following:

- The association remains on a strong financial footing
- The majority of aged debtors have now paid with a remaining c.£700 still outstanding
- Mark suggested that the Board may wish to consider setting funds aside for future projects

Following a question from Cllr Malcolm Eastwood, Mark advised that some reserves can be earmarked. The Chairman confirmed that he will bring forward proposals to the Board for earmarking funds.

Following discussions it was **AGREED** to write off aged penny balances.

6. Reports by District Associations

a) **Adur:**

No report.

b) **Arun:**

No report, Cllr Cooper advised that the next meeting of ADALC will take place on Thursday 27th October.

c) **Chichester:**

Cllr Shaxson reported that a meeting of the Chichester parishes north of the A27 had taken place on 1st September. The purpose of the meeting was to establish ways that CDALC can support and benefit those parishes concerned. 23 councillors and clerks attended from approximately half of the parishes in the area.

It was evident from the meeting that parishes are communicating with each other, particularly in the northeast of the region. The issue of motorbikes, speeding and police visibility were raised.

A further meeting will be scheduled following the next CDALC meeting taking place on Wednesday 26th October.

d) **Horsham:**

Cllr Eastwood advised that an introductory session on climate change has taken place, co-ordinated along with Horsham District Council and run by an external firm – the Centre for Sustainable Energy. A full day will take place on Thursday 20th October with a follow up session in November. 2 representatives from each parish have been invited to attend and parishes have been asked to form an action plan to work with communities. If the project is successful, it will be repeated for ecology.

Shermanbury Parish Council have re-joined HALC and there is now 1 remaining parish not in membership.

A joint HALC and HDC meeting will take place on Wednesday 30th November in Horsham and will cover a range of issues including the Local Plan, climate change and ecology.

e) **Mid Sussex:**

The Chairman reported that he was elected as Chairman of MSALC at the AGM held on 21st September. Along with the CEO, he plans to revive the association and re-establish contact with Mid Sussex District Council.

Cllr Martin Sheldon of Cuckfield Parish Council was appointed Vice-Chair and MSALC representative on the WSALC Board.

At the recent WSALC Clerks Forum, the Chairman encouraged Mid Sussex member councils to engage with and support MSALC.

The CEO added that a briefing by the local Police Superintendent had recently taken place for Mid Sussex parishes. The purpose was to brief member councils on local police strategy, and it is planned to hold the briefings on a regular basis.

7. Approval of District Association grants for 2022-23

The CEO recommended that WSALC continue to grant the district associations a sum of £500 per year.

It was **AGREED** to give Arun, Chichester, Horsham and Mid-Sussex District Associations a grant of £500 for 2022-23.

8. Cost of living crisis

Cllr Eastwood explained that a local group – Sustainable Henfield 2030 Group – are taking a lead in Henfield and are pulling together local organisations, including the Parish Council who are an outside body member and pay for the Group to have use of the Village Hall.

The Group are setting up small, organised groups of volunteers to help vulnerable people, designating warm room spaces where a hot drink and meal are provided and reaching out for donations of power rebate funding for those who may be most in need.

There is a food bank in Henfield and a community fridge is being considered.

Smaller, surrounding communities have been invited to use warm hubs in Henfield.

Cllr Cooper advised that there is an active church in the village of Rustington who are running a local pantry for those in need. The Parish Council have given a grant and are signposting vulnerable members of the community to where they need to go.

Cllr Eastwood added that a helpline used during the Covid pandemic is being relaunched to help vulnerable members of the community.

9. SDNPA Report

Cllr Andrew Shaxson referred to his report previously circulated ([appendix D](#)).

He added that the SDNP is the only National Park that has a CIL mechanism in place and that all parishes should be receiving CIL monies.

10. Matters for discussion not on the agenda

SERCAF (Southeast Regional County Officers Forum) – the CEO explained that he has acted as secretary to SERCAF for many years and has now taken the decision to stand down from the role although remaining as CEO of SALC. The next meeting will be his last, it was postponed due to the national period of mourning and is yet to be re-scheduled.

Elections – The Chairman reminded Board Members that elections take place on 4th May next year and that member councils should be considering ways to attract prospective new

councillors now. He suggested that WSALC, along with ESALC, could produce a promotional video which members can share on website and social media.

Following discussions, it was **AGREED** that the CEO and Anna put together a proposal including costings to produce a promotional video.

It was **AGREED** to allocate a maximum budget of £10,000 to the project subject to the final approval of the project by the Chairman or, in his absence, the Vice Chair.

AGM – the CEO confirmed that the Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex, Lady Emma Barnard will address members at the start of the AGM and that Emily King, Chief Executive WSCC, will be presenting on relevant matters, including cost of living and local highway operations. Tabletop displays will include the PCC, Action in rural Sussex, WSFRS and Aviva Insurance.

11. Future meetings

AGM - Friday 25th November 2022 @ 10:00, Billngshurst Community Centre, Roman Way, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9QW

15:45 Meeting closed

Signed (Chairman) _____

Dated _____

APPENDIX A

MULTI-AGENCY OFFICER & RURAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICER PRESENTATION TO WSALC BOARD MEETING

WSFRS – Three Strands Prevention/Protection/Response

Camilla O'Brennan: Multi-Agency Officer & Samantha Barber: Rural Engagement Officer Working within WSFRS with Fire Crews/Protection Officers/Community Fire Safety Officers/Safeguarding/Comms/Targeted Education/Road Safety/etc
(Rural Engagement Officer working closely with Retained Rural Fire Stations)

Multi-Agency Role working in partnership with Rural Engagement Officer to sustain people in the community in safer homes, preventing harm, injury, hospital admission, or loss of life. To attain this by promoting Safe & Well Visit and Community Engagement to target the most vulnerable members of the community.

Rural Engagement looking at remote rural areas – reduction in services/impact of covid/access/etc
Aware of remote, rural homes where the property is a high value asset, but the spending power may be low. In some circumstances, large houses to heat can in some instances be putting the household into fuel poverty – where more than 10% of income is spent on heating and lighting.

Linking into Community Engagement

The Fire Service could never knock on every door – targeted approach through professionals in the community to identify vulnerable households.

We know people who have:

- Reduced mobility regardless of their age
- Are elderly or frail
- Are a lone adult
- with children/reduced mobility/sensory impairment/unable to respond to an alarm

We don't expect our partners in the community to be fire experts. 4Qs. Eyes and Ears.

1. No working or missing smoke alarm
2. Cannot leave their home in event of fire independently
3. Exits/Entrances blocked or inaccessible due to disrepair etc
4. Other concerns around unsafe cooking, electrical overload, improvised cooking, scorch marks, overflowing ashtrays etc

Almost half of all fire start in the kitchen with cooking or kitchen appliances. The next most common reason for accidental dwelling fires is electrical fault or electrical appliance related problems.

SAWV triaged as Medium, High. Very High and visit is made by Fire Officer to the home.

The SAWV is a conversation about Fire Risk Awareness and making changes to risky behaviours. Also MECC to talk about other health and wellbeing concerns that increase Fire Risk Inequality.

WHAT ARE FIRE RISK INEQUALITIES?

8 x more likely to die in a fire without a Smoke Detector 4

x more likely to die in a fire after drinking alcohol

Two thirds of people who die in accidental dwelling fires are over age 65, which increases 80+

SAWV Prevention Activity has reduced Fire Calls in West Sussex by 40%

STATS and DATA indicate we need to target the most vulnerable people in our community.

Accidental fatal dwelling fire data:

- 84% had care and support needs

- 24% were living with dementia

- 44% were unable to remove themselves to a place of safety

- 68% known to Local Authority

- Only 16% were now to WSFRS

WSFRS works in partnership across health, housing, social care, mental health, community safety, care, and support. We also accept referrals directly from the person, their friend, family, or community support.

SAWV is a conversation, and we can only enter the home by invitation with consent.

If there are Fire Risk concerns for a person who does not give consent, this may be a matter to be discussed with the local Fire Station Crew to consider being aware of a high-risk property and consider a multi-agency approach to intervention measures.

We promote messages like #testittuesday (and ask people #getasmokealarmmonday!)

We have projects looking at the 'Cost of Living Campaign', and give advice on Electrical Recall etc.

Case Study:

Log fires in remote rural property where a couple were known to services, but as a result of a log falling from a log burner – the elderly couple perished in the house from smoke inhalation.

Case Study:

Example of Emollient Creams and the dangers of soaking into clothes and bedding. Some resolutions may lie in hot washing laundry = provision of washing machines/laundry support in POC. ie using of Community Hub Funds etc.

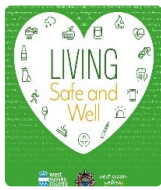
Provide MAO Newsletter Article and add members to the Newsletter Distribution List.

WSALC Board Members feed into 140+ Parishes. Opportunities for Newsletters and Noticeboards. Link into Blanket Testing/Warm Hubs etc.

WSFRS Prevention attending WSALC Board AGM at Billingshurst on 25/11/22 with opportunity to have a table in the Marketplace.

Meanwhile, provided a hand-out for attendees at WSALC Board Meeting of main points of SAWV and forwarded latest MAO Newsletter Article on Halloween & Candle Safety Week.

APPENDIX B



West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
Safe & Well Visit



Our objective at West Sussex Fire & Rescue is to sustain the most vulnerable people in the community, to live in suitable and safer homes: avoiding harm, injury, hospital admission, or loss of life. We aim to achieve this by working closely with our partners to identify Fire Risk Awareness to offer Safe & Well Visits in their homes. Safe & Well Visit is an opportunity to Make Every Contact Count to promote risk reduction, health & wellbeing, with the opportunity of a conversation about Community Safety and an opportunity for intelligence in Safeguarding and Self-Neglect Concerns.

Why are the Fire Service Promoting Health & Wellbeing?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help individuals, communities. and businesses to be safer, stronger, and more resilient. • To reduce death, injury, and economic loss • To promote health and wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raise awareness of potential fire risks in the home and promote the benefits of smoke detection ✓ Create a reciprocal working partnership between Police & Fire ✓ Safe and Well Visits (SAWV) Referrals
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Fire Risk Inequality

A need for effective and targeted campaigns to reach the most vulnerable members of our society.

The Fire Service is uniquely placed and has a wider prevention role than just fire and road safety.

The Prevention Strategy has reflected a 40% Reduction in Calls over the Last Ten Years

- Previously: Fire Services were ‘Response’ orientated
- Now - Broader role of ‘Community’ Firefighters in ‘Prevention’

Safe & Well Visits (SAWV)

Visits made to people’s homes under Safe & Well have a holistic approach to all issues of personnel safety such as:
 plan an escape route – clear exits,
 as electrical equipment risks of overload,
 manufacturer faulty equipment recalls,
 reducing risk of trips & falls,
 kitchens and cooking advice,
 dangers of smoking in the home,
 using paraffin-based creams,
 alcohol consumption,
 carbon monoxide
 winter warmer advice,
 health & wellbeing,
 dealing with scams & doorstep callers



APPENDIX C

WSALC Limited – Management Accounts Reporting for the quarter to 30th September 2022.

The association continues to move forward through 2022/23 with a strong financial footing with closing reserves anticipated to be circa £82.5k after a £26k surplus for the year. Our subscription income is £93.4k per annum so reserves will be a little high at the year-end date when comparing to the rule of thumb (50% income) we ask our members to operate at.

I don't anticipate any significant costs for the remainder of the year unless the board makes other plans.

Looking to the future I continue to propose only 2% nominal increase in subscriptions, which politically our members will appreciate in these times of rising costs and financial uncertainty.

I know in the past the board has muted the point of subsidising training for councillors – with our increasing reserves the association is certainly in the position of being able to implement some top down project work.

Income

Subscription income is £93,432 of which £712.74 remains unpaid as at the management accounts date. The original budget was for £81,083.

Expenditure

The costs incurred to date are £63,337 against a total year end budget of £95,165.

All costs are listed within this pack.

Bank & Cash Balances

At the 30th September there was £119,081 in the current account and £22 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 £26,419 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 £25k-£30k each year after allowing for £5k = £10k on special projects spending for the benefit of the membership.

I would therefore propose the following charges per elector

2023/24 £0.3122 per elector	{income circa £95.3k}
2024/24 £0.3185p per elector	{income circa £97.2K}
2024/25 £0.3248p per elector	{income circa £99.1K}

Reserves

The associations reserves position is as listed below:

31-03-22	£56,119 (actual)
30-06-22	£163,607 (actual)
30-09-22	£118,303 (actual)
31-03-23	£82,538 (forecast)

APPENDIX D

SDNPA report – 13/10/2022

The scheduled meeting of CDALC having been postponed this report will not to be brought to those parishes until 26th October. The day-to-day and long-term strategic impacts of the reduction of DEFRA funding on the organisation remains uppermost in the Authorities mind. It is no consolation that we are not the only body facing such pressures. Planning remains an area where this can be observed, as the national shortage of planning officers is felt not only by the SDNPA but also the LPAs who undertake work for the authority. Not only do planning applications take longer than anticipated, with many a 'request for an extension' to reset the clock, but the Planning Inspectorate is similarly overburdened with work. There are no short-cuts. The SDNPA is having to recruit a new Planning Policy lead, at the same time as the Local Plan review is commencing – not ideal. The local plan review is one of the topics being covered at a meeting called by the SDNPA for West Sussex Parish reps in Midhurst next Tuesday 18th October.

I was one of eight members and officers from the SDNPA who attended the two-day UK National Parks biennial conference based at Dunster on Exmoor at the end of last month, the theme being 'What does the nation need from National Parks today?' There was attendance from all of the 10 English, 3 Welsh and 2 Scottish parks. The pre-dominant background chatter was the emerging agricultural and land use policy of Mrs Truss's government. As things stand there are concerns that nature conservation and recovery has been side-lined. Hopefully the position will soon be clarified, but this seeming change in policy from the last administration is concerning to both National Parks and AONBs. Attendees were split into 8 groups, and the one I was on was shown the reason for and impact of managed coastal retreat in Porlock Bay, a controlled re-introduction of beavers into a wet area by the National Trust and an oyster farm including eating of the same. There were numbers of relevant speeches by amongst others Dr Tony Juniper (the Chair of Natural England), Julian Glover (the author of the 2018 review of NPs and AONBs), and Minette Batters (President NFU). As you might gather the event very much combined pleasurable knowledge gathering with serious business and networking well into the night. A major message gleaned from the event was the need for National Parks and AONBs to put aside any differences that might divide them to concentrate on lobbying as a serious force as hard as possible for the future of our protected landscapes.

Rather closer to home members and officers had an 'awayday' at the Seven Sisters Country Park on 20th September. This gave everybody the opportunity to see the work already carried out by the SDNPA since acquiring that facility from East Sussex CC. Having seen it previously, the change is very noticeable, and as a sign of public satisfaction the footfall has greatly increased. The estate is 280 hectares and besides the visitor centre at Exceat there are three other sets of buildings, creating both a challenge and opportunity to gain income from and showcase that part of the South Downs. Concerning income, it is hoped that Seven Sisters will be able to positively contribute to our funds reasonably soon. Identifying income is undoubtedly an area the SDNPA must give proper attention to in the future.

Being a relatively young National Park we have not accrued the portfolios of (hopefully money-spinning) assets of the well-established National Parks.

Andrew Shaxson