**Chichester District Association of Local Councils**

**Chair:** Cllr Andrew Shaxson (Harting and Elsted & Treyford Parish Councils)

**Clerk:** Mandy Jameson (temporary)dalc@wsalc.co.uk

**Draft minutes of a meeting of Chichester District Association of Local Councils held on Tuesday 14January 2025 at 7pm via Zoom.**

**Present:**

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| Cllr John Beckett | Bepton PC |
| Cllr Timothy Firmston  Cllr Catherine Salamons  Cllr Henry Potter  Cllr Richard Champness  Cllr Stephen Johnson | Birdham PC  Birdham PC  Boxgrove PC  Bury PC  Chidham & Hambrook PC |
| Cllr Frances Russell | Cocking PC |
| Cllr Dan Kilty  Cllr Charles Britton  Cllr Helen Marshall  Cllr Andrew Shaxson (chair) | Easebourne PC  East Lavington PC  Fishbourne PC  Harting and Elsted & Treyford PCs |
| Cllr Caroline Neville  Cllr Valerie Woods  Cllr Andy Tate  Cllr Sandie Moore  Cllr Richard Watts  Cllr Louise Myles | Lodsworth PC  Loxwood PC  Lurgashall PC  Lynchmere PC  Midhurst TC  Milland PC |
| Morag Birch, clerk | Stedham with Iping PC |
| Cllr Martin Mellodey  Cllr Graham Hockley  Cllr Andrew Irwin | Sidlesham PC  Stoughton PC  Tangmere PC |
| Cllr Sharon Burborough | Westhampnett PC |
| Cllr Nicolette Pike | West Wittering PC |
| Cllr Steve Debeger | West Wittering PC |
| Cllr Sophie Winship  Cllr Pete Drummond | Wisborough Green PC  Wisborough Green PC |
| Louise Davies, clerk | Wisborough Green PC |
| Trevor Leggo | WSALC |
| Mandy Jameson | Secretary |
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1. **Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Amanda Tait (Southbourne PC), Cllr Bill Black (Fernhurst PC), Cllr Beverley Ford (East Wittering & Bracklesham PC) as well as Heyshott PC, Lavant PC, Petworth TC, and Plaistow & Ifold PC.

Apologies were also received from Pam Bushby of CDC.

1. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2024 were **APPROVED** as a correct record to be e-signed by the Chair.

Cllr Sandie Moore had raised the issue of lack of repairs to social housing in the last meeting. She confirmed that the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) expects social landlords to ensure that the health and safety of residents is met, and for residents to let them know if this is not the case. Lynchmere PC have been liaising with CDC about issues in their area.

1. **Chair’s report**

Cllr Shaxson attended a meeting with the other West Sussex DALC Chairs the previous week and the issue of devolution had been discussed at length. This will be raised under agenda item 7.

1. **WSALC update – Trevor Leggo, CEO**

* The next WSALC Board meeting is to be held on 31 January at 10.30am.
* Recent changes to the administration of WSALC mean that Emily Simpson (who has dealt with ESALC administration for the past few years) will now also deal with WSALC admin in place of Anna Beams. Emily now holds the role of Assistant Chief Executive. Mandy Jameson is temporarily covering the secretariat of the West Sussex DALCs until a permanent replacement is found.
* An ‘all parishes’ meeting run by CDC is to be held on 3 February, this time by Zoom.
* It seems preferable to hold the next CDALC meeting face to face. A suitable location should be identified which means nobody has to drive an unreasonable distance. The timing of future meetings was also raised because Southbourne PC has requested CDALC meetings should not be held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month to avoid a clash with their own council meetings.
* Trevor suggested a Doodle poll might be held for all CDALC councils to identify a consensus view about future dates of meetings.
* The new Monitoring Officer at CDC has indicated that his approach will be different from Nick Bennett’s and his engagement with parish councils would be less. This caused some concern as Nick Bennett had always proved helpful and supportive to councils.

1. **SDNP Report**

The Chair referred to his report circulated with the agenda (appendix A).

A new Management Plan is to be consulted on at the same time as the Local Plan Review, with the consultation period running for 8 weeks from 20 January. There will be a briefing on both plans in Midhurst on 22 January from 4-6pm.

Andrew encouraged anyone interested in planning issues concerning the SDNP to sign up for the weekly email updates.

Cllr Potter asked if there was any news on the extension of Centurion Way through Singleton. Andrew said there are very few landowners potentially affected by the route as far as the South Downs Way, but the considerable costs of providing the route may affect progress. Updates will cover this as things move forward.

1. **CHC Report**

Cllr Nicolette Pike (CHC representative on CDALC) explained that CHC meetings and minutes are now deemed confidential and she was only able to replicate rather brief notes taken by Richard Austin (appendix B). Cllr Pike feels this compromises transparency as CHC matters should be in the public domain; the default should be that everything is held in open session unless there is good reason not to do so.

Andrew Shaxson said this should be looked into carefully and an explanation sought. He suggested that he and Trevor Leggo meet with the CHC Chief Executive to ascertain what is going on.

1. **Devolution – the way forward**

Trevor Leggo gave a summary of the current situation as follows:

* On 16 December ’24, the government announced that bids were invited for strategic authorities to be set up and run by a directly elected Mayor. The deadline for bids was 10 January. West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove have submitted a joint bid which falls very much within the government’s initial remit (ie. combined population of over 1.5m, and substantially rural).
* Keith Stevens, NALC Chair and East Sussex councillor, has indicated that the government is keen to forge ahead with plans for devolution which will essentially mean the end of district and borough councils. Apparently there are ‘financial sweeteners’ for those councils who go down this route early in the process.
* If this were to happen in Sussex, it could give towns and parishes the opportunity to take on extra responsibilities – eg. working together as in the case of Haywards Heath TC and Burgess Hill TC who worked together some years ago to maintain road surfaces (under an SLA with WSCC) until the new contractor objected. At this point, Cllr Drummond mentioned the pothole mended in Wisborough Green for which the repairs lasted for precisely half an hour.
* A discussion ensued and Trevor confirmed that County Council elections for May 2025 have not been cancelled despite some attendees hearing that this is definite. -At this stage the public are not being consulted on devolution plans but WSALC and ESALC are keeping a very close eye on things and will keep members updated. A decision is expected from the government by the end of January.
* Andrew Shaxson said it is important to remain agile in order to respond to the evolving situation. It is likely that devolution will now be a standing item on the CDALC agenda for future meetings.

1. **Planning updates**

Trevor Leggo explained that planning consultant Steve Tilbury has put together a paper about changes to the National Planning Policy framework and at this point it appears that the role of Neighbourhood Plans is unaffected. However, there will be reforms to come. In the meantime Steve Tilbury is the most reliable source of information for WSALC and ESALC, so members will be kept fully updated.

1. **Matters of concern to your council**

* Cllr Neville highlighted two issues concerning travellers in Lodsworth; the first where a field has been purchased and a 75 page planning application put in. There is great concern from residents. Andrew Shaxson said national legislation is not helpful but he will bring it up again with the National Park authority

Secondly, Cllr Neville explained that a neighbouring field has also been purchased and is now being used for events, campsite etc – residents are concerned it will get out of hand. Planning enforcement officers say it is within the law. She was advised to keep careful notes of evidence about any ongoing issues.

* Cllr Drummond asked if any other council has faced ‘stupid’ decision-making from CDC about the need to separately name a small ‘spur’ off another new named road.
* Cllr Irwin expressed concern about a piece of unregistered land in Tangmere which has been enclosed by a resident. The parish council seems unable to take action to save this piece of land from future development as CDC are uninterested in getting involved. Andrew Shaxson confirmed that this is not a planning issue until a planning application is submitted.

1. **Date and format of next meeting**

It is intended to hold the next CDALC meeting in May and after that in September.

Attendees agreed that the next meeting should be held face to face. A reasonable

central location will be identified and a convenient date investigated.

*Meeting closed at 8:34pm*

Signed: …………………………………………… Dated: ……………………………

Andrew Shaxson, Chair

**Appendix A**

**SDNP report 14th January**

This is a brief overview, which I hope will prompt questions, and if you need more, and more detailed information I can address it at the meeting.

* Sion McGeever, the new CEO, in post for a couple of months. Still finding his feet.
* Tim Slaney has reverted back to being Director of planning.
* Consultations on the latest iteration of the Management plan for the SDNP, and the Local Plan revision are taking place for 8 weeks between the 20th January and 17th March.
* Standby notices have been sent to parish councils in the SDNP, and an invitation for West Sussex parishes in the National Park to attend a briefing on both consultations at South Downs Centre in Midhurst on 22nd January, between 4pm and 6pm.
* For those with any interest in SDNP regardless of whether they are a NP resident, the Management Plan might well be of interest. Please study the documentation, and if you feel there are issues that need to be amended or included let us know.
* For parishes within the NP the Local Plan revision Reg 18 consultation is getting under way. SDNP does not need to allocate sites for major expansions of market housing, but some sites are proposed AND there are policy changes and additions in regard to the plan that came into force in July 2019.
* Parishes and Community organisations must ensure that the SDNPA knows they exist, as there is help and funding available for relevant projects – including CIL, Sustainable Communities fund grants. As is often the case, those in the know, are experienced at form-filling and shout loudest get noticed -and tend to get the funds and other resources.
* Local government reorganisation, and how will it affect SDNP and SDNPA? As a starter there will be changes in representation by various bodies. Likely to also be changes in how planning applications are processed and the way National Parks are funded. Not sure there is a mention of the governance and administration of National Parks in the White Paper.
* Previously mentioned that the weekly ‘Updates’ and regular Planning briefing notes are the best way to gain understanding of what is happening from week to week.

Andrew Shaxson

**Appendix B**

Chichester Harbour Conservancy Report for CDALC December 2024

There was an Advisory Meeting held on 24th November, the first since June. All the papers resulted in Minutes that are deemed to be “Confidential” by CHC Management and therefore I have not been able to rely on the meeting to report back to CDALC. I therefore had to ask Dr Richard Austin, Director of the National Landscape to give me some notes that I was allowed to report. These notes are set out below:

* The CHaPRoN partnership continues to meet, however it is there is a significant funding boost we will struggle to realise the nature recovery ambitions that we have developed.
* The EA have secured some funding for us, which will include a second BUDs trial in 2025 (beneficial use of dredgings).
* We have two new rangers: Rosie Ellis, Lead Ranger, and Jack Shepherd, Ranger. Both have settled in well. Plus a new Nature Recovery Officer, Lily Whittaker.
* On Harbour safety, it is an exceedingly safe season with only two serious incidents, neither of which were life threatening (a sinking keelboat and a man overboard). The annual PMSC audit will be next week.
* On mooring fees, these are largely going up in line with CPI. There will be additional concessions for paddle craft and a new QR code system for casual harbour users.
* I have attached a PDF with the most recent update on Snowhill Marsh, by Peter Hughes, the CHC Ecologist. (This pdf shows the early stages of a CHC project to open up the Saltmarsh to public, to fence off islands to avoid fox predation and an aim to improve the habitat)
* The Itchenor Jetty replacement and extension is complete. The CEO and Harbour Master reported words of appreciation from several local people.
* The next phase of the project is to improve the facilities at the Harbour Office, including the public shower and toilets. These plans are going ahead in the coming months.
* The planned rollback of the footpath at Apuldram Meadow in Fishbourne is at the Detailed Design stage. JBA Consultants are assisting with this with the view to holding a public drop-in session in the Spring, followed by a planning application. The ambition is to create 5-12 hectares of saltmarsh at this site over the next 50 years. The public drop-in session will likely be a St. Peter’s Church Hall.
* CHC are planning to install a 1km cycle link route between Shipton Green and West Wittering. CHC are waiting for CDC to agree that the planning conditions have been discharged. It is hoped that work will commence in February, by a contractor called Barcombe, with the route open in the Spring.
* CHC sought to resolve the issue of the state of Salterns Lock, however it is not been possible to identify the responsible body, therefore it has reached an impasse.
* CHC sought a meeting with PINS about the number of major developments approved around Chichester Harbour, most recently Birdham, Bosham, Chidham & Hambrook. Although PINS agreed to a meeting, it has not taken place yet. CHC is concerned that the character and setting of the National Landscape is being eroded, and the cumulative impact of these developments is not being taken into consideration.
* CHC have developed a Strategy to 2050, which will help guide the organisation for the next 25 years.
* In the meantime, a public consultation on the emerging Management Plan (2025-30) will take place early in 2025.

Cllr Nicolette Pike, CHC representative on CDALC