

RUSTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES: of the Monthly Meeting held on 24 February 2025

PRESENT: Councillors J Bennett (Chairman), Mrs V Allen, Mrs C Broomfield, M Broomfield, Mrs A Cooper, A Cooper (Late Arrival), R Grevett (Late Arrival), G Lee, Mrs S Partridge, D Rogers, Mrs C Stevens and P Warren

In attendance: Mrs C Ward (Clerk of the Council) and Ms R Costan (Deputy Clerk of the Council)

36/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ceiriog-Hughes (Personal), Mrs Gregory (Personal), Ms Lloyd (Indisposition) and Ms Revell (Holiday). These apologies were accepted by the Council.

37/25 APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE - COUNCILLOR MRS P GREGORY

The Clerk said that she had received a request by email from Councillor Mrs Gregory requesting a leave of absence with effect from 25 February 2025. The reason for the application was due to Councillor Mrs Gregory's current personal circumstances. She advised the Council that subsequent to the receipt of the aforementioned request, she had met with Councillor Mrs Gregory.

Following a discussion, the Council RESOLVED that a leave of absence be granted to Councillor Mrs Gregory with effect from 25 February 2025 to 24 August 2025.

The Council also AGREED that its best wishes should be conveyed to Councillor Mrs Gregory.

38/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bennett declared a personal interest in Minute 46/25 (Minute 20/25(a) of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting - 24 February 2025 refers). He remained in the Meeting during consideration of this item and took part in the vote thereon.

Councillor Mrs Broomfield declared a personal interest in Minute 50/25. She remained in the Meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Broomfield declared a personal interest in Minute 50/25. He remained in the Meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Rogers declared a personal interest in Minute 50/25. He remained in the Meeting during consideration of this item.

39/25 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 27 January 2025 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

40/25 SUSSEX POLICE

Apologies for absence had been received from Sergeant West and PCSO Raju.

(a) Matters Arising

The Clerk referred to Minute 4/25(a) and said that she had nothing of any significance to report at the present time, other than to advise that she had received notification from PCSO Raju that the Police were working in

partnership with the Arun District Council to conduct bike marking on 28 February 2025 at 3.00 pm near to the Cook Shop and Park Coffee Bar in the Village Centre.

Councillor Lee then advised that from the Sussex Police Website, 70 crimes had been reported for Rustington in December 2024. He said that PCSO Raju had advised him that, so far in the current month, there had been 70 crimes.

He then referred to the fact that the last 'Stop and Search' incident in Rustington was in July 2024.

The Council NOTED this information and the Chairman thanked Councillor Lee for his Report.

Councillor Mrs Cooper then reported that she had been advised that, at the beginning of February, a group of between 8 and 10 youths had been shoplifting from the Waitrose Store. She said that a Deputy Manager had chased the group and challenged individuals. He had then been assaulted with a bottle of alcohol and suffered injuries as a result.

The Council was concerned to NOTE this information.

She also advised the Council that Store Property Investments Limited were in the process of having CCTV installed in Churchill Court and also in the vicinity of the Cook Shop.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

(b) Arun All Parishes Meeting - 14 February 2025

The Clerk advised that she had attended the above Meeting, hosted by Inspector Ross Wickings.

She said that a small number of Parishes had been represented at the Meeting, together with Lee Matthews from the Arun District Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

Inspector Wickings had provided a general update on Sussex Police as follows:-

Forcewide

- Neighbourhood Policing Team Review currently being undertaken - Recommendations expected to come through in April - Internal Consultation going on and External Consultation with Council also anticipated to take place
- Engagement App launched - Officers recording how they are engaging with members of the public and then all recorded information should be able to be lifted from Data Catch System

Divisionally

- Anti-Social Behaviour Lead, Superintendent Andy Saville - Relocating to Worthing and Horsham

Locally

- Op Ceremony - Predominately Chichester based for various crimes, but also involves people from Arun going to Chichester to commit crimes - A great deal of resources being put into this
- Op Sonar - Littlehampton High Street - Still dealing with local issues - Request received for expansion of a multi-occupied building in the Town, but will be objecting as lots of problems being caused by occupants of said building
- Currently trying to recruit replacement Sergeant - Only one in post at the present time in Arun
- In April there will be one additional PC in Bognor Regis

- Several PCSOs arriving - three so far going to Bognor Regis - Currently three vacancies in Arun, but will hopefully be filling these from the next two cohorts.

Inspector Wickings then responded to several questions and concerns raised by the Council representatives in attendance.

Following this, Lee Matthews said that he had nothing specific to raise, other than to mention the excellent response by the Police to the recent spate of shop break-ins in Rustington and Littlehampton which were linked. He said the culprit had been arrested and charged, etc.

Inspector Wickings concluded the Meeting by referring to the Briefing that would be being organised with the Arun District Council, West Sussex County Council, Parish and Town Councils prior to the 'Travellers Season'.

The Council NOTED this information.

Councillor Cooper joined the Meeting at this juncture.

41/25 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Ms Edwards.

Councillors Mrs Partridge, Mrs Cooper and Gunner, in their capacity as District Councillors for Rustington, then reported on Arun District Council matters as follows:-

Councillor Mrs Partridge

- *NPPF - No further progress made to date*
- *Possible re-development of Watersmead Park*

Councillor Mrs Cooper

- *2025/2026 Budget to be considered at Special Meeting on 26 February 2025*
- *Policy and Finance Meeting - Rejoining Brighton Economic Board - Split vote, but decision made to join the Board again*
- *HR and Payroll System - Will cease to be supported from April 2025 - Looking into options available for new System*

Councillor Gunner

- *Local Plan - No further progress likely at the present time*
- *Council Housing - De-pooling of communal Service Charges - Tenants will have to pay up to £525.00 per annum extra - Leaseholders will also have to pay additional charges*
- *New Waste Bins - Will be being purchased soon - Large expenditure item.*

Following their Reports, Councillors Mrs Cooper and Mrs Partridge responded to a number of questions from Members including:-

- An enquiry from Councillor Bennett - He advised that in the local Press where it had been reported that the District Council had lost another five complaints in respect of Housing issues with the Ombudsman - Councillors Mrs Cooper and Gunner said that the Committee had been kept informed of these complaints which were all historic regarding old repairs.

The Council NOTED all of the above information and the Chairman of the Meeting thanked Councillors Mrs Partridge, Mrs Cooper and Gunner for their contributions in respect of District Council matters.

42/25 **COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Mrs Cooper reported on County Council issues as follows:-

- *Devolution - Consultation currently ongoing for Mayoral Combined Authority for Sussex and Brighton*
- *2025/2026 Budget - Settled - Balanced Budget without cuts to front-line services - Core Funding £47.7M - Additional £12M Received - £35.7M for Council Tax - 4.99% Increase of which 2% is for Adult Social Care.*

The Council NOTED the above information and the Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs Cooper for her Report.

43/25 **CLERK'S REPORT**

(a) Retiring Collection - Community Carol Concert

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks and appreciation from Blind Veterans UK Rustington, in respect of the donation of £974.66, representing the Retiring Collection and proceeds from the Auction at the Community Carol Concert.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

44/25 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reported on his official representation and attendance at Meetings, Events and Functions since the last Monthly Meeting as follows:-

- Arun District Council - Arun Town and Parish Council's Climate Change Meeting - 28 January 2025
- Arun District Association of Local Councils (ADALC) Meeting - 28 January 2025

The Chairman also thanked the Clerk and Councillor Rogers for attending the Chaucery Memorial on 17 February 2025 to mark the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the Rustington plane crash on 17 February 1945.

The Council NOTED this information.

45/25 **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Council NOTED the Report of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 27 January 2025.

(Prior to consideration of the following item, Councillor Bennett had declared a personal interest, in his capacity as a Governor at Georgian Gardens Community Primary School - Minute 20/25(a) refers)

46/25 **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The Council received the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 24 February 2025. (Verbal Report from the Chairman of the Committee).

The Council RESOLVED that the Recommendations contained in the Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 24 February 2025 be APPROVED.

47/25

CHANGE OF MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING START TIMES

The Clerk referred to Minute 88/24 (Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting - 25 November 2024 refers) and reminded Members that the Committee had recommended that the Council should be asked to consider a proposal to change the start time of the Monthly Council Meetings from 7.00 pm to 6.45 pm, as soon as practicably possible in 2025, due to the limited time required, at most of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meetings, to conduct the monthly business. She said that Councillor Cooper had, at the aforementioned Meeting, pointed out that frequently the wait time for Members between the Committee Meeting and Full Council Meeting was approximately 30 minutes.

The Clerk said that, if the Council was to agree to the proposed change, the start time for the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meetings did not need to change from 6.15 pm, unless there was an increase in the business to be transacted, in which case the start time could be brought forward to 6.00 pm or earlier, to accommodate this.

Following a brief discussion, the Council RESOLVED that future Monthly Council Meetings should commence at 7.00 pm, with Public Question Time commencing at 6.45 pm.

48/25

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING - 10 APRIL 2025

The Clerk referred to Minute 12/25 and said that, in accordance with the decision made, she had approached Chief Constable Jo Shiner to invite her to attend the Meeting as the Guest Speaker. Unfortunately, she had responded to say that she already had a prior commitment on the date of the Meeting and would not, therefore, be able to attend.

Chief Inspector Shiner had, however, advised that she had taken the liberty of copying the Divisional Commander, CS Stu Hale, in to her response, who might be able to attend if the Council still wished to have a senior policing input.

The Clerk said that she had responded saying that she was extremely grateful to her for passing the Invitation on to Divisional Commander, CS Stu Hale and, on behalf of the Council, was very much hoping that he would be able to find the time to attend. She concluded by saying that he had been on annual leave until 24 February 2025, but she was anticipating that he would respond in the near future.

The Council NOTED this information.

49/25

THE WOODLANDS CENTRE - PROPOSED MAJOR REDESIGN AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The Clerk referred to Minute 13/25 and said that the Architects had advised that they had amended the plans for Phase One of the Project, and had forwarded them on to the Quantity Surveyors for the Cost Plan to be prepared. She said that the Architects had advised that they had ringfenced certain items so that it would be easy to see costs for the different items, such as the chair store for the Village Memorial Hall, etc.

She said that a Report from the Working Party with its recommendation/s would be placed before the Council for anticipated approval, as soon as the new Cost Plan had been received and agreed.

The Council NOTED this information.

(Prior to consideration of the following item, Councillors Mrs Broomfield, Broomfield and Rogers had declared a personal interest as Members of the Littlehampton District Lions Club)

50/25

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY - 8 MAY 2025

The Clerk referred to Minute 14/25 and said that the Littlehampton Concert Band had agreed that they would like the Concert to be moved to the afternoon of Saturday 10 May 2025, from 2.30 pm to

approximately 4.30 pm, with doors opening at 2.00 pm. She said that tickets for the Concert would be available from the Samuel Wickens Centre with effect from 1 April 2025, and Members would be contacted by email prior to the aforementioned date for their ticket requirements.

She then reminded the Council that a small themed Exhibition would be being held at the Museum, with a Public Talk taking place on the afternoon of Wednesday 7 May 2025, and a Rustington Heritage Association Walk, led by Graeme Taylor on Friday 9 May 2025. She said timings were yet to confirmed in respect of the Walk, but this would be advertised on Social Media in due course.

**51/25 CHAUCERY MEMORIAL - 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSTINGTON PLANE
CRASH - 17 FEBRUARY 2025**

Councillor Rogers reported that he had laid a wreath on behalf of the Council at 12.00 noon on 17 February 2025, to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Rustington Plane Crash in Chaucer Avenue. He said the representatives from the Rustington Heritage Association, the Museum Manager and Administrative Assistant, together with local residents had been present to observe a two-minute silence in memory of those who sadly lost their lives in the crash on 17 February 1945.

The Council NOTED this information.

**52/25 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - ARUN TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL'S CLIMATE
CHANGE MEETING SUMMARY**

The Clerk reported that she had previously circulated an email received from Jonathan Letendrie, Project Support Officer, together with associated documentation in this regard.

The Chairman then reported on his attendance at the Climate Change Meeting on 28 January 2025 and said that it had been a most interesting Meeting.

The Council NOTED this information and thanked the Chairman for his Report.

**53/25 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL - DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
RE-ORGANISATION**

The Clerk referred to Minute 31/25 and reported that she had previously circulated a further Newsletter received from Dawn Hudd, Chief Executive of Arun District Council, which had been sent to all Arun District Town and Parish Councils.

In the Newsletter, Ms Hudd said that she would be working with the Leader of the Council and other West Sussex CEOs and Leaders over the next few weeks to prepare the various options to submit to Government on 21 March 2025. This would be followed by work on preparing business cases for the options for each constituent authority in order to make a decision on the preferred option, prior to the September deadline. She also advised that the Government had encouraged areas to come together with one proposal and would prefer to not have competing bids, but would provide further information once she knew more about how the consultations with Councillors and members of the public would work.

A copy of the Newsletter is attached and forms a part of these Minutes.

She then reminded the Council that she had also previously circulated a subsequent email received from Ms Hudd, advising that a Consultation on the proposals for a Mayoral Combined Authority for Sussex and Brighton was now open and everyone across the County was being invited to have their say. The Consultation, which was specific to the Sussex and Brighton region, would be running until 13 April 2025.

The Consultation was specifically asking about:-

- The proposed geography
- Governance arrangements
- Supporting the economy
- Improving social outcomes
- Local government services
- Improving the local natural environment
- Supporting the needs of local communities and reflect local identity.

The email also advised that Ministers had agreed that a strategic authority for Sussex and Brighton, made up of an elected mayor and two members of each constituent authority, offered the chance to give the residents more control and influence over the issues affecting them, from transport and housing to skills and employment, as well as a stronger voice in how national decisions affected them.

Ms Hudd concluded that the decision whether or not to proceed with the proposal would be made by the Government based on its assessment of the Consultation responses. She advised that formal steps towards setting up a combined authority for Sussex could not commence until that decision was made, and she wanted to encourage Parish and Town Councils to respond to the Consultation as key stakeholders in the region.

Following a brief discussion, the Council RESOLVED that Members should respond to the Consultation on an individual basis, but that the Clerk and Deputy Clerk should be tasked with producing a draft response from the Council for approval at the next Meeting.

54/25 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL - WEST SUSSEX HIGHWAY NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated an email received from Marius Kynaston, Senior Programme Manager, in this regard.

She said that in his email Mr Kynaston had advised that the West Sussex Highway Network Management Plan (HNMP) had now been agreed and published on the County Council's Website. He had advised that the HNMP covered the approach taken to all aspects of highway network management in West Sussex, including the way the Highway Authority managed works and events on its network to minimise disruption.

The Council NOTED this information.

55/25 WEST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated an email received from Stephen Davy-Osborne, Communications and Engagement Lead, advising that the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service had launched a Public Consultation to review its Emergency Response Standards. These Standards referred to the time it took the Service to attend incidents such as fires and road traffic collisions in West Sussex.

The proposed changes would not affect the location of any fire stations or fire engines within West Sussex or change the time it took for a fire engine to attend an incident but would bring the way the Service measured its performance in line with other fire and rescue services to allow for greater transparency.

The Clerk reminded the Council that she had previously circulated the aforementioned email to all Members as the closing date for comments was 27 February 2025. She said that the Consultation had also been advertised on the Council's Social Media Page.

Following a brief discussion, the Council AGREED that no further action should be taken by the Council as an Authority, but that Members should be urged to respond to the Public Consultation on an individual basis before 27 February 2025.

Councillor Grevett joined the Meeting at this juncture.

**56/25 WEST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - ENGLISH DEVOLUTION
WHITE PAPER UPDATE**

The Clerk said that she had previously circulated an email from Emily Simpson, WSALC, with an update in this regard from Councillor Paul Marshall, Leader, West Sussex County Council.

In his update, Mr Marshall advised that the Deputy Prime Minister had made an announcement in the House of Commons that Sussex would be one of the places on the Devolution Priority Programme and that the Government would be moving to consult on the formation of a Strategic Combined Authority and elected Mayor. Also included in the announcement was the fact that WSCC, and other Authorities on the list, would not be holding Elections in 2025.

She then reported that she had, earlier in the day, circulated a further email containing an update from Councillor Marshall, in which he had advised that the Consultation was now open and, broadly, provided the same information as that reported in Minute 53/25 above.

The Council NOTED this information.

The Meeting was then ADJOURNED to allow Councillor Gunner to provide detailed information for the Council on Local Government Re-organisation.

Councillor Gunner addressed the Council at length regarding how the new Unitary Authority would shape up and from the District point of view he said there would be three options to be considered, namely:-

- West Sussex Wide Unitary Council
- Chichester/Horsham/Arun Combined Unitary Council
- Chichester/Arun/Adur Combined Unitary Council.

He advised that there was likely to be a Governance Review regarding how Parishes would be developed, but services would probably be devolved to Parish level.

He said that with just one year to prepare, the Parish Council would need to be considering what it felt would work best for Rustington.

He concluded by stating that, overall, very little would be likely to get done in the way of District Council Projects but, in the meantime, certain assets might be being disposed of and the Council should, maybe, approach that Council if there were any services/properties/land that it might be interested in assuming responsibility for.

The Meeting resumed at this juncture.

The Council expressed its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Gunner for providing such detailed and interesting information in this regard.

**57/25 WEST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - ADALC MEETING -
28 JANUARY 2025**

The Council NOTED the draft Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2025.

58/25 SAFETY OF LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES AND E-BIKES AND SCOOTERS

The Council NOTED further email correspondence received from Ron Bailey, Researcher for Lord Foster, House of Lords, together with associated documentation in this regard.

59/25 REACH PROJECT UPDATE

The Clerk reported that she had previously circulated an email received from Councillors Gunston (East Preston Parish Council), Evans (Angmering Parish Council) and Lee (Rustington Parish Council), providing an update on the REACH Project.

Councillor Lee said that work had been continuing on the Project, and it would soon be receiving the first stage payment of a £40,000.00 grant from the Community Energy Fund. This meant that a Project Manager could be appointed and a panel of appropriately certified installers had already been appointed.

He continued by advising that the Grant would be used to lay the groundwork and develop the business case to offer customer funded and pay as you go (PAYG, i.e. no upfront cost) options for households and businesses to obtain the benefits of solar PV. The option of a local energy market to enable benefits even for those who did not have a suitable roof was also being explored.

He then advised that the Project was hoping to enlist further support from the West Sussex County Council. To that end it was hoped that a Meeting could be convened with the appropriate County Councillors to establish what support could be expected from the County Council.

He concluded by saying that it was hoped that the options could start to be offered to both domestic and commercial customers in the second half of 2025, but the Project would first be reporting back to the Community Energy Fund in June 2025, following which a further update would be provided.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

60/25 WSALC COUNCILLOR/CHAIR TRAINING SESSION - 11 FEBRUARY 2025

Councillor Mrs Stevens reported on her attendance at the above Training Session which was hosted by the Chief Executive Officer of WSALC, Mr Trevor Leggo.

She said that she had thoroughly enjoyed the Training Session, which had made her realise how much information she had picked up. She said that the Session had also confirmed what she already thought, namely, that the Parish Council was very well operated and she was happy to have joined a Council that believed in Team Work.

The Council was pleased to NOTE this information.

61/25 DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS CIRCULATED

The Council NOTED the following Documents and Publications previously circulated for Members' information:-

- (a) Arun District Council - News Release - 7 February 2025
- (b) CAGNE - February Bulletin
- (c) Carers Support - Latest News
- (d) Chestnut Tree House - How Your Support Means Every Child Can Play
- (e) Clear Councils - Newsletter
- (f) CPRE - Campaigns Update - February 2025
- (g) East Preston Parish Council News - 29 January 2025, 5 February 2025, 13 February 2025 and 20 February 2025
- (h) National Association of Local Councils - Chief Executive's Bulletin - 30 January 2025, 6 February 2025, 13 February 2025 and 20 February 2025
- (i) Oneillhomer - What Impact Could English Devolution Have On Your Council Plans?
- (j) RHS Communities - Grow With It Is Back!
- (k) RHS - Tell us what you think about community gardening

- (l) St Barnabas House - How Does A Hospice Social Worker Support Families?
- (m) Transport for the South East (TfSE's) - Connections - 21 February 2025
- (n) Turning Tides - February Update
- (o) West Sussex County Council - Highways, Transport and Planning - News and Updates - 28 January 2025
- (p) West Sussex County Council - Join The Fun As Our Libraries Celebrate Their 100th Birthday!
- (q) West Sussex County Council - News Release - 29 January 2025, 30 January 2025, 3 February 2025 x2, 4 February 2025, 5 February 2025, 6 February 2025, 10 February 2025, 11 February 2025, 14 February 2025 x2 and 19 February 2025
- (r) West Sussex County Council - Residents' eNewsletter - 20 February 2025

There being no further business the Meeting concluded at 8.09pm.

Chairman:

Date:

There were no questions received either preceding, or at, the Meeting for consideration during the Public Question Time, held prior to the commencement of the formal proceedings.

Devolution

and local government reorganisation

February 2025

Dawn Hudd

Introduction

Thank you to all of those that attended the Devolution member briefing this week, whether in person or via Teams. I don't know about you, but I thought it was a useful, constructive hour. [You can find the slides from the session here.](#)



I hope that the information I shared brought you up to speed on where we are in the process and the key deadlines we are working towards.

As I have said all along, there are many unknowns at the moment, which I know may be frustrating as we all want the answers so that we can start looking ahead and making plans to continue to provide the best for Arun residents, but we are still at the beginning of the process.

Next steps

I will be working closely with Cllr Lury and other West Sussex CEOs and Leaders over the next few weeks to prepare the various options to submit to Government on 21 March. We will then get on with the work of preparing business cases for the options for each constituent authority in order to make a decision on the preferred option, prior to the September deadline. The government has encouraged areas to come together with one proposal and would prefer to not have competing

bids. It remains to be seen if the West Sussex authorities will agree on one final proposal. As soon as I know more about the process of how consultations with members, and the public will work, I will of course let you know.

Communications

I know from listening to points raised by you, that communication is key, for the public, for members and for our officers. On Tuesday our Communications Manager attended the first of a course of monthly LGA Communications Network briefings and will have access to a tool kit of resources and information which we will share appropriately. We will also add our own content into the mix as needed.

When we have more clarity of how Sussex will be divided and how the geography will work, we are hoping to see communications on this topic cascaded to ensure that messaging is consistent and for all of us involved. Only time will tell!

Future briefings

It was raised at the briefing that more sessions would be welcome in the future, and I completely agree. Keeping our dialogue open and sharing our views and ideas to keep the residents of Arun at the forefront of our plans is important.

I am interested to hear from you (either individually or via Group Leaders), what format you would like these briefings to be. They need to be productive and useful to you. I will of course update on any progress as an introduction, but how would you like the rest of the session to look? Please feel free to email your thoughts to me. dawn.hudd@arun.gov.uk