

## Horsham Association of Local Councils (HALC)

**Chair:** Cllr Graham Watkins (Southwater Parish Council)  
**Secretary:** Anna Beams, Mulberry & Co, Eastgate House, Dogflud Way, Farnham, GU9 7UD  
**Tel:** 03303 450597  
**Email:** [horshamalc@gmail.com](mailto:horshamalc@gmail.com)

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Minutes of the meeting of Horsham Association of Local Councils held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 at 7:00pm by Zoom.

### Present:

Cllr Elisabeth Tooms	Amberley Parish Council
Cllr Tony Moss	Ashington Parish Council
Cllr Susie Fischel	Ashurst Parish Council
Cllr Ann Blakelock	Bramber Parish Council
Cllr Terry Oliver	Broadbridge Heath Parish Council
Cllr Stephen Davies	Colgate Parish Council
Cllr Nigel Hillpaul	Denne Neighbourhood Council
Cllr Elaine Goodyear	Henfield Parish Council
Cllr Jane Jones	Henfield Parish Council
Cllr Morag Warrack	Horsham Trafalgar Neighbourhood Council
Cllr Sally Wilton	North Horsham Parish Council
Cllr Val Court	Nuthurst Parish Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Paul Kornycky	Rudgwick Parish Council
Cllr Paul Thompson	Rudgwick Parish Council
Cllr Patrick Field	Shermanbury Parish Council
Cllr Graham Watkins	Southwater Parish Council (Chair)
Cllr Andy Gibson	Storrington & Sullington Parish Council
Lauren Hansing	Storrington & Sullington Parish Council
Cllr Caroline Instance	Thakeham Parish Council
Cllr Ian Gurling	Warnham Parish Council
Cllr Steve Buddell	Washington Parish Council
Cllr Jason Thomas	Washington Parish Council
Cllr David Green	West Grinstead Parish Council
Trevor Leggo	CEO, WSALC
Cllr Douglas Denham St Pinnock	Chair, WSALC
Anna Beams	HALC Secretary

## **1. Welcome**

The Vice Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

## **2. Apologies**

Received and accepted from Cllrs Sandy Duck and Phillip Day (Billingshurst PC), Cllr John Evans (Coldwatham PC), Cllr Derek Moore (Southwater PC), Cllrs Stephen Watkins and Norman Prince (Thakeham PC) and Matthew Thomas (Wiston PC)

## **3. Nominations for and election of Chairman**

The Vice Chair advised that she had attended the recent memorial service held for Malcolm Eastwood, previous Chair of HALC. The service was a touching memorial to Malcolm, and he will be a great loss to HALC as well as the community of Henfield.

***On a proposal by the Vice Chair and seconded by Cllr Steve Buddell, Cllr Graham Watkins (Southwater Parish Council) was duly elected as Chair by a majority show of hands and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.***

## **4. Approval of minutes of the previous HALC meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023.**

The minutes were approved as a true record pending a correction to the start time.

## **5. To appoint 1x representative to the WSALC Board**

***On a proposal by the Vice Chair and seconded by Cllr Elaine Goodyear, Cllr Graham Watkins was appointed as representative to the WSALC Board. There were no objections.***

## **6. To appoint 1x signatory to the HALC bank account.**

No expressions of interest were received.

Trevor Leggo explained that there have been difficulties with all district association bank accounts, in particular with appointing and updating signatories, but that WSALC may be able to provide a solution which he will cover under the next agenda item.

Trevor returned to item 4, adding that it had been agreed at the previous meeting that a poll would be held to ascertain member councils views on the Local Plan. Due to events over the past few months, this has not yet taken place and he suggested that an email is circulated to Anna Beams as soon as possible in a simple yes/no format.

It was further suggested that the annual joint meeting is held with Horsham District Council (HDC) is held as early as possible this year in order to feedback member councils feedback, Anna agreed to arrange a date with HDC.

## **7. Reports from outside bodies**

### **a) WSALC**

Trevor Leggo reported the following updates from the WSALC Board held on 26<sup>th</sup> January:

- Cllr Andrew Shaxson (Chichester District Association) was unanimously elected Vice Chair.
- £250 to be donated to St Barnabas Hospice in memory of Malcolm Eastwood.
- DALC finances – Trevor explained that each of the four district associations (DALCs) has experienced difficulties in the past with recruiting and maintaining bank account signatories and continuous access to the accounts resulting in them being unable to progress the associations and that, in some cases, WSALC has subsidised the DALCs.

He explained that, following discussions, the Board proposed that in order to support the DALCs, the accounts and administration are incorporated into WSALC, with the individual DALC funds being issued their own cost centre. Signatories would therefore be appointed by WSALC with any payments approved by the individual district association Chair and Vice Chair.

Cllr Denham St. Pinnock (WSALC Chair) added that, as the secretarial function of the DALCs is being combined with WSALC, combining the finances would further simplify the processes. He added that it is his firm belief that the DALCs are the beating heart of the county and that WSALC should assist their function as much as possible.

***On a proposal by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Caroline Instance, it was agreed to transfer the accounts and administration to WSALC – 24 in favour, 1 abstention.***

- The Board agreed to assist troubled councils that need intervention beyond the Monitoring Officer should it be necessary.
- A survey was circulated to all West and East Sussex member councils to establish how many member councils have adopted the Civility and Respect Pledge. Of the 135 councils in West Sussex, 35 have indicated that they have adopted the Pledge. Trevor encouraged member councils in the Horsham district to respond to the survey and if they have not adopted the Pledge to indicate why not.

Cllr Denham St. Pinnock added that the Pledge provides ammunition for NALC when negotiating with Government. His own parish has adopted the Pledge and will re-adopt it each year.

Some councils stated that they were not aware of the Civility and Respect Pledge or the survey, Trevor advised that he will ensure the information is circulated again.

## **b) HDC Standards Committee**

Cllr David Green (West Grinstead Parish Council & HDC Standards Committee representative) referred to a report of a meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 ([appendix A](#))

There were no further questions.

## **8. Matters of concern to your council not on the agenda**

- Cllr Terry Oliver (Broadbridge Heath Parish Council) – was unable to attend the recent peer review at HDC, is there any feedback?  
The meeting was chaired by the Leader of Winchester City Council, turnout was low. The main focus was processes and communications. HDC feel that engagement and communication is improving although the sharing of findings needs improvement.
- Cllr Ian Gurling (Warnham Parish Council) – raised issues with external auditors and the manner that the audit was conducted and responses received.  
Trevor advised that the external auditor is appointed by the SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit

Appointments). Complaints should be raised directly with the external auditor in the first instance and escalated to the SAAA if necessary. Complaints should be clear and concise with a clear statement of concerns.

- Cllr Elisabeth Tooms (Amberley Parish Council) – queried whether there has been any update to the Water Neutrality Project as reported at the last meeting.

The Chair reported that HDC believe they have resolved the issue in the Local Plan with offsetting and reduction and increasing green and grey water. It has yet to be put to the test. Southern Water have reported that they are looking at ways to reduce sewage output. The Chair will meet with Barbara Child shortly and report back.

- Cllr Paul Kornycky (Rudgwick Parish Council) – the council currently have an active Speedwatch team and several speedwatch indicator devices. The speedwatch team can only be in position periodically and the indicator devices have no ANPR recognition. Sussex Police have reported that ANPR indicator devices cannot be installed for GDPR reasons. Rudgwick Parish Council have been made aware of parish councils in Hampshire that have purchased ANPR devices and have therefor written the PCC to question why the rules differ between the counties.

Trevor reported that Sussex Police have indicated to him that they will deal directly with Subject Access Requests to remove the responsibility from parishes and offered to nudge the PCC office to respond to Rudgwick Parish Council.

- Cllr Graham Watkins (Southwater Parish Council & HALC Chair) – concerns have been raised regarding the HDC planning department and HDC not complying with Neighbourhood Plans in full. It was also pointed out that HDC consider some Neighbourhood Plans to be out of date, although the councils in question were told not to update their Plans until the Local Plan has been updated. The Chair will raise the matters when he meets with Barbara Childs and is happy to raise any questions sent to him.
- Cllr Terry Oliver (Broadbridge Heath Parish Council) – the council have issues with the implementation of S106 going back several years, Cllr Oliver is happy to talk to other councils experiencing similar issues if they would like to get in touch.
- It was suggested that HALC collate statistics around issues with Neighbourhood Plans to take to HDC. A survey will be circulated by Anna to gather the relevant information to be fed back to HDC at the next face to face joint meeting.
- Trevor Leggo added that Horsham Neighbourhood Watch will potentially be suspended, he has been in touch with the local Inspector and will report any response received.
- The Chair closed the meeting by offering the use of Southwater Parish Council offices as a venue for future meetings.

## **9. Date of future meeting**

TBC.

*Meeting closed at 20:03.*

## Appendix A

### HDC STANDARDS MEETING 29 NOVEMBER 2023

This meeting was probably the shortest ever, lasting just 15 minutes. The sole topic for discussion was concerning complaints about HDC made to the local government Ombudsman for the 2022/23 year.

During that period there were 10 complaints compared to 18 for the previous year. Eight of the complaints were closed without investigation, either because there were alternative complaints processes available to the complainants or they had not fully followed the complaints procedure.

One complaint was invalid or incomplete due to lack of information.

One had been referred back to HDC to consider the matter further.

There was no action for the committee to consider. However, as many of the complaints concerned Planning matters, the officer presenting the report was asked to consider whether better signposting to the Planning Inspectorate might be appropriate in order to ensure complaints were directed to the correct authority.

There was no other business.

Stephen Watkins David Green PC Representatives 2/12/23