

Horsham Association of Local Councils (HALC)

Chair: Cllr Graham Watkins (Southwater Parish Council)
Secretary: Anna Beams
Tel: 07724 545699
Email: horshamalc@gmail.com

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Horsham Association of Local Councils held on Tuesday 15th October 2024 at 7:00pm remotely by Zoom.

Present:

Cllr Elisabeth Tooms	Amberley Parish Council
Cllr Phillip Day	Billingshurst Parish Council
Cllr Ann Blakelock	Bramber Parish Council
Cllr Terry Oliver	Broadbridge Heath Parish Council
Cllr Geoff Clark	Broadbridge Heath Parish Council
Cllr Daryn Goldsmith	Henfield Parish Council
Cllr Guy Stanley	Forest Neighbourhood Council
Cllr Trudie Mitchell	Horsham Denne Neighbourhood Council
Cllr Alan Strudley	Itchingfield Parish Council
Cllr Glenn Turner	North Horsham Parish Council
Cllr Val Court (vice chair)	Nuthurst Parish Council
Cllr Paul Thompson	Rudgwick Parish Council
Cllr Ritchie Gatt	Rusper Parish Council
Cllr Graham Watkins (Chair)	Southwater Parish Council
Cllr Simon Alexander	Steyning Parish Council
Cllr Andy Gibson	Storrington & Sullington Parish Council
Cllr Sally Pavey	Warnham Parish Council
Cllr Derrick Frost	West Chiltington Parish Council
Cllr Justin Reynolds	West Grinstead Parish Council
Anna Beams	Secretary
Trevor Leggo	WSALC
Helen Peacock	Horsham District Council
Victoria Wyllie de Echeverria	Horsham District Council

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting

2. Apologies

Received and accepted from Cllrs Tony Moss (Ashington PC), Sandy Duck (Billingshurst PC), Matthew Thomas (Wiston PC), Paul Kornycy (Rudgwick PC), Donna Everest (Cowfold PC), Jason Thomas (Washington PC), Norman Prince (Thakeham PC) and Colgate Parish Council.

3. Election of Officers of HALC

- a) **Chair:** Cllr Derrick Frost proposed Cllr Graham Watkins, seconded by Cllr Ann Blakelock.

Cllr Graham Watkins was duly elected as Chair AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

- b) **Vice Chair:** Cllr Terry Oliver nominated Cllr Val Court, seconded by Cllr Guy Stanley.
Cllr Val Court was duly elected as Vice Chair AGREED BY THE MAJORITY

- c) **Secretary/Treasurer:** Cllr Elisabeth Tooms nominated Anna Beams as Secretary/Treasurer, seconded by Cllr Ann Blakelock.

Anna Beams was duly elected as Secretary/Treasurer AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st February 2024.

It was **AGREED** that the Minutes are approved and signed as a correct record.

5. Appointment of representatives to outside bodies

- a) **WSALC Board:** Cllr Terry Oliver proposed the Chair and Vice Chair as representatives, seconded by Cllr Phillip Day.

Cllr Graham Watkins and Cllr Val Court were duly elected as HALC representatives on the WSALC Board AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

- b) **CPRE:** Item deferred to the next meeting to enable further information regarding the role to be disseminated to members. Anna Beams will draft a briefing note to circulate prior to the next meeting.

- c) **HDC Standards Committee:** Cllr Val Court proposed the Chair as representative, seconded by Cllr Ann Blakelock.

Cllr Graham Watkins was duly elected as HALC representative on the HDC Standard Committee AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

6. To appoint 3x signatories to the HALC bank account

Anna Beams explained that current signatories were herself and Cllr Val Court and that a minimum of one further signatory was required to approve payments.

The Chair and Cllr Terry Oliver volunteered as signatories.

Anna Beams, Cllr Val Court, Cllr Graham Watkins and Cllr Terry Oliver were duly appointed as HALC signatories. AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

7. Agree annual subscription for 2024-25

Cllr Derrick Frost proposed that the subscription remain at £20, seconded by Cllr Terry Oliver.

It was AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the HALC subscription will remain at £20 per council for the financial year 2024-25.

8. Report of last year's HALC activities by the Chairman

The Chairman referred to his report circulated prior to the meeting ([Appendix A](#)). The Chair suggested that, if members have any questions, they are sent to the Secretary to pass to him.

The Chair added that he would like to propose a coordinated approach in response to the ongoing Regulation 19 inspection. He suggested that a meeting of parishes within the district is arranged to gather evidence to take to Horsham District Council. The secretary will circulate information as it becomes available, and a meeting will be arranged.

9. **HDC Climate Action Group Update**

Victoria Wyllie de Echeverria, Sustainability Officer HDC delivered a presentation on HDCs Climate Action Strategy (presentation and strategy circulated with minutes).

Victoria added that the Climate Action Group hope to collaborate with the parish and neighbourhood councils and HALC and would like to have a Strategy Update standing item on HALC meeting agendas. The Chair proposed including a standing item on the agenda and suggested that he attends Climate Action Network meetings as the HALC representative for this year.

Victoria opened up to questions.

Q: Can Habitat Banks be built into the strategy?

A: Habitat Banks are a complex issue. Criteria and guidance are being developed with planning officers.

Q: Does the District Council follow up on end products of recycling, in particular single use soft plastics?

A: Soft plastics are collected by supermarkets; this is not within the control of the Council. Victoria will follow up with further information as recycling is the responsibility of the waste team.

Q: Would the team consider talking to parishes directly who are not involved in the network?

A: Yes.

Q: Does the Weald to Waves project feature in the strategy?

A: HDC is linked into the Weald to Waves project, and they also have their own scheme known as Wilder Horsham District.

Q: Would HDC consider a tutorial or workshop for the One Planet system.

A: Yes, HDC are looking into that.

Trevor Leggo added that Natural England will be at the forthcoming joint WSALC/ESALC conference on 4th November and will cover Weald to Waves.

The Chair thanked Victoria and Helen Peacock for attending the meeting.

19:40 Victoria Wyllie de Echeverria and Helen Peacock left the meeting.

10. **Reports from outside bodies**

a) WSALC

- Trevor Leggo advised that a letter had been published in the West Sussex County Times urging residents to opt for a Town Council in Horsham. Trevor has not seen any further support for this but wished to make members aware. If WSALC are approached, they are required to assist with the process.
- Police focus groups have been taking place twice a year for the past six years. Following her re-election in May, the PCC cancelled the meetings. A successful trial has taken place in Lewes, East Sussex, integrating the focus groups into the district association (DALC) meetings, with the first half an hour dedicated to police matters followed by the DALC meeting. Trevor can put the same into

place in Horsham if members agree. Cllr Terry Oliver expressed his support for this format.

- b) HDC Standards Committee: no report
- c) CPRE: no report

Cllr Trudie Mitchell returned to item 10a. She advised that the matter of the creation of a town council in Horsham had been raised at a recent Neighbourhood Forum, where some members were in favour. Nothing further has been decided upon.

11. Matters of concern to your council not on the agenda.

Cllr Elisabeth Tooms (Amberley PC): HDC were recently approached by a resident for assistance regarding a dispute between two neighbours. The resident was advised that, according to the HDC Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, they should approach their parish council to resolve the issue. Cllr Tooms questioned whether this is the correct process.

Trevor Leggo advised that the parish council should not get involved in any dispute as parish councils should show no bias and be fair to all. WSALC would usually suggest mediation as a course of action. Trevor stated that he has not seen the HDC Anti-Social Behaviour Policy but will attempt to obtain a copy.

Cllr Geoff Clark (Broadbridge PC): wondered whether fellow councils could share thoughts in respect of retaining and recruiting councillors.

- Southwater Parish Council have asked current councillors to suggest people that they think would be suitable and invite them to come along to meetings. They also try to limit the length of meetings and live feed the meetings through YouTube so that residents have an idea of what being a councillor involves.
- Steyning Parish Council engage with the community as much as possible however, communications from the residents suggest that there is a lack of understanding of the roles of each council in the three-tier system. The parish council is in the process of launching a campaign to address this, including signage with links directly to reporting portals to ensure that residents are directed to the correct authority to report issues.

Trevor Leggo suggested that parish councils may wish to update their communication and media policy which would help to get the messages out to residents.

Cllr Simon Alexander (Steyning Parish Council): anti-social behaviour is on the increase in Steyning. The Parish Council are in the process of potentially going to public consultation to install CCTV in the parish. Can any other parish councils share experience of this?

- Henfield Parish Council are investigating CCTV but have been advised that taking any incidents to prosecution is problematic. Trevor Leggo advised that he has contact within the Police and can assist with escalation to resolve particular incidents if necessary if contacted by the Clerk.
- The Chair advised that community engagement has helped reduce incidents in Southwater, as has appointing Neighbourhood Wardens.
- A WhatsApp group for local businesses has been created in Southwater to enable the communication of incidents.
- The Disc Reporting System has been rolled out in parts of Horsham. The system allows communities to share information about incidents and offenders.

12. Date of next meeting

A date to be arranged in January/February.

Meeting closed at 20:26

Signed:

Date:

DRAFT

Appendix A

WSALC

Report

1. Prepared and circulated a planning survey dealing with the Regulation 19 submission of HDC that highlighted the general dissatisfaction of the Parishes with aspects of the Local plan in particular the NP – Reg 19 now submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and awaiting a date for the enquiry that I will be attending.
2. Held a face-to-face meeting with:
 - a. Jane Eaton CEO of HDC
 - b. Cllr Martin Boffey, Leader of HDC
 - c. Cllr John Milne – Chairman of Planning North

To deal with concerns raised in the planning survey and agree an agenda for the upcoming HALC meeting on Monday 29th April at The Capitol, where they will all be present along with Catherine Howe Head of Strategic Planning dealing with NP & LP effects and Emma Parkes Head of Planning to discuss slow build out rates and the effects of section 106

Jane Eaton will deal with matters that affect communities, she after a suggestion with HALC will be paying visits to all Parishes

I have also had conversations with Emma Parks in preparation dealing with the slow build out rates of current developments which is causing disruption within villages that have ongoing major developments. I will circulate notes

Attended a virtual meeting on the 24th September about Parish & neighbourhood Councils Planning training 45 representatives from P & NH Councils with Barbara Childs, Emma Parks 7 Catherine Howe and Andy Bush the Arboricultural Officer – Interesting information about Habitat Banks that could be a revenue income stream for Councils. I will be preparing a briefing note

Jane Eaton will be visiting all the Parishes over the next 12 months

We have an upcoming HALC meeting on the 15th October where there will be an update from reps of HDC on Climate Action in Horsham and West Sussex

Graham Watkins

15/10/2024