

**MINUTES
OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
HELD IN THE ARUN CIVIC CENTRE
ON 31 MAY 2023 AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Councillors Staniforth (Chair), Mrs Cooper (Vice-Chair), Ayling, Batley, Bence, Bicknell, Birch, Blanchard-Cooper, Mrs Bower, Bower, Brooks, Butcher, Cooper, Elkins, English, Goodheart, Greenway, Gunner, Hamilton, Harty, Haywood, Huntley, Jones, Kelly, Lawrence, Lloyd, Long, Lury, Madeley, May, McAuliffe, McDougall, Nash, Needs, Northeast, O'Neill, Oppler, Partridge, Patel, Pendleton, Penycate, Purser, Stainton, Stanley, Tandy, Turner, Wallsgrove, Walsh, Warr, Wiltshire, Woodman, Miss Worne, Mrs Worne and Yeates.

Honorary Alderman, Mr Dingemans, was also in attendance at the meeting.

[Note: The following Councillors were absent from the meeting during consideration of the matters detailed in the Minutes indicated – Councillor Greenway – Minute 1 to Minute (2); Councillors Lury, Yeates, Penycate; Lloyd, McDougall and Pendleton – Minute 1 to 7 (Part); Councillor Brooks – Minute 1 to 8 (Part); and Councillor Goodheart – Minute 1 to Minute 11 (Part)].

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed newly elected and re-elected Councillors, representatives of the public, press and officers to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

A special welcome was extended to Mr Norman Dingemans as the Council's Honorary Alderman.

2. FORMER MEMBER OF STAFF SHARON PEARCE

The Chair stated that it was with great sorrow that she had to commence the meeting by announcing some very sad news which was the death of former member of staff Sharon Pearce.

Sharon had lost her fight with cancer on 25 April 2023, and this had come as a huge shock to many Arun staff who had known Sharon as a friend or had worked with her in the past.

Sharon had first joined the Council on 2 March 1992 and left on 7 January 2018 having completed 26 years' service. Sharon was a great character and lived life to the full and would be very fondly remembered by many at Arun especially her huge personality which would be greatly missed.

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The Council's condolences were extended to Sharon's family, friends and colleagues.

The Council then undertook a minute's silence to her memory.

3. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An Apology for Absence had been received from Councillor Edwards.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

5. MINUTES

The minutes from the last meeting of the Council held on 15 March 2023 were approved by the Council as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

6. URGENT MATTERS

The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items for this meeting.

7. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-2024

The Chair reminded Members that Councillor Alison Cooper had been nominated for the position of Chair of the Council for 2023-2024 at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 18 May 2022.

Councillor Gunner was invited to propose this and in doing so confirmed that he was delighted to be able to propose Councillor Alison Cooper be Chair of the Council for 2023-24. Her hard work and dedication to the community meant that she would be an excellent Chair for Arun.

Councillor Stanley seconded the proposal outlining that Councillor Cooper, since her first election to the Council in May 2019, had been an active and constructive Vice-Chair of the Housing & Wellbeing Committee and had also acted passionately as the Council's nominated representative on the Safer Arun Partnership and the Arun Wellbeing and Health Partnership. As Vice-Chair of the Council she had very successfully chaired a number of Full Council meetings as well as covering various civic engagements. He therefore fully supported her nomination.

The Council

RESOLVED

That Councillor Alison Cooper be elected as Chair of the Council for 2022-2023.

Councillor Cooper then made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

8. VOTE OF THANKS FOR THE RETIRING CHAIR

The new Chair extended her thanks to the past Chair, Samantha-Jayne Staniforth, for her year as Chair of the Council and particularly for the advice and support that she had provided whilst being Vice-Chair. This had put her in good stead to now be Chair. The Chair praised Samantha-Jayne Staniforth for her work over the year in the community representing the Council at numerous events.

Other words of thanks were presented by Councillor Gunner, as Leader of the Conservative Group. He particularly highlighted the contributions that had been made to the Council by Samantha-Jayne Staniforth in covering critical areas such as mental health which would be a positive and lasting legacy for the Council.

In response, Samantha-Jaye Staniforth, thanked those that had spoken for their kind words stating that it had been a positive year following covid-19 with more events now taking place. This had meant that she had been able to meet a wide range of people from many different Councils and the community and this had been a real joy. Having focused on the highlights of what had been a year of change for many, with the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, she extended final thanks to Councillor Alison Cooper for her support and for stepping in and chairing several Council meetings when her sone had been very poorly in hospital.

Samantha-Jayne Staniforth then received her Past Chair's badge.

9. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-2024 AND CHAIR ELECT FOR 2024-2025

The Chair confirmed that in line with the Council's Constitution at Part 3, Responsibility for Functions, Rule 13, it was necessary to now appoint the Vice-Chair of the Council.

The Chair invited Councillor Huntley who proposed that Councillor Walsh be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Council for 2023 to 2024.

Councillor Northeast seconded this nomination.

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The Chair therefore proposed to proceed in confirming this appointment by going straight to the vote.

The Council

RESOLVED

That Councillor James Walsh be elected as Vice-Chair of the Council for 2023-2024 and Chair Elect for 2024-2025.

Councillor Walsh then made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

10. NEW CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair thanked Councillors for giving her the honour of being Chair of the Council stating that she felt that it would be a real privilege to represent Arun over the next civic year. She extended her thanks again to the Past Chair for fulfilling the role over 2022-2023.

The Chair stated that she wished to have recorded the Council's thanks to all Councillors who had either chosen not to stand for election or who had not been successful in being elected on 4 May 2023. The Chair felt strongly that their service and dedication needed to be formally recognised by the Council.

Turning to her chosen charity for her year, the Chair confirmed that she would be announcing this at her Civic Reception to be held on 14 June 2023. She hoped that as many Councillors as possible would be able to attend and to show their support to a very worthwhile cause.

The Chair confirmed that she was really looking forward to the year ahead which commenced tomorrow with her first engagement.

Finally, the Chair outlined that although this was her first meeting, it was the Council's Chief Executive's last meeting as he would be starting his new position and new career tomorrow. The Chair thanked Mr Hassett for his time at Arun and for the enthusiasm he had brought. She wished him good luck with his new venture and for the firm stepping stones he had left in place to move the council forward.

Councillors Gunner and Stanley echoed these words and also wished Mr Hassett well, sharing the Chairs thanks for some very noticeable improvements that he had made during his 18 months at Arun.

11. APPOINTMENT OF THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Northeast formally proposed the appointment of Councillor Stanley to be Leader of Arun District Council. The proposal was then seconded by Councillor Wallsgrove.

The Council

RESOLVED

That Councillor Stanley be appointed Leader of Arun District Council.

Councillor Wallsgrove then formally proposed that Councillor Nash be appointed Deputy Leader of the Council, and this was seconded by Councillor Huntley.

The Council

RESOLVED

That Councillor Roger Nash be appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council.

12. REVIEW OF ENTITLEMENT OF POLITICAL GROUPS AND NON-ALIGNED COUNCILLORS TO SEATS ON COMMITTEES

Before inviting the Leader of the Council to present this report, the Chair referred Councillors to the supplement pack that had been published earlier in the day and sent to all Councillors via email. A hard copy of this supplement pack had also been circulated to the meeting.

The Leader of the Council presented this report and formally proposed the allocation of seats to Committees for 2023/2024. The proposals were then seconded by Councillor Nash.

In debating the report, the following amendments were proposed:

- By Councillor Northeast confirming that he wished to replace Councillor May with Councillor Butcher on the Housing & Wellbeing Committee; and
- By Councillor Wallsgrove confirming that she wished to replace herself with Councillor Ayling on the Standards Committee.

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Councillor Stanley confirmed that he would be happy to second these amendments.

The Council

RESOLVED

That the appointments to Committees, Working Parties and Panels for 2023-24, together with the confirmation of the Chair and Vice-Chair where relevant, as set out in Appendix 1, as amended at the meeting, be approved.

13. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Before inviting the Leader of the Council to present this report, the Chair referred Councillors to the supplement pack that had been published earlier in the day and sent to all Councillors via email. A hard copy of this supplement pack had also been circulated to the meeting.

The Leader of the Council presented this report setting out the proposed nominations to representations to Outside Bodies for 2023/2024. The proposed nominations were then seconded by Councillor Nash.

The Council

RESOLVED

That the schedule of Appointments of Representatives to Outside Bodies for 2023/24, be approved, a copy of which is *attached* to the signed copy of the Minutes.

14. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR DIRECTORS OF ANY COUNCIL OWNED PROPERTIES

The Chair confirmed that there were no appointments to confirm.

15. APPOINTMENT OF GROUP LEADERS

The Council noted the appointment of the other Group Leaders. A copy of which is *attached* to the signed copy of the Minutes.

16. REPORT FROM THE RETURNING OFFICER OF THOSE PERSONS ELECTED AS DISTRICT COUNCILLORS FOR ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL ON 4 MAY 2023

The Council received and noted the report of the Returning Officer of those persons nominated as District Councillors for the Arun District on 4 May 2023.

17. FORD PARISH COUNCIL AND LYMINSTER AND CROSSBUSH PARISH COUNCIL - CO-OPTION OF DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer presented this report confirming that following 4 May 2023 Town and Parish Elections, there were two Parish Councils, being Ford and Lyminster and Crossbush Parish Councils, who had found themselves being in the position of having too few Councillors to be quorate. This meant that they were not able to continue to fulfil their duties to their residents.

Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 entitled 'Temporary appointment of members of parish and community councils' provided a temporary solution which the Council had used last year with Clapham Parish Council. The proposal was to appoint, temporarily, one district Councillor to Ford Parish Council and two District Councillors to Lyminster and Crossbush Parish Council for six months to make them quorate and to ensure that they were fully functional. Having undertaken consultation it was proposed that the District Councillors appointed be from the Yapton Ward, covering the Parish of Ford, and from the Arundel & Walberton Ward, covering the Lyminster and Crossbush Parish. Councillors Henry Jones, Mel Penycate and Stephen McAuliffe had given their agreement to take on this role.

Councillor Wallsgrove then proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Batley.

The Council

RESOLVED – That

- (1) To temporarily appoint Councillor Henry Jones to Ford Parish Council, to make it quorate and therefore fully functional, for six months; and
- (2) To temporarily appoint Councillors Mel Penycate and Stephen McAuliffe to Lyminster and Crossbush Parish Council to make it quorate and therefore fully functional, for six months.

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18. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERIM HEAD OF PAID SERVICE AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(Prior to the commencement of this item, both the Director of Environment and Communities and the Director of Growth left the meeting for the consideration of this item).

Prior to inviting the Leader of the Council to present this report the Chair referred Members to an additional appendix that had been provided to Members via the supplement pack published earlier in the day and emailed to all Councillors. This appendix contained additional and revised recommendations for Members to consider.

The Leader of the Council outlined that the report and appendix were in relation to the upcoming vacancy for the post of Head of Paid Services, and as this was the last day in post for the current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, James Hassett. The report explained that the Council was legally required to always have a Head of Paid Service in post. Due to the urgency of the situation, it was recommended that the Council's two Directors, Philippa Dart, Director of Environment and Communities and Karl Roberts, Director of Growth, be jointly appointed as Interim Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive.

Under the proposed arrangements both Directors would continue to have operational and line management responsibility for half of the organisation, in addition to full accountability for their decisions as Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive. It was not deemed to be practical to backfill any of their roles due to the timescales involved as Director posts would also require Member involvement. Essentially, the three most senior roles in the organisation would be carried out by two individuals until the start date of a new Chief Executive. It was for this reason that the remuneration arrangements had been confirmed in Appendix 1.

The report also clarified that the role of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer would be undertaken jointly, and the recommendations were asking Members to confirm this.

Councillor Stanley emphasised that the decisions today were solely interim arrangements, with a permanent solution to follow with a formal process involving the Chief Executive's Recruitment and Selection Panel and The Chief Executive's Remuneration Committee, with both the Panel and the Committee having been appointed earlier in the meeting, and then ultimately Full Council.

Councillor Stanley then formally proposed the revised recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and these were seconded by Councillor Gunner.

The Council

RESOLVED – That

- (1) Philippa Dart, Director of Environment and Communities and Karl Roberts, Director of Growth, are jointly appointed as Interim Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive Officer until such time as the Council agrees alternative interim arrangements and/or a permanent replacement is in post. Should either of the individuals resign from the interim post the other one will continue until an alternative is agreed;
- (2) The remuneration for the interim post for each director will be the same as the current Chief Executive's salary, that is £126,925;
- (3) The Chief Executive's Recruitment and Selection Panel and the Chief Executive's Remuneration Committee are convened once their membership has been confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting on 31 May 2023, with their terms of reference set out in the Constitution; and
- (4) Philippa Dart, Director of Environment and Communities and Karl Roberts, Director of Growth, are jointly appointed as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer until such time as the Council agrees alternative interim arrangements and/or a permanent replacement is in post. Should either of the individuals resign from the interim post the other will continue until an alternative is agreed.

(The meeting concluded at 6.37 pm)