

**MINUTES
OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
HELD ON 19 MAY 2021 AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Councillors Mrs Worne (Chairman), Brooks (Vice-Chair), Baker, Bennett, Bicknell, Blanchard-Cooper, Bower, Caffyn, Catterson, Chapman, Chace, Charles, Clayden, Mrs Cooper, Cooper, Coster, Daniells, Dendle, Dixon, Edwards, Elkins, Mrs English, English, Goodheart, Gregory, Gunner, Hamilton, Haywood, Hughes, Huntley, Jones, Kelly, Lury, Madeley, Needs, Northeast, Oliver-Redgate, Oppler, Pendleton, Purchase, Rhodes, Roberts, Seex, Smith, Stainton, Staniforth, Stanley, Tilbrook, Thurston, Walsh, Warr and Yeates.

Honorary Aldermen Mrs Stinchcombe and Mr Dingemans were also present during the meeting.

[Note: The following Councillors were either absent from taking part in the named vote contained in the following Minutes or were absent from the meeting for that item:- Councillors Hamilton and Purchase – Minute 1 to 2 (Part); Councillor Oliver-Redgate – Minutes 1 to 3 (Part); Councillor Stainton – Minute 11 (Part) to Minute 16; Councillor Catterson – Minute 10 (Part) to Minute 16; Councillor Dendle – Minute 12 (Part)].

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Councillors, Honorary Aldermen, Officers, members of the public and press to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Chair confirmed that this meeting was being held in accordance with the resolution of the Extraordinary Council meeting of the Council held on 12 May 2021 which continued Section 5 Part 5 of the Constitution (The Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules) and declared the use of Council powers, under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, and the general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, for making advisory decisions, as appropriate.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence had been received from Councillors Batley and Buckland and from the Council's Honorary Alderman Mrs Goad, MBE.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

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The Declaration of Interest Sheet set out below confirms those Members who had made a declaration of their personal interest as a Member of a Town or Parish Councillor or a West Sussex County Councillor, as confirmed in their Register of Interest as these declarations could apply to any of the issues to be discussed at the meeting.

Name	Town or Parish Council or West Sussex County Council [WSCC]
Councillor Tracy Baker	Littlehampton
Councillor Kenton Batley	Bognor Regis
Councillor Jamie Bennett	Rustington
Councillor Paul Bicknell	Angmering
Councillor Billy Blanchard-Cooper	Littlehampton
Councillor Jim Brooks	Bognor Regis
Councillor Ian Buckland	Littlehampton and WSCC
Councillor David Chace	Littlehampton
Councillor Mike Clayden	Rustington
Councillor Andy Cooper	Rustington
Councillor Alison Cooper	Rustington
Councillor Sandra Daniells	Bognor Regis
Councillor David Edwards	WSCC
Councillor Roger Elkins	Ferring and WSCC
Councillor Paul English	Felpham
Councillor Steve Goodheart	Bognor Regis
Councillor Pauline Gregory	Rustington
Councillor June Hamilton	Pagham
Councillor Shirley Haywood	Middleton-on-Sea
Councillor David Huntley	Pagham
Councillor Henry Jones	Bognor Regis
Councillor Martin Lury	Bersted
Councillor Claire Needs	Bognor Regis
Councillor Mike Northeast	Littlehampton
Councillor Francis Oppler	WSCC
Councillor Jacky Pendleton	Middleton-on-Sea and WSCC
Councillor Vicky Rhodes	Littlehampton
Councillor Emily Seex	Littlehampton
Councillor Martin Smith	Aldwick
Councillor Samantha Staniforth	Bognor Regis
Councillor Matt Stanley	Bognor Regis
Councillor Isabel Thurston	Barnham & Eastergate
Councillor James Walsh	Littlehampton and WSCC
Councillor Jeanette Warr	Bognor Regis
Councillor Amanda Worne	Yapton
Councillor Gillian Yeates	Bersted

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 12 May and the Full Council meeting held on 12 May 2021 were approved by the Council as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair when normal office functions started again.

5. RETIRING CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The retiring Chair, Councillor Worne, outlined that although it had been a very tough year, for all sorts of obvious reasons, it had been a great honour to have been Chair of the Council and that she had enjoyed her year in office enormously. She had been the first person ever to be Chair through a global pandemic and she certainly hoped that she would be the last.

Councillor Worne confirmed that she was truly grateful to all Councillors who had been supportive towards her and she appreciated all the lovely messages and emails that had been sent after some of the more challenging meetings held.

During Covid-19, engaging with the community had been very hard and the usual social events a Chair would attend had not been possible. However, Councillor Worne had fortunately managed to be imaginative and had created some events of her own. An overview of these events was then provided listing the activities that had been specifically organised for her Charity.

Finally, on Sunday 16 May 2021, she completed a 24 hour marathon accompanied by her Vice-Chair Councillor Brooks in which they had received amazing support from other Councillors and members of the public. To date a total of £3,000 had been raised for PASCO (Parent and Carers Support Organisation) her chosen charity and donations were still being gratefully received.

Finally, Councillor Worne extended a thank you to all the Officers who had provided her support during her year and to her Vice-Chair, Councillor Brooks, for his help and assistance and she wished him a happy year ahead as Chair of the Council.

6. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

The Council

RESOLVED

That Councillor Jim Brooks be appointed Chairman of the Council for 2021/22.

Councillor Brooks then made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

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7. VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING CHAIR

Councillor Brooks formally thanked Councillor Worne for her tireless work as Chair over the last year. He outlined that she had embraced the role with gusto and enthusiasm and had been an excellent public ambassador for the District during what had been a very difficult and challenging year as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite these challenges, Councillor Worne had still managed to raise awareness for her chosen charity and had used her creativity and enthusiasm to work to ensure that the profile of Arun and PACSO, remained visible.

These words of thanks were echoed by Councillor Walsh, as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group; Councillor Dixon on behalf of the Independent Group; Councillor Thurston on behalf of the Green Group; Councillor Gunner as Leader of the Conservative Group and Councillor Seex as Leader of the Arun Independent Group.

8. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL AND CHAIR ELECT

The Chair introduced this item and reminded Councillors that Councillor Staniforth's nomination for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2021/22 and Chairman Elect for 2022/23 had been accepted at the meeting of Full Council held on 17 March 2021. In view of this he proposed to go straight to the vote on this matter.

Councillor Oppler proposed that a secret ballot to determine this appointment be undertaken and this was seconded by Councillor Dixon. Having undertaken the secret ballot, the Council

RESOLVED

That Councillor Samantha-Jaye Staniforth be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2021/22 and Chairman Elect for 2022/23.

Councillor Staniforth then made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

9. NEW CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Brooks confirmed that an important part of being Chair was the opportunity to raise money for a chosen charity or charities. It was hoped that with the end of lockdown events for the public to attend could be resumed. Sadly, this had not been part of the civic year that the last two Chairs had been able to enjoy or take part in to any significant level in terms of raising funds for their chosen charities. Councillor Brooks therefore proposed to meet with Councillors Warr and Worne to see, if coming out of lockdown, some joint events could be organised that could benefit their charities.

What Councillor Brooks could confirm now was that he proposed to support young people becoming engaged in all sorts of music by either playing instruments, singing or composing music. He would announce the detail of such events at a later date.

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

Councillor Walsh made a formal request to speak. He confirmed that he wished to formally resign from his position as Leader of the Council and he thanked the Council for its support over the last two years.

Councillor Roberts formally proposed the appointment of Councillor Gunner to be Leader of Arun District Council. The proposal was then seconded by Councillor Edwards.

The Council

RESOLVED

That Councillor Gunner be appointed Leader of Arun District Council.

Councillor Gunner firstly welcomed Councillor Brooks into the role of Chair of the Council and he wished him a successful year ahead. He then paid tribute to Councillor Walsh for his time as Leader of the Council and all that he did to make Arun a better place for its residents. Tonight represented a new start for Arun and Councillor Gunner confirmed that he hoped to make Arun better by maximising its potential by making the most of its natural environment; to drive tourism; investment; regeneration; and jobs and to engage with new environmental initiatives across the District that would help support the District's natural environment and create leisure and tourism opportunities, which were all vital to economic growth and the levelling-up agenda. Serious discussions needed to take place to push forward regeneration opportunities for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton working with the District's Members of Parliament to ensure success in gaining investment and to end years of delays in delivering public realm in Littlehampton. Plans were in place to revisit the Council's Local Plan to ensure that the District's younger generation would be able to afford to continue to live in the District and much focus would be placed reducing unnecessary expenditure on consultancies, agency staff and IT.

Councillor Bower then confirmed that he was delighted to be able to propose that Councillor Pendleton be appointed Deputy Leader of the Council and this was seconded by Councillor Roberts.

The Council

RESOLVED

That Councillor Pendleton be appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council.

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11. REVIEW OF ENTITLEMENT OF POLITICAL GROUPS TO SEATS ON COMMITTEES (PROPORTIONALITY) AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

The Chair invited the Interim Monitoring Officer to present this report which had been circulated as a supplement earlier that afternoon. Councillors were informed that it was a statutory requirement for the Council to undertake a review of proportionality following the two District By-Elections held on 6 May 2021 and because there had been other changes. The Arun Independent Group had been formed during the last year and since that time other Councillors had changed Party allegiance. The purpose of the report was to ensure that when appointing memberships to Committees, such appointments were made using the correct proportionality figures which had been confirmed in Paragraph 1.9 and set out in Appendix 1 of the report. It was possible for Members to come to alternative arrangements, but if such proposals were made it was necessary for every Member of the Council to agree to such alternative proposals.

Councillor Gunner then formally proposed the recommendations set out in the report and these were then seconded by Councillor Pendleton.

The Chair then invited debate on the recommendations.

The Committee Services Manager confirmed that some late changes had been made to the membership listings set out in Appendix 2 and she confirmed what these changes were. They were that:

- Councillor Blanchard-Cooper would be Chair of the Licensing Committee
- Councillor Tilbrook would be Chair of the Standards Committee
- Councillor Lury would be Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee [formally known as the Development Control Committee]
- Councillor Gregory would be Vice-Chair of the Residential & Wellbeing Services Committee

Councillor Dixon confirmed that Councillor Hamilton had been missed from the membership of the Residential & Wellbeing Services Committee and Licensing Committee and he asked for the membership listings at Appendix 2 of the report to be updated accordingly. Turning to the Environment & Neighbourhood Services Committee Councillor Dixon then formally proposed that Councillor Thurston be made Vice-Chair of this Committee in view of her very strong environmental credentials. Councillor Stanley then seconded this proposal.

The Chair then invited debate on this amendment. This commenced with further updates being made to the membership listings set out in Appendix 2 of the report which the Committee Services Manager undertook to correct.

Following some debate on the amendment relating to the Vice-Chair of the Environment & Neighbourhood Services Committee, on this being put to the vote it was declared LOST.

The Chair then returned to the substantive recommendation on the proposals for the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs to Committees.

The Council

RESOLVED – That

- (1) The outcome of the review of entitlement of Political Groups and non-aligned Councillors to seats on Committees, based on proportionality rules, as set out in Appendix 1 be noted;
- (2) The allocation of seats to Political Groups be approved;
- (3) The appointments to Committees, Sub-Committees, Working Groups, Working Parties and Panels for the 2021/22 municipal year, together with the confirmation of the Chair and Vice-Chair where relevant and as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.

12. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

This item commenced with a Point of Order being raised by Councillor Gunner. He confirmed that in formally proposing the Appointments to Outside Bodies for 2021/22, under Article 15 in the Constitution and Council Procedure Rule 27 [Suspension and amendment of Council Procedure Rules] he wished to move a Motion without Notice to suspend the six month rule and also pertaining to the rules Motions without Notice that the terms of reference for each Committee which required that representation on Outside Bodies must be a Member of the relevant Committee be removed. This amendment was then seconded by Councillor Walsh.

On putting this amendment to the debate, this was agreed as a sensible way forward and on it being to the vote it was declared CARRIED.

Debate then focused on the Outside Bodies listed in the appendix to the report. The points debated were:

- Aldwick West & Pagham Advisory Group – should be titled Aldwick & Pagham Advisory Group.
- Was the appointee to the West Sussex Health and Adult Social Care Committee appropriate as they were also a West Sussex County Councillor

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The Council

RESOLVED

That the schedule of Appointments of Representatives to Outside Bodies for 2021/22, be approved, a copy of which is *attached* to the signed copy of the Minutes.

13. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR DIRECTORS OF ANY COUNCIL OWNED PROPERTIES

The Chairman confirmed that there were no appointments to confirm.

The Chairman then called a short adjournment.

14. APPOINTMENT OF OTHER 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.

15. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Council

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

16. APPOINTMENT TO THE POST OF GROUP HEAD OF LAW & GOVERNANCE (MONITORING OFFICER) - EXEMPT - PARAGRAPH 1 - INFORMATION RELATING TO ANY INDIVIDUAL

The Chief Executive presented this item confirming that approval was sought from the Council to appoint the candidate confirmed in Paragraph 1.3 of the report into the current vacant role of Group Head of Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer).

Councillor Gunner then formally proposed this recommendation which was then seconded by Councillor Walsh.

Subject to approval at the next Full Council meeting

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The Council

RESOLVED

To approve the appointment of Sameera Khan to the role of Group Head of Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer) subject to contract and references being satisfactory to the Chief Executive.

(The meeting concluded at 8.25 pm)