



Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council
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Village Centre
Trinity Road
Hurstpierpoint
West Sussex BN6 9UY

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 24 October 2024 at 7.30 pm at Hurstpierpoint Village Centre.

Members Present:

Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn (Chairman)	Cllr Rodney Jackson
Cllr Michael Avery	Cllr Claire Majsai
Cllr Sarah Baldey	Cllr Duncan Ranger
Cllr Helen Bedford	Cllr Julia Shorrocks
Cllr Susan Dyke	Cllr Annette Street
Cllr David Evans	Cllr Lindsey Thompson
Cllr Barry Forster	

Also Present: Sarah Groom, Clerk to the Council, Cllr Joy Dennis (WSCC) and Cllr Geoff Zeidler (MSDC).
Cllr Alison Bennett (MSDC) sent her apologies.

C24/25.072: To receive and accept apologies for absence: There were no apologies for absence.

C24/25.073: To receive and record declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.

C24/25.074: To receive and accept the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 26 September 2024:
Members reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024.

C24/25.075: Adjournment for Questions from the Public: There were no members of the public present.

C24/25.076: Reports from Other Authorities: Members received reports from representatives of:

C24/25.076.1: West Sussex County Council (WSCC): Cllr Dennis explained the WSCC 2025/6 budget setting process was underway and confirmed that the budget would be balanced. There will be no cuts to services and there is planned to be an increase in the budget for Highways. A multi-agency Water Summit has been created with senior officers of South East Water, Southern Water, Portsmouth Water, the Environment Agency and DEFRA. The Summit is addressing several issues including flooding, surface water flooding, sewage leaks and water scarcity. A lot of good work is happening. Reeds Lane will be closed on 4 November 2024 (subject to weather conditions etc) to complete the surveys of gulleys and pipework including in front of Kingsland Cottages. Those residents will be contacted.

The extension of the Hurstpierpoint village centre 20mph zone will be discussed on 25 October 2024 by the Highways Moderation Team. The process for bus stop area line marking is being clarified. The bus stop at the junction of Hassocks Road and St George's Lane is a particular issue, as is the one on the Cuckfield Road opposite Trinity Road due to people parking inconsiderately. WSCC Officers will meet with the Parish Council to walk Trinity Road in the area around the Health Centre to see if improvements can be made to parking and visibility, following concerns raised by residents.

In response to questions Cllr Dennis explained how WSCC was managing its Childrens' Services and SEND provision in Schools. Once the PFI for replacement street lights is agreed the College Lane lights will be upgraded to LED lamps. Cllr Dennis will take up the issue of signage for the Latchetts Lane highway/footpath in Hurstpierpoint which runs off the end of St George's Lane and north to College Lane. The Hurstpierpoint Society are keen for it to have a street name plate/signage at each end, although this may fall back to MSDC, or the Parish Council and the Hurst Society to action. Cllr Baldey was concerned about uneven pavements on College Lane. Cllr Avery had already reported this. It is important for everyone to report concerns directly to WSCC and the more people reporting concerns the better.

C24/25.076.2: Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC): Cllrs Bennett had given a brief update in an email which had been circulated previously. Cllr Jackson gave an update on the Draft District Plan (2021-2039) Public Examination hearings, the Food Waste Trial and that MSDC had given planning permission for the battery storage facility in Twineham. Cllr Zeidler expanded on the same matter, stressing that not sufficient attention had been given to managing significant construction traffic in the country lanes. A meeting had been held to help progress action at the Berrylands Pond and a further update is due shortly.

Cllr Shorrocks asked if MSDC would be expanding their enforcement team due to the number of blatant contraventions that were not being tackled. Cllr Zeidler welcomed more examples of such cases so he can continue to push for more enforcement resources. Cllr Evans believed 95% of planning applications were determined by officers rather than Committees. He was reassured any large or contentious applications are elevated to Committee decisions.

Cllr Dyke had responded to the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Survey and included concerns over fire risks from battery storage farms in her feedback. Cllr Zeidler had also been investigating such risks and kindly offered to send us a link to information on battery farm fire/pollution risks and the new technology being used to mitigate them.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Jackson and Zeidler for their reports and Cllr Dennis and Cllr Zeidler left the meeting at 8.17pm.

C24/25.077: Committee Minutes: Members received the minutes of the:

C24/25.077.1: Staff Panel (7 October 2024): These minutes were discussed under the confidential section of the meeting and the recommendations were agreed.

C24/25.077.2: Planning Committee (7 October 2024): There were no recommendations for Council.

C24/25.077.3: Sustainability Strategy Working Group (10 October 2024): There were no recommendations for Council.

C24/25.077.4: Finance, Governance & Estates Committee (18 October 2024) There were four recommendations for Council:

- i) **F24/25.052: Review of 2023/24 External Audit Report:** The Committee noted the External Auditor's (Moore West Sussex) Certificate for the 31 March 2024 accounts and agreed to recommend it to Council for adoption, and it was: RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the External Auditor's (Moore West Sussex) Certificate for the 31 March 2024 accounts and AGREED to recommend it to Council for adoption, and it was: **RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the External Auditor's (Moore West Sussex) Certificate for the 31 March 2024 Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the Chairman congratulated the team on the success.**
- ii) **F24/25.053: Internal Controls and Asset Register:** The Committee reviewed the internal controls completed in September 2024 and noted the updated asset register, and that the Asset Register Policy will be reviewed in May 2025, and it was: RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend the September 2024 Internal Controls and updated Asset Register to Council for adoption, and it was: **RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the September 2024 internal controls and updated asset register.**
- iii) **F24/25.056: Internal Audit:** The Committee considered the report of the first internal audit of 2024/2025, which took place on 7 October 2024 and noted there were no improvements required. The General Reserves figure of £126,000 on page 7 will be clarified. The Auditor had called the systems the clerk has put in place "a model of exemplary good practice and it is especially encouraging to see the councillors taking an active role in reviewing internal controls, this is to be applauded", and it was: RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the first internal audit of 2024/2025 and AGREED to recommend it to Council for adoption, and it was: **RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the interim audit of 2024/2025 and the Chairman congratulated the team on this success.**
- iv) **F24/25.057: Budget and Precept Setting Timetable:** The Committee reviewed the proposed timetable, principles and assumptions to commence the budget setting exercise for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The CPI figure will be amended to September 2024's "excluding owner occupiers' housing costs", at a rate of 1.7%.

The detailed definition of the use of Reserves only for one-off expenditure or capital items will be clarified, and it was: **RESOLVED:** That the Committee AGREED the Budget and Precept Setting Timetable, as amended, and to recommend it to Council for adoption, and it was: **RESOLVED:** That the Council AGREES the timetable, principles and assumptions to commence the budget setting exercise for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council RECEIVES the minutes of the following Panel and Committees, and AGREES the recommendations where appropriate:

- i. **Staff Panel (7 October 2024)**
- ii. **Planning Committee (7 October 2024)**
- iii. **Sustainability Strategy Working Group (10 October 2024)**
- iv. **Finance, Governance & Estates Committee (18 October 2024)**

C24/25.078: Casual Vacancy: Members consider a timetable to co-opt a councillor to fill the current vacancy and noted that an official 'Notice of Vacancies' was displayed until 22 July 2024 to permit ten or more electors to call for a by-election. No such call was made, so the co-option advert was displayed from 29 July 2024 to 16 October 2024, to aim to fill the vacancy at this Council meeting. Having received no interest or applications for the vacancy it was proposed that the advert be continued to be displayed and promoted in Hurst Life and on Facebook highlighting the need for someone with an interest in the areas of planning, estates and facility management generally, and nature conservation in particular. The aim is to fill the vacancy at the 27 February 2025 Council meeting, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES to continue to promote the casual vacancy, with the aim to fill it at the 27 February 2025 Council meeting.

C24/25.079: Winter Plan 2024/25: Members reviewed the Parish Council's Winter Plan for 2024/25. Two minor amendments were made. It was agreed the Plan would be highlighted in the December Hurst Life article with how to register for the UKPN priority services, the EA's flood warning alerts, cold weather alerts and details of the Age UK advice line, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the Winter Plan 2024/5, as amended.

C24/25.080: Highway Network Management Plan: Members considered the West Sussex County Council's draft Highway Network Management Plan. Cllr Dyke had highlighted the requirement (if true) that for roads of less than 4 metres wide, they must be closed for works. This was highlighted recently by works on the causeway (measuring 3.96m wide) into the new Iden Hurst development, barricading-in 250 homes. Noting the width of buses and emergency vehicles, it would be better for roads to be left open for say 2 metres for normal traffic to get through. The Chairman felt the managing stakeholders section needed clearer definition e.g. whose councillors, also that it does not recognise that others own street lights. Cllr Majsai felt the document was clear and easy to understand with helpful explanations of e.g. how to obtain a Licence. Members were encouraged to read the document and send any further comments to the Clerk so they can be submitted by the deadline of 30 October 2024, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES to submit comments on the WSCC draft Highway Network Management Plan by the deadline of 30 October 2024.

C24/25.081: Reports from representatives on outside bodies: Members noted the reports as follows:

C24/25.081.1: Hurstpierpoint Society: Cllr Dyke reported the Society AGM is on 14 June 2024 in the Village Centre. The Society Chairman had spoken at the District Plan hearings. The Society remains concerned about lack of planning enforcement at 145 High Street at Hurstpierpoint College. The Society will be seeking quotes for repairing the heritage street signs.

C24/25.088.2: Sayers Common Village Society: Cllr Thompson confirmed the Society's Secretary had resigned. The Society had met with the Sayers Common Village Association to discuss how they could work together.

C24/25.088.3: Sayers Common Village Association: Members noted the update report from Cllr Forster, who confirmed the Association wanted to push forward to create a coherent communication network through their website and road-hub representatives, that can provide a genuine voice for the village.

C24/25.088.4: WSALC/MSALC: Cllr Jackson reported the WSALC AGM and conference is on 4 November 2024. A conference is also being planned for MSALC in 2025, to help improve communication between Mid Sussex District Council and the town and parish councils.

C24/25.088.5: Cllr Dyke reported that a South Downs National Park Authority parishes meeting had taken place, the invitation to which had not been received by the Parish Council. Minutes had been circulated after the meeting.

C24/25.089: Information Items: Members noted the following information items:

C24/25.089.1: Parish Strategy: Members noted the update report previously provided by Cllr Forster, who confirmed the process going forward will be more straightforward than the original plans, however the excellent data collection work undertaken to date will still inform the Strategy going forward.

Members RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the following items, the press and public be excluded under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

Confidential Matters:

C24/25.090: Methodist Church: Members considered a draft business plan and provisional costings for the potential purchase of the asset of community value. A red-book valuation had not been possible until access into the building is secured once an agent is appointed to sell it, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES to continue to collate information to help inform the decision to be taken on the potential purchase of the asset of community value.

C24/25.091: Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Examination Update: Members received a verbal update provided by the Chairman regarding the Mid Sussex District Plan Stage One examination public hearings on 23 October 2024. Issues covered had included the period of the plan, unmet need, the overall housing numbers and the lack of a spatial strategy which in turn could impact on the existing site selection process. Once the Planning Inspector has completed her Stage 1 report it will conclude either that: the Plan is fine to proceed to Stage 2; can proceed with minor modifications; or needs to be re-written, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council NOTES the update on the Mid Sussex District Plan Stage One examination public hearings.

C24/25.092: Staff Panel Minutes (7 October 2024): Members considered the minutes of the Staff Panel meeting and agreed the recommendations, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES the recommendations in the Staff Panel minutes of 7 October 2024.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.52pm.

Chairman