

MSALC Zoom meeting - January 22 2026

Chair: Cllr Douglas Denham St. Pinnock (West Hoathly PC)
Secretary: Susannah Finch
Email: dalc@wsalc.co.uk

Minutes of a meeting of Mid Sussex District Association of Local Councils held at 7.00pm on Thursday 22 January 2026 by Zoom.

Present:

*denotes also a member of Mid Sussex District Council

Cllr John Drew	Albourne PC
Cllr Tofojjul Hussain *	Burgess Hill TC
Cllr Peter Williams	Burgess Hill TC
Cllr Elaine Langridge	Hassocks PC
Cllr Frances Jones	Twineham PC
Cllr Nicky Hanley	Bolney PC
Cllr Rodney Jackson *	Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common PC
Cllr Linda Grace	Lindfield PC
Cllr Ian Gibson *	Turners Hill PC; Worth PC
Cllr Douglas Denham St. Pinnock	West Hoathly PC (and Chair of MSALC)

Don McBeth	Burgess Hill U3A
Trevor Leggo	West Sussex Association of Local Councils, CEO
Inspector David Derrick	Sussex Police
Susannah Finch	Secretary

Key Takeaways

- **Crime is down 8.1% in Mid Sussex**, but Home Office rule changes have reclassified shoplifting as robbery, causing a misleading 10.6% increase in robbery stats.
- **PCSO visibility will improve by April**, 5 new PCSOs are joining Mid Sussex District.
- **Mid Sussex DC is blocking asset transfer talks** until a unitary authority is formed, despite other districts (e.g., Horsham) engaging now. WSALC will lobby them.
- **The Mayoral election is delayed to 2028**, but WSALC is lobbying for a 2027 date to align with local elections and avoid councils bearing high by-election costs (e.g., £10k for one seat in Storrington).

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed those present online. Apologies were received and accepted from Martin Robinson of West Hoathly PC.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were approved for signing by the Chair.

3. Neighbourhood Policing Update

Insp. David Derrick (who is retiring) gave a comprehensive report on Q4 2025 in Mid Sussex and addressed key concerns:

Mid Sussex Crime Stats (3 months to Dec 2025):

- **Total Calls:** 7,571 (of which 477 were Domestic Abuse incidents)
- **Police Attendance:** 3,100 incidents
- **Crime Reductions (YoY):**
 - Total Crime: -8.1%
 - Burglary: -22.2%
 - Public Place Crime: -19.3%

The only crime that is on the rise is Robbery, mainly due to a change in counting rules by the Home Office, now including Theft Shoplifting within this.

Key Concerns Addressed:

- **Theft Shoplifting:** It's common to see this increase in moments of austerity and food price rises. Sussex Police are seeing increases in every district.
- **E-Scooters:** They're illegal on public land. However, police are limited to warnings and seizures due to safety policies against pursuing minors, often the drivers of e-scooters.
- **PCSO Visibility:** A retention crisis is resolving, after 40% of PCSOs resigned within four months for personal and varied reasons. 5 new PCSOs to join by April, restoring staffing to ~90% of establishment.
- **Clare Park Incident:** Investigation continues but is hampered by victim account discrepancies. The park is considered safe and there's a proposal to increase lighting.
- **Prolific Offender:** A minor responsible for ~40 arrests is difficult to detain due to limited youth detention capacity. The situation is expected to resolve upon their 18th birthday in August.
- **Pavement Parking:** Now a Mid Sussex DC enforcement responsibility, not police.

Insp. Derrick stressed that Mid Sussex remains a really safe place to live compared to the rest of the UK and Sussex.

4. Update from WSALC - Trevor Leggo

There is a clerk's networking day on the 6th March, taking place in person in Billingshurst.

It's to be confirmed if the Chairs Forum will combine East and West Sussex, and dates for this will be communicated.

5. Devolution & Unitary Authority Proposals

Mayoral Election: Delayed to 2028. Cllr. Denham St.Pinnock is lobbying for a 2027 date to align with local elections and save costs.

Asset Transfers: Mid Sussex DC is refusing to discuss asset transfers (e.g. toilets, playing fields) until a unitary authority is formed, citing process.

- **MSALC Position:** Assets must transfer with freehold title and a funding package.
- Cllr. Denham St.Pinnock will lobby Mid Sussex DC on behalf of MSALC, citing other districts (Horsham, Chichester) that are engaging now.

6. Planning & Local Issues

NPPF Consultation: The consultation on proposed NPPF modifications (aimed at simplifying policies) closes March 10. A detailed report from Steve Tilbury was circulated to all parishes.

Ian Gibson, Turners Hill PC - Crossing Patrol: The school crossing patrol position is vacant due to poor pay and unsocial hours. If the council has the Power of General Competence, it could top up the salary to attract candidates.

John Drew, Albourne PC - Sayers Village: Albourne PC and Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common PC are collaborating to address traffic and flooding concerns from the proposed 2,400-house development. Berkeley Latimer is hosting a public event on Jan 30 (3–7 PM) at Sayers Common Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.