



Minutes of a meeting of Seaford Town Council's Full Council on Thursday 23rd January 2025

Held at The View, Seaford Head Golf Course, Southdown Road, Seaford, BN25 4JS at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor S Markwell (Mayor) and M Wearmouth (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors S Adeniji, C Bristow, R Buchanan, S Dubas, F Hoareau, O Honeyman, J Lord, J Meek, G Rutland, L Stirton and I Taylor.

Steve Quayle, Interim Town Clerk

Georgia Raeburn, HR & Governance Manager

Sharan Brydon, Assets & Projects Manager

Lucy Clark, Responsible Financial Officer

There were 10 members of public in attendance

C99/01/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Ali, L Boorman, R Honeyman, O Matthews and L Wallraven.

Councillor L Stirton sent his apologies for lateness.

C100/01/24 Disclosure of Interests

Councillor C Bristow disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 16 due to being employed by the South Downs National Park Authority, although not directly involved in the National Nature Reserve.

C101/01/24 Dispensations

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** that the Town Clerk grants dispensation to all Councillors to take part in discussion and vote on item 11. This dispensation is granted in order for the Town Council to be quorate and to consider its policy in relation to members' allowance. This dispensation will last the duration of this current administration i.e. until May 2027.

(7.05pm - two members of public joined the meeting)

C102/01/24 Public Participation

| Speaker | Statement |
|-----------------------|---|
| Resident A | <p><i>With regards to agenda item 15, spoke on behalf of the family of a Royal Marine who was killed whilst on duty in Northern Ireland in November 1978. Talked through the Marine's childhood in Seaford, involvement and passion in local sports, and the whole family's involvement in the Seaford community. Shared that on their first deployment in active service, they were fatally injured. A full military funeral was held at St Thomas More Church in Seaford, attended by a large number of people and the then Mayor of Seaford, followed by a burial in Seaford Cemetery.</i></p> <p><i>Appealed that we must remember the Marine and the others who have died for their country.</i></p> |
| Town Council Response | Thanked the resident for their contribution. |
| Resident B | <p><i>With regards to concessions, explained that they were there as a concessionaire but also committed member of the community, advocating for a fair resolution to major challenges surrounding the Martello Café, including increased rent, structural defects, flooding issues and the internal set up. Explained that they had attended a meeting with the management team and wanted to work collaboratively but felt there was no option for discussion. Reaffirmed their commitment to resolving the issues amicably. Confirmed that there is public support for their business, which they have worked hard to get off the ground and create something special for the community. Implored the Town Council to fulfil its Concessions Policy and support small local businesses by investigating this situation further. Requested a response to their email on 2nd December to arrange a meeting and work together to resolve this.</i></p> |
| Town Council Response | Thanked the resident for their contribution. |

C103/01/24 Petitions

There were no petitions presented for consideration at this meeting.

C104/01/24 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the following minutes:

| | | |
|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 103.1 | Full Council | 14 th November 2024 |
| | | 12 th December 2024 |
| 103.2 | Planning & Highways | 7 th November 2024 |
| | | 28 th November 2024 |
| | | 17 th December 2024 |
| 103.3 | Climate Change | 21 st November 2024 |
| 103.4 | Personnel | 27 th November 2024 |
| 103.5 | Community Services | 5 th December 2024 |
| 103.6 | Finance & General Purposes | 19 th December 2024 |

The Golf & The View minutes from 10th December 2024 were deferred for approval at the next Full Council meeting.

C105/01/24 Mayors Update Report

Full Council considered report 143/24 presenting the Mayor's update and details of engagements attended.

The Mayor introduced the report, thanked the Deputy Mayor for their support and deputising, and expressed their enjoyment of and privilege at attending the Christmas engagements.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

C106/01/24 Interim Town Clerk's Update Report

Full Council considered report 142/24 updating Full Council on key Town Council work and work priorities for the Town Council.

Members thanked the Interim Town Clerk for the positive first three months in service.

Members discussed being pleased to see the updated Bönningstedt Wall situation, and welcomed the Interim Town Clerk's understanding of the Government's white paper of devolution.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

(7.26pm – two members of the public exited the meeting)

C107/01/24 Town Council Working Group Reports

There were no working group update reports to be discussed.

C108/01/24 Outside Body Representative Reports

| Representative | Statement |
|--|---|
| Councillor C Bristow, National Nature Reserve Partnership | Provided an overview of the National Nature Reserve (NNR) proposal, that appears elsewhere on the agenda. Confirmed that joining the NNR is a voluntary declaration made by key partners, which include South Downs National Park Authority, Natural England, South East Water, Forestry England and Sussex Wildlife Trust. Confirmed the purpose and aims of the NNR, and an overview of the recent whole site visit and unique elements of each area. Had posed a question to other partners during the visit around their handling of visitor numbers and how they do the best to conserve nature whilst enabling people to enjoy this. Feels there is lots of knowledge and experience sharing that the Town Council can gain from as part of the NNR. Confirmed that there is also the opportunity for additional external funding bids. Summarised that joining the NNR would be good for the flora and fauna, and good for the Town Council as well. |
| Councillor J Meek, Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve Management Committee (SHLNRM) | Posed the question as to whether joining the NNR would supersede the SHLNRM. |
| Trees for Seaford | Confirmed that Trees for Seaford has planted 100 trees in autumn and planted over 2,000 trees in Seaford in total – the group is going from strength to strength. |
| Councillor I Taylor, Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) | Confirmed that CAB has received extra funding to have a worker hold regular meetings in Bishopstone Station to pick up issues from Seaford residents – this is a service to the community. |

C109/01/24 District & County Councillor Update Report

| Representative | Statement |
|--|---|
| East Sussex County Councillor S Adeniji | <p>Confirmed that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has written to the Secretary of State who will decide if ESCC is in the first tranche of councils to go forwards as a combined authority (should be confirmed by the end of January) and, if agreed, whether the May 2025 ESCC elections can be deferred (should be known by mid-February).</p> <p>Confirmed that the Secretary of State should be issuing a publication for town and parish councils in March, setting out the impact of the devolution white paper on local councils.</p> <p>Confirmed that ESCC will be setting its budget on 11th February, which includes proposals to cut costs and make savings. This includes changing the waste and recycling sites to pre-book only – while this consultation is no longer live, residents can share their thoughts with the County Councillors ahead of 11th February.</p> |
| Lewes District Councillor O Honeyman | <p>Confirmed that the Lewes Local Plan public consultation session will be taking place on 30th January, 6-9pm, at The Downs Leisure Centre, Seaford. An exhibition of the plans is being held at Marine Workshops in Newhaven, this will not be staffed but encourages people to attend, view the information and send in their views. The District Council's website confirms the relevant venues and times.</p> |
| Lewes District Councillor J Meek | <p>Confirmed that on 5th February, there will be both Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park Authority officers in attendance at the exhibition in Marine Workshops. This is part of helping to ensure that both local plans are developed in sync in order to remove contradiction between the two.</p> |

C110/01/24 Members' Allowance

Full Council considered report 158/24 presenting the recommendation from Finance & General Purposes Committee regarding the Town Council's Members' Allowance Policy. Members clarified that this deferral would be ready for next set of councillors in 2027 and that the impact of devolution on the role of a local councillor would be better understood. Members discussed the option to consider support for councillors to access computer equipment to carry out their roles, whether there may be certain expenses that could be offered instead of an allowance, other councils offering a dependency allowance, and the Climate Change Sub-Committees discussing and future work looking at the provision of councillor laptops.

C110.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

C110.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in deferring any amendments to the Member's Allowances Policy for the Committee to reconsider in December 2026, at the latest.

C111/01/24 Interim Update of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023 - 2024

Full Council considered report 157/24 updating on the status of the 2023 - 2024 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Members discussed the nature and submission of the complaints received by the external auditor.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

C112/01/24 Interim Internal Audit Report 2024 - 2025

Full Council considered report 157/24 presenting the interim Internal Audit Report from Mulberry & Co Ltd for 2024 - 2025.

The RFO introduced the report and confirmed that a report would be presented to March Full Council covering the appointment of the internal auditors.

Members discussed the justification behind the recommended increase of the bad debt write off limit, the robust process for chasing bad debts before write off is considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, and the need to reword the section to ensure debtors do not think that the Town Council will automatically write off up to that limit.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the Internal Auditor's report.

C113/01/24 Final Budget 2025 – 2026 & Precept Setting

Full Council considered report 120/24 presenting the budget and precept proposal for 2025 - 2026.

The RFO clarified a small amendment to the precept amount quoted within the recommendation, although the correct figure was within the report.

Members thanked the RFO for the clarity of the report. Members discussed ongoing work to investigate pitch hire fees, earmarked reserves containing funds set aside for Seaford Head Estate which includes Hope Gap Steps, the impact of the committee structure review on the budget and plan to migrate and apportion this, additional expenditure that may be incurred in the year due to external parties and whether this should be budgeted for or can ensure costs will be passed on to the external company causing them, a request for earmarked and general reserve figures to be included in future budget reports, and acknowledging an increase in precept.

C113.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report and associated attachments.

C113.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the budget proposal for 2025 – 2026.

C113.3 It was **PROPOSED** to **AGREE** the precept request to Lewes District Council for 2025 - 2026 as £1,248,359; this **MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

C114/01/24 Memorials Policy Update

Full Council considered report 140/24 presenting a request that Full Council formally approve a temporary pause in the Memorial Policy, alongside an exceptions process.

Members discussed the ongoing project for a memorial for Clare Sumners, the proposed exceptions process, alternative modes of memorials aside from benches, the disrepair of existing benches and need to audit the existing benches, the emotive and personal nature of memorials and the impact of pausing memorials, the option of contracting for a period of years, the option of a shared memorial e.g. tree with leaves, the suggestion to approach Trees for Seaford to request memorial trees, the funds from Martello Entertainments Area, and the logistics of people being aware of the exceptions process.

C114.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

C114.2 It was **RESOLVED** to formally **APPROVE** a temporary pause of the Memorial Policy with immediate effect, until 1st April 2026.

C114.3 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** an exceptions process to the paused Memorial Policy.

(8.40pm to 8.45pm – a short break was held. Councillor S Adeniji, the RFO and four members of the public exited the meeting)

C115/01/24 Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve – Update & Consideration of Next Steps

Full Council considered report 136/24 seeking Full Council's consideration of the Climate Change Sub-Committee's recommendation with regards to the Town Council's involvement in the Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve.

Members discussed how joining the National Nature Reserve could aid the situation and research needed for Hope Gap Steps, the breadth of the opportunity to knowledge share across the country, the retention of local control and importance of the Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve Management Plan and the option to affiliate further land in the future.

C115.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the land denoted In Appendix B of the report 136/24 to be included as part of the Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve.

C115.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** that Natural England be provided with a letter of intent to agree and confirm Seaford Town Council's commitment to becoming an Approved Body via Natural England's processes and under section 35 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to manage the land as a National Nature Reserve.

C116/01/24 Martello Tower – Granting of a new Lease by Reference

Full Council considered report 141/24 seeking Full Council's agreement to grant a Lease by reference to Seaford Museum and Heritage Society.

Members apologised to the Seaford Museum and Heritage Society for the delay in progressing the lease.

C116.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

C116.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the granting of a new lease by reference for the Martello Tower.

(9.02pm – two members of the public exited the meeting)

C117/01/24 Seaford Cricket Club – Determination of Lease Arrangements

Full Council considered report 154/24 seeking Full Council's agreement of the lease arrangements with Seaford Cricket Club, specifically in relation to the land used for the cricket nets at The Salts Recreation Ground.

C117.1 It was **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

C117.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** to surrender the existing lease with Seaford Cricket Club and grant a new lease enlarging the demise to include the land currently housing the cricket nets, subject to written consent from Lewes District Council.

C118/01/24 Committee Membership Update

Full Council considered report 152/24 proposing to appoint an additional member of the Climate Change Sub-Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the appointment of Councillor S Dubas to the Climate Change Sub-Committee for the remainder of the 2024 – 2025 municipal year

C119/01/24 Proposed Meeting Timetable

Full Council considered report 139/24 presenting the proposed meeting timetable for the 2025 – 2026 municipal year for adoption.

Members discussed the remaining meeting dates of the Climate Change Sub-Committee, the meeting denoted as 'AGAR', and the new format with the mayor making meeting.

C119.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the 2025 – 2026 meeting timetable.

C119.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the Climate Change Sub-Committee meeting scheduled for 1st May 2025 be cancelled due to the Golf, Open Spaces & Climate Action Committee meeting in June 2025.

C120/01/24 Exclusion of Press & Public

It was **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public **BE EXCLUDED** from the meeting during the discussion on the remaining items of business for the reasons as set out within the agenda.

(9.13pm – the remaining two members of public exited the meeting)

C121/01/24 Richmond Road Car Park – Correction of Ownership back to Lewes District Council

Full Council considered report 138/24 proposing that the Community Services Committee's recommendation to rectify an historic administrative error resulting in the official transfer of Richmond Road Car Park from Lewes District Council to Seaford Town Council in 2005

C121.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** to the transfer of ownership of Richmond Road Car Park back to Lewes District Council under the General Disposal Consent 2003.

C121.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** to submit the Town Council's comments – as per sections 8 to 11 of the exempt appendix 1 - alongside this request to the District Council.

The meeting closed at 9.17pm.

Councillor Sally Markwell

Mayor of Seaford