



## Seaford Town Council

### **Minutes of a Meeting of Seaford Town Council's Full Council on Thursday 23 April 2026**

Held in the Council Chambers, 37 Church Street, Seaford, BN25 1HG at 7.00pm

#### **Present:**

Councillors M Wearmouth (Mayor) and L Stirton (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors S Adeniji, L Boorman, C Bristow, R Buchanan, S Dubas, S Dunn, F Hoareau, O Honeyman, R Honeyman, J Lord, S Markwell, J Meek, G Rutland, and I Taylor  
Steve Quayle, Town Clerk

Darryl Keech, Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

George Raeburn, Senior Committee Clerk

Peter Cousin, Head of Place

Sharan Brydon, Operations & Facilities Manager

There were six members of the public in attendance

Prior to the meeting beginning, the Mayor held a short period of reflection, highlighted the St. George's Day celebrations taking place, and extended the Town Council's best wishes to the Town Crier, Peter White, following a recent medical episode.

#### **C131/04/25 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Matthew, R Stirton, and L Wallraven.

#### **C132/04/25 Disclosure of Interests**

There were no disclosures of interests.

#### **C133/04/25 Public Participation**

Speaker	Statement
Resident A	<i>Speaking to agenda item 21, presented a proposal for the reinstatement of Hope Gap Steps. Confirmed that they are a graduate civil engineer, who has specialised in maritime engineering, and been personally involved in projects on the south coast confronting the ever eroding cliff line and rising</i>

	<p>sea levels. Explained that their proposal (provided in hard copy for councillors to view) was a short to medium term solution that would allow safe access to the beach through the replacement of the top tier of steps with timber steps and just requiring occasional maintenance of the remaining two flights of steps – with all works above mean high water and not requiring approval from the Crown Estate. Provided an overview of how the construction could take place and the details within the drawings presented.</p> <p>Shared concerns that maritime environmental consultants know the risks of coastal projects such as this and schemes will be costly. Advised that the Town Council consider a scheme like their proposal, with a clause to relax codes of practice with the consultant, which should enable a scheme costing less than £50,000 with a build timeframe of four weeks.</p> <p>Offered their voluntary support with meeting any contractors and discussing options in order to help open Hope Gap Steps again.</p>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution.
Resident B	<p>Speaking to agenda item 21, highlighted that Hope Gap Steps have been closed for three years whilst the Town Council tries to find a solution. Shared that in the last six months, lots of people have come forwards to share their love of the area and hope to see this reopened for generations to come. Expressed concerns around people being cut off by the tide and not having a safe exit via the steps. Confirmed that they are aware of similar proposals, such as at Birling Gap, and that their own proposal would be practical, have a low environmental impact, and be made locally from galvanised steel. Urged the Town Council to find a way to reopen the steps, as has been the case recently with Wealden District Council prioritising the reopening of Birling Gap Steps.</p>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution.

	<p>A Town Councillor shared details around the progress of work to Birling Gap Steps.</p> <p>A Town Councillor confirmed that the Town Council has reviewed its safety warning signs in the area.</p>
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### **C134/04/25      Petitions**

There were no petitions presented at this meeting.

### **C135/04/25      Minutes**

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

*(7.19pm – four members of public exited the meeting)*

5.1	Full Council	29 January 2026
		18 March 2026 – Extraordinary
5.2	Assets & Facilities	26 February 2026
5.3	Golf, Open Spaces & Climate Action	5 March 2026
5.4	Personnel	6 January 2026
		19 March 2026
5.6	Planning & Highways	15 January 2026
		12 February 2026
		12 March 2026
		9 April 2026

### **C136/04/25      Mayor's Update Report**

Full Council considered report 203/25 presenting the Mayor's update report and details of engagements.

Members welcomed the Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve coming to fruition and noted that His Majesty The King visited the town of Seaford for the launch of the new National Nature Reserve, through which the King Charles III Coastal Path runs.

Members noted their delight that the Town Crier had been able to attend and celebrate three cheers for King Charles III.

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

### **C137/04/25      Town Clerk's Update Report**

Full Council considered report 212/25 updating Full Council on key Town Council work and work priorities for the Town Clerk

In response to queries from members, officers confirmed details in relation to the Exceat Bridge replacement: the first closure being due in June 2026; a stakeholder meeting being held in mid-May in the Town Council's offices; the continued dialogue with East Sussex County Council regarding the impact of the closure on Alfriston, Seaford and Newhaven and how to manage this; joined up discussions with officers from other local councils, including Newhaven Town and Alfriston Parish; utilising the local County Councillors to help represent the needs and concerns of the town and its surroundings areas whilst this project is ongoing; the need for better and clearer traffic sign management, in particular with road closures; the need for road closure times to be accurate and not seeing roads closed earlier than advertised; the impact on emergency services and, in particular, a request that ambulances be diverted to take patients to Brighton rather than Hastings during the road closure; that officers will inform the local MP about the planned stakeholder meeting, and; that Town Council officers will continue to proactively represent the needs of the town. Furthermore, officers confirmed that discussions were ongoing with regards to the management and maintenance agreement for Cliff Gardens, and that the Town Council would be looking to employ a number of casual staff to provide car park attendant cover. Members welcomed the new Seaford Head Golf Course website and congratulated the Town Clerk on completing the Certificate in Local Council Administration qualification. It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

### **C138/04/25      Town Council Working Group Reports**

There were no updates given.

Representative	Statement
Councillor L Stirton, Concessions Working Group	Confirmed that the group is currently deliberating and will report in due course.
Councillor S Markwell, Seaford Health Stakeholders Working Group	Confirmed that the group is meeting next week with a panel focussing on youth support in Seaford – any councillors looking to attend should inform officers.
Town Clerk, Strategy Programme Working Group	Confirmed that the group would be reconvened in the coming weeks, to discuss progress against the programme and prepare for the review in October 2026

**C139/04/25 Outside Body Representative Reports**

Representative	Statement
Councillors Bristow & Wearmouth, Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve Management Committee	Shared that the committee meets twice yearly and its minutes are published on the Town Council's website. At its recent meeting, concerns were discussed about a decrease in biodiversity onsite and the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) generally declining – a matter due for discussion later on this agenda.
Councillor Rutland, Seaford Chamber of Commerce	Shared that the Town Council has an excellent relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and that the most recent breakfast meeting was very interactive with an interesting talk from the local MP.
Councillor Meek, Trees for Seaford	Shared that Trees for Seaford has been undertaking lots of good work with local schools – raising awareness with the children around the environment and planting together.
Councillor R Honeyman, Access Newhaven & Seaford	Shared that he had recently joined the group on a visit to Newhaven Fort and that this was very insightful in terms of realising the access issues with historic buildings

**C140/04/25 District & County Councillor Update Report**

Representative	Statement
<i>Lewes District Councillor J Meek</i>	<i>Shared that the Local Government Reorganisation is taking up a lot of the District Council officer's time. The District Council is continuing to insulate properties and make them more resilient before it is dissolved, with the hope being that the new unitary authority will continue that hard work.</i>

	<i>The two weekly bin collection rollout – with the aim of encouraging recycling - has been fairly successful. The District Council has confirmed that residents can request an additional household general waste bin but that only one would be emptied at a time.</i>
<i>Lewes District Councillor C Bristow</i>	<i>Confirmed that tetrapak cartons (e.g. juice cartons) can now be put into household recycling bins.</i>

### **C141/04/25 Complaints, Freedom of Information Requests and Appeals Update Report – April 2026**

Full Council considered report 202/25 updating Full Council on Complaints, Freedom of Information requests and appeals.

In response to queries from members, officers confirmed that one of the outstanding Freedom of Information requests is due to additional work required of the solicitors and that officers have formally complained about the delay in carrying out this work. Officers will write to councillors to confirm the reason for the delay in the other outstanding information request.

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

### **C142/04/25 Fields in Trust**

Full Council considered report 155/25 providing Full Council with an update on the Fields in Trust programme and decide if the Town Council wishes to proceed to apply for Fields in Trust status for The Crouch, The Salts Recreation Ground and Martello Fields.

In response to queries from members, officers confirmed that: Martello Fields would be treated as one application despite the dividing road; Fields in Trust approval of changes to buildings onsite would be subject to the size and use of the building; the Town Council could revisit a decision to designate The Salts site under the scheme in the future, and; in order to withdraw a site from the scheme the Town Council would have to designate a replacement site, which would be feasibly impossible given the lack of green space.

Members discussed concerns relating to: designating The Salts under Fields in Trust due to the upcoming strategic planning of the site and the Town Council yet to publicly consult on this and establish the community's and stakeholders wants and needs from the site; the complexity caused by the leases onsite, and; the uncertainty ahead with Local Government Reorganisation, the new unitary authority, and new Town Council administration.

**C142.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

**C142.2** It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that an application should be made for Fields in Trust status, with the Deed/s of Dedication being brought back to Full Council for approval in due course, for The Crouch.

**C142.3** It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that an application should be made for Fields in Trust status, with the Deed/s of Dedication being brought back to Full Council for approval in due course, for Martello Fields.

*There was no proposer for making an application to include The Salts Recreation Ground in the Fields in Trust Scheme.*

*(8.03pm – two members of public exited)*

### **C143/04/25 Approval of a Five Year Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Agreement**

Full Council considered report 211/25 presenting the recommendation from the Golf, Open Spaces & Climate Action Committee that Full Council approves entering into a five year Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Agreement.

In response to queries from members, officers confirmed that; the signed agreement entered into by all parties would guarantee the capital repayments to the Town Council subject to the work being carried out, and; as landowner the Town Council is under a legal obligation to improve the condition of the site to 'recovering' status and that, in the absence of this, there are potential punitive measures that Natural England could take including fining the Town Council.

Officers confirmed that one particular feature for focus is the decline of the chalk grassland.

**C143.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

**C143.2** It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** that the Town Council enters into and executes a five-year Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Agreement, as recommended by the Golf, Open Spaces & Climate Action Committee.

**C143.3** It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the associated spend on capital works, to be partly reclaimed from the Rural Payments Agency, as recommended by the Golf, Open Spaces & Climate Action Committee.

### **C144/04/25 Interim Update on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024 - 2025**

Full Council considered report 213/25 updating Full Council on the status of the 2024 - 2025 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and provide relevant background on the ongoing external audit process relating to the 2023 - 2024 AGAR. It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

### **C145/04/25 Devolution Considerations – Public Update**

Full Council considered report 206/25 providing a public update in relation to the devolution considerations being undertaken by the Town Council.

In response to queries from members, officers confirmed that public consultation would take place ahead of Full Council's final decision on the assets.

Members highlighted that this process will take time and has caused confusion due to the lack of information available prior to the meeting from the District Council. Members commended officers for the work on the devolution process to date.

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

### **C146/04/25 Exclusion of the 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 next item of business for the reasons as set out in the agenda.

*(8.17pm to 8.32pm – a short break was held and the Town Council entered exempt session)*

### **C147/04/25 Approval of On-Call Arrangement Spend EXEMPT**

Full Council considered exempt report 216/25 seeking Full Council's approval of the on-call arrangements and the necessary spend to enable a six-month trial of the arrangements.

**C147.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

**C147.2** It was **PROPOSED** to **APPROVE** the six-month trial of the on-call arrangements as discussed in the meeting; the **MOTION** was **PASSED**.

**C147.3** It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the necessary spend to enable a six-month trial of the on-call arrangements from 1 May to 31 October 2026.

**C147.4** It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** an addition to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers Policy, that on-call officers are given delegated authority to spend up to £500 plus VAT to make an area or asset safe, only for use while they are on call.

**C148/04/25      Devolution of Assets - Initial Considerations EXEMPT**

Full Council considered exempt report 205/25 to facilitate Full Council's determination of which of Lewes District Council's non-housing assets the Town Council will nominate to be considered for devolution through a Local Control Transfer.

*(9.46pm – Councillor I Taylor exited the meeting)*

**C148.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

**C148.2** It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** to instruct officers to submit a nomination for STC Site References 001, 002, 003, 005, 007, 008, 009, 010, 012, 015A, 016, 017, 034, and 035 to be considered by Lewes District Council for Local Control Transfer.

**C148.3** It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the Town Council will not submit a nomination for STC Site References 004, 006, 011, 013, 014, 015, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 036, 037, 038, 039, 040, 041, and 042.

**C148.4** It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** to instruct officers to undertake the necessary due diligence of nominated sites that are agreed to by Lewes District Council, approving an unbudgeted expenditure the equivalent of £1,500 per asset nominated, to be met from General Reserves.

**C148.5** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** that a public consultation on any asset transfer proposals will be undertaken at a formative stage of the process, the exact timing of which is yet to be determined.

**C148.6** It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that that, once due diligence and the public consultation are completed, a report be brought back to Full Council for a final decision.

*(9.58pm – It was **PROPOSED** to **SUSPEND** Standing Order 3q to enable the meeting to continue beyond a period of three hours; the **MOTION** was **PASSED**)*

**C149/04/25      Hope Gap Steps – Consideration of Survey Quotes  
EXEMPT**

Full Council considered exempt report 215/25 updating Full Council on the results of the tender process and seeking Full Council's approval to engage a consultant engineer to develop plans.

**C149.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

**C149.2** It was **PROPOSED** to **APPROVE** officers engaging Bidder A, subject to written confirmation of the costs including concept/scheme level of design sufficient for a

quantity surveyor to cost, and to approve the expenditure required to engage a Quantity Surveyor to provide costs for the construction of the design, with both costs being met from General Reserves. Furthermore, that a report be brought back to Full Council prior to going to tender for final sign-off of the proposed scheme; the **MOTION** was **PASSED**.

**C150/04/25 Update on the Sale of Hurdis House EXEMPT**

Full Council considered exempt report 217/25 updating Full Council on the progress made on the sale of Hurdis House.

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

*(10.23pm – Councillor J Lord exited the meeting)*

**C151/04/25 The View Lease Arrangement EXEMPT**

Full Council considered exempt report 222/25 providing Full Council with an update on the financial performance of The View Seaford Ltd, and to consider their request to vary the existing financial elements of the lease agreement.

*(10.37pm – Councillor S Adeniji exited the meeting)*

It was **PROPOSED** to **APPROVE** varying the financial elements of The View lease as per 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 of exempt report 222/25, and defer decision making on 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 of exempt report 222/25 until audited accounts have been provided and subject to this being received prior to the end of June 2026; the **MOTION** was **PASSED**.

The meeting closed at 10.53pm.

*Councillor M Wearmouth*

Councillor M Wearmouth

Mayor of Seaford