



Annual Meeting of the Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held in The Council Chamber, County Hall, St Annes Crescent, Lewes on Wednesday, 20 May 2015 at 2.30pm

Present:

Councillor R O’Keeffe (Chair)

Councillors S Adeniji; G Amy; R Blackman; W Botting; B Bovington; J Carr; J Carter; S Catlin; M Chartier; D Cooper; S Davy; N Enever; P Franklin; P Gander; P Gardiner; S Gauntlett; B Giles; J Harrison-Hicks; O Honeyman; V Ient; T Jones; A Lambert; I Linington; A Loraine; R Maskell; E Merry; S Murray; D Neave; T Nicholson; J Peterson; R Robertson; T Rowell; S Saunders; J Sheppard; A Smith; C Sugarman; R Turner and L Wallraven.

Apologies received:

Councillors S Barnes and S Osborne.

Minutes

1 Election of the Chair of the Council

The Chair of the Council (Councillor Nicholson) invited the Assistant Director of Corporate Services to inform the Council of the nomination which had been received for the office of the new Chair of the Council.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Services reported that Councillor Ruth O’Keeffe had been nominated by the Conservative Group of Councillors and Councillors Carter, Catlin and Murray.

Councillor Blackman moved, and Councillor Gander seconded, the motion:

Action

“That Councillor Ruth O’Keeffe be elected Chair of the District Council of Lewes until the next Annual Meeting of the Council and her successor is entitled to act as Chair.”

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

1.1 Accordingly.

The new Chair of the Council (Councillor O’Keeffe) then made and subscribed the Declaration required by law and announced that charities and voluntary bodies would be of particular importance to her during her year of Office and that she proposed to visit one such charity or voluntary body in each Ward during that period. Councillor O’Keeffe invited Councillors to notify her of any particular charities or voluntary bodies in their Wards which they felt deserved to receive particular recognition.

Councillor O’Keeffe further announced that Nick Robinson would be her Consort during her year of Office.

Councillor O’Keeffe in the Chair

Councillor Blackman moved, and Councillor Saunders seconded, a vote of thanks for Councillor Nicholson’s work on behalf of the Council during his year of office and for the attendance of his consort Angela Nicholson at engagements during the year. Both Councillors Blackman and Saunders paid tribute to Councillor Nicholson and Mrs Nicholson for such work. Councillor Nicholson then gave a brief speech in response during which he thanked his wife and the Officers who had provided him with support during the year and further thanked the Chief Executive and the Officers who had successfully conducted the recent Parliamentary, District, Town and Parish Council elections. Councillor Nicholson also highlighted the recent Unsung Hero’s event that had been held at Newhaven Fort which had celebrated those people in the District who volunteered their services for the overall benefit of the local community. He concluded his speech by saying that it had been an honour to serve as Chair of the Council for two of the last three years.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

1.2 Accordingly.

2 Appointment of the Vice-Chair of the Council

The new Chair of the Council (Councillor O’Keeffe) invited the Assistant Director of Corporate Services to inform the Council of the nomination which had been received for the office of Vice-Chair of the Council.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Services reported that Councillor Robbie Robertson had been nominated by the Conservative Group of

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Councillors.

Councillor Botting moved, and Councillor Loraine seconded, the motion:

“That Councillor Robbie Robertson be appointed Vice-Chair of the District Council of Lewes until immediately after the election of a Chair at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

2.1 Accordingly.

The Vice-Chair of the Council (Councillor Robertson) then made and subscribed the Declaration required by law.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 April 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 To Receive any Announcements From the Chair of the Council, Leader of the Council, Members of the Cabinet or the Chief Executive

(i) Urgent Items

The Chair advised that it had been agreed that, in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, Report No 63/15 of the Returning Officer relating to the Councillors Elected to the Council on 7 May 2015, as referred to in Agenda Item 7; Report No 64/15 relating to appointments to Cabinet and members and Chairs of Committees and other bodies, as referred to in Agenda Items 9(a) and 9(b); and Report No 65/15 relating to the appointment of members to serve on outside and joint bodies, as referred to in Agenda Item 9(c); which had been circulated to all Members of the Council immediately before the start of the Meeting under cover of Council Document B, be considered as matters of urgency at the meeting in order that decisions thereon could be taken based on the most recent information which was available.

(ii) Chair of the Council's Engagements

The Council received the list of the Chair of the Council's engagements carried out since the Meeting of the Council held on 23 April 2015.

5 Councillors Elected to the Council on 7 May 2015

The Chair moved, and Councillor Saunders seconded, the motion that Report No 63/15 of the Returning Officer relating to Councillors Elected to

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the Council on 7 May 2015, be noted.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

5.1 Accordingly.

6 Election of the Leader of the Council

The Chair reported that, contrary to that which was printed on the Council Agenda papers, the Election of the Leader of the Council was for the period until the Annual Council Meeting following the next local elections in four years' time unless the Leader resigned from Office; was no longer a Councillor; was removed from Office by resolution of the Council; or was otherwise disqualified by law.

The Chair of the Council then invited the Assistant Director of Corporate Services to inform the Council of the nomination which had been received for the Office of Leader of the Council.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Services reported that Councillor Rob Blackman had been nominated to the Office of Leader of the Council.

Councillor Davy moved, and Councillor Maskell seconded, the motion:

“That Councillor Rob Blackman be elected Leader of the Council for the period until the Annual Council Meeting following the next local elections in four years' time unless he resigned from Office; was no longer a Councillor; was removed from Office by resolution of the Council; or was otherwise disqualified by law.”

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

6.1 Accordingly.

The Chair then invited the Council to note the following appointments of Leaders and Deputy Leaders of the political groups that were represented on the Council:

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Leader of the Conservative group – Councillor Blackman;
Deputy Leader of the Conservative group – Councillor Smith;

Leader of the Liberal Democrat group – Councillor Osborne;
Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat group – Councillor Saunders;

Leader/Convenor of the Green Party group – Councillor Rowell;
Deputy Leader/Deputy Convenor of the Green Party group – Councillor Murray; and

Leader of the Independent group – Councillor O’Keeffe; and
Deputy Leader of the Independent group – Councillor Catlin.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

6.2 Accordingly.

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7 Appointments

The Leader of the Council reported that he had appointed the following Councillors to be members of the Cabinet however, details relating to their individual portfolios had not yet been finalised:

Councillors: R Blackman (Leader of the Council); P Franklin; T Jones;
R Maskell; E Merry and A Smith.

The Leader of the Council moved, and Councillor Smith seconded, the motion that the recommendations contained in Report Nos 64/15 (Appointments 2015/16) and 65/15 (Appointments of Representatives to Serve on Outside and Joint Bodies 2015/16), be approved, subject to the addition of Councillor B Giles to fill the vacant Conservative seat on the Audit and Standards Committee.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

7.1 That the membership of Committees etc for the municipal year 2015/2016, based on the political structure and the political balance as set out in Appendix B to Report No 64/15 and taking account of the adjustments referred to in that Report, be as follows:

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Proportionality is shown as Conservative – Liberal Democrat – Green – Independent:

Audit and Standards Committee Membership 7 (4-2-1-0 becomes 5-1-1-0, see paragraph 10 above)

N Enever	M Chartier (Chair)	T Rowell
B Giles		
I Linington		
A Loraine		
R Robertson		

(plus up to 3 co-opted, non-voting Town/Parish Council members – participation restricted to Standards matters)

Devolution Committee Membership 7 (4-2-1-0)

A Smith (Chair)	G Amy	J Carter
P Franklin	D Cooper	
P Gander		
J Harrison-Hicks		

Employment Committee Membership 5 (3-2-0-0)

T Nicholson (Chair)	S Gauntlett
P Franklin	A Lambert
E Merry	

Licensing Committee Membership 10 (6-3-1-0)

S Adeniji (Chair)	M Chartier	S Murray
W Botting	S Gauntlett	
B Bovington	S Osborne	
P Gander		
J Harrison-Hicks		
D Neave		

Planning Applications Committee Membership 11 (6-3-1-1)

S Davy (Chair)	G Amy	S Murray	S Catlin
T Jones	P Gardiner		
T Nicholson	V Ient		
J Sheppard			
R Turner			
L Wallraven			

Scrutiny Committee Membership 11 (6-3-1-1)

S Adeniji	P Gardiner (Chair)	J Carter	R O’Keeffe
N Enever	V lent		
J Harrison-Hicks	S Osborne		
I Linington			
J Peterson			
C Sugarman			

- 7.2** That the following Working Party be re-appointed in order to continue the business for which it was originally established: CMT

Housing Working Party Membership 7 (4-2-1-0)

R Maskell (Chair)	M Chartier	T Rowell
B Giles	S Saunders	
R Robertson		
R Turner		

- 7.3** That the Electoral Review Working Group be re-appointed in order to continue the business for which it was originally established. As an advisory group, it is not subject to the political proportionality rules but it is representative of all political Groups and its membership comprises the Leaders of each political Group; CMT
- 7.4** That the nominations for the appointment of Chairs, as indicated above, be approved and that the remaining Chairs be appointed at the first meetings of the bodies concerned; and CMT
- 7.5** That the appointment of representatives to serve on outside and joint bodies be as set out below: CMT

Outside Body (annual appointment unless otherwise stated)	Representative(s)
3VA Board (Voluntary Action Lewes)	J Peterson
Age UK East Sussex Governing Body	R Turner
Chailey Common Nature Reserve Management Committee	S Davy
Citizens’ Advice Bureaux, Lewes & Seaford	P Gander
Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board <i>(Rep should be Cabinet Member for Planning)</i>	T Jones
Community Safety Partnership <i>(2 reps – 1 should be Cabinet Member whose portfolio includes Communities)</i>	E Merry (Chair) T Nicholson

Outside Body (annual appointment unless otherwise stated)	Representative(s)
Court of the University of Sussex <i>(Rep should be Chair of the Council)</i>	Chair of the Council
East Sussex Flood Risk Panel	B Giles
East Sussex Gypsy and Travellers Forum <i>(2 reps)</i>	J Harrison-Hicks R Turner
East Sussex Health and Well-Being Board	L Wallraven
East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee <i>(Rep cannot be member of Cabinet)</i>	S Adeniji
Greater Brighton Economic Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board member <i>(Rep should be Leader of the Council)</i> • Independent Call-in Panel member <i>(1 rep and 1 appointed sub – rep and sub cannot be on the Board or involved in decision being called-in)</i> 	R Blackman VACANT VACANT (sub)
iESE Transformation Ltd <i>(Rep should be Leader of the Council)</i>	R Blackman
Impact Seaford	R Blackman
Joint Portfolio Holders Strategic Planning Group <i>(Rep should be Cabinet Member for Planning)</i>	T Jones
Lewes Joint Parking Board <i>(2 reps)</i>	R Turner L Wallraven
Local Government Association: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Assembly <i>(Rep should be Leader of the Council)</i> • Coastal Issues Special Interest Group • District Councils' Network <i>(1 rep and 1 appointed sub)</i> 	R Blackman B Giles I Linington N Enever (sub)
Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve Management Committee <i>(2 reps)</i>	B Bovington P Franklin
South Downs National Park Authority <i>(Rep appointed for 4 years, expires 2019)</i>	T Jones
South East England Councils <i>(1 rep and 1 appointed sub – rep and sub should be Cabinet Members)</i>	R Maskell A Smith (sub)
Sussex County Playing Fields Association	A Loraine
Sussex Downs and Low Weald LEADER Local Action Group	J Sheppard

Outside Body (annual appointment unless otherwise stated)	Representative(s)
Sussex Police and Crime Panel <i>(1 rep and 1 appointed sub)</i>	T Nicholson A Smith (sub)
Wave Trust Leisure Board	R O’Keeffe
West Sussex Joint Planning Board <i>(Rep should be Cabinet Member for Planning)</i>	T Jones

Joint Body (annual appointment unless otherwise stated)	Proportionality (where appropriate) Con-LibDem-Green-Ind (see Report No 64/15)	Representative(s)
Housing Consultative Panel <i>(4 reps and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing as ex-officio member)</i>	4 (3 - 1 - 0 - 0)	P Gander J Harrison-Hicks A Loraine VACANT (Lib Dem seat) (plus R Maskell, Cabinet Member for Housing, ex officio)
Landport Bottom Management Committee <i>(4 reps)</i>	4 (3 - 1 - 0 - 0 becomes 2 - 1 - 0 - 1, see paragraph 13 of Report No 64/15)	VACANT (Cons seat) VACANT (Cons seat) VACANT (Lib Dem seat) S Catlin
Planning Service User Group <i>(3 reps – 1 should be Cabinet Member for Planning)</i>	3 (2 - 1 - 0 - 0)	T Jones VACANT (Cons seat) VACANT (Lib Dem seat)

8 Substitute Members

The Leader of the Council moved, and Councillor Gander seconded, the motion that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, all members of the Council be appointed to the “approved list” of members appointed to act as substitute members.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

8.1 Accordingly.

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9 Questions to the Leader of the Council

<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Question/Response</u>
Councillor Carter	<p><u>Question:</u> With the Cabinet system of decision making there existed a democratic deficit in the mechanism in respect of the way that the Council was run with a risk that Cabinet was not properly representative of the composition of the Council and did not include a representative from Lewes. Were councillors from other political groups not consulted on the composition of Cabinet and, if not, whether such consultation could be considered for the future?</p> <p><u>Response (by Councillor Blackman, Leader of the Council):</u> The Leader and Cabinet system of decision making was adopted by the Council as it was considered to offer improved accountability when compared to the previously used committee system of decision making. All members of the Council could attend Cabinet meetings at which it was anticipated that any questions they had in respect of the Reports on the Agenda, would be answered. Additionally, Councillor Blackman had invited a representative of the Green Party on the Council to meet with him on a monthly basis in order to discuss any issues the Green Party Councillors had regarding the running of the Council and any issues that they wanted to bring to Councillor Blackman's attention. In instances where Councillors had been elected to serve on their local Town Council and on the District Council, it was important for them to differentiate between those two roles.</p>
Councillor Murray	<p><u>Question:</u> Could the Leader of the Council tell the Council how many Lewes District Council employees, or employees of its contractors, were currently not paid as much as the living wage?</p> <p><u>Response (by Councillor Blackman, Leader of the Council):</u> On the most recent occasion when such issue was investigated, there were either two or three Lewes District Council employees who were not paid as much as the living wage. However, Councillor Blackman was not aware of the number of employees of the Council's contractors who were not paid as much as the living wage.</p>
Councillor Rowell	<p><u>Question:</u> The Green Party Councillors on the Council were pleased to hear about the programme of solar panels on social housing. What were the opportunities for extending that programme and how could the fund for environmental improvements to the Council's housing stock be used for</p>

<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Question/Response</u>	
	more solar panels or other renewable energy schemes?	
	<u>Response (by Councillor Blackman, Leader of the Council):</u> The Council was currently undertaking a programme of installing solar panels to 700 Council housing units. When the Report thereon was considered by Cabinet, there were three levels of opportunity for such installation namely: that the associated cost benefit analysis which had been undertaken had provided a clear indication that it was beneficial to install such panels; or that the analysis had indicated that it might be beneficial to install such panels for which the subsequent results were expected to be obtained shortly; or that it was not cost efficient for such installation to be undertaken. The Council was investigating other potential energy related projects which included extracting heat from the River Ouse which was associated with the proposed North Street Quarter Development in Lewes. Councillor Blackman reported that he would arrange for a comprehensive list of such projects to be sent to Councillor Rowell.	DSD
Councillor Adeniji	<u>Question:</u> A few months ago, the Council had undertaken a survey of Seaford residents relating to the introduction of a trial green waste collection service in respect of which Councillor Adeniji had received some indications from residents that they were quite keen for the service to be provided. Would the Leader of the Council please confirm whether or not the service was going to be introduced and, if so, when it would begin?	
	<u>Response (by Councillor Blackman, Leader of the Council):</u> Councillor Blackman reported that several Seaford residents were in favour of the introduction of the service which was scheduled to be introduced around the beginning of August.	
Councillor Saunders	<u>Question:</u> During the previous Council administration there seemed to be some confusion in respect of which Lead Councillors were responsible for housing matters. Would the Leader of the Council please ensure that Councillors who were awarded such responsibilities were clearly identified in the new Cabinet?	
	<u>Response (by Councillor Blackman, Leader of the Council):</u> Councillor Blackman reported that Councillors responsibilities for housing related matters would be clearly	

Questioner Question/Response

identified in the new Cabinet. However, there was a 'grey area' in respect of strategic housing matters for which Councillor Blackman would be responsible for some and others would be the responsibility of Councillor Maskell.

10 Ward Issues

Ward issues were raised by Councillors on the following subjects:

<u>Councillor/Ward</u>	<u>Ward Issue Concerning</u>	
Councillor Rowell – Lewes Priory Ward	<p>An important part of the Council's provision for emergency housing was located in Lewes Priory Ward. Concerns had recently been raised with Councillor Rowell relating to the future of Saxonbury on Juggs Road which currently provided much needed emergency housing.</p> <p><u>Suggested action to be taken by the Council:</u> That Councillors and residents be assured that the emergency provision at Saxonbury was not under threat or, if there were plans to change that which was provided at Saxonbury, that Councillors and residents be notified as to what provision was planned instead in Lewes town in order to make sure that no emergency housing was lost.</p>	DSD
Councillor Wallraven – Seaford West Ward	<p>There was an increasing problem with some six or seven professional dog walking companies currently using The Rookery, off Bishopstone Road during the day. Consequently, the residents of Bishopstone Village felt that the area was becoming the local 'dog's toilet facility'.</p> <p><u>Suggested action to be taken by the Council:</u> That a dual purpose waste bin (ie rubbish/dog waste) be provided at The Rookery.</p>	DSD
Councillor Cooper – Lewes Bridge Ward	<p>Litter was becoming an increasing problem in Lewes shopping precinct and on Cliffe High Street which was not pleasant for visitors but also attracted seagulls which sometimes picked-up and choked on the plastic waste. Part of the problem had resulted from there being an insufficient provision of litter bins in the area.</p> <p><u>Suggested action to be taken by the Council:</u> That additional litter bins be provided in Lewes</p>	DSD

<u>Councillor/Ward</u>	<u>Ward Issue Concerning</u>	
	shopping precinct and on Cliffe High Street, and that additional litter collections be undertaken especially on days when special events were being staged in those areas.	
Councillor Gander – Ouse Valley and Ringmer Ward	<p>There was a problem with heavy buses travelling at a relatively high speed when turning into Broyle Close from Broyle Lane, Ringmer, which had resulted in vibrations being experienced to the older properties on the left-hand side of Broyle Lane.</p> <p><u>Suggested action to be taken by the Council:</u> That the Council write to the appropriate bus company in order to request it to ensure that its drivers further reduced the speed of their buses before they turned into Broyle Close from Broyle Lane, Ringmer.</p>	DSD
Councillor Carr – Newhaven Valley Ward	<p>Waste materials and rubbish were being deposited in the alleyways that were located behind properties particularly in Elphick Road; Lawes Avenue; and Lewes Road in Newhaven, some of which were the Council's properties, details of which had been reported to the Council. The Council had written to residents of the affected area, some of whom were elderly and/or disabled, advising them that, prior to consideration of any enforcement action, they were requested to co-operate and help remove the waste and rubbish which had become a waste and environmental issue and to keep the area clear of such items. Councillor Carr had assisted with work to clear the area but, as those alleyways had not been adopted by the Council or East Sussex County Council, they were not cleared regularly by council staff.</p> <p>Additionally, Councillor Carr had contacted the Council's department that had been responsible for sending the letter to the residents which had indicated that the letter should also have indicated that the residents would be clearing the waste materials and rubbish at their own risk, an issue in respect of which Councillor Carr felt was not acceptable</p> <p><u>Suggested action to be taken by the Council:</u> Councillor Carr felt that problems associated with the waste materials and rubbish, including that of vermin, were being 'stored-up' for the future. She therefore requested that the Council undertake clearance of the waste materials and rubbish that</p>	DSD

<u>Councillor/Ward</u>	<u>Ward Issue Concerning</u>	
	had been deposited in the alleyways (in respect of which Councillor Carr would encourage residents to assist) and give consideration to adopting those alleyways.	

The meeting ended at 3.08pm.

R O'Keeffe
Chair