

The Minutes of the Annual Parish (Electors) Meeting of Lavant Parish Council held on Tuesday 14th May 2024 commencing 7:00pm held at the Lavant Memorial Hall, Pook Lane, Lavant.

In attendance: Cllrs. Aldridge, Goldsmith, Kuchanny, Mayhead, Quest, Tucker, Turner, and Cllr Whincop.

Also Present: WSCC Cllr Hunt, CDC Cllr Brookes-Harmer and the locum Clerk.

Public present: Three.

1. Welcome by the Chairman and introduction of Parish Councillors present.

The Chairman thanked all for attending. He explained that the reports and structure of the meeting were reduced compared to previous years as the Parish Council had yet to appoint a full-time Clerk. He introduced the new Clerk, Faye Joice, who will commence duties on 1st June 2024.

2. To receive minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th May 2022.

Cllr Tucker proposed that they be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Kuchanny and agreed by all attending. The Chairman then signed the draft Minutes as a true record of the meeting.

3. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Parish Council on activities during 2023/24 Council Year.

The Chairman's report is attached at Appendix A

4. To receive reports from external bodies.

Reports from the WSCC and CDC Councillors are attached at Appendices B and C.

5. To receive & discuss and vote upon any business raised by Electors of Lavant given by written notice.

None received.

6. Items for future consideration for the next Agenda.

None.

The meeting closed at 6:45pm

Signed

Date

APPENDIX 1 – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Lavant Parish Council annual electors meeting. 14/05/2024

I must start by offering my apologies. We failed to call an electors’ meeting in 2023 and this meeting has been called with very little notice, but we will endeavour to be better organised next year.

As most of you will be aware, the parish council has undergone a period of considerable upheaval following the departure of Hannah-Louise O’Callaghan who was our excellent parish clerk until May last year. We engaged a new clerk who was also employed by both Westhampnett PC and Hunston PC but some months into the appointment it became apparent that the new clerk was not able to fulfil the requirements of the role and we issued notice in early January of this year. Upon the departure of the clerk, we discovered a great many anomalies in correspondence and record keeping, and a disturbing number of unpaid invoices. Since that time, we have been fortunate to have been able to engage the services of Paul Richards as locum clerk and Paul has spent many hours restoring our financial affairs into order and bringing our correspondence up to date. Paul will leave us on 1st June and his place will be taken by Faye Joice. Paul will continue to provide support and training assistance for the next few months. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul for his invaluable help and his calm and professional approach to a very testing set of circumstances.

One of the results of the investigation into our financial position was that we realised that the precept had fallen significantly behind inflation and was no longer enough to cover our annual expenditure. We had hoped to phase the increase over several years but circumstances beyond our control made that impossible, in the event we have been granted an increase in our precept from £33,000 to £47,000.

Significant events this year:

We have finally concluded the transfer of the Public Open Space and the Car Park extension and these are now owned by the parish. The developers will continue to maintain the Public Open Space until 23rd October this year but after that date we assume responsibility for maintenance and we are busy making sure that we have the support to do that. I am aware that there are some concerns over the lack of night time visibility in the car park extension so we are looking into appropriate lighting that will not transgress the SDNPA dark skies policy.

The new sports pitch was handed over in 2022 and has now been in use for two seasons, maintenance is an expensive issue and I can report that both Adrian Blades and I have now obtained Level 1 Football Grounds Maintenance qualifications which has allowed us to apply for a maintenance grant and we have obtained a grant of £10,666 spread over the next six years. We will need to investigate other forms of maintenance funding for the future.

The new Lavant footpath, from the Churchmead playground to Marsh Lane remains a project but we are progressing towards the approval of a final design and engineering specifications for the bridge over the river. I hope this will be completed this year.

We continue to support the Lavant volunteers and are very grateful for their work in keeping the footpaths clear and maintaining the green and the sports field. Whilst the parish council sets aside a sum to fund the volunteers work, we are keen to encourage donations towards their costs. It is for your benefit that they are working, and any sums

would help towards maintenance of equipment and the purchase of new machinery as needed.

Plans are in hand to create a new car park for Lavant Primary School and as those plans progress, we will keep the parish informed.

CHIL. The Parish Council is supporting a new initiative to try to mitigate the impact of vastly increased traffic flows through the village. This is being led by Alan Taylor and Nick Reynolds.

The new development at Eastmead is approaching completion and we continue to maintain regular communication with the developers in order to ensure that all local concerns are voiced, and appropriate action is taken. At our request, the developers have installed two new wooden bus shelters at the entrance to the site.

Planning. Thus far we have had no major planning applications and no significant issues, and the volume of applications seems to have reduced somewhat in recent months.

We are very aware that the Lavant Neighbourhood Development Plan was published in May 20016 and is now eight years old. and, though it is designed to serve until 2030, we know that the planning inspectorate views it as having less authority with each passing year. We are therefore embarking on the process of putting together a Parish Priority Statement which will update the LNDP without the time and expense of starting the whole process afresh and will reinforce the existing plan's validity with the planning inspectorate.

We are aware that the LPC website is in need of improvement, and we are in the process of redesigning the site to make it easier to view and with a particular emphasis on keeping the content up to date !

I will close by saying that the Parish Council members are all available on the telephone or via email, our contact details are on the website, and we welcome and comments or questions.

APPENDIX B – WSCC REPORT

Lavant PC

WSCC Annual Report

14/05/24

Good evening, to highlight everything that West Sussex County Council have done over the last year would make an extremely long report! Hopefully my monthly updates at your PC meetings have covered some of the key things we are doing that impact on local residents. If there are any particular issues that you wish to raise with me, or there is anything related to the many services we provide that you feel I might be able to help you with, then please get in touch. My contact details are at the end of this report.

In the meantime I have just highlighted a few key areas in my report that I hope will interest you.

The Revised Council Plan and Budget 24/25. I'm pleased to say that West Sussex finances are in a sound position. Yes, there are ongoing challenges, especially with the ever escalating costs of social care. That is across all age groups where we care for around 900 children, as well as supporting families with young children, right up to looking after our elderly residents. Our spending on adult social care alone accounts for nearly 35% of our overall net revenue budget. Of course, that includes not just the elderly, but about 50% of our ASC budget goes to looking after the many working age adults that need our care and support.

And just as a reminder, in 2024/25 WSCC our overall gross revenue spend across the County will be just over £2bn! Across the county we will be supporting our residents by investing:

£961m - managing schools and education

£507m caring for adults (both elderly and working age) & keeping people healthy

£204m children's social care and supporting young people

£91m protecting the environment, recycling and waste disposal

£83m maintaining our highways

£38m running the F&RS

£22m supporting local communities

£3m supporting the local economy

Highways. The condition of our roads continues to be a concern, not only to many residents, but also to the County Council. This is not only a concern to us here in West Sussex, but it is a concern right across the country. In their 2024 Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance Survey Report (<https://www.asphaltuk.org/wp-content/uploads/ALARM-survey-report-2024-FINAL.pdf>) the Asphalt Industry Alliance predict that the one-time repair costs across England and Wales would now cost £16.3 billion and would take a decade to complete. To address highway maintenance Local Authorities (LA's) do receive annual maintenance grants from the government. Additionally, the government announced last Autumn that LA's would receive an extra £8bn for highway maintenance from the funding that was reprioritised following the cancellation of the northern part of the HS2 rail project. The West Sussex share will be £67m. However, welcome as this is, the payment will be spread over the next 11 years. So, to try and address the current state of our roads the County Council, over and above the government funding, are investing an additional £10m in revenue spending on highway maintenance, as well as a further £20m of capital into our road improvement programme. That is in addition to the extra £20m we have already invested over the last two years. So altogether, over and above the normal grant funding we receive from the Government, WSCC will be investing an additional £50m of our money into the counties roads

over a four year period. So just to give you an update, between October 2023 and February 2024, we had more rain in 5 months that we would normally have in a whole year. March didn't show much improvement, and in fact in some West Sussex areas we saw 3 times the rain we normally expect. In these conditions potholes can form as water seeps under the road surface and saturating the substrate which leads to a hydraulic fracturing effect as vehicles pass over. At this moment, our teams are working over-time and our contractor's gangs are working twilight shifts, as well as Saturdays, to try and manage the increased number of safety repairs. In addition, we have 'find and fix' gangs who are predominately operating in urban areas and, now that the weather is improving, we have three Jet Patchers working in more rural areas. Although we still have to carry out the odd emergency repair where we just fill the hole on safety grounds, we continue to focus on quality 'Sides Sawn and Sealed' repairs. Although these repairs take longer, they should last longer. Inevitably, with the amount of water we have on the network some repairs may fail. Please don't forget to report any highways issues on our website @ <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/>

Drainage. In terms of drainage, in our normal cleansing programme we have cleansed 90,000 gullies this year. In addition, we have 4 gully suckers operating across the network carrying reactive work to alleviate flooding issues. They have tackled over 600 jobs on our highest priority sites. I would add that due to the amount of rain - and the very high ground water levels over the winter - many gullies that appeared blocked were in fact just full up, with nowhere for the water to go. However, please report any blocked gullies, potholes or other highways issues on our website @ <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/maintaining-roads-verges-and-pavements/road-maintenance/flooding-drainage-and-gullies/>

And just by way of a final update:

In March 2024 our Highways Teams...



Received 9600 enquiries from the public, of those 6000 related to potholes



Delivered 4300 safety repairs, of these 3200 were for potholes.



Completed 320 find and fix jobs (this is a proactive approach to roads with multiple potholes)



Repaired 810 safety potholes by the Velocity Jet Patcher which equated to around 460sqm

Carers Support. WSCC is reinforcing its ongoing support for people who care for family members, friends, and neighbours with a new five-year contract to offer them information, guidance, and emotional help. The contract, which began on 1 April, has been awarded to [Carers Support West Sussex](#), a local charity with expertise and specialist knowledge in supporting unpaid carers. The county-wide service will provide a dedicated Carers' Helpline, carer support groups and a dedicated specialist service to young adult carers aged 18 to 25. It will offer access to Carer

Wellbeing Workers who can provide information, help and guidance and enable carers to be identified as early as possible in their caring journey. Carers will also be able to receive support from Carer Assessors and Welfare Benefits' Advisors over the telephone or at seven local hubs, at five acute hospital and eight community hospital sites in West Sussex and at East Surrey Hospital, which is managed by Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust. Visit the [Carers Support West Sussex Carers Hub](#) to find out about the help you can access if you are a carer who provides unpaid support to someone who couldn't manage without your help because of old age, a disability, an illness, mental health problems or an addiction. You can register as a carer by visiting the [Carers Support West Sussex website](#) or by calling 0300 028 8888.

Are you SCAM savvy? In West Sussex, during the last three months of 2023, a total of £3.5 million was lost to fraudsters, with 53% of victims being over the age of 75. In the same time frame the top three fraud types were courier/impersonator fraud, dating and romance scams, and sextortion which is classed as a form of blackmail. To support residents from becoming victims of fraud, West Sussex County Council's Digital Safety Team has organised another round of their popular 'Are you scam savvy?' online and in-person sessions, which were launched last year. These free 1.5-hour sessions are open to anyone who wants to keep themselves, or friends and family, from falling victim to different types of scams, both online and offline.

The remaining dates available for the online only sessions are:

- Wednesday 22 May: 1pm - 2.30pm
- Friday 5 July: 11am - 12.30pm.

In-person 'Are you scam savvy?' sessions will also be taking place in three West Sussex Libraries across the county:

- Monday 20 May at Bognor Library: 10am - 11.30am
- Monday 17 June at Shoreham Library: 10am - 11.30am .

If you can't attend the library events in person, there is also the opportunity to view these online. Booking is essential to attend any of the in-person or online sessions and free tickets can be ordered through www.eventbrite.co.uk by searching for 'Are you scam savvy?'.

If you can't attend any of the sessions, you can still visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/staying-safe-online where you can find more information on how the Digital Safety Team can support you, your family or business to keep safe online.

Local Issues:

Trees - Lavant Down Roads - I have update Jenny on the situation regarding the dead trees in LDR. Unfortunately we have missed the deadline for replacing in the current season, but the team have agreed to look at possible replacement next winter. With regard to your request to plant a new walnut tree on the highways verge, also in LDR, I have sent Jenny the application details.

Summersdale garage - I did send this update to your last meeting but I note it wasn't recorded in the minutes, so I just wanted to make sure it was included this month. I am fully aware that lorries and tractors are still parking on the pavement north of Summersdale Garage, despite the new yellow lines. When the TRO restricting parking was implemented the officers made it clear to me that they would monitor the position for around six months and if (as is already happening) the

illegal parking continued they would look to consider the possibility of putting in bollards. I am making a collection of pictures that residents are sending me (and some I have taken) and will be discussing this with officers later in the year. In the meantime, any vehicle parking on the yellow lines is parked illegally and should be reported to the CDC Parking enforcement team who are responsible for parking control.

School Car Park - I understand that you are now applying to WSSC Highways Planning for pre-submission advice. Please keep me updated and if you have any queries, or feel I can help in any way, please feel free to contact me.

Broken Fence by the Allotments - This was reported earlier this year and it has now been repaired.

Community Road Safety Scheme proposals. Just to confirm that once your proposals are drawn up I would suggest that you contact me and I will try and arrange a pre-submission meeting with officers. This will help to refine your proposals before you submit a Communities Highways Scheme application.

Halnaker Windmill. I know this is not actually in your parish, but as a local landmark I thought you might appreciate an update. As you are no doubt aware, we had to remove the sweeps a couple of years ago on safety grounds, due to a failed spar. Last September, following an extensive report from the Millwrighting and conservation officer for Kent County Council and a subject expert from the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings, the County Council approved the funding to carry out the necessary repairs to the windmill, including the restoration of the sweeps. We were hoping to carry out the restoration work this summer but, unfortunately, a single roosting bat was spotted by our ecologist during a visit earlier this year. Hopefully, we will be able to complete the work next summer.

WSSC Residents News Letter. Lastly, every month we issue a Residents News Letter which is sent to all residents who subscribe to our free email service. Signing up for our email alerts means you don't need to check our website to find out the latest information. Instead, it will be delivered free, straight to your inbox. Some of our topics include:

- Emergencies - extreme weather alerts and school closures
- Your Council - County Council meeting dates, agenda and minutes
- Service eNewsletters such as:
- WSSC newsletter, a general update about the council and its services
- West Sussex recycles
- Staying safe online
- Environment and climate change
- Highways, transport and planning.

To subscribe please go to: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKWSSC/subscriber/new>

Finally, please don't forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

Jeremy Hunt – West Sussex County Council Member for Chichester North

c/o Cabinet Office, County Hall, West Street, Chichester, PO19 1RQ

E-mail: jeremy.hunt@westsussex.gov.uk Tel: 0330222419536

APPENDIX C

Lavant Annual council report 2023/24

Report author: Joseph Brookes-Harmer

District Councillor for Lavant, Funtington, West Stoke, East & West Ashling and Asdean

Contact:

Cllr Joseph Brookes-Harmer

East Pallant House

1 East Pallant

Chichester

West Sussex

PO19 1TY

Email: Jbrookes-harmer@chichester.gov.uk

Telephone: 07368 410696

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Council elections took place in May 2023.

The result was:

Liberal Democrats 25

Conservatives 5

Local Alliance (Selsey) 4

Greens 2

*The Local Alliance and Greens sit as a "Group" and are therefore the official Opposition.

Joseph Brookes-Harmer

District Councillor for Lavant

Responsibilities / committees:

- **Planning committee**
- **Overview and scrutiny committee**
- **Economic development committee**
- **Budget task and finish group**

Outside bodies:

- **Goodwood aerodrome consultative committee**

The new Council met on May 17th 2024.

Clare Apel (Chichester West) was elected Chair.

Adrian Moss (Harbour Villages) was elected as Leader.

Midhurst Fire

- It's also hard to believe it's been just over a year since the major fire in Midhurst. As you know, the council has stepped in to offer significant support to the town with a package of over £300,000, as well as business support on the ground and marketing activities to encourage people back to the town. The funding has been used to provide grants to eligible businesses, pay for a new website to promote the town and to provide coaching from a retail specialist. The Town Team is also developing a new Midhurst Business Partnership.

Temporary accommodation

- One of the most pressing issues is increasing the amount of temporary accommodation. We must house people who are facing unintentional homelessness.
- Last year the council spent a significant amount of money on nightly paid accommodation, so we are delighted to have secured additional temporary accommodation. We can now place people in more suitable accommodation and reduce the Council's outlay on Temporary Accommodation at the same time.

Play Parks

- Parks and play areas are integral to people's quality of life.
- We have started a project to refurbish play parks on our own land including in Florence Park; Priory Park; Sherbourne Park; and Whyke Oval.

Boosting the local economy

- We've issued more than £220,000 to businesses and community groups from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). This is from the £1.7 million that we were allocated in 2022.
- The funding has supported a variety of work - from small charities, to growing businesses and community organisations.
- We are also running a range of Markets and Events to encourage people to visit Chichester. Many of you I know attended the Laser show at the canal and others I have seen at the Farmers Market.

Supporting businesses and Regeneration Strategy

- We are providing enabling grants scheme for small and independent businesses; a shop front grant scheme for high street businesses; and an independent retailers grant scheme.
- We've developed the Invest Chichester project over the last three years, which works hard to attract businesses to the district or businesses looking to relocate in order to boost the local economy.

- We are also working on a Regeneration Strategy for the city, which will set the overall direction of travel; work in partnership to influence change and investment in the city; set out potential key areas, strategic land and physical assets; and provide a clear framework for decision making.

Food waste

- We are also starting to prepare for the introduction of a new food waste recycling service. This is a huge project that has to be delivered in 2026 and so we have lots to do between now and then. This includes purchasing new vehicles, recruiting new staff and rolling out the service.

Local Plan

- The local plan has now been submitted to the secretary of state. The inspectorate will scrutinise the plan and revert with any comments.
- The aim was to submit in summer 2023 but delayed due to issues with National Highways, wastewater and Natural England.

Climate Change and the Environment

- We are starting work on the new Environmental & Biodiversity Plan for the District
- Later this year, we will consult on our revised Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Cost of living

- A key priority for the council is helping local people with the cost-of-living crisis. I am delighted that we have been able to retain our services, including:
 - Supporting You
 - Council tax reduction schemes
 - Social Prescribing

Coastal projects

- We are also hoping to bring forward to major coastal and harbour schemes
 - Selsey Flood defence
 - Chichester Harbour Adaption Plan
- We are currently bidding for money on these from the EA and other government grant schemes.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any help. My contact details can be found at the top or alternatively, on the Chichester district council's website.

Best wishes,
Joseph Brookes-Harmer