LANCING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council AGM held at the Council Chamber on Wednesday 20th May 2026

Councillors present: Denyse Whillier (Chair), Carol Albury, Carson Albury, Douglas Bradley, Ann Bridges, Mandy Buxton, Lee Cowen (Vice Chair), David Devoy, Vanessa Evans, Liz Haywood, Mike Mendoza, Steve Neocleous, Joe Pannell and Kathryn Penny.

Officers: Steven Trice (CEO/Clerk)
Members of the Public: None

The Chair welcomed all present and read the safety announcement.

001. Election of the Chair for Lancing Parish Council

Cllr Whillier invited nominations for the Chair for the municipal year 2026/27. Cllr Buxton nominated Cllr Whillier, which was seconded by Cllr Penny. With no further nominations Cllr Whillier was duly elected as Chair and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

002. Election of the Vice-Chair for Lancing Parish Council

Cllr Whillier invited nominations for the Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2026/27. Cllr Cowen nominated Cllr Neocleous, which was seconded by Cllr Bradley. Cllr Neocleous was duly elected as Vice-Chair and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

003. Apologies for Absence

None.

004. Declarations of Interest

None.

005. Public form and questions

None

006. Minutes of the council meeting held on 5th March 2025

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the full council meeting held on 5th March 2025 as a true and accurate record.

007. Governance Review

The CEO/Clerk presented a Governance Review of the Council. In opening his presentation, he stated that the Council's governance had been deemed to be in good order and, in fact, exemplary. He noted that this was great credit to the former CEO/Clerk. He explained that the proposals presented intended were to simply to fine-tune and strengthen the existing governance arrangements. He also advised that the review would naturally result in changes to the agenda structure and related procedures. The report was presented in this manner so not to pre-determine Members' decisions on the recommendations contained in the report. Members considered each recommendation in turn and were unanimously agreeable to each.

Members **RESOLVED** the **recommendations presented in the covering report as follows.**

Terms of Reference for Committees

1. **Finance & Governance (F&G): Add responsibility for administering the Council's grant policy and awards.**
2. **Amenities, Community and Environment (ACE): Correct wording to ensure it refers to F&G (not itself).**
3. **Amenities, Community and Environment (ACE): Expand remit of the Committee to include oversight of licensing arrangements across all Council-owned land. *'To consider and agree the heads of terms for tenancy agreements and license agreements on behalf of the Council unless Standing Orders and Financial Regulations direct to Council.'***
    - **ACE Committee to approve "Heads of Terms" (location, duration, fees).**
    - **Officers execute agreements under delegated authority.**
    - **Disputes or contentious cases referred to Finance and Governance Committee and/or Council as Standing Orders and Financial Regulations dictate.**
4. **Human Resources (HR): Include explicit responsibility for reviewing Equality and Diversity Policies, Safeguarding Policies and other policies that effect the rights and safety of staff and Councillors.**
5. **Human Resources (HR): that the membership remains at 5 and that the Committee's Terms of Reference reflect such (as it states 4).**
6. **Planning Committee: to continue with in-person meetings.**

Scheme of Delegation

7. **Remove reference to "Urgent Business."**
8. **Disband Emergency Decisions Group.**
9. **Use the established Strategic Planning Group to provide strategic support to the CEO/Clerk**.

Working Groups

10. **Strategic Planning Action Group: Retain with devolution pending. Strategic Planning Group remit to include:**
    - **Budget preparation support.**
    - **Drafting consultation responses.**
    - **Supporting devolution planning.**
    - **Developing strategic objectives and business plans.**
11. **Community Action Group: Merge into Events & Markets Group as a trial.**
12. **Climate Change Action Group: Retain, define community remit and focus on Council operations.**
13. **Youth Action Group: Retain, with need to set a defined remit.**
14. **Business Action Group: disband; consider forming an independent business-led body.**
15. **Widewater Visitor Centre Group: Retain rename Widewater Working Group so to retain oversight of visitor center development and add monitoring of Widewater management plan.**
16. **Events & Markets Group: Retain and absorb Community Action functions.**

17. **Emergency Decision Group: this group be disbanded now that a permanent CEO/Clerk is in place.**

18. **General Administration (taken on block)**

Chair Terminology: Replace "Chairman" with "Chair" across all documents.

Apologies:
- **Introduce deadline: submit apologies by 12pm on meeting day by the Councillor.**
- **Allow exceptions in genuine cases to the 12pm rule, but those with pre-planned reasons to apologise should do so in suitable time.**
- **Council may grant dispensations to avoid six-month disqualification rule if there are a valid reason and clear path for the Councillor to return.**

Substitutes: Formalise process and add standing item to all agendas:
- **Councillors arrange their own substitutes.**
- **Notify by 12pm on the day of the meeting stating the name of the substitute by the Members apologising.**
- **Record substitutions in agendas and minutes.**

008. To review and adopt

i. Standing Orders
ii. Financial Regulations
iii. Committee Terms of Reference
Amenities, Community and Environment Committee, Finance and Governance Committee, HR Committee, Planning Committee
iv. Scheme of Delegation
v. Co-Option Policy
vi. Council Representatives on Outside Bodies Policy

Members **RESOLVED** to **adopt all the documents as presented (i to vi). With reference to Financial Regulations, all changes tabled within the covering report were agreed.**

009. Council and Clerk Memberships

Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to **continue membership with the following**;

i. West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC)
ii. Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
iii. The National Allotments Society

010. Committees

Memberships of committees were reviewed and discussed. Cllr Pannell suggested that if all were agreeable then last year's Committees role forward. Cllr Cowen stated that he would want to sit on Committees now he was no longer ex-officio and Cllr Evans wished to go on to a committee. The by a show of hand Cllr put themselves forward to sit on each committee.

i. Amenities, Community and Environment (ACE) Committee
Eight Cllrs indicated they wished to take the seven seats available. Cllr Penny agreed to step back therefore it was **RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Carol Albury, Devoy, Evans, Bradley, Pannell, Mendoza and Bridges.**

ii. Finance and Governance (F&G) Committee
It was **RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Neocleous, Cowen, Devoy, Bridges, Bradley, Pannell and Mendoza.**

iii. Planning Committee
It was **RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Buxton, Haywood, Bridges, Bradley, Pannell and Strudwick.**

iv. HR Committee
Six Cllrs indicated they wished to take the five seats available. Cllr Mendoza agreed to step back therefore it was **RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Evans, Devoy, Bridges, Cowen and Haywood.**

011. Working Groups

It was **RESOLVED to make the following appointments.**

i. Community Action Group – **moved to Events and Markets Working Group.**
ii. Climate Change Action Group – **Bridges, Devoy and Whillier.**
iii. Youth Action Group – **Carol Albury, Mendoza, Evans, Bridges, Cowen**
iv. Business Action Group – **held in abeyance until the Council decides its preferred way forward.**
v. Widewater Working Group – **Carol Albury, Devoy, Pannell, Haywood, Evans, Penny and Bridges.**
vi. Events and Markets Working Group – **Bridges, Cowen, Carol Albury, Mendoza, Penny, Pannell.**
vii. Garden Competition Working Group – **Bridges, Buxton, Whillier and Penny.**

012. Outside Bodies

It was **RESOLVED to make the following appointments.**

i. Joint Audit and Governance Committee for Standard Matters at ADC – **Haywood**
ii. Adur West Capital Projects Group **– no longer in existence.**
iii. Adur and Worthing Safer Community Partnership – Joint Action Group (JAG) - **Carol Albury**
iv. Adur Voluntary Action Management Committee – **Devoy and Cowen.**
v. Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club Community Steering Group - **Haywood**
vi. Brighton City Airport - **Mendoza**
vii. Lancing Football Club - **Buxton**
viii. Lancing Kite Surfing Club - **Devoy**
ix. Lancing Parochial Charities - **Carol Albury and Carson Albury**
x. West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC) (2 with voting rights) - **Whillier and Neocleous**
xi. World of Widewater (WOW) - **Evans and Cowen**

013. Reports

To receive the following reports and agree recommendations

i. Clerk's Report

The Clerk informed Members that robust monitoring was in place for the forthcoming Market a Beach Green and the company had formally been written to support the Council position. Without further comment the report was noted.

ii. Chair's Report

iii. The Chair reported that she continued to hold regular meetings with the CEO/Clerk. The principal issues discussed related to workload and organisational capacity. Two unforeseen matters had arisen which had diverted attention from planned work programmes, and there remained challenges resulting from the absence of a Deputy Clerk. The HR Committee Chair and she had met with the CEO/Clerk to consider these matters and potential solutions. It was noted that the lack of continuity arrangements in the event of the CEO/Clerk's absence continued to represent an organisational risk. The Chair also reported that she, the CEO/Clerk and the Community Engagement and Events Manager had visited the regenerative farm to gain a better understanding of its operations and aspirations.

iv. West Sussex County Councillor Report

Cllr Mendoza reported that the newly formed council had not yet met and therefore there was nothing to report.

Cllr Devoy raised concerns regarding the Beach Green pathway. It was noted that a site meeting was scheduled to take place. The CEO/Clerk reported that he had raised concerns with the West Sussex County Council Project Officer regarding the contractor's apparent unwillingness to accept responsibility for the work undertaken. Cllr Mendoza advised that, as the newly elected Ward Member, he would also escalate the matter. The CEO/Clerk confirmed that Cllr Mendoza would be included in future correspondence relating to the issue.

Cllr Bridges reported that he had submitted photographs of several significant potholes in the areas around the railway station, Sompting Road and South Street. These had initially been reported to West Sussex County Council, but the reports had not been successfully processed. The matter had subsequently been raised with Cllr McGregor; however, the potholes had yet to be repaired.

Cllr Pannell left the meeting at 7.25pm

iv Adur District Councillor Report

Cllr Cowen reported that the Annual Meeting of the Council was due to take place the following evening. He also advised that a programme of street cleansing would be undertaken over the coming weeks and noted that Lancing had a new street cleaner who had already been seen working around the parish.

v. Action and Working Group Reports

None.

vi. Any other outside Body Representative Reports

Cllr Buxton reported that, after losing their last game of the season to Geurnsey, Lancing FC had been reprieved from relegation from the Conference league due to a reorganisation of the leagues.

Members received the report from Cllr Evans on the activities of the World of Widewater and noted the following:

- The AGM had been well attended and included a number of informative presentations.
- Thanks were expressed to the Council by the Committee for the provision of new signage.
- Concerns were raised regarding incidents of people defecating along the lower pathway and around beach huts. Members noted that a statement had been issued in an effort to address the issue and raise awareness.
- Members were advised that the local swan population was increasing, with three nesting sites currently supporting approximately 25 swans. However, concerns remained regarding cygnet survival rates. It was noted that advice had been sought from the RSPB and the Swan Sanctuary regarding the feeding of swans. While occasional ad hoc feeding was considered acceptable, regular feeding could discourage natural behaviours and increase dependence on human intervention.
- Members noted that a flower and insect walk, led by Steve Lawless, would take place on 7 June 2026. A bat walk was also planned, with the date yet to be confirmed.
- Cllr Cowen highlighted the activities of the Swift Watch Group at Crabtree Lane. Cllr Penny enquired about the provision of nesting boxes for swifts and other wildlife. Cllr Penny also raised the possibility of leaving selected grass verges uncut to support insects and wildlife. The CEO/Clerk advised that, for a verge to be removed from the regular grass-cutting schedule, an appropriate licence would be required.

014. Committee Reports

To receive the following Committee Reports

i. HR Committee (meeting held 22nd April 2026)

Without comment **Members NOTED the Committee reports**

015. Internal Audit Report

Members received the Internal Audit Report 2025/2026 and noted that it provided a clean bill of health for the Council's financial and governance arrangements. The CEO/Clerk commended the work of the Finance Officer in preparing for the audit, with assistance from the Assistant to the Clerk. Members asked that their congratulations and appreciation for the Finance Officer's work be formally recorded. The report was received and noted without further comment.

Members **RESOLVED** to **note the contents of the Internal Audit Report and adopt the report.**

016. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 (section 1)

Member received section 1 of the AGAR for 2025/26 and without comment.

Members **RESOLVED** to **adopt the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 (section 1)**

017. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 (section 2)

Member received section 2 of the AGAR for 2025/26 and without comment.

Members **RESOLVED** to **adopt the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 (section 2)**

018. Notice of Public Rights

Member noted the Notice of Public Rights and the dated period and without comment.

Members **RESOLVED** to **note the period of the Notice of Public Rights and agree to its publication.**

019. Asset Register

Members noted and approved the Council's Asset Register with the following comments being made.

- Cllr Devoy asked whether the format presented represented the standard format for the asset register. The CEO/Clerk explained that the information shown was high-level data extracted from the Council's asset management system. Cllr Devoy suggested that an indication of each asset's condition be included in future reports to help identify when items may require replacement. The CEO/Clerk agreed to investigate this further and stated that management plan were being drawn to support and forward budget planing.
- Cllr Mendoza enquired whether beach huts were included within the asset register. The CEO/Clerk confirmed that only the four beach huts owned by the Council were included. The remaining beach huts were privately owned, although they were situated on Council-owned land.

Members **RESOLVED** to **note and adopt the Council's Asset Register.**

020. Council Insurance Renewal

Members considered the renewal of the Council's Insurance Policy. The CEO/Clerk reminded Members that the Council currently had two outstanding insurance matters and advised that continuity of service and claims handling was therefore particularly important at this time. Having considered the matter, Members agreed that it was in the Council's best interests to renew the policy with its existing insurer in order to maintain continuity and minimise any potential disruption. Members unanimously resolved to approve the renewal of the Council's Insurance Policy with the current provider and agreed an increase in the Insurance Budget to cover the 2026/2027 year.

Members **RESOLVED renewing the Council's insurance policy with Zurich for three years at the cost of £11,249.19 for 2026/2027, which required a budget uplift of £914.64.**

Cllr Penny left the meeting at 8pm.

021. Confirmation of 2026/2027 Council and Committee Dates

Members **NOTED** the Council and Committee Timetable for 2026/2027, as previously circulated. Cllr Neocleous advised that the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee scheduled for 27 May 2026 would be rescheduled to 10 June 2026. This would allow sufficient time for work relating to beach hut income and sale options to be completed. It was also noted that the Human Resources Committee would meet beforehand to address any staffing or financial implications arising from the proposals. Cllr Cowen also asked if meeting dates could be put electronically into Councillor calendars, which the CEO/Clerk confirmed was possible.

022. Confidential Session

That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

023. Paddle Courts Proposal – Monks Road Recreation Ground

The CEO/Clerk introduced the report, which presented the business case for the proposed padel courts at Monks Recreation Ground, together with the proposed Heads of Terms for the tenancy agreement as set out in the accompanying report.

Cllr Mendoza reminded Members that the proposal would not result in any direct cost to the Council. Questions were raised regarding the design of the facility and whether any visual representations were available. The CEO/Clerk explained that detailed plans and images would form part of any subsequent planning application, but images had been tabled to the ACE Committee. In considering the proposed Heads of Terms, Members discussed the financial arrangements. Cllr Neocleous expressed concerns regarding the proposed income-sharing model finding it was unusual for a tenancy agreement to be based on a share of income rather than a fixed annual rent, this view was supported by Cllr Devoy. It was generally acknowledged that the proposal represented a positive opportunity for the Council, but Members wished to ensure that the final arrangements were appropriate and robust. It was suggested that transparency around the operator's accounts would be required if such an arrangement were pursued. Members also sought an update on the timescale for the submission of a planning application. The CEO/Clerk advised that he was currently awaiting detailed plans from the applicant

Cllr Cowen expressed support for the project but raised concerns regarding the long-term popularity of padel as a sport. He also questioned whether dedicating part of Monks Recreation Ground to a single activity was appropriate and suggested that local residents should be consulted. Members noted that public consultation would form part of the planning process and that the applicant would be expected to engage with local residents. Cllr Devoy highlighted the potential benefits of increased footfall at the recreation ground, which could enhance activity and improve safety in the area.

Cllr Albury commented that the applicant was bringing forward a project at no cost to the Council while making productive use of land that was currently underutilised. Cllr Albury considered the proposal to be a valuable asset for the community, particularly as there were no similar facilities in the immediate area. Cllr Mendoza added that, following the success of the Youth Hub project, the proposed courts could provide a further positive community asset. However, Cllr Neocleous reiterated the need for the Council to have appropriate safeguards and financial security within any agreement.

In summarising the discussion, the Chair noted that Members were broadly supportive of the project in principle. The key issues related to the detailed terms of the agreement, the financial arrangements, and the extent of community engagement. Members agreed that any consultation with residents should not unnecessarily delay the project.
It was agreed that the CEO/Clerk should continue discussions with the applicant regarding these matters. The CEO/Clerk requested delegated authority to negotiate and progress the outstanding issues to enable the project to move forward, which Members supported. Cllr Carol Albury moved to take the recommendation as presented and Cllr Carson Albury felt what was being discussed was not a normal business plan and 5 year review allowed the Council to move the model if income was not as forecasted. The Chair then moved the review be after 3 years, which Members agreed to and felt that a balance had been struck when dealing with the concerns raised.

Member **RESOLVED** to;

- **the Heads of Terms of the Tenancy Agreement with a rent review after three years.**
- **give delegated authority to the CEO/Clerk to negotiate the Tenancy Agreement to a conclusion.**
- **give delegated authority to the CEO/Clerk to submit the planning application on behalf of the Parish Council on receipt of the plans and supporting paperwork.**

024. Items for information and/or inclusion on future agendas

None.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35pm

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