

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL held at COUNTY HALL, LEWES on TUESDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2013 at 10.00 am.

Present Councillors Barnes, Belsey, Bennett, Bentley, Birch, Blanch, Butler, Carstairs, Charlton, Clark, Daniel, Davies, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Earl, Elkin, Ensor, Field, Galley, Glazier, Hodges, Howson, Keeley, Lambert, Maynard, O’Keeffe, Phillips, Pragnell, Pursglove, Rodohan, Scott, Sheppard, D Shing, S Shing, Shuttleworth, Simmons, Standley, Stogdon, St Pierre, Taylor, Tidy, Tutt, Ungar, Wallis, Webb, Whetstone and Wincott.

43 Minutes of last meeting

43.1 RESOLVED – to confirm the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 22 October 2013 as a correct record

44. Apologies for absence

44.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buchanan and Forward.

45. Chairman's Business

CHAIRMAN’S ACTIVITIES

45.1 The Chairman announced that he had attended a number of engagements since the last County Council meeting including: the launch of the Trading Standards promotional bus, the launch of the No Cold Calling ‘Super Sticker’ event, a visit to the Albion in the Community event at the Amex Stadium, the visit of Her Majesty The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to The Keep, and the Chair of Lewes District Council’s bonfire night celebration. I hosted a tea party for volunteers at the De La Warr Pavilion and the Vice Chairman and I attended 5 Remembrance Day services at Eastbourne, Lewes, Hastings and St Leonards. The Vice Chairman and I have undertaken 35 engagements in total since the last meeting of the Council in October.

PRAYERS

45.2 The Chairman thanked the Reverend Colin Lawlor, Chaplain of the University of Brighton for leading the prayers before the Council meeting.

PETITIONS

45.3 The Chairman informed the Council that immediately before the meeting the following petitions had been received from members:

Councillor Charlton	- calling upon the Council to ensure future requests by Veolia to relax Condition 28 are referred to the Planning Committee of the Council
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- Councillor Daniel - calling on the County Council to reconsider its proposal to cease funding the street crossing patrol outside St Paul's Church of England Primary School, St Leonards on Sea from 1 April 2014.
- Councillor Galley - calling on the County Council to introduce measures to reduce traffic volumes and speed on Crowborough Road/Ashdown View, Nutley
- Councillor Lambert - calling upon the County Council to reconsider its proposal to close Seaford's Household Waste and Recycling Unit (Cradle Hill)
- Councillor O'Keeffe - calling upon the County Council to change parking policy immediately so that it includes free parking for up to 30 minutes on School Hill, Lewes from Monday through to Friday, in addition to free on and off road parking on a Saturday in central Lewes where practicable
- Councillor Whetstone - calling upon the County Council to reconsider the decision to close the Forest Row Waste Recycling Centre

46 Questions from Members of the Public

46.1 There were no questions from members of the public

47. Declarations of Interest

47.1 The following members declared personal interests in items on the agenda as follows:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Position giving rise to interest</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Whether interest was prejudicial</i>
Councillors Belsey, Elkin, Shuttleworth, Taylor, Tutt, Ungar and Wallis	Members of Eastbourne Borough Council	Lead Member for Resources report, paragraph 1	No

<i>Member</i>	<i>Position giving rise to interest</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Whether interest was prejudicial</i>
Councillors Birch, Daniel, Hodges, Pragnell, Scott, Webb and Wincott	Members of Hastings Borough Council	Lead Member for Resources report, paragraph 1	No
Councillors Butler, Howson, Lambert, O'Keeffe and Sheppard	Members of Lewes District Council	Lead Member for Resources report, paragraph 1	No
Councillors Clark, Davies, Earl, Field and Maynard	Members of Rother District Council	Lead Member for Resources report, paragraph 1	No
Councillors Claire Dowling, Galley, D. Shing, S. Shing and Standley	Members of Wealden District Council	Lead Member for Resources report, paragraph 1	No
Councillor Rodohan	Officer of the Federation of Small Businesses	Lead Member for Resources report, paragraph 1	No

48. Reports

CALLOVER

48.1 The Chairman, having called over the reports set out in the agenda, reserved the following paragraph for discussion:

Lead Member for Resources - paragraph 1

NON-RESERVED PARAGRAPHS

48.2 On the motion of the Chairman of the County Council, the Council ADOPTED those paragraphs in the reports of the Committees that had not been reserved for discussion.

49 Lead Member for Resources report – Notice of Motion: Sustainable Communities Act Proposal

49.1 The following motion, to adopt paragraph 1 of the Lead Member's report, was moved by Councillor Elkin:

The County Council:

(1) agree that, on balance, it considers it inappropriate to support the motion, but reserves the right to reconsider this approach if the Government were to consult on a mandatory power to local authorities at a national level;

(2) note that the District and Boroughs also have an independent interest in this motion locally, namely Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council in East Sussex. This is due to their separate roles as local planning and business rates billing authorities; and

(3) considers it appropriate to undertake an economic impact assessment and referral for consideration by the meeting of the Joint Leaders of East Sussex Councils, and reported back through the appropriate Council process.

49.2 The motion was CARRIED after debate

50. Questions from County Councillors

ORAL QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

50.1 The following members asked questions of the Lead Cabinet Members indicated and they responded:

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
Councillor Rodohan	Councillor Maynard	Use of super glue in the bonding and sealing of pothole repairs
Councillor Field	Councillor Elkin	Income lost by Library Service as a result of upgrade to system for payment of fines, borrowing fees etc.
Councillor Ungar	Councillor Bentley	Outcome of review of the rate of interest applied to individual clients' managed bank accounts
Councillor Daniel	Councillor Elkin	Disposal of County Council assets
Councillor Birch	Councillor Glazier	Council's role in promoting acceptance and respect for all whatever their background/nationality
Councillor Carstairs	Councillor Maynard	Consultation regarding the proposed closure of the Seaford Household Waste Recycling site
Councillor Whetstone	Councillor Bennett	Translation of the School Admissions booklet

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
Councillor St Pierre	Councillor Bentley	The cost since the closure of Harvard Road, Ringmer of maintaining the empty building, the lost interest as a sale has not been completed and the cost of legal charges resulting from the delay in the sale of the site
Councillor Standley	Councillor Maynard	Proposed closure of three Household Waste Recycling sites in East Sussex
Councillor Barnes	Councillor Bentley	Extra Care Scheme in East Sussex
Councillor S Shing	Councillor Maynard	Introduction of LED street lighting in Eastbourne area
Councillor Hodges	Councillor Maynard	Site of King Harold's death
Councillor Barnes	Councillor Maynard	Archaeological finds uncovered during the construction of the Link Road
Councillor Howson	Councillor Maynard	Provision of street lighting in areas with high crime rates

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

50.2 Two written questions were received from Councillors O'Keeffe and St Pierre for the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness and the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development. The questions and answers are attached to these minutes.

50.3 The Lead Members responded to supplementary questions by the questioners for the purposes of clarification.

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.08 am

The reports referred to are included in the minute book

WRITTEN QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question by Councillor O’Keeffe to the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness

The East Sussex Music Service has been rated as outstanding more than once and has a very good reputation for the inclusion of a high percentage of pupils and the very good results they achieve both in beginners music and more advanced studies. A popular and important part of the service offered to students has been the week long summer schools which happen at the end of the Summer Term, or Term 6, which offer the chance for students to really immerse themselves in the study of music, play with larger groups of students at a similar skill level to themselves etc. I have been told that these Music School courses are being counted as unauthorised absences by schools, leading to some parents being unwilling to send their children, and difficulties with schools which previously were happy to send their pupils to the courses. Please can you explain how this has arisen and how it can be rectified? It seems very strange for a valuable educational experience delivered by an organisation very strongly linked to the Education Authority to be classified as an unauthorised absence.

Answer by the Lead Member for Learning School Effectiveness

This query has arisen out of information provided to the East Sussex Music Service from parents who have been told that absences to attend the courses would not be authorised. Although it is an individual headteacher's responsibility to decide whether, or not, to authorise an absence, there is appropriate flexibility available in the legislation to take into account students attending off-site provision, such as music courses. If a school is prepared to accept that they are responsible for the safeguarding and well-being of the pupil off site, then a 'B code' can be marked in the register - an approved off-site activity, which is not an absence. If a headteacher is not prepared to take this responsibility, then a C code for an authorised absence would be appropriate. Of course, individual circumstances will be taken into account when making this decision and, should a child have a history of poor attendance, it may be appropriate for a headteacher not to authorise an absence for such a reason. However, we would not expect there to be any blanket rules in schools on not authorising absences for such approved activities. We will make sure that teachers across the music service are aware of the regulations, so that information can be conveyed to parents should these concerns arise again. Additionally, we will re-issue guidance to all schools in East Sussex of the circumstances in which absences can be authorised in the next Virtual School Bag item.

2. Question by Councillor St Pierre to the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

Following an article in the Independent newspaper dated 20 November 2013, would the Leader confirm:

- a) the extent of East Sussex County Council's investment in the tobacco industry, directly or through the pension fund schemes and the extent of profits which accrued to the County or the pension schemes

- b) the expenditure by ESCC on education and health promotions to deter adults and young people to give up smoking?
- c) the cost to the public health from illnesses caused by smoking?

Answer by the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

a) The East Sussex Pensions Fund has a Statement of Investment Principles which has been produced and adopted in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2009. Within the investment objectives of this statement, the Pension Panel has considered the issues surrounding socially responsible investment and has adopted an 'Active Shareholder Approach' to encourage companies to adopt best ethical and environmental principles without jeopardising the investment performance of the Fund. Investment Fund managers have been encouraged to engage in constructive dialogue on behalf of the Fund and to use their influence to encourage companies to adopt best practice in all key areas of business which are corporate governance; employment standards; human rights and environmental standards.

The primary duty of the Investment Panel in its oversight of the Fund's investments is to seek the best returns it can for a given level of risk and it therefore needs to be recognised that in this there is a potential conflict between the fiduciary duty to seek best returns and any potential desire to exclude certain stocks, recognising that any exclusions, if the stocks outperform the market, result in a opportunity cost to the Fund.

The Pension Fund now have less active managers (therefore segregated holdings) - many of our investments are in pooled funds which means that it is not possible to give details of investments. Out of the East Sussex Pension Fund investment of £2.45billion, the only segregated holding in tobacco companies was valued at £5.05million, i.e., 2% of the total pension fund

b) As part of a comprehensive tobacco control programme for East Sussex the County Council currently invests around £1.4m in the provision of high quality Local Stop Smoking Services and tobacco control interventions to support adults and young people who wish to quit, and to prevent people from starting smoking. Interventions and services supported include:

- Stop smoking services in G.Ps, pharmacies and community settings
- Training to support people to refer to stop smoking services
- Proven approaches to reduce the prevalence of smoking, such as campaigns and marketing, to support awareness of the harms caused from smoking and the benefits of becoming Smokefree. This year the County Council promoted the national Smoke Free Homes campaign to reduce exposure to second hand smoke in the home, as well as encouraging people to stop smoking through campaigns such as 'Stoptober'.
- The ASSIST peer education programme in schools - tobacco education and promotion to deter young adults from smoking and to give up smoking if they have already started.

We are working through the recently formed East Sussex Tobacco Partnership to develop multi agency plans and responses to addressing tobacco use in East Sussex.

An additional one-off resource of £380,000 has been allocated to partnership work to address tobacco use in East Sussex including: social marketing campaign targeting communities where illicit tobacco is thought to be prevalent, work to interrupt the supply chain for illegal/illicit tobacco, training to key community organisations and agencies, enhanced enforcement activity for test purchasing with retailers, timed appropriately within a campaign schedule.

As part of the transfer of responsibilities for public health to the local authority Public Health is reviewing all of our commissioned services over the next three years, including the support to adults and children and young people to improve their health and to stop smoking.

c) In East Sussex there are on average 1,000 smoking related deaths every single year:

- Eastbourne – 200 deaths
- Hastings – 190 deaths
- Lewes – 170 deaths
- Rother – 190 deaths
- Wealden – 250 deaths

(Health Profiles 2013)

The total cost to the NHS from smoking in East Sussex is estimated to be £27.2 million (ASH 2011)

<http://ash.org.uk/localtoolkit/R8-SE.html>

In East Sussex in 2010/11 there were 5,289 smoking attributable admissions to hospital which gives an age standardised rate of 1,247 admissions per 100,000 population. The estimated cost per capita of smoking attributable hospital admissions (2011) in East Sussex is therefore £38.6 per year (Tobacco Control Profiles East Sussex, 2013)

Further information on smoking in East Sussex can be found on the East Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment website (JSNA):

<http://www.eastsussexjsna.org.uk/search.aspx?searchtext=smoking>