

MINUTES

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 21 MARCH 2023 at 10.00 am

Present Councillors Sam Adeniji, Abul Azad, Matthew Beaver, Colin Belsey, Nick Bennett, Bob Bowdler, Charles Clark, Godfrey Daniel, Penny di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Kathryn Field, Roy Galley (Vice Chairman), Keith Glazier, Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge, Stephen Holt, Johanna Howell, Eleanor Kirby-Green, Carolyn Lambert, Tom Liddiard, Philip Lunn, James MacCleary, Wendy Maples, Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood, Carl Maynard, Matthew Milligan, Steve Murphy, Paul Redstone, Christine Robinson, Pat Rodohan, Phil Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Alan Shuttleworth, Rupert Simmons, Bob Standley, Colin Swansborough, Barry Taylor, Georgia Taylor, David Tutt and Trevor Webb

53. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023

53.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the County Council meeting held on 7 February 2023.

54. Apologies for absence

54.1 Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Chris Collier, Johnny Denis, Gerard Fox, Nuala Geary, Alan Hay, Sarah Osborne, Peter Pragnell and John Ungar.

55. Chairman's business

COUNCILLOR PRAGNELL

55.1 The Chairman announced that Councillor Pragnell was unwell and therefore unable to attend the meeting. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman wished Councillor Pragnell a full and quick recovery.

CHAIRMAN'S ACTIVITIES

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55.2 The Chairman reported that Councillor Pragnell had attended a number of events since the last Council meeting, including a visit to Ashdown Forest and attending the Conservators Financial and Regulation Committee.

PETITIONS

55.3 The following petitions were presented before the meeting by councillors:

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| Councillor Maples* | - calling on the County Council to introduce a lorry route network similar to the one in West Sussex, so that HGVs are redirected away from narrow local roads in our villages. |
| Councillor Bowdler | - calling on the County Council to introduce lower speed limits on the B2095 Lower Street Ninfield to Marsh Road, A259. |
| Councillor Hilton | - calling on the County Council to divest the Pension Fund from fossil fuels related investments and publicly support a permanent windfall tax on Big Oil and a rapid transition to a green energy system. |
| Councillor Daniel Shing | - calling on the County Council to introduce double yellow lines either side of driveway on 63 St Johns Road, Polegate. |

*(on behalf of Councillor Denis)

PRAYERS

55.4 The Chairman thanked Mr. Michael Ensor, former Chairman of the Council, for leading prayers before the meeting.

56. Questions from members of the public

56.1 There were no questions from members of the public.

57. Declarations of Interest

57.1 There were no declarations of interest.

58. Reports

58.1 The Chairman of the County Council, having called over the reports set out in the agenda, reserved the following for discussion:

Cabinet report – paragraph 1 (Council Monitoring – Quarter 3 2022/2023)

Governance Committee report – paragraph 1 (Pay Policy Statement)

NON-RESERVED PARAGRAPHS

58.2 On the motion of the Chairman and the County Council, the Council adopted those paragraphs in reports that had not been reserved for discussion as follows:

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Governance Committee report – paragraph 2 (Remote Attendance at Meetings)

59. Report of the Cabinet

Paragraph 1 (Council Monitoring – Quarter 3 2022/2023)

59.1 Councillor Bennett introduced the reserved paragraph in the Cabinet report.

59.2 The paragraph was noted after debate.

60. Report of the Governance Committee

Paragraph 1 (Pay Policy Statement)

60.1 Councillor Glazier moved the reserved paragraph in the Governance Committee Report.

60.2 The motion was CARRIED after debate.

61. Questions from County Councillors

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

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
Councillor Lambert	Councillor Glazier	Lewes District Council legal action with regard to Vision Properties in the case of Talland Parade, Seaford
Councillor Swansborough	Councillor Claire Dowling	Quality of pothole repairs
Councillor Field	Councillor Standley	Early years funding in settings controlled by the County Council
Councillor Daniel	Councillor Glazier	Highways in Hastings and the installation of fibre networks
Councillor Daniel	Councillor Glazier	Effects of the National Government budget on local government
Councillor Maples	Councillor Claire Dowling	Lewes bus station and temporary bus stops
Councillor Maples	Councillor Bennett	Housing developments on greenfield sites
Councillor Murphy	Councillor Bowdler	Provision for childcare for 0-4 year-olds following the National Government budget announcement
Councillor Hilton	Councillor Bennett	Queensway Gateway Road

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Councillor Scott	Councillor Claire Dowling	Review of the criteria used for highway repairs and success of repairs
Councillor Stephen Shing	Councillor Bennett	Site formerly known as Hindlands playing fields in Polegate, and surrounding land
Councillor Tutt	Councillor Claire Dowling	Initial estimate of the Bexhill-Hastings relief road cost to date, and the estimated outcome
Councillor Georgia Taylor	Councillor Claire Dowling	Long-term repairs to highways and potholes in Forest Row and the effectiveness of the work of highways contractors
Councillor Kirby-Green	Councillor Glazier	Conservative councillors asking questions at Full Council meetings

61.2 Two written questions were received from Councillors Field and Stephen Shing for the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. The Lead Member responded to supplementary questions.

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.59 am

The reports referred to are included in the minute book

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WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question from Councillor Kathryn Field to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Does the County Council require its staff and its contractors to turn off their engines when a vehicle is stationary? Why do so few roadworks have instructions to drivers to turn off their engines while waiting at roadworks?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Whilst we would encourage all staff to turn their engines off where possible and most modern vehicles do this automatically when stationary, it is not always a viable option for those delivering highway works on the network. The engine may be left running to charge small plant/equipment and works tablets used for recording works and reviewing work programmes. During the winter months it can be particularly unpleasant working outside and therefore operatives may keep the engine running to keep the vehicle warm while they take their prescribed breaks.

With the new highways contract from 1 May, for works of 3 days or longer duration that use temporary traffic signals, we are planning to introduce signage as part of the works that encourages drivers to switch off their engine while queuing. Whilst this will apply to highway works, we cannot insist that this applies to utility or developer works. However, we will be encouraging these organisations to follow a similar approach.

2. Question from Stephen Shing to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment **Pothole repairs**

Our council repaired 7,299 potholes since the beginning of the year (including 2,598 up to February). More potholes being repaired is good performance and welcomed by our residents.

Residents are asking why many of the repaired potholes are of a poor standard which do not last very long, typically deteriorating within week. They do not understand why this is happening?

Will the new maintenance contractor for County Highways provide a better quality of repair? Residents would also like to know in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 how many potholes were repaired and at what cost? How many of those potholes were subsequently have repaired again within 12 months and 18 months? What was the cost for the repeat repairs?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Potholes are repaired to a set standard but this can, on occasions, be difficult to achieve during prolonged wet and cold weather. Over this winter we did see a slight increase in the number of potholes requiring a second repair shortly after being repaired (around 5%) – however this was very much due to the poor weather conditions – but the team were well prepared with more than double the number of gangs carrying out repairs to not only to deal with the increase in potholes but also the expected increase in failed repairs requiring a repeat visit.

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Overall the number of potholes requiring a re-repair remains relatively low and in 2021/2022 financial year only around 2% of the 18,000 potholes we repaired required a second repair. The team do not hold the data for 2020/2021 financial year as pothole remedial repairs were not recorded in the same way.

As you are aware, any pothole that requires a second repair within the two year guarantee period are fixed at the cost of our contractors – and no additional cost is incurred by the authority. We would encourage members to report any such failures on line so the contractor can attend asap.

Finally the new contract has been designed to improve the day to day engagement and service. Pothole repairs are a key part of this contract and responsibility to ensure/determine the best and most efficient way to repair potholes will be the responsibility of the contractor to drive efficiency to the service and provides value for money for the authority. The performance of the contractor will be monitored against key performance indicators with penalties for poor performance.