

MINUTES

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of an extraordinary MEETING of the EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 9 JANUARY 2025 at 10.00 am

Present Councillors Roy Galley (Chairman), Abul Azad (Vice Chairman), Sam Adeniji, Matthew Beaver, Colin Belsey, Nick Bennett, Bob Bowdler, Charles Clark, Chris Collier, Anne Cross, Godfrey Daniel, Johnny Denis, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Kathryn Field, Gerard Fox, Keith Glazier, Alan Hay, 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, Steve Murphy, Peter Pragnell, Paul Redstone, Christine Robinson, Pat Rodohan, Phil Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Alan Shuttleworth, Bob Standley, Colin Swansborough, Georgia Taylor, John Ungar and Trevor Webb

38. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2024

38.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the County Council meeting held on 8 October 2024.

39. Apologies for absence

39.1 Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Penny di Cara, Nuala Geary, Sarah Osborne, David Tutt and Brett Wright.

40. Declarations of Interest

40.1 The following members declared a personal interest in item 3 on the agenda as follows:

Member	Position giving rise to interest	Whether interest was prejudicial
Councillor Matthew Beaver	Member of Hastings Borough Council	No
Councillor Chris Collier	Cabinet Member for Lewes District Council	No
Councillor	Member of Rother District Council	No

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Charles Clark		
Councillor Johnny Denis	Cabinet Member for Lewes District Council	No
Councillor Julia Hilton	Leader of Hastings Borough Council	No
Councillor Stephen Holt	Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council	No
Councillor Johanna Howell	Member of Wealden District Council	No
Councillor Wendy Maples	Cabinet Member for Lewes District Council Member of Lewes Town Council	No
Councillor Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood	Member of Hastings Borough Council	No
Councillor Christine Robinson	Deputy Leader for Lewes District Council	No
Councillor Daniel Shing	Member of Wealden District Council	No
Councillor Stephen Shing	Member of Wealden District Council	No
Councillor Trevor Webb	Member of Hastings Borough Council	No

41. Government proposals for devolution and local government reorganisation

41.1 In light of the short notice for the extraordinary meeting and the tight timescales involved, the Chairman moved a motion to waive such standing orders as necessary, including standing order 36, to enable a motion to be put in relation to the matter specified on the agenda, and that the mover of a motion, and the relevant Cabinet member be provided with the opportunity of right of reply at the conclusion of the debate.

41.2 The motion was seconded by Councillor Beaver.

41.3 The motion was CARRIED.

41.4 The following motion was put forward by Councillor Denis, and seconded by Councillor Maples:

This Council believes:

1. *That entering into negotiations on behalf of this Council in such important matters as Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation should be by elected representatives with a mandate established through the democratic process. After 30*

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April 2025 this conservative administration, which is already operating a diminishing minority administration, will have no mandate.

2. *That progress can be made on negotiations towards a Mayoral Combined Authority without the need to cancel elections, therefore the request to suspend elections is not necessary for the council to request being in the priority devolution group. Local Government Reorganisation at the earliest timescale would mean the present administration would stay in power until 2028, not just another year.*

Therefore: the May 2025 County Council elections should not be suspended and the people of East Sussex should be allowed their rightful vote for the candidate they wish to negotiate through these significant matters on their behalf."

41.5 The following amendment was put forward by Councillor Field, and seconded by Councillor Holt:

[insert words]

We support increased regional powers, particularly around public transport, climate action, skills, energy and special planning as they relate to infrastructure, and also understand that the Government expects creation of unitary and strategic authorities.

However, we believe that this should not be at the expense of local democracy, and without consulting with residents, businesses and stakeholders on the future of Local Government for the region.

Therefore, we do not agree to the request to the government to suspend local elections.

This Council believes:

1. *That entering into negotiations on behalf of this Council in such important matters as Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation should be by elected representatives with a mandate established through the democratic process. After 30 April 2025 this conservative administration, which is already operating a diminishing minority administration, will have no mandate.*

2. *That progress can be made on negotiations towards a Mayoral Combined Authority without the need to cancel elections, therefore the request to suspend elections is not necessary for the council to request being in the priority devolution group. Local Government Reorganisation at the earliest timescale would mean the present administration would stay in power until 2028, not just another year.*

Therefore: the May 2025 County Council elections should not be suspended and the people of East Sussex should be allowed their rightful vote for the candidate they wish to negotiate through these significant matters on their behalf."

41.6 A recorded vote on the amendment was requested and taken. The amendment was LOST, with the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE MOTION

Councillors Cross, Collier, Daniel, Denis, Field, Hilton, Holt, Lambert, MacCleary, Maples, Murphy, Robinson, Rodohan, Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Shuttleworth, Swansborough, Taylor, Ungar, and Webb.

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AGAINST THE MOTION

Councillors Adeniji, Azad, Beaver, Belsey, Bennett, Bowdler, Clark, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Fox, Galley, Glazier, Hay, Hollidge, Howell, Kirby-Green, Liddiard, Lunn, Marlow-Eastwood, Maynard, Pragnell, Redstone, and Standley.

41.7 A recorded vote on the original motion was requested and taken. The motion was LOST, with the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE MOTION

Councillors Cross, Collier, Daniel, Denis, Field, Hilton, Holt, Lambert, MacCleary, Maples, Murphy, Robinson, Rodohan, Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Shuttleworth, Swansborough, Taylor, Ungar, and Webb.

AGAINST THE MOTION

Councillors Adeniji, Azad, Beaver, Belsey, Bennett, Bowdler, Clark, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Fox, Galley, Glazier, Hay, Hollidge, Howell, Kirby-Green, Liddiard, Lunn, Marlow-Eastwood, Maynard, Pragnell, Redstone, and Standley.

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.45 am

The reports referred to are included in the minute book
