

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of a meeting of **Telscombe Town Council** held on **Wednesday 16th July 2025** at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Telscombe Civic Centre.

Councillors Present:- Cllrs Clarkson, Gallagher, Lawrie, Ndeloa, O'Connor, Page, Robinson, Sharkey *Mayor*, Watts *Deputy Mayor* & Williamson

Also present: Stella Newman, Town Clerk & RFO (*minutes*)
11 members of the public
Cllr Zoe Nicholson, Leader of Lewes District Council

Cllr Nicholson, Leader of Lewes District Council was in attendance to talk about the Local Government Re-organisation and Brighton & Hove City Council's interest in taking over East Saltdean, Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven, Newhaven and Kingston. She introduced herself and advised that she had been Leader of Lewes District Council (LDC) for 6 years and lives in Peacehaven. She explained that LDC had been working for several months on the government's plan to change how local government operates and initial proposals were put forward by March as required. LDC undertook a consultation and decided the best way forward was for an East Sussex Unitary Authority and will create a case to be submitted by September.

Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) are also to submit proposals and revealed several options last week to include East Saltdean, Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven, as well as some including Newhaven and Kingston. Although initially thought that residents directly affected in our area by the proposal were not permitted to participate in their consultation process, the leader of BHCC clarified that everyone is welcome to participate. LDC are intending to go out to consultation again in view of BHCC's proposals and will collaborate with East Sussex County Council.

Cllr Nicholson advised she had concerns regarding the timing of the proposals which raised questions about the transparency and fairness of the process in view of the short time frame. Regarding why BHCC want to extend eastwards, two main reasons were presented were economic growth and the possibility of increasing housing growth in the east, which is considered easier than expanding westward.

Members of the public present were asked if they had any questions and they were as follows:-

Q - How will you consult as not everyone has facebook?

A – It will be on LDC's website and they will get paper copies to local council offices.

Q – A member of the public stated that BHCC Council Tax for a band D property is only about £150 more than LDC which they felt was not a large increase. They also stated that they felt we are a suburb of Brighton now and cannot get to Lewes easily via public transport.

A – There has been an inadequate bus service to Lewes for many years. Concerns regarding BHCC's planning and housing as they have different rules. The density per square metre is much higher as in cities development goes upwards. LDC have been trying not to increase the amount of density in this area because there is only one road in and out.

Q – A member of the public advised that they felt that East and West Saltdean should be joined as it seems madness that when you walk up Longridge Avenue that the area is split between two authorities.

Q – A member of the public advised they too were concerned about the split of East and West Saltdean and asked how LDC would bring the consultation to East Saltdean residents as they do not feel part of Telscombe.

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A – LDC will ensure all residents have an opportunity to participate in the consultation. If the joining of East and West Saltdean is to be considered, the town council would need to carry out a referendum and LDC would support the council with this.

Q – How does our MP sit with this?

A – Unknown.

The Mayor then asked if any Councillors had any questions and they were as follows:-

Q – When LDC ceases, will the District Councillors be absorbed into the unitary authority?

A – There will be elections for the new unitary authority in 2027 but it will not be established until 2028. LDC Councillors will continue in office until the new unitary authority commences.

Q – What is the timeline and who will make decisions?

A – Feedback on proposal will be received in October and they will be advised whether proposals are to be taken forward or whether they should be re-considered.

Q – TTC provides comments to LDC on planning applications and has an emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and how will this affect things if we come under BHCC?

A – BHCC's policies will have more weight, but a NDP is important and we should continue with that.

There was one more question from a member of the public:-

Q – Feels the area is currently community minded and is worried about potential development.

A – LDC's rationale is not about housing growth, it is about keeping all services together as disaggregation causes problems.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Nicholson and the residents for attending.

7.30pm - 10 members of the public left the meeting and Cllr Ndeloa arrived.

2466. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the remaining member of public.

2467. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Judd due to illness and this reason for absence was accepted.

2468. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

None.

2469. TO APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18th JUNE 2025

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson seconded by Cllr Williamson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting on 18th June 2025 were a true record of the proceedings and were signed as correct by the Mayor, Cllr Sharkey.



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2470. TO AGREE MINUTES FROM THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES AND ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Amenities & Civic Centre – 26th March 2025

Cllr Robinson proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 26th March 2025 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Williamson and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

b) Planning & Highways – 21st May and 11th June 2025

Cllr Gallagher proposed that the minutes of the meetings on 21st May and 11th June 2025 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr O'Connor and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

c) Policy & Resources – 7th May 2025

Cllr Clarkson proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 7th May 2025 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Page and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

2471. TO NOTE ACTION LIST AND AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
20.11.24	Min 2362, p 4243 – To consider purchasing Adobe Pro	SN	This has yet to be purchased.	July 2025
14.5.25	Min 2443, p 4353 – To appoint an internal auditor for the 2025/26 financial year	SN	It was agreed to appoint April Skies Accounting. <i>They have now sent through their engagement form.</i>	See new agenda item
14.5.25	Min 2445, p 4353 – To approve Councils Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) on the AGAR for year to 31 st March '25	SN	The agreed & signed document was submitted to the external auditor.	Complete
14.5.25	Min 2446, p 4354 – To approve Council's Accounting Statements (Section 2) of the AGAR for year to 31 st March '25	SN	The agreed & signed document was submitted to the external auditor.	Complete
14.5.25	Min 2447, p 4354 – To agree dates for exercise of public rights set by the RFO relating to annual accounts	SN	The Notice of Public Rights & associated documents was published on the agreed dates, ending on 14 th July.	Complete
14.5.25	Min 2448, p 4354 – To agree subscription renewals	SN	Subscriptions will be renewed as agreed when they are due.	Complete



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2471. To note action list and agree any further actions required (Contd)

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
14.5.25	Min 2449, p 4354 – To approve service & support contract renewals	SN	The service & support contracts will be renewed as agreed when they are due.	Complete
14.5.25	Min 2351, p 4355 – To approve draft Annual Report	SN	The agreed Annual Report has been published on our website & put on FB.	Complete
14.5.25	Min 2347, p 4356 – Business plan update/ review	SN	As agreed, an agenda item has been added to this meeting to review Councillor Allowances.	See new agenda item
18.6.25	Min 2464, p 4376 – To agree TTC's position & response re ESCC's consultation on plans for local government re-organisation in E Sussex	SN	The comments agreed at the meeting were emailed in response to the consultation.	Complete

The action list was **noted**.

2472. TO APPROVE PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS FOR APRIL AND MAY 2025

Payments for April 2025 totalling £35,893.39 and receipts of £167,858.80, including the first precept payment of £161,038 and payments for May 2025 totalling £25,198.32 and receipts of £2,083.60 were proposed as correct by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that they be approved and were signed by the Mayor, Cllr Sharkey.

2473. TO AGREE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FIGURES TO 31st MAY 2025

The full income and expenditure lists which showed the budget and actual spend figures were circulated and the Town Clerk/RFO's report detailed any significant differences between budget and spend figures to date. A couple of minor queries were raised and answered.

It was proposed by Cllr Robinson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the actual total figures at 31st May 2025 of £173,176 income and expenditure of £46,140 be agreed as correct.

2474. UPDATE RE CO-OPTION AND AGREE ACTION TO BE TAKEN

It was noted that following the resignation of Cllr Perrotta at the end of April, the casual vacancy was advertised and as no request was received by Lewes District Council for an election, we subsequently advertised the vacancy to be filled by co-option. The closing date was 17th June and only one application was received, but withdrawn a few days later. There are therefore no applications to be considered at this meeting and we still have 2 vacancies. It proposed by Cllr Watts, seconded by Cllr Clarkson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to advertise the remaining two Councillor vacancies to be filled by co-option, in accordance with previous agreement. Any applications received will be considered at our full Council meeting on 17th September 2025.



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2475. TO REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

There was discussion regarding adding the recently co-opted Councillor to committees and it was proposed by Cllr Sharkey, seconded by Cllr Watts and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr Ndeloa be added to the Amenities & Civic Centre and Planning & Highways Committees.

2476. TO REVIEW COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES AND AGREE AMOUNTS FOR 2026/27 FINANCIAL YEAR

Following discussion and having regard to the last Independent Remuneration Panel Report issued in November 2023, it was proposed by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Gallagher and unanimously **RESOLVED:-** not to increase the Councillor allowance for the 2026/27 financial year, to review it in July 2026 for the 2027/28 financial year and that everything remain as previously agreed as follows:-

- Not to increase the Councillor allowance for the 2026/27 financial year which is paid to elected Councillors only and it remains at £300.
- The Chair's allowance is not increased and remains at £500 for the 2026/27 financial year.
- No indexation in line with annual staff salary increases be applied to Councillor allowances, but that a review of the Councillor allowance is undertaken annually.
- Councillors be paid travel and subsistence costs in line with those agreed as part of the members allowance schedule for the District Council when travelling out of the Council area to visit another Council or attend conferences or seminars.
- Payment of the Councillor allowance is made in one lump sum at the financial year end in March.
- The Mayor's civic allowance for the 2026/27 financial year remain at £1,500.

2477. TO APPROVE CIL REPORT FOR 2024/25

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Williamson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the CIL report showing receipts of £4,384.91, expenditure of £12,304 used for bus shelters for the 2024/25 financial year and the total remaining CIL receipts standing at £16,246.36 at year end 2024/25.

2478. TO APPROVE REVIEWED MEMORIAL POLICY

Following review by the Policy & Resources Committee, it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Memorial Policy be adopted with the revision to the wording regarding the type of plaque used and that it be reviewed in 3 years' time.

2479. BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE/REVIEW

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr O'Connor and unanimously **RESOLVED** to make the following amendments:-

Section IV – Full Council:- To update No 1 regarding reviewing member allowances as this had been considered earlier in the meeting.



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2479. Business Plan Update/Review (Contd)

Section I – Amenities & Civic Centre:- To totally remove No 12 regarding the telephone network upgrade as this had been completed.

2480. REVIEW POSSIBLE MERGER WITH PEACEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

It was noted that Peacehaven Town Council do not currently want to form a joint working group to progress discussion regarding a possible merger between the two Councils. Following debate it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approach Peacehaven Town Council regarding arranging an informal meeting between the two Councils to discuss possible aims and objectives of a prospective working group looking at possible closer working, with the membership being restricted to three Councillors and the Town Clerk – Cllrs Clarkson, Watts and Williamson.

2481. TO REVIEW GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 1 AND GRASS VERGE CUTTING CONTRACT DUE TO CONTRACTOR NOT FULFILLING OBLIGATIONS OF THE CONTRACTS AND AGREE ACTION REQUIRED

There was discussion regarding the fact that the contractors we had engaged to carry out work under the Grounds Maintenance Contract 1 and the Grass Verge Cutting Contract were not fulfilling the obligations of the contracts and were uncontactable. As a result of an internet search, it was found that Administrators had been appointed on 10th July 2025. There was lengthy discussion regarding how to progress and it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Williamson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to:-

- Contact the Administrators to find out the position regarding the contractor and who payment of outstanding invoices from the contractor should be made to.
- To issue weekly default notices to the contractors if they continue not fulfilling the obligations of the Grounds Maintenance Contract 1, after our initial contact with them.
- To issue a letter of immediate termination of the Grounds Maintenance Contract 1 if 3 default notices are issued in accordance with the Contract.
- To request Lewes District Council to empty the 11 joint litter/dog bins throughout Chatsworth Park and the 5 litter bins in our playgrounds on a permanent basis at £3 per empty, twice a week on a Monday and Friday from 1st April to 31st October and reduce the 5 playground litter bin empties to only once a week from 1st November to 31st March annually at a weekly cost of £96 per week during the summer months and £81 per week during the winter months; annual total £4,600.
- To request Lewes District Council to empty the 6 dog waste bins on Telscombe Tye once a week on a permanent basis at a cost of £6 per empty, £36 per week; annual total £1,872.
- To replace the 2 dog waste bins on Telscombe Tye next to gate 2 off the South Coast Road with one joint litter/dog bin, with prices to be obtained and taken to Committee for agreement.
- To remove all bin emptying from Contract 1 and put out the revised Contract for tender with no other amendments.



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2481. To review Grounds Maintenance Contract 1 and Grass Verge Cutting Contract due to contractor not fulfilling obligations of the contracts and agree action required

- To contact ESCC regarding the grass verge cutting to see if they may be able to arrange a final cut at the end of the season.
- Refer discussion regarding the grass verge cutting for the 2026/27 financial year to the Planning & Highways Committee.

2482. TO AGREE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR’S TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR THE 2025-26 FINANCIAL YEAR

It was agreed at the meeting on 14th May to appoint April Skies Accounting as internal auditors for the 2025/26 financial year. They had subsequently sent through their terms of engagement. These were discussed and it was proposed by Cllr Robinson, seconded by Cllr Lawrie and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the terms of engagement for April Skies Accounting as internal auditor including internal control objectives, scope of the Audit and fee of £520 and to agree that they meet the criteria required of an internal auditor being (a) independent because they have no relationship with staff or Councillors of the Council beyond that required to carry out a professional audit and they will not take on any form of consultancy work with the Council and (b) that they are competent because Mike Platten is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). They are also registered with the Internal Audit Forum who provide a database of independent internal auditors and all members of the Forum have agreed to abide by their standard practices and procedures and that they have read and understood the requirements of the current Practitioners’ Guide.

2483. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Cllr Watts advised he had attended a Peacehaven Residents Association meeting where they discussed the local government reorganisation and setting up a focus group.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.55 pm.

Signed, Mayor.....

Date of next Council meeting – 17th September 2025