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Community House,
Meridian Way,
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East Sussex,
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Minutes of the meeting of the Council meeting held in the Anzac Room, Community House on Tuesday 16th December 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Debbie Donovan (Chair), Cllr Aimee Harman (Vice Chair), Cllr Nikki Fabry, Cllr Mary Campbell, Cllr Sue Griffiths, Cllr Cathy Gallagher, Cllr Paul Davies, Cllr Max Rosser, Cllr Simon Studd, Cllr Philip Mills, Cllr Kiera Gordon-Garrett, Cllr Sherral Wood, Cllr Ian Alexander, Cllr Claude Cheta, Cllr Wendy Veck, Youth Mayor & Deputy.

Officers: George Dyson (Town Clerk), Zoe Malone (Responsible Financial Officer), Kevin Bray (Parks Officer), Zoe Polydorou (Meetings & Projects Officer), Jessa Chapman (Civic & Events Officer).

4 members of the public were in attendance.

C1468 MAYOR/CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:30, welcomed everyone, made a statement on Civility & Respect and the application of this, briefly ran through the building fire procedures, asked that phones be put onto silent, advised that the meeting was being recorded, informed everyone of how the public session works, and reminded Councillors of obligations under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The Chair also advised that Bingo is tomorrow (17th December 2025) at 2pm, and any volunteers would be welcome.

C1469 PUBLIC SESSION. *Members of the public may ask questions on any relevant Council matter.*

a. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

b. Reports from District and/or County Councillors

Cllr Fabry updated that a motion at Lewes District Council has been passed to support community cohesion across the District.

Cllr Gallagher spoke about the strong financial position of Lewes District Council, and that Council Tax relief for those who most need it has been agreed to continue. Consultation for the Lewes District Local Plan is also due to start imminently.

C1470 TO APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Sharkey.

C1471 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

Cllr Deborah Donovan
12/2/26

C1472 TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 21st OCTOBER 2025

Proposed by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett

Seconded by: Cllr Mills

The minutes of 21st October 2025 were **agreed** and **adopted**.

C1473 TO CO-OPT A COUNCILLOR TO FILL THE CASUAL VACANCY IN WEST WARD

The Chair advised that the candidate who had applied has withdrawn, so advertising the co-option opportunity will continue.

C1474 TO RECEIVE THE 2025-2026 YOUTH MAYOR AND DEPUTY YOUTH MAYOR

The Chair explained that 3 candidates were interviewed by Cllrs Donovan, Veck, Studd, and Rosser, and that they were all such good candidates, that it was decided to offer all 3 the opportunity to be Youth Mayor/ Deputy Youth Mayor.

The Civic & Events Officer added that all 3 candidates will be a great asset to the Council.

Ruby Papanicolou introduced herself, who will take the first 4 months of the year as Youth Mayor. Daniel Gill who is starting as a Deputy Youth Mayor for the year then introduced himself, followed by Jacob Lord who will also be starting as a Deputy Youth Mayor.

The Chair of Council thanked the outgoing Youth Mayor & Deputy Youth Mayor for their hard work over the past year and presented them with a gift of thanks.

The Chair then presented Ruby with the Youth Mayor's Chain of Office.

C1475 TO RECEIVE MINUTES, RATIFY ACTIONS & RECEIVE REPORTS ON URGENT MATTERS:-

a. Planning Committee:-

- i. To receive the meeting minutes of the 7th October 2025
- ii. To receive the meeting minutes of the 28th October 2025
- iii. To receive the meeting minutes of the 18th November 2025

Proposed by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett

Seconded by: Cllr Wood

The minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

iv. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 9th December 2025

Cllr Gordon-Garrett offered an invite to any members of Council to join a TFG for the Lewes District Local Plan which was set up at this meeting.

Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

b. Policy & Finance Committee:-

- i. To receive the financial report, authorise payments and signing of Bank Reconciliation statements

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander

Seconded by: Cllr Campbell

Council **resolved** to **agree** to authorise payments and signing of bank reconciliation statements.

ii. To receive the meeting minutes of the 7th October 2025

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander **Seconded by:** Cllr Gordon-Garrett
The minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

iii. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 25th November 2025

Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

c. Personnel Committee:-

i. To note the draft meeting minutes of 30th September 2025

Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

d. Leisure & Amenities Committee:-

i. To receive the meeting minutes of the 23rd September 2025

Proposed by: Cllr Studd **Seconded by:** Cllr Rosser
The minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

ii. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 2nd December 2025

Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

iii. To agree funding for the Centenary Park car park line painting.

Proposed by: Cllr Studd **Seconded by:** Cllr Campbell
Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

e. Community Engagement Committee:-

i. To receive the meeting minutes of the 9th September 2025

Proposed by: Cllr Veck **Seconded by:** Cllr Wood
The minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

ii. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 4th November 2025

Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

iii. To adopt a revised Youth Mayor's Handbook

It was proposed that this be referred back to the Community Engagement Committee to be looked at.

Proposed by: Cllr Veck **Seconded by:** Cllr Wood
Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

Cllr Cheta added the importance of involving the newly elected Youth Mayor/ Deputy Youth Mayors in this review.

f. **Environment & Sustainability Committee:-**

i. **To note the draft meeting minutes of the 18th November 2025**

Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

The Civic & Events Officer left at this point (19:58)

C1476 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM CLLR GALLAGHER, CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

Cllr Gallagher informed Council that the Examiners report has now been received, and the required changes are updates due to changes to the National framework and District Local Plan, and that these changes are now being worked on. We are now in a period of very prescriptive timelines, which will involve a referendum hopefully in April or May, after the plan has been noted at Council.

Cllr Campbell asked about whether there's any reason why the Examiners Report and associated documents haven't been shared with all Councillors, whether there will be an opportunity for PTC to fully debate the plan or whether it will be simply to note, and to request that the Clerk seeks legal advice on several points, including whether the Local Planning authority spatial policies count as strategic in relation to Neighbourhood planning, whether it will only be the formal specified policies in the NHDP that will carry weight at the Local Planning Authority and appeal inspectors, and finally if it is just the policies that carry weight, will the rest of the text carry any weight at all with the planning officers and appeal inspectors.

The Town Clerk clarified that the Examiners report and associated documents are being reviewed by the Steering Group and will be shared in due course, and that as Cllr Gallagher mentioned in her update, the Plan will come before Council and we will take guidance from the District Council on how this happens.

C1477 TO AGREE THE 2026/27 BUDGET AND PRECEPT DEMAND

The Chair introduced the item and summarised the process that has been followed so far.

Cllr Griffiths put forward a suggestion that the 40% cut to the small grants budget is removed, and requested a recorded vote on this agenda item. Cllr Griffiths read out some of the wording from the PTC Grants Policy, and that this only makes a 76p per year difference to Council Tax, also citing the very small underspend this year in the small grants budget, and highlighting the amount that comes back to us in room hire charges. Cllr Griffiths gave some examples of the organisations that receive support from the small grants budget.

Cllr Alexander highlighted that the increases to the service level grants balance out the £4000 reduction from the small grants, highlighting that the room hire grants could be reassessed.

Cllr Gallagher spoke about there being a lot of compromising in the budgetary discussions this year, which led to some very difficult decisions.

The Clerk spoke about how the administration of room hire could be looked at in the future, but that this would need to be a separate matter.

Cllr Wood spoke about some of the grant applications being from outside of Peacehaven, which don't benefit the town.

Cllr Campbell spoke about agreeing that room hire grants should be looked at, that the precept is now coming in slightly lower than initially anticipated, and would support keeping the small grants budget at the current level.

Cllr Fabry highlighted that she does sit on the Grants Committee, that the Committee is very generous, and does not feel many organisations would lose out by reducing this budget.

Cllr Rosser and Cllr Veck spoke in support of keeping the small grants budget at its current level.

An amendment to the draft budget was proposed to keep the small grants budget at £10,000, and that a TFG is formed within the next year look at how grants for room hire are administered.

Proposed by: Cllr Griffiths **Seconded by:** Cllr Campbell

In favour: Cllr Veck, Gordon-Garrett, Rosser, Mills, Griffiths, Campbell, Studd, Harman.

Against: Cllr Davies, Gallagher, Cheta, Alexander, Wood, Fabry, and Donovan.

The Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal by majority vote.

The RFO updated the Council on the impact on the budget of this decision.

It was proposed that Council agree the amended budget, resulting in a precept demand of £1,031,538.

Proposed by: Cllr Griffiths **Seconded by:** Cllr Mills

Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal by majority of 11 in favour, 3 against, and 1 abstention.

C1478 TO AGREE A RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSALS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION CONSULTATION

The Clerk introduced the item and explained that Council had previously agreed an outline response to this consultation, which can be used as a basis for a response, as well as reinforcing the importance of Councillors and members of the public responding.

Cllr Gallagher spoke in support of the one East Sussex proposal, using the already agreed response as a basis for a response, Cllr Campbell also spoke in support of this.

Proposed by: Cllr Gallagher **Seconded by:** Cllr Campbell

Council **resolved** to **agree** to continue to support the One East Sussex proposal.

C1479 TO AGREE PROPOSED WORKS TO THE COMMUNITY HOUSE MAIN HALL IN JANUARY 2026

The Clerk introduced the report and summarised the works. Cllr Alexander questioned about whether any other groups could benefit from the use of the scissor lift which was briefly discussed.

It was proposed that Council agree to proceed with the works, as outlined in the report.

Proposed by: Cllr Gallagher **Seconded by:** Cllr Mills

Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

C1480 TO REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND AGREE ANY CHANGES

The Clerk spoke about a couple of requested changes, that Cllr Wood would like to come off the Leisure and Amenities, and Environment and Sustainability Committees, that there is also a vacancy on the Personnel Committee, which Cllr Davies had expressed an interest in.

Cllr Veck spoke about supporting Cllr Rosser going onto the Personnel Committee.

Cllr Cheta offered to step down from the Personnel Committee.

The above changes were proposed.

Proposed by: Cllr Campbell **Seconded by:** Cllr Mills
Council **resolved** to agree to this proposal.

C1481 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVES AND REVIEW OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATION

Cllr Gallagher put herself forward as the representative for the SCDA, which would be added as an additional Outside body to the SCDA Community Supermarket. Cllr Griffiths will become the representative for the SCDA Community Supermarket.

Cllr Griffiths asked about arranging the CEO of the SCDA to come to speak to Council.

Cllr Harman will become a representative for the Peacehaven Players.

It was proposed that Council agree the above changes.

Proposed by: Cllr Donovan **Seconded by:** Cllr Rosser
Council **resolved** to agree to this proposal

Council **noted** the Outside body reports

C1482 TO NOTE OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Council **noted** the overview of complaints received.

C1483 TO NOTE THE COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RECORD

Council **noted** the Councillor attendance record.

C1484 TO RECEIVE VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE FOLLOWING TASK AND FINISH GROUPS (TFGs):

a. Meridian Centre Liaison

The Clerk advised that Morrisons are in active discussion again and information should be shared publicly soon.

b. Public Rights of Way

Cllr Gordon-Garrett advised that the group is still running and is close to putting an application forward.

c. Meridian Walk

Cllr Donovan shared that the walk is set and the leaflet underway, and that this TFG can now close, although that there may be more in the future if additional funding becomes available.

d. Town Flower

Cllr Mills spoke that he and Cllr Rosser have been looking into this and making good work, that a report should be coming forward soon.

C1485 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 2026 AT 7.30PM.

The next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 17th February 2026 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 21:07

