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Community House,
Meridian Way,
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East Sussex,
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Minutes of the meeting of the Extraordinary Council meeting held in the Anzac Room, Community House on Tuesday 12th August 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Debbie Donovan (Chair), Cllr Nikki Fabry, Cllr Mary Campbell, Cllr Sue Griffiths, Cllr Kiera Gordon-Garrett, Cllr Sherral Wood, Cllr Ian Alexander, Cllr Cathy Gallagher, Cllr Libbee Bradley, Cllr Max Rosser, Cllr Paul Davies, Cllr Wendy Veck, Cllr Isobel Sharkey, Cllr Claude Cheta, Cllr Philip Mills.

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

No members of the public were in attendance.

C1413 MAYOR/CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:59, Welcomed all members, briefly ran through the building fire procedures, and asked that mobile phones be switched to silent.

C1414 PUBLIC SESSION. *Members of the public may ask questions on any relevant Council matter.*

There were no public questions.

C1415 TO APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Harman.

Cllr Studd was absent.

C1416 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

C1417 TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 24TH JUNE 2025

Proposed by: Cllr Sharkey **Seconded by:** Cllr Fabry
The minutes of 24th June 2025 were **agreed** and **adopted**.

C1418 TO AGREE A RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATIONS ON THE BOUNDARY OF LEWES DISTRICT FROM APRIL 2028 ONWARDS

The Town Clerk summarised the item, Cllr Donovan asked what Council's thoughts are about paying for a Parish Poll.

Cllr Alexander highlighted that the Public meeting that has just taken place was just 200 residents of the whole of Peacehaven.

Cllr Cheta commented that it's clear from listening to people tonight that the preference is to remain part of East Sussex, and that we should do whatever is possible to ensure this happens.

Cllr Campbell spoke in reference to a Parish Poll, she had spoken with the CEO of the East Sussex Association of Local Councils, and that the cost is between £1.25 to £1.50 per elector.

Cllr Wood stated that she was very disappointed that Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) haven't brought anything to the table, our Council tax would be frozen, but we'd still be paying a higher rate until BHCC catch up.

Cllr Davies suggested that BHCC need to consult their residents – if people knew their Council tax would keep going up whilst ours is frozen the BHCC residents would likely be against this.

Cllr Wood added to this, that she understands BHCC haven't mentioned Council tax to their residents, and Cllr Veck reinforced that there's about £203.87 difference in Council Tax between authorities.

Cllr Cheta suggested that the clear response to Q4 of consultation is that we do not want any change to the current boundary.

Cllr Griffiths commented that the will of our people is to stay the same, but that simply not wanting Brighton isn't a good enough reason, one main reason is a sense of place, we have always been attached to rural part of ESCC, and geographical orientation has been with ESCC, that we also need to mention disaggregation costs of splitting services which residents would have to pay for.

Cllr Sharkey added that it's not just the financial cost of disaggregation, but people could fall through gaps whilst it's being sorted, leading to a human cost too.

Cllr Cheta agreed that we do not want to lose our identity, which is not compatible with BHCC, Peacehaven is a quiet place.

Cllr Mills spoke in support, wholeheartedly with Cllr Cheta on this point.

Cllr Gallagher added that Lewes District Council is quite a forward thinking Council, who have done major stability and progression with refuse collections, as well as Housing Stock and dealing with Housing Tenants, LDC are also financially sound and always have been.

Cllr Veck agreed that there is a concern with going to BHCC due to Housing Stock and Homelessness concerns. LDC Housing (Homes First), is worlds apart from BHCC.

Cllr Wood added concerns about whether the health services could cope coming under BHCC.

Cllr Campbell suggested framing a response in line with criteria which the Government has laid down that has to be met, suggesting the following points be made;

1a. Peacehaven is currently in sensible economic area with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area. Peacehaven's businesses are currently Ouse Valley and Seaford/Lewes Town oriented, often with branches in several of the local towns, there is a risk that we could lose business to Brighton.

1b. Geography and topography is better as we are in the East Sussex area. The watershed is at Telscombe Tye and our South Downs dry valley in the North of town flows and sometimes floods into the Ouse. There is no evidence to show that extra housing supply would not go to meet local needs if we were to become part of Brighton Unitary.

1c. There is no evidence or analysis to suggest that there are any benefits for Peacehaven to being part of a Brighton Unitary Authority. Local engagement suggests a strong local opposition to this change.

1d. Single tier arrangements in an East Sussex Unitary Authority are clear within the East Sussex proposal about improvements for Peacehaven: Peacehaven would remain in the Lewes district administrative area, with no transition costs. There would be substantial administrative upheaval if district were to be divided and all Peacehaven's service provision moved to Brighton & Hove. The only way in and out of Brighton is the A259, and the long stretch of the A259

to Brighton is already jammed in rush hours: employment, social, and educational needs for Peacehaven residents should be concentrated locally, or on the short Eastbound route to Lewes Town, not Westward.

2a. The optimal numbers as set are met in the East Sussex Unitary Authority proposal.

2c. There is a concern that consumer spending, employment, and businesses could be shifted Westward for the benefit of Brighton residents and to the detriment of Peacehaven.

If Lewes District is divided and East Sussex loses services to the Brighton Unitary Authority, including Social Services, Education, transition costs will likely be higher than any potential savings for any of the parties involved. There would also be significant impacts on the NGOs and charities such as Lewes District Citizens Advice, Sussex Community Development Association, SEN services in Schools, and Alcohol & Drugs related advice services.

2f. Peacehaven residents could suffer financially as they become liable for Brighton & Hove City Council Debts.

3a. There will be severe fragmentation of Social Services such as Social Care and Children's Services.

3c. Peacehaven will likely lose its leadership role with Family Hub & youth services, currently shared with other towns in Lewes District, all social services would be disrupted for many years if Peacehaven services were shifted into the Brighton & Hove Unitary Authority.

4. Brighton & Hove City Council chose not to work co-operative with Lewes District, especially in their late decision to propose that areas to the East should be incorporated into the Brighton & Hove Unitary area.

Additionally, the Government guidance on boundary changes specifies that the existing District areas should be considered the building blocks for proposals unless there is a strong justification for more complex boundary changes. No such justification exists in this instance.

Cllr Fabry also added concerns about the working of School admissions.

It was proposed that the Town Clerk completes this consultation, taking into account the points made by Councillors, and that PTC supports retaining the existing boundary.

Proposed by: Cllr Veck

Seconded by: Cllr Mills

C1419 TO AGREE A NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE TO TAKE EFFECT FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2025

The Clerk introduced the item and the background work that has gone into this through the TFG.

Cllr Veck spoke about the Youth Engagement working group and reference to the Youth Mayor not being in the Scheme of Delegation or Terms of Reference for the Community Engagement Committee, which should be included.

It was proposed that, subject to an amendment to include the points raised by Cllr Veck, that Council agree to implement the new Committee structure from September 2025.

Proposed by: Cllr Campbell

Seconded by: Cllr Sharkey

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

It was proposed that the following Councillors be members of the Environment & Sustainability Committee: Cllr Mills, Campbell, Bradley, Sharkey, Griffiths, and that Cllr Griffiths be Committee Chair.

Proposed by: Cllr Davies

Seconded by: Cllr Bradley

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

C1420 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7.30PM.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 2nd Sept 2025.

C1421 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

Proposed by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett

Seconded by: Cllr Wood

The Council **resolved** to **exclude** press and public from the remaining agenda items.

NOTE: In accordance with Standing Order No. 3(d) and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, in view of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted, the public and press are excluded from the rest of the meeting.

C1422 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATIONS FOR THE TENDER FOR THE WORKS TO THE HUB

The Town Clerk summarised the information in the report, and there was a discussion about this.

It was proposed to note the report for now, with a further update to come in September to include progress on a quote from UKPN, discussions with a quantity surveyor, and the phase 2 consultation. Additionally, Officers should continue to consider inclusion of windows and doors as part of the works.

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander

Seconded by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett

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

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 21:03.