



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on **Monday 27th January 2025 at 7pm**

Present: Janice Henwood Town Mayor
Tofojjul Hussain Deputy Town Mayor

Graham Allen*
Diane Black
Stuart Condie
Matthew Cornish*
Cedric de Souza
Robert Eggleston
David Eggleton
Anne Eves
Bob Foster
Jon Gardner
Matthew Goldsmith
Simon Hicks
Mohammad Hossain
John Orchard
Andy Stowe
Brenda Williams
Peter Williams
Adam White

* *Denotes non-attendance.*

*Also in attendance: Julie Holden - Chief Executive Officer
Kayleigh Elliott-Davidson - Events, Communication
and Administrative Officer
Sam Kimblin - Administrative Support Officer
5 members of the public*

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and asked to join her in a moment of silence to reflect on all who had suffered due to genocide and wars

205. OPEN FORUM

There were 5 members of the public present.

A member of the public stated that there was no lighting above the pay machines in the Cyprus Road car park and this made it hard to purchase a ticket. Councillors stated they would take the matter up with MSDC, as the owners of the car park.

206. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies for absence were noted.

Councillor Matthew Cornish	Attending MSDC meeting
Councillor Graham Allen	Illness

207. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations were received from:

Cllr Eggleston	Declared a non-pecuniary but prejudicial interest in relation to minute 77 in item 7. As he has given professional advice to the Pantry he did not vote on that part of the decision
Cllr Eggleton	Declared a personal and potentially prejudicial interest in relation to minute 75 in item 7 he is a resident and was part of the original purchasing group for the Alexandra Road Open Space. He did not vote.
Cllr Hicks	Declared a personal interest regarding minute 44 in item 8 as an allotment holder and did not vote on that part of the decision.
Cllr de Souza	Declared a disclosable interest in relation to minute 78 in item 7 as the Treasurer of the Park Centre and did not vote on that part of the decision.
Cllr Hicks, Cllr Henwood and Cllr Eves	Declared an interest regarding minute 77 in item 7 as members of Burgess Hill Community Partnership. The interest was noted but the Councillors are permitted to vote on this item as the vote is separate from their role at the CIC.

It should be noted that a blanket dispensation is awarded to the Council regarding setting of the annual budget and precept to allow for quoracy.

208. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor advised that a European Friendship visit to our twinned town of Schmallerberg was being arranged for August to correspond with their 50th anniversary of becoming "Greater" Schmallerberg. The Town Mayor and a small delegation of other Councillors along with

community groups will be going. The Town Council would present a gift to the town, paid for from the existing Town Twinning budget, which will also meet the Mayor's expenses.

The Town Mayor also wished to congratulate and celebrate the local Repair Café. In February this will have been open for 5 years.

209. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday 25th November 2024 were **AGREED** and signed as a correct record.

210. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meetings on Monday 9th December 2024 and 6th January 2025 were agreed.

211. FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP - NOTES OF MEETING (TO INCLUDE THE PROPOSAL FOR APPROVING THE 2025/26 BUDGET AND LEVYING THE PRECEPT FOR 2025/26)

The Chairman deferred to the Chair of the Finance Key Area Group who presented their resolutions and recommendations from the meeting of 20th January 202.

It was clarified that the Pantry intends to move to new premises in order to expand and after 3 years hopes to apply for their own funding and become self sufficient.

It was commented that 12.5% in the precept is a large increase. Paying Council Tax is a mandatory requirement, it's not a choice. There are a lot of events provided. The Council could cut back.

It was further commented that the local population really value the events put on by the Town Council. Most are free to attend. Taken as an average over the past 5 years, the increase to the precept has been well below the rate of inflation. Some years have seen 0% increases when inflation was nationally at its peak. This is not sustainable and the Council wishes to invest in the community.

MINUTE 77: Draft Revenue Budget

1) The Pantry

RESOLVED: To agree an annual Pantry grant of up to £15,000 for a 3 year period.

2) Balance of the 2025/26 Budget

A recorded vote was requested on the balance of the 2025/26 budget as presented of £1,183,306 and the votes were as below:

Janice Henwood – Support
Tofojjul Hussain – Support
Diane Black – Support
Stuart Condie – Support
Cedric de Souza - Support
Robert Eggleston – Support
David Eggleton – Support
Anne Eves – Support
Bob Foster – Support
Jon Gardner – Support
Matthew Goldsmith – Support
Simon Hicks– Support
Mohammad Hossain – Support
John Orchard – Support
Andy Stowe – Do Not Support
Adam White – Support
Brenda Williams – Support
Peter Williams – Support

RESOLVED: To approve the balance of the 2025/26 budget as presented of £1,183,306, resulting in an overall Revenue Budget for 2025/26 of £1,198,306.

3) Precept

A recorded vote was requested on levying the Precept of £1,198,306. and the votes were as below:

Janice Henwood – Support
Tofojjul Hussain – Support
Diane Black – Support
Stuart Condie – Support
Cedric de Souza - Support
Robert Eggleston – Support
David Eggleton – Support
Anne Eves – Support
Bob Foster – Support
Jon Gardner – Support
Matthew Goldsmith – Support
Simon Hicks– Support
Mohammad Hossain – Support
John Orchard – Support
Andy Stowe – Do Not Support
Adam White – Support
Brenda Williams – Support

Peter Williams – Support

RESOLVED: To approve to levy a Precept of £1,198,306 in respect of the year 2025/2026 on Mid Sussex District Council, the amount represented as a Band D household as £92.19 per annum.

It was questioned whether it was appropriate for the notes to include the statement made at the start of the Finance KAG. The Chairman asked that the CEO clarify the situation outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: To approve the notes of the Finance KAG and the remaining Resolutions therein.

212. CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP - NOTES OF MEETING

The Chairman deferred to the Chair of the Customer Service Group to present the notes and resolutions of the meeting of 15th January 2025

MINUTE 40: Tourism Update – Railway200

A question was raised – had a proposed route been identified as Councillors may wish to be involved in this. It was advised it would be going back to the Customer Service KAG.

MINUTE 43 Shop Local

Cllr Eves proposed an amendment to the Resolution as shown in the notes. She commented that 100 hours of staff time was spent on this last year but only 7 cards were returned to the Council at the end. Staff time would be used better to promote the town centre shops in other ways. We need to step back and look at strategy and re-introduce it in two year's time.

It was commented that officers could look into a better way to deliver Shop Local and bring new ideas to the next Customer Services KAG.

Concern was raised about withdrawing incentivised schemes from our town centre shops. Could officers speak to local retail businesses about how the scheme could work better for them?

Concern was raised that this would increase the amount of officer time spent.

General comments as to support of town traders were expressed.

A member of the public expressed concern about the way this scheme was advertised in 2024 and the cost of this advertising. They felt not enough use of social media or videos was made. The Council could consider using a marketing agency in the future.

A member of the public commented that in November, that MSDC promoted “No buy November” on social media. The post was removed but this sent conflicting messages to the public.

A Cllr requested the record to show that MSDC Councillors had not supported this social media post and the post was subsequently and quickly removed.

RESOLVED:

To Suspend shop local for 2 years with a view that staff time could be better spent on other projects.

Officers shall contact Mid Sussex District Council to see if it will be willing to support this scheme either financially or promotionally.

MINUTE 46: Improvements To The Public Realm

It was clarified that once officers have more specific proposals, they will bring these back to the Customer Services KAG to be approved.

RESOLVED:

To approve the notes and remaining Resolutions within the customer Service KAG with exception of minute 43 which was amended as shown above.

213. UPDATE FROM PRINCIPAL COUNCILS

An update from the Principal Councils had not been provided due to pressures of work, however the Chief Executive gave a brief update on Mid Sussex updates following the recent Clerks briefing.

NPPF: The new framework came in to being with immediate effect in December. The house building target for MSDC has increased. However, the district plan is to be examined on the old NPPF and that has to be considered against the original numbers.

In the meantime, the plan continues through examination with the next stage hoped for the spring.

Until the new plan comes in the higher figures are expected to be met and the decision making will tilt in favour of development. Some of the current district policies are therefore out of date and this could result in speculative applications.

MSDC budget is published in draft and the highlights are:

Rise 2.95% from £190.80 to £196.43 PA Band D

Increase of 10p on all Car parking tariffs

Increase of 20% on planning advice

Increase of 10% on hackney carriages licences

Increase of 10% on waste and recycling charges

Increase of £12.50 on garden waste bin (97.50 from 85.00) 14.7%

Increase in garden waste to allow service to be rolled out to more residents.

Car parking will pay for ANPR technology in three sites along with new methods of paying (on foot but also in advance). Burgess Hill site is Cyprus Road Car Park.

We have asked for figures around the car park use and this will be provided.

The District are willing to help parishes with cyber security plans and some information was received today on that.

LGR and Devolution: Not much more is known except that 16/21 non-unitary areas have expressed interest in being considered, whether this number will affect the timetable for bids is not known.

Sundries:

New S106 officer is due to start imminently

New monitoring officer is due to start at the end of February

214. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

The Chair introduced the report

RESOLVED: To agree the Business Plan to drive the Councils work plans for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

215. STANDING ORDER REVIEW

The Chair introduced the report.

It was asked whether a petition clause could be added to the standing orders, and stated he had raised this with the previous CEO but that a change was not made. The Chief Executive stated that this was something she was looking to address and the matter would return to full Council at a later time.

RESOLVED:

1) To approve the new standing orders as set out in appendix B to the Agenda.

2) The CEO be authorised to make any necessary changes to correct typographical or reference errors in relation to the Standing Orders.

216. COMPLAINTS / COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED 2024/25

The update was noted

It was questioned if a previous complaint made against a Councillor had been advised for referring to the monitoring officer. The Chief Executive was unable to comment on this, but stated that this would be the expected procedure and certainly would be going forward.

217. DEVOLUTION - WHAT THIS MAY MEAN IN WEST SUSSEX

The update was noted.

218. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

RESOLVED

The Council confirmed their support to the proposal and instructed the Officers to advise WSCC accordingly.

219. DRAFT ROTA OF MEETINGS FOR 2025/2026

RESOLVED

The known dates for 2025/26 meetings of the Council were approved.

220. PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING ROUTES

Cllr Eves was asked to introduce the report as she had proposed this. It was stated that it was not known that the land had actually been sold and this may not be correct, but the fact remained that the path has now been rendered too small for a cycle route and would not progress. Further explanation may be needed from WSCC. Some Councillors were going to visit the site and view the dimensions of the path.

RESOLVED: The Town Council expressed their dismay that the widening of footpath FP70BH to form a cycle route has been ruled out, despite being a crucial route to and from Brookleigh into the town centre. Burgess Hill Town Council resolves to write to WSCC, the landowner, to establish the facts and seek to reverse the decision.

221. DIARY DATES

The diary dates for forthcoming meetings were noted with a correction that the Community Buildings Development Group was to be held on Monday 3rd February 2025.

It was also noted that the Customer Services KAG were due to meet on is on 24th March 2025.

The Town Mayor ended the meeting at **8.23pm** thanking all for attendance

Chairmans Signature

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