

**How to contact us**



Write to: Manor House, Church Street,  
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**Minutes of the Town Centre Action Group Meeting held in the New Millenium Chamber on Tuesday 8 October 2024**

**Present:**

Councillor Sean Lee – Chair (Mayor of Littlehampton)  
Laura Chrysostomou (Littlehampton Town Council, Town Clerk)  
Sofia Chittenden (Littlehampton Town Council, Communications and Marketing Manager)  
Melanie Nicholls (Littlehampton Town Council, Temporary Project Support Manager)  
Miriam Nicholls (Arun District Council, Business Development Manager)  
Katie King (Arun District Council, Economic Development & Regeneration Officer)  
Richard Groome (East Beach Guest House, Business Representative)  
Sophie Cullen (L.Guess Jewellers, Business Representative)  
Mike La Traille (Business Representative, Pier Road Coffee and Art)  
Councillor Bob Woodman (Councillor at Arun District Council)  
Councillor Mike Northeast (Councillor at Arun District Council)  
Councillor Alan Butcher (Councillor at Littlehampton Town Council)  
Councillor Maralyn May (Councillor at Arun District Council, substitute for Councillor Christine Wiltshire)  
Matt Pollard (Arun Youth projects, Youth Service Manager)  
Dax O'Connor (Arun District Council, Community Safety Officer)

**Apologies:**

Georgia Hudson (Sussex Police)  
Greg Ockwell (Officer, West Sussex County Council)

**2024 to 2025**

**1. Introductions**

Introductions were made between the group.

**2. Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the March meeting were confirmed and approved.

**3. Action Plan**

Matthews Associates, who had been working on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Town Centre Support Project, have handed their work over to Littlehampton Town Council (LTC) to take forward. Further updates on this would be given under item 6.

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Being halfway through the “immediate actions” stage of the Action Plan the meeting was being asked to review progress so far, with particular consideration of actions not yet started.

It was requested that an “estimated completion date” column be added to the sections “actions not started”. It was also suggested that a review of actions be undertaken to identify those which are high priority and those which may no longer be pertinent.

Whilst not confirmed, the possibility of development of Waitrose and Harvester buildings were highlighted and harnessing the potential for regeneration of the town centre discussed.

“Review Visit Littlehampton Website” – was identified as a high priority. Specifically the promotion of the seafront development by ADC and promotion of hotels and other accommodation available to visitors in the town.

Whilst it was agreed that “to ensure that an effective marketing strategy is delivered for the Town Centre...” is a high priority, it was also agreed that this might be best developed with greater input from the business community. Therefore, this action should be put on hold to allow the business community meetings to develop their voice over the next few months and thus be ready to shape the strategy more effectively. This timing could also work with the launch of the major development of the seafront led by ADC. ADC officers will come back to the group regarding any event plans and or formal launch events.

It was also noted that whilst the sea and river are the key attractions of Littlehampton and must therefore be central to promotion, at the same time the “push / pull” towards the town centre needed consideration in the marketing strategy and more action in the action plan. At the same time, LTC cannot bear full responsibility for all marketing and events in the town so partnership working will be crucial.

Regarding “Support restaurants in the Town Centre to ensure they are successful and more invest in the town” It was noted firstly that the service industry will be critical to the future of the High Street and that a thriving evening economy makes a town centre feel safer and more welcoming for all people. Regarding support, no specific type was identified however the free one to one specialist business development support available from ADC was cited as being of very high quality by the two group members who had used this service. Simply asking the businesses what they need from the TCAG should be the first step.

Discussing “Identifying any concerns over traffic management and work with West Sussex Highways to address these...” it was noted that unsafe driving, most notably by larger vehicles is putting young people at considerable unnecessary and unacceptable risk at the railway station end of the high street. This issue has already been reported to the Police.

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Under the action *“Work with businesses to maintain cleanliness”* it was agreed that the new paving had improved the look of the High Street and ADC confirmed that sealing of the paving was underway. It was also noted however that although the bins are emptied regularly the bins themselves are looking very dirty.

More generally across the actions under discussion parking remains a key concern.

#### **4. Town Centre Action Group Membership**

One year review of the Terms of Reference.

The following amendments to the Terms of Reference were agreed.

- 4.1. To include the option, at the discretion of the membership, to withdraw membership from a representative who fails to attend three consecutive meetings.
- 4.2. To amend the terms to state that the Action Plan will be reviewed at least annually and the Strategy at least once every three years and to confirm that progress against Action Plan targets will be reviewed at every meeting.
- 4.3. In line with the Town Centre Strategy to amend the Group membership of Business Representatives to read “Business and / or landlord or agents: up to four nominated representatives, with a minimum of three.
- 4.4. In Group membership to include a Youth Organisation representative.
- 4.5. To update the Lead officer(s) / Officer Task Group to reflect changes in job titles and roles following changes to the ADC staffing structure.

#### **5. Littlehampton Town Council Updates**

##### **5.1. Update on Events Review**

The Communications and Marketing Manager updated the group on the recent work undertaken to review the council’s events programme. The plan is to deliver a similar programme in 2025 to usual and continue working with external organisations to establish gaps and opportunities to develop a 3-year programme to start in 2026.

##### **5.2. Update on Business Crime Reduction Partnership**

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It was reported that the partnership funding had been secured to implement a Business Crime Reduction Partnership. This would see the incorporation of the town centres of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton into a single reporting hub and the appointment of a full time BCRP Manager to support businesses in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. The funding partners were the Safer Arun Partnership, Bognor Regis BID (Business Improvement District), Littlehampton Town Council and Sussex Police with each partner contributing £12,000 per year. It was noted that the BCRP Manager would be managed by the District Council's Economic Team and that work was underway to prepare a role profile and job description. This would include defined and measurable outputs which would be monitored by the partnership.

**5.3. Update on LTC contacts**

Melanie Nicholls will be covering for Elise Bicknell during her sabbatical from October to December 2024.

**6. UKSPF Project Update**

Officers facilitated a Business Community Meeting. Twenty representatives from seventeen businesses attended and participants identified their core challenges and priorities for the group. They also started the process of identifying roles and responsibilities required to form a sustainable business voice for the community. Further meetings are booked for October, November and January.

**7. Business and Landlord Representatives Feedback**

A business representative highlighted a perceived lack of support for a neighbour's business which is suffering due to drug dealing taking place from the upstairs flat. The ADC Community Safety Team agreed to investigate the matter.

There was a discussion of anti-social behaviour (ASB) on the High Street, including concerns about the Houses of Multiple Occupancy where emergency accommodation for people with complex social issues are housed.

It was noted that ASB happens in most town centres but is perhaps more noticeable in Littlehampton because the High Street is sometimes very quiet. It was noted during busy times, such as during the town centre summer events, ASB fades into the background.

Whilst the meeting understood the need to report crime and ASB to evidence the need for more resources, at the same time attendees advised that traders become disheartened when issues are reported, but no action is taken, an

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example being the local Pub Watch group have been reporting, but seen no action taken. It was suggested that agencies responsible for improving safety needed to listen to the concerns of residents and traders as well as study data. At the same time, it was acknowledged that resources in Policing and Community Safety are scarce.

**8. Any other business**

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the TCAG would be Tuesday 11 February 2025.

The meeting closed at 7:41 pm.