

**POLO
PARISHES OF THE LOWER OUSE**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON MONDAY 6th October 2025

Present – Paul Bevan (SDNPA parish member), Cllr. Sarah Davies (Kingston PC), Cllr Ian Douglas (Kingston PC), Cllr David Hoare (Kingston PC), Cllr. Fred Wettern (Rodmell PC), Cllr John Scaife (Piddinghoe PC), Cllr Cathy Gallagher (Telscombe TC and Peacehaven TC), Cllr James Harrison (Newhaven TC), Cllr. Sarah Osborne (ESCC), Wendy Brewer (Egrets Way), Sue Carroll (The Safer C7 Project and POLO secretary).

Apologies - Alex Pett (Southeast PM and POLO chair), Cllr Stella Spiteri (LDC)

Did not attend – Christopher Baker (Iford PM).

<p>1. Apologies for absence Alex Pett (POLO chair) and Stella Spiteri were unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Sue Carroll (secretary) chaired the meeting.</p>	
<p>2. Changes to Representatives on POLO New members were welcomed as follows: Kingston – Cllr Sarah Davies Rodmell - Cllr Fred Wettern ; Egrets Way - Wendy Brewer, following retirement of Neville Harrison.</p>	
<p>3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 June 2025. <u>Sussex Police Rural Crime Surgeries.</u> Kingston PC had kindly offered to host a ‘surgery’ open to all POLO residents. Some proposed dates were received from the scheme co-ordinator, but these were all in August and POLO members did not think a date in August would be well attended. The POLO secretary declined the August dates and asked for some alternative dates after the end of the school holidays. These were promised but have not yet received. Sue will contact the scheme co-ordinator again.</p>	SC
<p>4. Local Government Re-organisation All the POLO parishes had made formal responses to both the LDC and Brighton and Hove consultations, and a letter was also sent on behalf of POLO. Letters were also sent to the office of the minister of Housing Communities and Local Government. The letters set out the reasons a transfer of the rural POLO parishes to a new Brighton and Hove City authority was unanimously rejected. Reasons for wishing to remain part of East Sussex, and maintain the long standing and close relationship with Lewes were explained.</p>	

<p>Lewes District Council formally endorsed the One Sussex proposal, but Wealden council did not.</p> <p>Town councils are set to be retained, but without district councils, there are widespread concerns about the likely negative impact on community governance. It seems that in the absence of district councils, local government accountability and responsiveness to the factors affecting rural parishes could be much reduced. How will the needs and interests of rural residents and businesses, especially in smaller parishes be conveyed to the East Sussex authority and what weight will they carry? The question was raised whether, to fill a vacuum, there could be a more significant role for POLO, or a body similar to POLO, encouraging and enabling parishes to work collaboratively. A suggestion was made that perhaps town councils could take on additional responsibilities for neighbouring (satellite?) local villages – but for this to work, there would need to be some direct representation of these parishes within the town council structure. We do not yet have government guidance on these matters.</p>	<p>PARISHES OF THE LOWER OUSE</p>
<p>5. SDNPA Matters</p> <p>Paul Bevan, elected parishes member of the SDNPA, led this item.</p> <p><u>SDNPA Local Plan</u> – The SDNPA has written to parishes which have proposed new sites for development. Parishes will be sent a fact checking document and site assessments will be made. Formal decisions will be made in February/March, followed by Regulation 19 consultations from May to July, prior to final decisions.</p> <p>Two sites were put forward by Kingston, but it wasn't known if these have been included.</p> <p>It was reported that Lewes Town Council is convening a '<u>Master Plan Workshop</u>' on 22nd October, with invited representatives from a number of local organisations and groups. The purpose is to draft a 'masterplan for Lewes that promotes sustainable living, a thriving economy and a better environment for the town'. The outputs will inform Lewes Town Council and be submitted to the SDNPA with the aim of influencing the Local Plan and other policy documents. This event will be attended by SDNPA board chair, Vanessa Rowlands, and other SDNP managers and officers.</p> <p>The SDNPA (Ben Marsh) is drafting an Active Travel Network Plan for the national park. This is an attempt to produce a digital map showing all the various footpaths and cycle paths etc and how these link up. Parishes had the opportunity to put active travel routes in their localities on to the map. Active Travel England is contributing funds towards the final section of the Egrets Way.</p> <p>There was some discussion about access to the countryside for people seeking to use the footpath and cycle way network in the Lower Ouse valley, and the need for more signage and maps showing the routes for walkers and cyclists. Could SDNPA produce a map of the routes and perhaps produce information boards and install more way signs? The Safer C7 Project report prepared by consultants, PJA, proposed the display of such maps at bus stops along the C7 as part of local active travel 'information hubs'.</p>	<p>PB</p>

<p><u>Ouse Valley Climate Action Community Pitch</u> – This scheme is funded by the SDNP Trust, in partnership with the National Lottery Community Fund (via Ouse Valley Climate Action – OVCA). It awards grants of £500 - £5000 towards projects relating to climate change, environmental issues and wild life conservation in the lower Ouse Valley and Havens. Applications for the current round are open until 31 October 2025.</p>	PARISHES OF THE LOWER OUSE
<p>6. Updates on road matters and interactions with ESCC Highways</p> <p><u>The Safer C7 Project</u></p> <p>The final report and all the design plans are now published on the project website. SDNPA have allocated £81K CIL funding for Phase 1a, to install the village gateways. An application to the LDC CIL Community pot was submitted for £152K. This sum would fund phases 1b (crossing points), 2a (improved bus stop access), and part of 2b (some crossing point upgrades and new footways), and included project management costs. However, the LDC board concluded that – due to the ‘strategic importance’ and scale of the project - the application for funding for the Safer C7 Project should go to the LDC Infrastructure CIL pot, rather than the Community pot. Applications for the LDC infrastructure pot won’t be confirmed till March 2026, so work on these measures will be delayed by approximately 6 months. Kingston PC has contributed £3000 from its CIL funds. It is anticipated that work will start on installing the village gateways in summer 2026.</p> <p>The project team have had meetings with ESH officers who advised on the process of obtaining planning permissions. At their suggestion, SDNPA has agreed that planning consent would be sought via the SDNPA rather than ESH, although some Highways consents from ESH will also be needed. SDNPA have identified a named officer from their major projects team to work with the team on this process.</p> <p>The Safer C7 Project has applied for charitable status as a CIO. (Egrets Way is also a CIO). The process of commissioning a project manager has been started.</p> <p>An update on the Safer C7 Project is being published shortly. Two community presentation events are being organised so that local people and groups who use the C7 can come along and hear about the plans. In the previous 8 weeks there have been 5 instances of cars leaving the road and landing in fields on both sides of the C7 in moreorless the same spot between Rodmell and Northease. Sue Carroll is making contact with the ESH Traffic Safety Manager to draw attention to residents’ concerns about this stretch of road, and to ask for it to be investigated. The Accident Log published on the project website has recorded 47 accidents on the C7 since 2019. This is probably an understatement of the true figure.</p> <p>It was noted that a recent closure of Kingston Rd (from Wellgreen Lane Junction to Lewes) to replace a single electricity pole, took place during the morning rush hour, so that around 5000 vehicles were diverted through Kingston village and on to the Ashcombe roundabout. The job only took around 2 hours. If the licence granted for the work by ESH had been marked as ‘traffic sensitive’ this short job could have been scheduled to take place after the morning rush when the C7 is much quieter. On enquiry, a UK Power Networks representative reported that the licence had NOT been marked traffic sensitive by ESH. Cllr Sarah Osborne undertook to raise this</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>Cllr Sarah Osborne</p>

<p>matter with ESH to make them aware that closures of the C7 are highly traffic sensitive. There are an average of 10,000 vehicle movements per day on the C7 and residents in 5 parishes are wholly dependent on the road.</p>	
<p>7. Egrets Way Update</p> <p>There is now a 4 mile circular off road route between Iford and Lewes. This is called Bridleway 13 and is separate from the Egrets Way (EW), although EW secured the funding for the surface improvements.</p> <p>The Egrets Way surface has been repaired where needed, funded 50:50 by SDNPA and LDC. At Southease there is some repair work still to be completed.</p> <p>Phase 7 – Piddinghoe. This is the last remaining stretch needed to complete a continuous cycle route between Newhaven and Lewes. It is proposed that an 800m section at the north end of Piddinghoe will need go along the side of the road because there is no practical alternative away from the road to fill the gap in the route. The plan is to have a raised segregated cycle path. However, some landowners have pushed back on the plans and as a condition, want a guaranteed 30 mph speed limit here. The EW7 project team are organising a public event in Piddinghoe, so that residents can hear directly from representatives of Sustrans, SDNPA, ESH, Egrets Way, and the Safer C7 Project, see drawings and visualisations of the proposals, and hear responses to their concerns. The intention is that this event will be followed by a wider consultation.</p>	<p>PARISHES OF THE LOWER OUSE</p>
<p>8. Kingston Highways Projects</p> <p>Kingston PC has received a draft report and CAD drawings commissioned from PJA consultants. The proposed measures are intended to reduce speed and bring about driver behaviour appropriate for the location and nature of the road and its users. The measures include 'place making' features such as a feature suggestive of a 'village green' near the Juggs pub, and some additional speed reduction measures towards the C7/Wellgreen Lane junction.</p> <p>Kingston PC is seeking enforcement of the existing width restriction at Ashcombe Hollow and are also considering physical restrictions.</p>	
<p>9. Matters of potential common interest to other councils</p> <p>Representatives from Kingston PC raised the lack of affordable housing, as well as accommodation for people wanting to 'downsize' in the POLO parishes. Kingston PC is seeking advice from Action in Rural Sussex (AIRS); e.g. about ways of acquiring land, such as rural exception sites on the edges of villages.</p> <p>They are wondering if there would be mileage in collaborating with other parishes on this matter. They have also discussed this issue with Trevor Leggo and Christopher Baker from LDALC. It was agreed to have this as an item on the next POLO agenda.</p>	<p>Next agenda</p>
<p>10. Date of Next Meeting - Monday 23rd Feb at 7.30 via Zoom</p>	