



# ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Aldwick Parish Offices, 88 Pryors Lane, Aldwick, West Sussex. PO21 4JF  
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**Chairman:** Cllr Richard Gotheridge **Clerk:** Heather Knight

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Minutes of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING (459) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**  
Held on **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 at 7.15pm** in the Aldwick Parish Council Office.

**Present:** Cllrs Gotheridge (Chairman), Basford, Bence, Buckley, Huntley, Patel, Purser, Rufey and Shepherd

**In attendance:** H Knight (Clerk), and 1 member of the public (part of meeting)

***The meeting opened at 7.15pm.***

**169. Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies.

**170. Declarations of Interest**

None were made.

**171. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Council Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were a correct record and that the Chairman sign them.

**Clerk's Report and Actions**

Min. 154 – Co-options: Induction/welcome packs had been sent to new councillors, their completed Register of Interest forms forwarded to Arun DC, APC email addresses set up, and councillor training sessions were being arranged.

Min. 158 – IT, AETP security: The Advanced Email Threat Protection had been arranged with the Council's IT provider. Other cyber security measures discussed were still being looked into.

Min. 159 – Climate Change Workshop: The clerk had registered to attend.

Min. 162 – CIL Funds: The Clerk had advised Arun DC of the Parish Council's support for proposed cycle projects in the area.

Min. 163 – Insurance renewal: Annual insurance and Long-Term Agreement was in place, the Clerk had received confirmation that civic insignia is covered but that cyber-attack is not: A quotation for cyber-attack cover was being investigated, some information required the input of the IT provider. Arun DC had confirmed that all play equipment responsibility and liability was theirs, and believed that in the past the Parish Council, having made a very significant financial contribution to replacement play equipment, had wanted to identify its involvement with the equipment provision, hence the insurance cover.

Min. 164.4 – D-Day 80: The Clerk was about to order the flag as agreed but was checking appropriate size for the flag pole.

Portrait of His Majesty King Charles III: The portrait had arrived and was on show in the room: Members were asked to think about where it should be permanently displayed as suitable wall space was limited.

**172. Any such matters as the Chairman may wish to bring to the of the Committee for information only**

The Chairman clarified that his recent email to all regarding the appointment of a new chairman had related to the Annual Council Meeting in May.

The Chairman highlighted the Clerk's circulation of the County Council's Greenprint project details: WSCC had incorporated Aldwick, Bersted and Pagham into its pilot project that would see reduced grass cutting to improve wildflower and biodiversity, and cuttings being removed for re-use in initiatives such as biofuels. Members were disappointed at the lack of consultation with parish councils and commented that the project may not be received positively by residents. The project was for 3 years, last year having been the initial planning and preparation with two years to trial it. Funding for the project had come from the Department for Transport.

**173. Adjournment for public questions**

There were no public questions. A member of the public attending was directed to contact the ward county councillor regarding a matter deemed sensitive and not within the parish council's remit.

**174. To receive reports from the District and County Councillors representing Aldwick**

D.Cllr Purser reported from the Bathing Water Quality Partnership group meetings that Southern Water continued trying to address the worst of the problems with all the flooding and sewerage issues. Due to the Environment Agency reporting on bathing water quality over a four-year period and because a couple of reports were below par, the overall rating for Aldwick has been poor: The results for last year, if taken as a stand-alone figure, would have meant a moderate rating instead of poor.

D.Cllr Bence detailed some local areas that were of concern and contributing to poor water quality and the tracing work that was ongoing. Surface water drainage is an issue and he was querying water testing of drainage from the Six Villages and Aldingbourne Rife that flows out to sea at Felpham. He had access to a mapping app that shows where broken sewers are being treated.

C.Cllr Patel reported on several County Council items including: 400 real time passenger information displays being installed; 24 junctions are being upgraded to give buses priority; WSCC Fire Service is undertaking a test emergency situation at Chichester Cathedral in May; 92.4% of West Sussex children will be offered their first choice of school; Further free online 'Are you scam savvy' sessions are available, plus an in person session at Bognor Regis Library on 21<sup>st</sup> May;

C.Cllr Bence reported in his capacity as a county ward councillor for another area, but relevant also to the Aldwick community, that the Phoenix Centre Youth Club premises had been signed over to The Regis School on a seven year lease, for use by its students.

**175. To receive Committee meeting Minutes**

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 19<sup>th</sup> March and 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were received and noted.

**176. Committee Appointments**

Following nomination and proposal, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Buckley to the Planning Committee to fill the vacant position.

**177. Annual Parish Electors Meeting**

Members received the draft agenda and Chairman's/Council report for the meeting on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 6.30pm. It was **RESOLVED** to approve these without amendment. The agenda would be published imminently and the report would be available for the meeting with the last minutes from 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022, as no meeting took place in 2023.

**178. Proposal for Pedestrian Crossing at Rose Green**

In the absence of Cllr Thas to propose and speak about this item, it was deferred to the next meeting.

**179. Business Plan**

The previous Business Plan 2013-2018 and some examples of other councils' business plans had been circulated. The Chairman advised that with the previous APC version being out of date, and with a new council and structure forming over the past year, Members might want to review the old version and use the opportunity to set out longer term plans and budget setting. Members discussed ways of doing this, including setting up a Steering Group, surveying what residents want and managing expectations. It was **RESOLVED** to set up a Business Plan Steering Group, appointing Cllrs Purser, Gotheridge, Buckley and Basford as members, to report back to Full Council. Terms of reference to be drawn up for recommendation to Council.

**180. Councillor Training**

**180.1** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the attendance of Cllr Huntley at new member training by WSALC on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024, at a cost of £45 (exc. VAT).

**180.2** The Clerk reported that following her request, Arun District Council's Monitoring Officer had confirmed that he would be happy to provide council training of the Code of Conduct (Aldwick PC having adopted the Arun DC model). The session could be offered out to neighbouring parishes if space permitted. The earliest opportunity would be from early May onwards. Following the Clerk's recommendation that Council undertake this training, it was **RESOLVED** to proceed and the Clerk would negotiate suitable dates with all. It was suggested that a Tuesday evening, possibly before or after a Planning Committee meeting, would be preferred.

**181. Solar Panels Service Visit**

Members considered the quotation from the supplier for their recommended 2-5yr after care service visit, noting that the 15 solar panels had been installed in May 2021. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation of £120.00 (exc. VAT) from Wagner Renewables and the Clerk would arrange the visit.

**182. Amenities (roads, PROW/footpaths and general maintenance of the parish).**

**182.1 Tree Planting:** The Chairman gave the background of the last three years of the Parish council having subscribed to the WSCC Donate a Tree scheme, with 30+ trees planted at locations agreed between the two councils. The anticipated 2024 cost was £257 per tree, though this may increase for the current financial year. WSCC provide a species list and assess suitability of locations. Noting that this had been allocated within the 2024-25 budget, it was **RESOLVED** to approve participation again this year, and that Cllr Gotheridge would lead on identifying suitable sites to nominate.

**182.2** Following proposal, it was **RESOLVED** to change the order of business to move agenda item 14.2 Annual Gardening Maintenance to the end of the meeting, as it required the exclusion of public and press.

**182.3.Public Benches:** There was no further update as due to workload the Clerk had not yet had time to seek additional information or quotations.

**182.4 Summer Play Scheme:** The Clerk had not yet been able to research this item.

**182.5 Allotments:** The Clerk reported that the majority of plot holders had renewed their tenancy and paid rent due to the Council promptly, with six tenants to be followed up. Offering the option to pay by online banking had proved popular. All plots were let, including one previously in extremely poor condition having been let at a slightly reduced rate due to the work necessary. The waiting list had reduced as a result of recent changes but still stood at around 15 people as new requests were regularly received. The Clerk reported that one of the site sheds that had been due to have repair work done had subsequently been reported as having a rotting base corner, with a request for its replacement. Details would be brought to a future meeting for consideration. Following the Clerk's request for a Member willing to work with and support the Clerk in monitoring the site, Cllr Huntley offered and it was **AGREED** to appoint her as lead councillor on allotments matters.

**183. Finance**

**183.1 Data Correction on QuickBooks and VAT reclaims:** The Clerk reported that additional backdated errors had been discovered with previous VAT reclaims during 2023-24, due to the software 'intuitively' allocating the VAT rate incorrectly during periods of staffing changes. This had resulted in some significant under claiming by the Council and could be adjusted through the final quarter reclaim but needed professional input from Rialtas support at a cost of £267.50 (ex VAT) for a half day. Owing to timeframes as year-end approached, the Clerk had taken urgent action in liaison with the Chairman to book this essential work for 22<sup>nd</sup> April to recoup Council's due reclaim. It was **RESOLVED** to ratify this action and cost.

**183.2 Financial reports**

Members received and approved bank reconciliations for Cashbooks 1, 2, 3 and 5 to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Members received an Income & Expenditure compared to budget report to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The Clerk reported that the March accounts had been entered and reports uploaded but owing to an IT technical issue of non-synching, it was regrettably not possible to show these to Members or print out copies. The March reports would therefore be deferred to the next meeting. Members asked questions

regarding some budget overspends on the I&E report. The Chairman and Clerk explained that the Council had had to start the budget process at time of transition both in terms of staffing and accounting software and monitoring. It was likely that some budgetary predictions might prove incorrect over the year. Some invoices had been allocated by the Clerk to cost centres that may not have directly correlated with previous allocations, resulting in potential imbalance. The Clerk advised that as soon as possible she would check on the National Insurance contributions budget, which showed significant difference.

**183.3 Earmarked Reserves:** Members received and noted the report detailing Earmarked Reserves to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, as agreed at the last meeting.

**183.4 List of Payments for Authorisation:** Members **RESOLVED** to approve the payments, as shown below, and that the payment schedule be duly signed.

Tivoli	£686.78
Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
Heather Knight	£1,857.68
HMRC	£572.47
Nest	£129.08
Zen	£68.06
Barclays Bank	£2.50
Octopus Energy	£97.07
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
Barclaycard Commercial	£152.28
Mulberry Local Authority Services Limited	£54.00
Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	£230.00
West Sussex ALC Limited	£2,509.54

**183.5 Budget 2024-25:** Members received the already confirmed budget 2024-25.

**183.6 Precept:** The Clerk reported that the first instalment of £57,212.00 of the 2024-25 precept had been received from Arun DC. The annual business rates demand had also been received, at £0 due to small business relief applied.

**183.7 CIL Funds:** The Clerk reported that a CIL payment of £854.66 had been received from Arun DC.

#### **184. Representatives to External Bodies**

Members noted brief reports of representation at external meetings as follows:

- Cllr Rufey had attended Bognor Regis Town Council's recent Civic Reception as Vice Chairman.
- Cllr Gotheridge had attended Bersted Parish Council's recent Civic Reception as Chairman.
- Cllr Gotheridge gave a brief summary of his attendance at the recent Chairmen's Forum, hosted by Bersted Parish Council.

#### **185. Correspondence.**

Details were noted, attached as Appendix 1. With regard to the ADC invitation to an online briefing on 8<sup>th</sup> May to update on its position on the Rampion 2 proposals, the Clerk asked whether any Members wished to attend this. Comment was made that it would be useful for a Member to attend this if possible. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would forward the meeting details to all Cllrs and await feedback as to availability for one representative.

**186.** Owing to the contractually sensitive and confidential nature of the next item, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude members of the public and press for the following item only.

**187. Gardening Maintenance Arrangements**

Members discussed at length the Clerk’s confidential report and details of the annual renewal quotation from the current service provider. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would respond to confirm that the quotation was not currently accepted, owing to concerns around some of the accompanying terms and conditions and the need for clarity of the service provision, and that the Clerk and Cllr Basford would arrange to meet the contractor’s local manager urgently to discuss the way forward, as per Members’ discussion.

**188. Date and time of next Council Meeting:** Annual Council Meeting, Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 at approximately 7.15pm (preceded by short Planning Committee at 7.00pm).

***The meeting closed at 9.37pm.***

CHAIRMAN .....

DATED .....

**APPENDIX 1****CORRESPONDENCE LIST FOR COUNCIL MEETING 23.04.24****WSCC**

- Various date Member Bulletins and press releases (forwarded to Cllrs where relevant)
- Details of WSCC Greenprint project exploring innovative uses for highway grass cuttings this growing season, and Clerk's summary of meeting with WSCC discussing the inclusion of Aldwick, Bersted and Pagham in the project. (forwarded to Cllrs).

**ADC**

- Invitation from Neil Crowther to ADC online briefing for town and parish councils, for one representative, to update on ADC position regarding the Rampion 2 proposals – Wed 8<sup>th</sup> May, Teams meeting 4pm-5pm.

**Sussex Police**

- Details of Counter Terrorism Policing personal security briefings for the next few months (forwarded to Cllrs)
- Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner: Various regular updates comms (published on APC website)

**Residents**

- Email dated 06.03.24 from resident to Clerk querying the rise in precept (Clerk responded)
- Email from resident representing a resident association of private road/estate seeking advice or council intervention regarding householder trees overhanging road. (Clerk responded and RA is discussing options).

**Publications**

Clerks & Councils Direct, March 2024, issue 152