



ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Aldwick Parish Offices, 88 Pryors Lane, Aldwick, West Sussex. P021 4JF
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Chair: Cllr Guy Purser **Clerk:** Heather Knight

Minutes of the **ORDINARY MEETING (464) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**
Held on **Tuesday 22nd October 2024 at 7.15pm** in the Aldwick Parish Council Office.

Present: Cllrs Rufey (Chair), Basford, Bence, Huntley, Patel, Shepherd and Thas

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

The meeting opened at 7.15pm.

In the absence of the Chair of Council, the Vice Chair of Council, Cllr Rufey, took the meeting.

81. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received, and reasons approved, from Cllr Buckley (personal commitment), Cllr Purser (personal commitment) and Cllr Gotheridge (personal commitment).

82. Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests

There were no Declarations of Interest or changes to the Register of Interests made.

83. Minutes of the Council Meeting held 24th September 2024

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24th September 2024 were a correct record and that the Chair of the meeting sign them.

Clerk's Report

Min. 71.2 - Staffing Committee/Assistant Clerk position: The Clerk reported that Alison Colban had been appointed by the Staffing Committee panel on salary SCP 16, commencing employment on 1st November 2024 for 12 hours per week, normally on a Wednesday and Friday.

Councillor Training: The Clerk had circulated details of GDPR training on 29th October delivered by ProcessMatters2, facilitated by Slindon PC, at a cost of £15 per attendee, and recommended councillors who had not previously undertaken this should do so. Cllr Basford had registered to attend.

NALC website: NALC had launched their new website, which now required each member to set up an account in order to log in and view member council resources. The Clerk had circulated full details.

WSCC Winter Preparedness: Clerks and Chairs had been invited to attend an online WSCC parish/town briefing on 15th October. The slides from the session had been shared with Members.

WSCC Resurfacing: Whilst Highways were undertaking various footpath and other maintenance in the vicinity, the Clerk had reported badly compromised surfaces in the Willowhale car park which as well as potentially damaging cars were causing pedestrian issues. WSCC had responded quickly and arranged for their team to address the worst of the potholes.

ADC Predetermination Advice: Arun DC's Predetermination advice had been forwarded to Clerks for dissemination, and circulated to Members, following discussion at the recent Code of Conduct training by the MO.

Premises Maintenance: The six monthly fire alarm service had taken place on 8th October.

Lt Prior Memorial Plaque: The brass plaque commemorating Lt Walter Erskine Prior, RNVA, had fallen from its wall mounting in Dark Lane, retrieved by residents who alerted the Clerk. This was now held at the office whilst any damage, repair work, and any landowner permissions to re-site it was investigated. A report back by Cllr Patel on the wall condition and property owner consent was awaited.

84. Any such matters as the Chair may wish to bring to the attention of the Committee for information only

None reported.

85. Adjournment for public questions

The Chair welcomed the Chairman of West Meads Residents Association (WMRA).

The meeting was adjourned at 7.18pm.

The chair of WMRA explained issues due to frequent inconsiderate parking with vehicles straddling the footpath separating the recreation ground from the car park. This was impacting residents with mobility issues, wheelchair users, those with buggies etc, causing safety concerns and affecting access to services at the busy car park. WMRA, on behalf of residents and users of the car park, were requesting that the Parish Council apply for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for WSCC to put lines/parking restrictions in place to address the issue. WMRA had understood from recent liaison with a WSCC Highways Officer that WSCC would view this as a high priority and that the Parish Council must apply for the TRO.

Members asked questions and during the discussion it was confirmed that whilst the Parish Council could apply, any individual or organisation could also do so, and that along with support from the County Council ward member and the Parish Council, WSCC would require evidence of public support for the scheme. It was suggested that WMRA conduct a survey and collect as many signatures (with postcodes) as possible so that the Parish Council could see a clear public wish for the TRO. The Parish Council could then consider making an application for the WMRA following which the WSCC process for scoring of applications would commence. The chair of WMRA agreed to take this back to their committee for action. The WMRA Chair was thanked for their attendance and input and left the meeting.

The meeting reconvened at 7.34pm.

86. Reports from the District and County Councillors representing Aldwick

D.Cllr Bence reported on various ADC matters, including: His recent meeting with Marine Park Gardens Residents Association, who had raised concerns about rats in the area. This was being looked into; ADC Parks was progressing provision of ditches, bunds and boulders to protect Avisford Park, West Meads/Queensfield recreation ground and West park against further traveller incursions, Aldwick Pound having already been completed. ADC were prioritising the Aldwick area; Flytipping at West Meads and Avisford Park car parks continued to be an issue and additionally clothes collection points were having a lot of bags just left. Cllr Bence was enquiring about the frequency of emptying of these and whether some clothing recycling bins should be removed if not emptied regularly; Tents used by homeless people at High Trees had been removed, although another group of tents now occupied the beach area; He was still actively involved in issues of surface water run-off from open sewers– these periodically get blocked with stones, and had been emptied twice this year.

C.Cllr Patel reported on various WSCC initiatives, including ‘Positive Ageing Month’ with wellbeing and health check events taking place at libraries across the county.

87. Committee Meeting Minutes

87.1 The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 25th September and 8th October 2024 were received and noted.

88. Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Request from West Meads Residents Association

Cllr Bence declared an interest in this item due to involvement with Public Rights of Way at WSCC.

Members discussed the RA request for the Council to apply for a TRO to have parking restriction lines painted at West Meads/Queensfield car park, noting the comments from their chair during the public session. It was understood that the footpath separating the car park from the recreation ground is WSCC Highways jurisdiction, so would be eligible for an application, although whether it would be successful was debatable. It was felt that, as indicated to the RA chair, WSCC would need to see evidence of public support and that the Parish Council should have confirmation of this. It was **RESOLVED** that the matter would be considered further once the Council had seen public response to research by West Meads RA.

89. Amenities

Before Council moved to listed agenda items, a Member raised concerns regarding the standard of footpath repair work currently being carried out by WSCC Highways contractors in the parish. In addition to poor finishing, several paths had been walked on whilst still wet, disturbing the surface. Following a brief discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Council should write to the Cabinet Member for Highways acknowledging appreciation of Aldwick footpaths being maintained but seeking assurance that work is checked off as meets required standards. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the meeting Chair (Vice Chair Cllr Rufey) over the final content of the letter.

89.1 Review of Summer Play Scheme

The Clerk had not yet received further contact from Freedom Leisure unfortunately so was unable to update Members.

89.2 Grounds Maintenance Working Group (GMWG)

Cllr Basford gave a verbal report from the Working Group's first meeting earlier that evening. The GMWG has developed a working programme to timetable in with decisions for forthcoming Council meetings, with an ideal of either January or February 2025 latest for Council decision on contractor appointment. Some recommendations were needed for Council decision today. Following recommendation and proposal, the following was **RESOLVED**:-

- That the Council will not undertake providing the usual winter bedding planting this year;
- That the Working Group is authorised to arrange for councillors to empty compost and summer planting as appropriate from the railing troughs and post top planters; If possible the railing troughs would be removed: Any equipment/items removed to be stored at the Council offices by arrangement with the Clerk. This would give an opportunity to check the planters for any repair or replacement needed.
- That the Clerk will appoint Bognor Regis TC Town Force to tidy up the Millennium Garden, with grass cut, weeding, concourse jet spray and planting of winter bedding in the three raised planters, ahead of the Remembrance Day ceremony, cost to be advised, paid for from the Grounds Maintenance budget.

89.3 Planted Railing Troughs

The Clerk reported urgent action taken on 25th September under delegated authority, in liaison with the Chair of Council, to safely secure a second trough that was slipping on the railing, and potentially hazardous. It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the Clerk's action in appointing Bognor Regis TC Town Force to undertake work to secure the trough to the railing, at an estimated cost of £66.00 plus any parts, plus VAT, to be paid from the Grounds Maintenance budget.

89.4 Benches – Review of deferred repair/replacement

The Clerk had circulated a report, followed by an updated version as new information had become available. Members discussed options and costs for repair or replacement of two badly damaged and unusable seats at Pryors Lane/GP surgery bus stop and Grosvenor Gardens/Rose Green Road junction respectively, and the provision of a new seat to replace a 'missing' one at the B2166 Aldwick Road bus stop. Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to replace all three with new black Traditional seats from Marmax, currently 15% discounted until 31st October, at a cost of £323.00 each, with fixings at £21.00 each, and gold plaques at £52.00 each, plus delivery (x1) and VAT – total £1,238.00 + VAT: Plaque wording to be as agreed and with the Council crest if possible. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the estimate for Bognor Regis TC Town Force to remove redundant seats and install new, at an estimated cost of £466.80 + VAT. The Clerk had highlighted that there would shortly be approximately £3,146 of CIL income available to utilise, since the Open Public Spaces & Improvements budget would have only £1,173.00 available once the Tree Planting Scheme costs had been deducted. It was **RESOLVED** that a combination of that budget and CIL earmarked reserve would be used to pay for the benches work, primarily using the balance of Open Public Spaces & Improvements budget and the CIL earmarked Reserve for the remainder.

89.5 Christmas Tree

Subsequent to previous discussion in September, the Clerk had established that a larger tree and additional securing by temporary anchor points was viable, with costs potentially still within the original budget set. Having liaised with the Chair of Council, the Clerk had contacted Members by email for

consensus on instead purchasing a 20' tree, which all had supported. A decision had been urgent in order to secure a tree. It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the Clerk's action in ordering a 20' tree instead of 16', at a cost of £450.00, +VAT and delivery. It was further **RESOLVED** to approve, subject to any necessary WSCC/landowner consents, the cost of Bognor Regis TC Town Force installing temporary anchor points and straps, at an estimated cost of 165.96 + VAT, approving that this may result in a small overspend on the project budget.

89.6 Allotments

Members discussed the need for repairs to the two large sheds provided by the Council. Unfortunately repairs expected to be carried out last year had not materialised and previous discussion on replacement sheds had also not progressed. Repairs were deemed viable and cost effective compared to removal and replacement with new, and a quote of £1,950.00 (excl. VAT) had been received. Several contractors had been approached but only one had responded. Members were advised that the co-ordinator of the now defunct Allotments Association had offered to make a financial contribution towards the repairs from their residual funds. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the estimate from SDH Property maintenance to undertake the work, approving also that this would result in an overspend on the Allotment Maintenance budget. It was further **RESOLVED** to ask the Allotments Association for a £500 contribution towards the costs.

Members went on to discuss the rent charged to tenants, which was currently £20 pa and had not changed for some years. It was felt that this was a generous charge which did not adequately balance the cost of council expenditure. It was **AGREED** that review of allotment rents would be raised both at imminent budget working group meetings and also at an appropriate future Council meeting, noting the Clerk's advice that 12 months' notice to tenants would be required.

Finance

90.1 Members received bank reconciliations and the Income & Expenditure report for Cashbooks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to month ending 31st August 2024. It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair sign the bank reconciliations and agreement to bank statements. The Clerk reported that regrettably a further issue had arisen preventing finalisation of the September accounts, and these would be deferred to the November Council meeting.

90.2 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the List of Payments for Authorisation for September and October, as detailed below, and that the payment schedules be duly signed.

September

C&M Fire Alarms Ltd	£274.28
Pronetic Ltd	£70.20
Barclays Bank	£2.50
Bognor Regis Town Council	£590.44
Moore	£378.00
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
ProcessMatters2	£160.00
Barclaycard Commercial	£149.76
Zen Internet Ltd	£62.02
Heather Knight	£1,853.91
HMRC	£548.34
NEST	£156.98
Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
Gold Standard Doc Solutions Ltd	£953.99
Barclaycard Commercial	£149.76
Barclays Bank	£2.50
Octopus Energy	£43.01
Bognor Regis Town Council	£679.80
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
Zen Internet Ltd	£61.44

October

Heather Knight	£1,853.91
HMRC	£548.34
NEST	£156.98
Barclays Bank	£2.50
Octopus Energy	£43.41
Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
Bognor Regis Town Council	£212.50
David Chaffe (ProcessMatters2)	£80.00
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
Business Stream	£45.06
Castle Water	£41.46
Zen Internet Ltd	£55.81
Barclaycard Commercial	£149.76

90.3 The Clerk had circulated two initial draft budget scenarios, which were a starting point only. One version used a blanket increase of 10% on the previous year, resulting in a precept requirement of £125,866; the other based on predicted spending using current spends to 30th September, resulting in a precept requirement of £120,145. Both methods were crude as did not address known spending or spending that arose only once annually. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint a Budget Working Group to undertake work and make recommendation to Council through November and December, for final approval of budget and resulting precept at the January 2025 meeting at the latest. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllrs Purser, Gotheridge and Basford to the Budget Working Group with the Clerk/RFO attending.

91. S106 Funds

Members noted details from Arun DC of S106 fund status for spending on eligible projects. The viability of proposing new village gateway signage was discussed. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Bence would investigate boundary lines and previously investigated project costs by WSCC, and the Clerk would establish from Arun DC any application deadline and clarification of the criteria for 'green infrastructure'. The matter would be discussed again at a future meeting once information is available.

92. A259 Chichester to Bognor Regis Improvement Scheme – Stage 2 Public Consultation

Members noted the consultation, ending 11th November 2024, and made no formal response.

93. West Sussex Highway Network management Plan (HNMP) – Stakeholder Consultation

Members noted the consultation, ending 30th October 2024, and made no formal response.

94. Arun Flood Forum

Members noted details of the next meeting on Monday 25th November at the Civic Centre and invitation for the Chair or Vice Chair to attend. The Chair was not available and it was **RESOLVED** that the Vice Chair, Cllr Rufey, would attend.

95. West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC) AGM and Joint Conference

Members noted details of the WSALC AGM and Joint East/West ALC Conference on 4th November 2024. Unfortunately both the Chair and Vice Chair were not available to attend. Members decided not to appoint proxy voting representatives in their absence.

95. Defibrillator for Aldwick

Cllr Patel had asked for an item to consider whether there was a need for a public access defibrillator, especially given that grants were available to help offset purchase costs. The Clerk reported that she had found there were registered defibrillators in the Rose Green vicinity. Following some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk produce a list of defibrillators in the parish/surrounds with a view to publishing for public information and the council reviewing it to establish the need for any further equipment. This would be brought to a future meeting as soon as possible.

96. Calendar of Meetings

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the circulated schedule for meetings for the six month period January to June 2025.

97. Representatives to External Bodies

No reports made.

98. Correspondence

The Clerk reported correspondence as follows:

- Email from Arun DC Community Safety Officer: ADC and the Neighbourhood Policing Team were undertaking a joint review of unauthorised encampments across the district in 2024 and asked for the views of parish/town councils to ensure a community aspect to the review, to sit alongside data held by ADC and the police. The Clerk had completed the short survey, in liaison with the Chair, as the deadline was 21st October 2024.
- Various regular e-newsletters from NALC and WSCC had been forwarded to Members where of interest.
- Clerks & Councils Direct September 2024, Issue 155, was available for Members interested.

99. Date and time of next Council Meeting: Tuesday 26th November 2024 at approximately 7.15pm (preceded by short Planning Committee at 7.00pm).

The meeting closed at 9.17pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATED