



ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Aldwick Parish Offices, 88 Pryors Lane, Aldwick, West Sussex. PO21 4JF
Tel and FAX: 01243 263330 **E-mail:** clerk@aldwickparishcouncil.gov.uk
Chair: Cllr Guy Purser **Clerk:** Heather Knight

Minutes of the **ORDINARY MEETING (465) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**
Held on **Tuesday 26th November 2024 at 7.15pm** in the Aldwick Parish Council Office.

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

In attendance: H Knight (Clerk)

The meeting opened at 7.15pm.

101. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received, and reason approved, from Cllr Buckley (personal commitment).
Late apologies were received from Cllr Thas, due to family illness.

102. Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests

Cllr Bence declared an interest in any matter related to public rights of way, as he sits on the PROW committee at WSCC.

Cllr Gotheridge declared an interest in agenda item 12, Grant Aid, as he is a member of one of the organisations applying.

Cllr Purser declared an interest in agenda item 12, Grant Aid, as a close relative is a member of two organisations applying, namely Girlguiding Bognor Regis and St Richard's Church.

There were no changes to the Register of Interests made.

103. Minutes of the Council Meeting held 22nd October 2024

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22nd October 2024 were a correct record and that the Chair of the meeting sign them.

Clerk's Report

Min 89.4, Benches: The 3 benches had been ordered, the installation work placed with the contractor and required WSCC licence applied for. WSCC required a 28 day public consultation period, therefore, subject to any unresolvable public objections, the licence would be issued and benches installed from w/c 9th December 2024. The benches were due to be delivered to the Council premises shortly, kerbside only, and the Clerk would be asking for assistance to move them inside for storage.

Min. 89.5, Christmas Tree: The WSCC consent had been received. The tree anchor fixings had been installed on Friday 22nd November and the tree had been installed on Monday 25th November. Some issues had occurred with fixing the anchor points into stable positions without compromising the concourse surface and one had had to be moved after lifting away. Additionally gravel and the swollen trunk from the 2023 tree not removed by the previous contractor had reduced the available pit depth for the new tree. The Clerk had liaised with contractors to resolve these matters satisfactorily and was attending site daily to monitor/risk assess the tree. The lighting contractor had had to be put off and was now anticipated installing the tree lights by the weekend.

Min. 91, S106 Monies: This item had been deferred from the previous meeting. No further information was available yet, so this would be brought to a future meeting agenda.

Min. 95, Defibrillator for Aldwick: This item had been deferred from the previous meeting. As the Clerk had not been able to research this yet, it would be added to a future meeting agenda.

Premises maintenance: The six monthly fire alarm service had taken place. The contractor had highlighted that there is no zone sketch located at the fire alarm control panel, which is a requirement.

The Clerk was actively investigating costs of obtaining this, which first needed a sketch of the premises floorplan to be provided to the contractor.

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

The Chair remarked on the well attended Armistice Day ceremony on 11th November. He thanked staff for arranging and co-ordinating the event and Cllr Rufey for providing cakes. Public had appreciated the ceremony and refreshments afterwards and several had asked if there might be a return to the regular coffee morning that the Parish Council used to provide.

The Chair reported that he would be attending Bognor Regis Town Council Mayor's Carol Service on 1st December.

The Chair had received a letter from Alison Griffiths, MP for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (circulated to Members), in which she acknowledged the work and role of parish councillors. Ms Griffiths was engaging with constituency towns and parishes and had offered to meet councillors to hear about specific parish issues and ways she might help. Members agreed that this should be discussed further, with a view to accepting the offer, and requested that this be added to the December agenda.

105. Adjournment for public questions

There were no public present.

106. Reports from the District and County Councillors representing Aldwick

C.Cllr Patel reported various news items from WSCC: on 6th December libraries were celebrating 100 years of libraries being at the heart of communities since 1925; Firefighters are walking the length of the county in less than a day for charity; WSCC had partnered with its recycling and waste contractor Biffa to launch a new Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund for community based household waste prevention projects, with grants of up to £5000 available from January 2025; Ahead of winter, work is increasing to clear drainage systems and ensure water can run off roads as effectively as possible, providing extra resources to clear more gullies, ditches and areas where leaves build up; Almost 40,000 safety related defects on county highways had been repaired between April and September and £13 million had been invested to actively tackle deteriorating roads and keep the county moving; Smokefree West Sussex is a programme run by the Wellbeing Team to support people giving up smoking cigarettes and/or moving to vaping, full details available by visiting westsussexwellbeing.org.uk/smokefree or telephone 0330 222 7980.

Following a query about resolving the flooding problems on Lower Bognor Road, Cllr Patel advised that the issues were being monitored.

D.Cllr Bence reported on various ADC matters: He would be attending the Bathing Water Quality Partnership meeting on 28th November; A rat infestation affecting West Park, Marine Park Gardens and adjoining coastal area was being addressed by relevant departments. He had met with the Marine Park Gardens Residents Association, when various concerns were aired around this and alleged drug dealing in the area; He had asked ADC to look at providing better lighting in a twitten along Aldwick Felds; Bunds to prevent traveller encampments were almost complete at Queensfield. These will be covered with composted soil and seeded and he had liaised with West Meads Residents Association and West Meads Community Centre. Avisford Park would be the next location for bunds; There will be a review of clothes recycling bins at all the parks and he was in touch with the cleansing department over issues with these; Long term motorhome parking at the seafront/beach huts and in Silverstone Avenue was becoming an issue, and the possibility of winter parking charges was being looked at, however this might cause displacement to other roads.

A member queried any plans to deal with drug dealing and whether the Council should write to Sussex Police with concerns. It was suggested that the Clerk remind residents through the next newsletter about reporting to Sussex Police and also bring the matter up at the next Neighbourhood Policing Team Forum. It was also suggested that the police could be invited to a meeting with the Council.

107. Committee Meeting Minutes

107.1 The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 22nd October and 12th November 2024 were received and noted.

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

The receipt of a petition arranged by WMRA and signed by 63 members of the public was noted. The petition asked for support for a proposal for a TRO to paint yellow lines next to the footpaths in the car parks at Queens Field East and West leading to the precinct, to deter parked vehicles from obstructing the footpaths, causing nuisance and danger to pedestrians. Members were satisfied that the petition provided the evidence they had requested of public opinion and it was **RESOLVED** that the Council would submit a TRO request to WSCC on behalf of WMRA.

109. Memorial to Lt. Prior

The Clerk reported on the brass memorial plaque that had dropped from its wall mounted position in Dark Lane. Information from Cllr Patel was awaited as regards any damage to the site and landowner permission. Cllr Patel indicated that he had approached the landowner, who had verbally confirmed approval to re-site the plaque. The Clerk will liaise with Cllr Patel and the landowners to obtain written confirmation. Additionally a request had been received from the Royal Naval Association Bognor Regis Branch for a re-dedication service, which was usual protocol, and which they could arrange. The Clerk was looking into costs to repair and re-position the plaque and any costs associated with the re-dedication service that the Council might anticipate bearing. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council supports the proposal for a re-dedication service, noting that this would take place in 2025 owing to the short timeframe and unconfirmed repair/permission aspects. The matter would therefore be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

110. Amenities**110.1 Grounds Maintenance Working Group (GMWG)**

Cllr Basford reported on the GMWG meeting held 4th November (notes circulated), outlining the recommendations being made to Council. Some discussion took place regarding whether the nature and value of the proposed Grounds Maintenance Agreement/contract necessitated using a formal tender process. Financial Regulations did not require this if the appointment was for one year but a two or three year contract value would trigger this. Members also discussed the level of detail needed for the quotation invitation documentation. The GMWG was asked to keep things as simple as possible whilst providing sufficient detail for bidding contractors and with the Council's best interests in mind. The GMWG members had recently undertaken weekend work to remove expired summer planting and compost from the railing troughs and other planters, with trough liners now stored in the Council first floor space. Some still flowering geraniums had been re-planted and left in situ temporarily but would be removed once unable to survive. The GMWG was thanked for its work on this project.

On considering the GMWG recommendations it was **RESOLVED** that:

- The length of contract for grounds maintenance from April 2025 be one year with an option for a further two years;
- A grounds maintenance budget for 2025/26 of £10,000 be allocated in the new budget;
- The Council delegates to the Working Group the completion of the process of choosing contractors/suppliers to be invited to submit a quotation for the grounds maintenance work from April 2025, with a further recommendation to Council on 17th December 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** to ratify expenditure and reimbursement to Cllr Basford of £22.99 for items associated with the recent planter compost and summer planting removal. It was **RESOLVED** to approve that Cllr Huntley would replace expired geraniums with her own surplus forget-me-knots and wallflowers.

110.2 WSCC Footpath Remedial Work – Min. 88, 22.10.24, refers

Cllr Rufey reported on the agreement at the last meeting that a letter be written to WSCC raising concerns about the quality of work. In researching the letter, she had found little evidence of dissatisfaction by residents and rather the opposite. The Clerk had circulated one complaint received but had also reported appreciation from some residents. As the matter had not been a specific agenda

item and as there appeared to be mixed views, it had therefore been decided to add this to this evening's agenda for due consideration. Cllr Patel advised that as the County Ward Member he had already raised concerns that he was aware of directly with WSCC Highways. It was **RESOLVED** that this action was satisfactory in dealing with the matter and that no further action by the Council was necessary at this time.

111. Finance

111.1 Members received bank reconciliations and the Income & Expenditure report for Cashbooks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to month ending 30th September 2024. The October accounts were not yet available. It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair sign the bank reconciliations and agreement to bank statements.

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

Heather Knight	£1,853.91
HMRC	£548.34
Nest Pension	£156.98
CIA Alarms	£15.67
Barclays Bank	£16.30
Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
Octopus Energy	£85.69
C&M Fire Alarms Ltd	£168.00
Barclaycard Commercial	£224.76
Castle Water	£15.82
Zen Internet Ltd	£61.08
Heather Knight	£2,219.31
J Rufey	£331.50
A Patel	£265.10
R Gotheridge	£265.10
A Colban	£637.76
HMRC	£1,070.48
Nest	£205.34
K Basford	£22.99
Bognor Regis Town Council	£276.00
Pronetic Ltd	£2,529.87
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
Chichester Payroll Services	£30.00
Information Commissioner's Office	£35.00
Barclays Bank	£14.80

111.3 Members considered a draft Budget V1 arising from the Budget Working Group meeting of 8th November 2024. Cllr Gotheridge reported on the available information used. The Working Group had kept in mind a realistic approach whilst endeavouring to keep any increases reasonable and justified. The anticipated budget scenario produced a £119,346 precept requirement, which was a 4.3% annual increase, or 93p, on a Band D property from the current year. However, the Arun DC council tax base figure was not yet available and further refinement was needed on some budget lines. In particular, the impact of the Government's changes to employer National Insurance contributions needed further examination. The Working Group was meeting again on 5th December and a further revised draft budget would be brought to the December Council meeting for discussion, with the final Council decision to be made at the January 2025 meeting.

111.4 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funds

Receipt of CIL payments in the sums of £854.66 in April and £1,709.32 in October had been received from Arun DC, which the Clerk recommended be moved to the CIL Earmarked Reserve. It was **RESOLVED** to transfer the CIL funds for April and October to the CIL Earmarked Reserve. Members were reminded that part of the funds would be spent on the three new public benches.

111.5 Q2 VAT reclaim and Penalty Appeal

The Clerk reported that the Q2 VAT reclaim had been submitted successfully by the due date and there appeared to be no further technical issue with the previous and current accounting software transfer. This meant that the QuickBooks software subscription could now be cancelled and all data would be solely on Rialtas software. The Clerk updated Members on the previous penalty points from HMRC, which had been successfully appealed against.

112. Grant Aid 2024-25

CLr Bence declared an interest in the application from Rose Green Infant School as family members were students there.

Members considered the recommendations from the Grant Aid Working Party and the following was **RESOLVED**:

The Parochial Church Council of St Richards	:	£ 500.00
Aldwick Baptist Church	:	£1,000.00
Girlguiding Bognor Regis West	:	£ 600.00
Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice	:	£ 50.00
Bognor Regis & Chichester District Samaritans	:	£ 200.00
Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance	:	£ 500.00
Tyler's Trust	:	£ 100.00
Rose Green Infant School	:	£1,500.00*
Arun Community Transport	:	£ 100.00
Puppy Love 2025	:	£ No grant
Willowhale Community Association	:	£ 500.00
2351 Sqn (Bognor Regis) Air Cadets	:	£1,000.00
Bognor Regis Armed Forces Day 2025	:	£ 200.00
Aldwick Green Conservation Society	:	£ 100.00
4Sight Vision Support (Bognor Regis)	:	£ 650.00

*Rose Green Infant School grant is conditional on directing the funding to the Foundation/Early Years and Year 2 groups projects outlined in their application.

Some discussion took place around the previous practice of hosting a Civic Reception at which Grant Aid cheques were presented. Members would like to consider resuming this for the 2025-26 Grant Aid, for either a December or January event.

113. Council Finances held and Bank Accounts

The Clerk reported that following receipt of the second precept instalment, the Council's main bank accounts with Barclays Bank now exceeded the level at which the FSA guaranteed protection cover. It was therefore recommended that the Council consider moving some funds to a new bank account provider. Two high interest savings accounts had recently come to attention and the Clerk had investigated these. Only one would accept parish councils. Following consideration it was **RESOLVED** to approve that the Clerk be authorised to open a Redwood Bank Business Savings Notice Account (35 days' notice), and transfer the required minimum £10,000 from Barclays Bank, with the existing Council named signatories to be authorisers together with the Clerk.

The Clerk had started investigating the benefits of transferring the Council's main day to day banking from Barclays Bank to Unity Trust Bank. Further research was needed however in order to bring full information to the Council. It was **AGREED** that this would be brought to a future meeting as soon as possible.

114. National Joint Council for Local Government Services Pay Scales 2024-25

Members noted that the new pay scales and pay award agreement had been announced in late October, to take effect backdated from 1st April 2024. This resulted in a new hourly rate for the Clerk and for the Assistant Clerk, as per contracts.

115. Government public consultation on Remote Meetings and Proxy Voting

Members noted details of the 8 week consultation from 24th October 2024 on whether parish and town council meetings should be held in person, as per current legislation, or permitted to take place online. Members did not choose to make a formal representation on the matter.

116. Policies

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt / re-adopt the following policies without amendment:-

- Lone Working Policy
- Biodiversity Policy
- IT Security Policy
- Civility & Respect Pledge: Dignity At Work Policy and Member Officer Protocol

117. Representatives to External Bodies

Cllr Rufey reported on her attendance at the recent Arun Flood Forum which had been very interesting. She would forward the presentation to the Clerk.

128. Correspondence

The Clerk reported on correspondence as follows:

- Email from Arun DC Electoral Services Manager: Electoral Review – Request for Community Governance Review. As part of the electoral review process, ADC would like to know by 16th December whether any town and parish councils would like to request a community governance review. The Clerk asked Members whether they wished this to be a December agenda item (with a request to ADC for deadline extension). Members did not wish to do so.
- The Grant Aid application from Arun Community Transport had included an offer to talk to the Council about the organisation. The Clerk asked Members if they would like to invite a representative to a future meeting, and this was **AGREED**.
- WSCC was conducting a brief Riparian Survey as part of a wider initiative to better understand how parish and town councils currently deal with such issues and how these may affect local highways. Owing to the deadline of 17th November, the Clerk had completed the survey on behalf of the Council.
- Sussex Resilience Forum – Local Risk Perception Survey.
- WSALC AGM & Conference 2024: The Report and handouts from the recent meeting had been forwarded to Members.
- WSALC Succession Planning: The Chair of WSALC had emailed regarding administrative changes at WSALC and introducing Emily Simpson, who would take over the day to day management of WSALC and become Assistant CEO of WSALC.
- ADC Monitoring Officer: The Clerk had forwarded the Social Media Guidance, Gifts & Hospitality Notification form and ADC Councillors Guide to Personal Safety for Members’ information.
- Southern Water: Announcement of Southern Water’s new Rivers and Seas Watch service, replacing the Beachbuoy online monitoring tool. The Clerk had subscribed to receive reports from the Rivers and Seas Watch service.
- Various regular e-newsletters from NALC and WSCC had been forwarded to Members where of interest.
- Clerks & Councils Direct November 2024, Issue 156, was available for Members interested.

121. Date and time of next Council Meeting: Tuesday 17th December 2024, at approximately 7.15pm (preceded by short Planning Committee at 7.00pm).

The meeting closed at 9.21pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATED