



ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

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Chair: Cllr Guy Purser **Clerk:** Heather Knight

Minutes of the **ORDINARY MEETING (468) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**
Held on **Tuesday 18th February 2025 at 7.00pm** in the Aldwick Parish Council Offices.

Present: Cllrs: Rufey (Vice Chair), Bence, Buckley, Gotheridge, Patel (to Min 161) and Thas (from Min. 154)

In attendance: H Knight (Clerk)

The meeting opened at 7.00pm.

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

152. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received, and reason approved, from Cllrs Huntley (personal commitment), Basford (personal commitment), Shepherd (personal reason) and Purser (personal reason).
Cllr Patel gave advance apology that he would need to leave the meeting at 8.30pm owing to a personal commitment.

153. Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests

Cllr Buckley declared an interest in agenda item 11 Grounds maintenance Contract, as two of the original invited tender contractors were known to him. It was noted that redaction of contractor details from the quotation documents before Members removed the difficulty of potential bias.

There were no changes to the Register of Interests made.

154. Minutes of the Council Meeting held 21st January 2025

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21st January 2025 were a correct record and that the Chair of the meeting sign them.

Clerk's Report

All Parishes Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) Meeting: The Clerk had attended the 14th February 2025 meeting. NPT Inspector Ross Wickings had reported forthcoming restructuring, which was likely to impact on NPT resourcing, further details were awaited. The Clerk had highlighted local concerns around drug and antisocial behaviour issues in the Marine Park Gardens area: The Inspector will raise this with the area PCSO, and also ADC Community Safety Officers would raise with parks and contractor teams for monitoring.

Premises maintenance: A recommended 2-5 year solar PV system service visit had been carried out on 7th February 2025 (installation was May 2021) by the installer Wagner Renewables, as previously agreed by Council, at the cost of £120 +VAT. Findings were satisfactory, other than pigeons having nested beneath the array, which could cause connector issues: A quotation for removal and fitting of mesh barrier was awaited. A minor finding was non signal to the WiFi, which is not a supply issue as it only affects data reporting but would be monitored. The Clerk has requested checks on brackets when installing the mesh to ensure these are water tight, following water ingress during heavy rain. Details of SEG (Smart Export Guarantee) scheme had also been requested to investigate potential for selling unused energy to the grid.

Annual PAT Testing and Emergency Light Testing had taken place on 6th February 2025, which the Clerk had authorised under delegated authority at a cost of £350 (ex VAT). One emergency light needed to be replaced due to not holding its charge, which the Clerk had authorised and the replacement light would be fitted next week, at a cost of £70 (ex VAT).

A service/maintenance visit had been arranged for the Lincat water boiler to bring it back into use, as it had remained out of order for the past 16 months, at a cost of £160 + VAT. The equipment had been descaled, sanitized, a new filter fitted and was now fully functional.

TRO West Meads: The WSCC Area Traffic Engineer dealing with the recent application for a TRO at West Meads car park had acknowledged receipt and detailed the process, advising that it may take approximately 12 months for a TRO application to proceed to implementation, if approved. Initial Assessment had taken place and the application would now progress to Detailed Assessment, which included input from the WSCC Parking Team.

Allotments: 4 vacant plots had recently occurred for reasons such as ill health or notice to terminate for non-cultivation. All 4 had been quickly re-let from the waiting list. Several notice to cultivate letters had been issued and relevant plots were being monitored. The previously approved repairs to the two sheds would take place on 3rd March 2025.

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

None raised.

156. Adjournment for public questions

There were no public speakers.

157. Reports from the District and County Councillors representing Aldwick

D.Cllr Bence reported on various district matters pertaining to the parish: Bunding defences were almost complete at Queens Field playing field (West Meads) and he had been liaising with the resident's association there. Avisford Park should be next to be addressed, and one more security gap at The Pound was awaiting work. Aldwick Conservation Society had recently received 30 trees from a Plymouth Brethren grant. Hedging at West Park had had to be drastically cut into to address a rat infestation in the vicinity. Progress was being made regarding flooding in Fish Lane with County, District and Southern Water working together regarding responsibility for the ditch bordering West Park. Southern Water's proposal for infrastructure investment was imminently anticipated. National planning changes now meant that no new attenuation ponds linking to sewers would be permitted for new developments. Parking across marked parking bays by motorhomes in Fish Lane had been confirmed as an enforceable offence regardless of whether other parking restrictions were in place, and the District Council was taking action to curtail incidences.

C.Cllr Patel reported on several County Council matters, including: A road safety campaign highlighting the growing problem of drivers using mobile phones; Bognor Fire Station recently celebrated 12 Chichester College pupils aged 16-19 passing their IGNITE course; WSCC has agreed a balanced budget 2025-26 with a 4.99% increase to residents, lower than many county councils.

158. Committee Meeting Minutes

158.1 The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 21st January and 4th February 2025 were received and noted.

159. Amenities

159.1 Review of annual allotment rent charges: The Clerk's report was noted. Members discussed whether to increase the annual plot rent in 2026 from £20 to £25 or other amount, noting that no increase had been applied for several years and that maintenance costs for the allotment site would continue to rise. Whilst wishing to continue the accessibility of this community asset for residents, Members felt that an increase was justified. It was **RESOLVED** to write to plot tenants advising of the intention to raise the annual fee to £30 with effect from 1st April 2026.

159.2 Review of Allotment Tenancy Agreement: The Clerk's report with recommendation was noted. Members considered whether to amend the tenancy terms to reduce the boundary gap between private property, however it was felt that the current 800mm gap was a reasonable amount. It was **RESOLVED** that no change would be made.

159.3 Summer Play Scheme 2025: Members considered quotations from two play scheme providers, one being the previous contractor at a cost of £9,850 (ex VAT) and the other being The 39 Club at a cost of £4,301 (ex VAT). The two options provided different approaches, though broadly both would have sports, games and arts/craft activities available. Following detailed discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from The 39 Club, for the six week summer school break period, with similar arrangements as in previous years of two days per week in both West Park and Avisford Park. The Clerk would publicise the play scheme in due course in the Council's newsletter, notice boards and website.

159.4 Bus Shelter Repairs: Following graffiti and vandalism to the bus shelter on Aldwick Road near Aldwick Farm/Westminster Drive, Arun Community Wardens had partially removed offensive graffiti from the Perspex window, however ghosting was visible and graffiti remained on two timber panels in addition to damage to a window frame. Two options for graffiti removal, window frame repair and repainting of the bus shelter were considered, viz either repainting of the whole shelter, or repainting of only the two affected panels. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Bognor Regis Town Council/Town Force of Option 1, graffiti removal, window frame repair and repainting of entire shelter (except internal roof) at a cost of £338 + VAT. On the Clerk's recommendation, it was **RESOLVED** that this would be funded from CIL receipts 2024-25 EMR 326.

160. Finance

160.1 Cashbook Reconciliations: Members received bank reconciliations for Cashbooks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to month ending 31st December 2024 and month ending 31st January 2025. It was **RESOLVED** that two Councillors sign the bank reconciliations and bank statements to confirm agreement of matching figures.

160.2 Income & Expenditure Reports: Members received and reviewed Income & Expenditure Reports for months ending 31st December 2024 and 31st January 2025. It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the known overspend on the Open Spaces Improvements budget code 4410, which was due to the recent public seat replacements. It was **RESOLVED** to ratify that the Christmas Projects budget code 4500 would be overspent in the region of up to £200. Final figures were not yet available but should be evident in the March accounts.

160.3 Earmarked Reserves: Members received a summary of Earmarked Reserves held to Q3 31st December 2024.

160.4 Payments for Authorisation: Members **RESOLVED** to approve the List of Payments for Authorisation, as detailed below, and that the payment schedule be reviewed and duly signed by two Councillors.

Aldwick Parish Council withdrawal/top up petty cash	£150.00
Heather Knight	£1,899.60
Alison Colban	£637.76
HMRC	£741.19
Nest Pension Services	£163.03
Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
Tyrrell Services Ltd	£192.00
Wagner Renewables Ltd	£144.00
Bognor Regis Town Council	£458.35
Bognor Regis Town Council	£314.39
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	£36.00
Lowen Electrical Services Ltd	£350.00
Barclaycard	£302.32
Castle Water	£6.70
Octopus Energy	£141.69
Barclays Bank	£25.30

161. Owing to the confidential nature of agenda item 11 Grounds Maintenance Contract, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude press and public from the meeting for discussion of the following item (SO.3d refers, commercial/contractual sensitivity).

Cllr Patel gave his apologies and left the meeting as noted under Min. 152.

162. Grounds Maintenance Contract

Members considered the Grounds Maintenance Working Group (GMWG) confidential report and recommendation, which Cllr Gotheridge summarised on behalf of the GMWG. Identification of individual contractors was redacted, with bidders labelled A, B, C etc. Of the six invited contractors, two had withdrawn and one had not responded. Of the three contractors submitting bids, the GMWG had undertaken thorough evaluations and scoring system, on which basis the recommendation was made.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommended appointment of Perry Turner-Hogg / West Sussex Mowing as the Council's grounds maintenance contractor from 1st April 2025 for twelve months, at the annual contract value of £10,350 (ex VAT), with the option of a two year extension beyond 31st March 2026 subject to Council agreement.

163. Lt Prior Memorial Plaque

Members considered the quotation for reinstatement of the commemorative plaque at Dark Lane beach entrance, written permission from the landowner having been confirmed. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the quotation and agreed that Kevin Hughes, Stonemason, undertake the work at a cost of £280 (ex VAT), subject to clarification by the Clerk of the fixing method: if this would affect the appearance of the plaque, the Clerk will revert to Council.

164. Premises Cleaning Arrangements

Following previous discussion, four quotations had been sought and the officer report was noted. Members considered two quotations and officer recommendation. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Monkey Nuts Ltd at the quoted cost of £43 + VAT for fortnightly premises cleaning visits, plus quarterly external window/solar panel cleaning at a cost of £38 + VAT per visit, and annual gutter cleaning at a cost of £40 + VAT per visit. The Clerk reported that premises cleaning, window cleaning and gutter cleaning could commence in March using an unspent balance of £552 under Premises Expenses budget code 4210, and Members approved this. Members requested that a simple agreement by Letter of Instruction be drawn up setting out terms including a three month termination period.

165. Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)

The Clerk reported that although the current EICR report, which covered fixed appliance/wire testing (FAT) of the premises, was valid and had been for a recommended 10 year period at the time, it was now considered best practice to undertake the EICR every 5 years. This was particularly pertinent as a building regularly used by staff and public. Two quotations had been obtained, both by service providers previously contracted by the Council. Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation by UK Safety Management Ltd at a cost of £319 + VAT.

166. Devolution

The Chair of Council had asked for this item to be included for Members to start considering services that might be viable for the Parish Council to take over from District or County as a result of proposals for local government reorganisation and a unitary principal authority. Arun DC Devolution Updates by the CEO had been shared with Members to keep all informed. It was noted that there is now a live Government consultation on the proposed Sussex mayoral strategic authority, closing mid-April. It was **AGREED** that this item would be discussed again at future meetings.

167. Public Engagement and Communications

The Chair of Council had requested this item, supported by the Clerk, to consider whether the Council should set up a social media presence. It was **AGREED** to defer this item to a future agenda.

168. West Sussex County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) 2025-2030

Members consider whether the Council would formally respond to the public consultation, deadline 11.55pm 21st March 2025. It was **AGREED** that rather than responding to the consultation questions, a covering letter raising salient points from the Parish Council perspective be drafted, with the Clerk to liaise with Cllr Bence regarding content, for ratification at the 18th March meeting.

169. Representatives to External Bodies

There were no reports or meetings attended.

170. Correspondence

The Clerk highlighted correspondence of note as follows:

- WSCC: West Sussex Fire & Rescue, public consultation on proposed changes to Emergency Response Standards, deadline 27th February 2025 – forwarded;
- WSCC: West Sussex Highway Network Management Plan (HNMP). Following consideration of results of key stakeholder consultation, the Plan been agreed and published on the County Council’s website, available at this link: [Highway Network Management Plan - West Sussex County Council](#);
- WSCC: News release 05.02.25 on Government backing for the expression of interest for a Sussex mayoral strategic authority;
- WSCC: The Bulletin/Member Information 05.02.25, topics relating to devolution and local government reorganisation, the draft Transport Strategy consultation, HNMP, and TROs for Bognor Regis – forwarded;
- ADC: Devolution Updates January and February by CEO – forwarded;
- NALC: CEO Bulletin 06.02.25 – forwarded;
- WSALC: Neighbourhood Planning and Planning Reform Note 23.01.25 – forwarded
- WSALC: English Devolution White Paper Update 05.02.25, Government confirmation that Sussex will be on the Devolution Priority Programme – forwarded;
- ADALC: Minutes of meeting 28.02.25 – forwarded;
- Grant Aid: Update and photographs from Aldwick Baptist Church on use of the Council grant towards their regeneration project, now completed – forwarded;
- Resident: Email received regarding inconsiderate parking of potentially abandoned van and other vehicles at High Trees – resident and officers have reported to Operation Crackdown, issue is ongoing.

171. Date and time of next Council Meeting: Tuesday 18th March 2025, at approximately 7.15pm (if preceded by short Planning Committee), or at 7.00pm if the Planning Committee meeting is cancelled.

The meeting closed at 9.18pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATED