



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 (469) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**
Held on **Tuesday 18th March 2025 at 7.00pm** in the Aldwick Parish Council Offices.

Present: Cllrs: Rufey (Chair), Basford, Bence, Gotheridge, Huntley (from Min. 174), Patel, Shepherd and Thas

In attendance: H Knight (Clerk)

The meeting opened at 7.00pm.

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

172. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received, and reason approved, from Cllrs Purser (personal commitment) and Buckley (personal commitment).

173. Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

There were no changes to the Register of Interests made.

174. Minutes of the Council Meeting held 18th February 2025

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18th February 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 18th March 2025 meeting today. She had raised concern regarding a damaged vehicle abandoned in the car park following a collision in February, and would be following this up with relevant authorities. Insp. Wickings had reported on very recent burglaries of fire stations, including Bognor Regis, involving theft of tools and heavy duty equipment. Any information from public to assist investigation should be reported to the police.

ADC Monitoring Officer/Clerks' Meeting: Attended by the Clerk on 27th February, various topics were discussed including code of conduct issues and training, register of interests, and devolution.

Min. 154 - TRO West Meads Car Park: The TRO application had received no objection from the Highways Parking Strategy Team and had subsequently passed WSCC officer Detailed Assessment stage. The application would now progress to presentation at a TRO Moderation, where scoring and design will be modified by a panel of Traffic Engineers against TRO criteria.

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

The Chair brought to attention that an EV charge point had been installed in Elbridge Crescent, which a resident had queried with the Council's staff. The Clerk advised that the WSCC consultation was part of correspondence last November and had been publicised on the Parish Council's website and notice boards. The resident concern was over loss of the ordinary parking space and potential for increased parking in their residential close, however the WSCC specifically states that no new restrictions will be in place and anyone can continue to use the EV space.

176. Adjournment for public questions

There were no public present.

177. Reports from the District and County Councillors representing Aldwick

D.Cllr Bence reported on various district matters pertaining to the parish: Bunding defences at Queens Field playing field (West Meads) were now complete bar one additional boulder, and a review will be undertaken to check security measures are satisfactory. The rat infestation at Marine Park Gardens had improved, however there was now an issue at West Park. He reported on his attendance at a Members' Briefing on gypsy and traveller encampments and police powers to act. The Clerk reported that this was mentioned at today's NPT /parishes meeting and the slides from the briefing had been shared: She would forward these to Members, but they are not in the public domain. Regarding sewerage and flooding issues, Cllr Bence reported that an agreement between Southern Water, District and County Councils to extend the beach outfall pipe at Aldwick was very close. A query was raised regarding the Parish Council response to the draft Flood Risk Management Strategy consultation, and Cllr Bence advised that he had been unable to produce this. Cllr Gotheridge advised that he would undertake this. The Clerk reminded members that this was a separate agenda item.

C.Cllr Patel reported on several County Council matters, including: Status of the TRO for West Meads Car Park; Devolution – WSCC Leader had written to the Deputy Prime Minister for clarification on the emerging local government reorganisation and devolution. With a West Sussex population of around 900k, East Sussex circa 525k and Brighton & Hove circa 250k, confirmation was being sought of area transfers under the new system.

178. Committee Meeting Minutes

178.1 The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 4th March 2025 were received and noted.

179. Amenities

179.1 Grounds Maintenance: The Clerk had circulated bullet notes summarising main points discussed at the 3rd March meeting between the Grounds Maintenance Working Group and Clerk and the new contractor following their appointment. Cllr Basford reported on the positive meeting and a subsequent inspection of the railing/post top planters. These were in serviceable but untidy condition and a quote had been sought from the contractor and their associate worker. Members discussed the resulting quote of £790 (ex VAT) labour and estimated £210 (ex VAT) materials for the sanding down and Hammerite painting of these, plus repainting of raised bed sleepers at The Millennium Garden. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the work and cost up to a maximum total of £1,100, noting that the materials element was estimated due to requesting an urgent quote for consideration.

179.2 Summer Play Scheme 2025: The Clerk sought Members' views on whether to research additional and complementary services for the summer school break, as there would be surplus funds available. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Clerk researching her suggestions of possible options such as skateboard sessions and Family Support Network sessions.

179.3 Public Seats: Members considered the quotation of £225.00 +VAT for replacing 4 slats and wood staining the seat situated at the beach entrance at the end of Barrack Lane, noting that a number of residents had commented on the condition of this seat over the past year. The seat and land did not appear to be owned by any authority. It was **RESOLVED** to approve that Bognor Regis Town Council/Town Force undertake the work as per their quotation of £225.00 + VAT, to be funded from Earmarked Reserves CIL 2024-25 receipts.

179.4 Annual Tree Scheme

Cllr Gotheridge sought confirmation that Members were happy for him to proceed with researching suitable locations for tree planting, as in previous years, to which Members **AGREED**, noting that this was within planned budgeting.

180. Finance

180.1 Cashbook Reconciliations: The Clerk reported that the February accounts were not completed in time for consideration and would be brought to the next meeting.

180.2 Income & Expenditure Reports: The Clerk reported that as per the previous item, the Income and Expenditure report to 28th February was not yet available and would be brought to the next meeting.

180.3 Earmarked Reserves: The Clerk advised that any movement of funds into or from earmarked reserves (EMRs) should take place before the financial year end on 31st March 2025, as any unspent budgets would otherwise return into general reserves. Members discussed anticipated underspends, suggested utilisation and the Clerk's recommendations. It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the Clerk move unspent funds and set up new Earmarked Reserves as follows:

- Unspent balance of Garden Maintenance budget code 4400 to be transferred to a new EMR Open Spaces & Improvements;
- Unspent balance of £644 from Elections & Polls budget code 4100 to be transferred to existing EMR 322 Elections;
- £1,700 balance of Youth Activities budget code 4415 to be transferred to new EMR Youth Activities;
- Unspent balance of Subscriptions budget code 4125 to be transferred to new EMR Equipment Renewal/Purchase;
- The £280 cost of reinstating the Lt Prior commemorative plaque, previously approved, would be funded from the £300 unspent balance of Chairman's Allowance, budget code 4070.

Reference was made to the need to commence the office flooring and blinds replacement, using EMR 324 New Flooring. It was noted that current Earmarked Reserved awaiting spending would be reviewed for purpose and appropriate project progression as soon as possible in the new financial year. Comment was also made regarding consideration of future projects such as parish boundary signs/gateways and review of location in particular of a gateway entrance for the boundary at Marine Drive West.

180.4 Payments for Authorisation: The Clerk drew attention to the £8,000 contribution to public toilets provision at Queens Field (West Meads) and Avisford Park, which also forms a separate agenda item. 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.

Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
Salaries, tax, NIC, pension February 2025	£3,441.58
Lowen Electrical Services Ltd	£70.00
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
Securitas Technology	£342.00
Barclays Bank	£22.60
Octopus Energy	£121.33
Zen Internet Ltd	£58.58
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
SDH Property Maintenance	£1,950.00
Barclaycard Commercial	£147.22
Arun District Council	£8,000.00
Castle Water	£14.26
Castle Water	£2.72

181. Risk Register Annual Review

Members considered the current Risk Register. The Clerk highlighted several amendments, where information had updated, that needed to be incorporated. The document would be reviewed again as soon as practicable in the new civic year. A suggestion was made to insert a section relating to potential damage to property or loss of business caused by a contractor. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Risk Register with the recommended amendments and inclusion of a new point covering risk of damage to property or loss of business caused by a contractor.

182. Insurance Annual Review

Members noted the annual renewal premium for the second year of the Long Term Agreement of £2,700 (including IPT) for cover commencing 1st April 2025 and **RESOLVED** to approve this (invoice awaited).

The Clerk reported on action taken, in liaison with the Chair of Council, regarding building reinstatement revaluation, having noted that none appeared to have been undertaken in recent years. It is normally recommended to ensure valuations are updated regularly, and especially following significant materials cost increases after the Covid pandemic, to avoid an insurance cover shortfall. The Clerk had therefore under urgent action / delegated authority sought a revaluation exercise through the Council's insurance broker's recommended provider, Cardinus Risk Management, at a cost of £150 + VAT. The revaluation report was awaited and Members noted that this may result in a mid-term adjustment to the premium. It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the Clerk's action and the £150 + VAT cost.

183. Cyber Security Insurance

The Clerk had sought advice and recommendations from the Council's insurance broker regarding cyber security insurance cover, which is excluded from the insurance policy. Sector advice currently was that this cover is considered to be essential due to the increasingly high risk of cyber attack. A mini survey of other Sussex town and parish council clerks revealed that the majority of councils approached had adopted such cover. A quotation offering two costed levels of cover had been obtained. Following some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to take out the broker recommended cyber insurance cover by Coalition from April 2025, at the lower limit annual premium of £319.20 (inc. IPT).

184. Backup of IT/Cloud Storage

The Clerk advised that investigation had revealed that Microsoft and Google, whilst ensuring that they won't lose customers' data, do not guarantee restoration if lost by the customer or resulting from cyber incident: Cloud stored data is therefore as vulnerable to accidental or malicious deletion, ransomware and other types of data loss as on-premises applications. The Council's IT provider had recommended the benefit of 365 back up of email, SharePoint and OneDrive at a cost of £2.50 per user per month. Members considered the quotation received from Pronetic Ltd for 13x Microsoft 365 Backup Infinite Cloud Retention at a total annual cost of £32.50 + VAT, and **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase for the new financial year.

185. Public Toilets Contribution

As noted under agenda item 9.4, Min. 180.4, the Clerk sought formal approval for the budgeted annual contribution to Arun District Council of £8,000 towards the upkeep of the public toilets at Queens Field (West Meads) Recreation Ground and at Avisford Park. It was **RESOLVED** to formally approve the contribution of £8,000 (no VAT).

186. Annual Parish Meeting Tuesday 6th May 2025, 6.30pm

The Clerk advised that as previously agreed, a short presentation by Arun Community Transport was being arranged. An additional offer had been received from the WSCC Community Engagement Officer to talk about the Greenprint grass verge mowing programme. This would be for around 15 minutes also and in addition to both presentations there would be the usual Council reporting. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the addition of the Greenprint presentation to the evening. The Clerk would advertise the event on the Council's website, notice boards and newsletter, and the agenda would be available in due course. It was noted that the longer public meeting may mean a later start for the scheduled Planning Committee meeting on the same evening.

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

As referred to under agenda item 6, Min. 177, Cllr Bence was unable to produce the letter giving the Parish Council's overall response to the draft LFRMS. Following an offer by Cllr Gotheridge, it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would liaise with him to identify key points and submit a response to the County Council by the consultation deadline of 21st March 2025.

188. Arun Flood Forum

Members noted the forthcoming Arun Flood Forum meeting scheduled for 24th April 2025. On this occasion it was not the turn of Aldwick Parish Council to attend however questions for the forum to consider could be submitted. No matters were raised for submission.

189. Devolution

A Devolution Conference for Arun parish and town councils was arranged by Arun District Association

of Local Councils (ADALC) and West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC), taking place on 31st March 2025 at Littlehampton Town Council. Councils were invited to send the clerk plus two councillors. The Clerk reported that she and the Chair of Council planned to attend and asked for any other nominations. Cllrs Huntley and Thas advised that they would like to attend and would check diary availability. Attendance was therefore **AGREED** as being the Clerk plus two out of Cllr Purser (Chair), Cllr Huntley or Cllr Thas.

190. Representatives to External Bodies

There were no reports of external meetings attended.

191. Correspondence

The Clerk highlighted correspondence items of note as follows:

- SALC Newsletter Sprint 2025 – forwarded.
- WSCC Community Engagement: Greenprint grass verge mowing update – to be forwarded.
- WSCC Public Health Department: Advance notice of public consultation commencing 24th March-27th April 2025 about the proposed five year West Sussex Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030. The Clerk asked Members if they wished this to be an agenda item for consideration of formal response – Members did not wish this.
- WSCC Children Young People and Learning: Details of consultation on post 16 Transport Policy. The Clerk asked Members if they wished this to be an agenda item for consideration of formal response – Members did not wish this.
- WSCC: Various Email Updates and Press Releases regarding Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – forwarded.
- WSCC: Notice and consultation of proposed Permanent Traffic Order A29 Bury Road/Bury Hill to introduce a 40mph speed limit on the A29 southwards through Bury Village and Bury Hill – forwarded.
- WSCC Highways Transport and Planning: Details of major projects, including Bus Service Improvement Plan, Real time passenger information screens and bus stop improvements; A29 Realignment Scheme; A259 Bognor Regis to Littlehampton improvements; Bognor Regis Esplanade public realm improvements – forwarded.
- ADC: CEO -Various Updates and Member Briefings regarding Devolution.
- ADC: Flood Smart leaflets and information 'Prepare now for tomorrow'
- NALC: Various CEO Bulletins covering Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation proposals – forwarded.
- Sussex Alerts: Sussex Police Monthly Bulletins Arun – forwarded.
- Keep Britain Tidy: The Great British Spring Clean.
Comment was made regarding residents who carry out regular litter picking under their own arrangements. Members expressed appreciation for their community minded action and wished to express thanks. The Clerk would make mention in a future Newsletter.
- Clerks & Councils Direct, March 2025, issue 158.

192. Date and time of next Council Meeting: Tuesday 22nd April 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 8.34pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATED