



ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Aldwick Parish Offices, 88 Pryors Lane, Aldwick, West Sussex. PO21 4JF
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Chair: Cllr Guy Purser **Clerk:** Heather Knight

Minutes of the **ORDINARY MEETING (469) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL** Held on **Tuesday 22nd April 2025** held at Aldwick Parish Council Offices.

Present: Cllrs: Purser (Chair), Basford, Bence, Buckley, Gotheridge, Huntley, Rufey and Thas

In attendance: H Knight (Clerk)

The meeting opened at 7.15pm.

193. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Shepherd (work commitments), and it was noted that this would have been his last meeting as he had recently resigned from the Council.

194. Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests

Cllr Bence declared an interest in any items that may relate to his role as a County Councillor or as a District Councillor.

There were no changes to the Register of Interests made.

195. Minutes of the Council Meeting held 18th March 2025

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18th March 2025 were a correct record and that the Chair of the meeting sign them. The Clerk reported items as follows:-

Clerk's Report

Min. 174 – Clerk's Report/TRO West Meads Car Park: WSCC had confirmed that the application had sufficiently passed the TRO Moderation, and a detailed design would now be undertaken to determine exact lengths of double yellow lines to put forward for public consultation stage. West Meads Residents Association had been informed of progress. The Clerk and Cllr Bence were meeting the officer on site on 1st May.

Lt. Prior Plaque Reinstatement: This had been reinstated in late March and the Bognor Regis Branch of the RNA advised. They were now working on the Rededication Service and final details were awaited. A potential date of Saturday 31st May, afternoon, had been proposed, for which the Chair of Council had confirmed his availability.

Grounds Maintenance: The newly appointed contractor had commenced contract work, with weeding/tidying of roundabouts, tarmac around Council offices and Millennium Garden, grass mowing, bedding edges recut, mulch applied and leaf blowing. Additionally, as separately agreed, planters were being repainted.

Min. 179.2 – Summer Play Scheme: The Clerk had produced the Event Management Plan and submitted the event licence application to Arun DC. Contact had been made with a skateboard lesson provider used by Arun DC, costs for which were awaited. It was possible that a Community Safety Grant could be applied for to assist with funding. A separate event licence and management plan would be needed once details for the sessions were known.

Min. 179.3 – Public Seats: The seat at Barrack Lane had been repaired as agreed. A number of residents had expressed thanks, which the Clerk had forwarded to members together with several appreciative comments about the Lt Prior Plaque restoration.

Other actions: The Council's insurance had duly been renewed from 1st April 2025 and as previously reported a revaluation exercise commenced. The report and any mid-term adjustment were awaited (Min. 182 refers). The Cyber Insurance had been taken out as agreed (Min.183 refers). The IT/Cloud Storage action was in progress (Min. 184 refers). The £8000 contribution to Avisford and Queens Field public toilets had been transferred to Arun DC (Min. 185 refers). The response letter to WSCC LFRMS consultation had been submitted and circulated to Members (Min.187 refers).

Other updates for Members' information: In response to a public enquiry, the Clerk had found that Arun DC is in the process of refurbishing the disused toilet block into open plan marketable space, which is part of a long term strategy for improving revenue.

Sussex Police Rural Crime Team is offering street surgeries for Sussex parishes which will include attendance by the Neighbourhood Police Team. The Clerk had registered interest for Aldwick, potentially combined with Pagham PC. The six monthly fire alarm visit had taken place.

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

The Chair reported that he had attended Bognor Regis Town Council's Mayor's Service and Bersted Parish Council's Chair's Civic Reception recently.

197. Adjournment for public questions

There were no public present.

198. Reports from the District and County Councillors representing Aldwick

C.Cllr Bence reported in detail on the process for devolution and local government reorganisation, as a member of the WSCC committee working on this. A number of potential scenarios were still unknown, such as the Crawley proposal to separate from WSCC to align with Surrey CC, whether this would include Gatwick, whether Adur and Worthing would be aligned to a Brighton authority, etc. The final WSCC committee report would be drawn up on 23rd September 2025, for submission to the Government on 25th September, and he would keep the Parish Council updated.

D.Cllr Bence reported briefly on notable Arun DC matters: Drainage issues – Agreement had been reached to extend the beach outfall pipe, a decision was to be made as to whether WSCC or ADC procurement process will be used for contracted work. The Bathing Water Quality Working Group had been due to meet last month but was postponed. The bunding to secure parks and open spaces was now complete, with much improved protection around Queens Field recreation ground at West Meads.

199. Committee Meeting Minutes

199.1 The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 8th April 2025 were received and noted.

200. Amenities

200.1 Bus Shelter, Aldwick Road:

The Clerk's Report was noted. The bus shelter had been repainted following graffiti, as previously agreed. However, some graffiti ghosting remained burned in and visible on one window despite attempted removal by both Arun Community Warden and Town Force. Members considered options and following discussion **RESOLVED** to approve the quotation of £226.00 + VAT for Bognor Regis Town Council/Town Force to replace the polycarbonate/Perspex window, to be funded from CIL receipts Earmarked Reserve.

200.2 Allotments:

The Assistant Clerk's report was noted. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation by the Council's grounds maintenance contractor to cut back two exposed tree stumps affecting Plots 16, 17 and 18 at a cost of £90 (excl.VAT) and cutting back of overgrown vegetation/hedging affecting Plots 14 and 19 at a cost of £140 (excl.VAT). No hedge removal would take place if nesting birds were evident. The total cost of £230 (excl. VAT) would be funded from the Allotments Maintenance Budget Code 4480. It was also **AGREED** that costs be obtained for clearance of brambles/debris affecting Plot 13.

201. Finance

201.1 Cashbook Reconciliations: Members considered the banking reconciliation reports for Cashbooks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to month end 28th February 2025 and confirmed agreement to bank statements, and that paperwork be duly signed by two authorisers. Members considered the banking reconciliation reports for Cashbooks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to month end 31st March 2025 and confirmed agreement to bank statements, and that paperwork be duly signed by two authorisers.

201.2 Income & Expenditure Reports: Members considered the Income and Expenditure reports to 28th February and 31st March 2025. Members discussed with the Clerk an ongoing anomaly with the figures for Salaries and Employers NI, which appeared underspent and overspent respectively due to historic data entries. It was noted that some inherited methodology during the transition of accounting software and processes in 2023-2024 were still not clarified and that potentially employee tax figures had been inadvertently included within the Employer NI/Tax budget coding. The Clerk would ensure that this was fully rectified for the new financial year 1st April 2025-31st March 2026 to give correct representation and clarity of expenditure against budget. The Clerk advised that whilst the accounts were to month end and reconciled, the final Year End accounting and closedown was yet to take place.

The Clerk highlighted and explained several other items on the report showing significant variance; Code 4065 bank charges – Barclays Bank had increased its charging considerably which now cost the council more than budgeted: The Council's recent move to electronic payments, would reduce costs. Some items, such as the annual insurance Premium Code 4110, would become accounted for as year end adjustments. Code 4125 Subscriptions was significantly underspent. This was due to recent cancellation of some subscriptions, eg Zoom conference licence, but also possibly that under previous administration items such as Microsoft packages may have been allocated to this code. Conversely, Code 4145 MS SharePoint License was significantly overspent, as all Microsoft invoices were now being allocated to this. Code 1020 Hall Hire Revenue was significantly higher than budgeted due to increased bookings income. Code 4200 Electricity was significantly underspent and may have been overbudgeted for in 2024-25. The 2025-26 budget had therefore been reduced. Code 4480 Allotments Maintenance was overspent, as previously agreed due to major shed repairs, however a £500 donation from the Allotments Society would partially offset this.

Members and the Clerk discussed Earmarked Reserves held and being set up, as previously agreed. It was **RESOLVED** to set up a new Earmarked Reserve for any unspent toilet repairs from the budgeted £2000 allocated.

201.3 Precept: Receipt from Arun DC of £60,954.50, being the first half of the new precept, was noted.

201.4 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.

Zen	£76.28
Zen	£63.96
March salaries/pension/HMRC/	£3,441.58
UK Safety Management	£390.00
A J Gallagher Insurance	£2,700.00
Monkey Nuts Ltd	£248.40
Copiers & Printers	£55.52
C&M Fire alarms Ltd	£168.00
Barclays Bank	£17.50
Barclaycard Commercial	£145.32
Octopus Energy	£85.84
Castle Water	£12.17
Castle water	£9.44
Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
Bognor Regis Town Council	£344.40
Kevin Hughes	£280.00
MPW Decorating and Maintenance	£116.24
Process Matters2	£120.00
Sussex Views magazine	£120.00
A J Gallagher Insurance	£319.20

202. Risk Register Annual Review

201.5 Internal Auditor: The Clerk's report and recommendation was noted. Following consideration of options and costs versus previous services, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditor for the year ending 31st March 2025 and ensuing three financial years, at an estimated cost of £350 plus travelling expenses, + VAT, per year. This would provide two visits per year, one interim and one final, of either in person or remote audit, and represented good value with detailed reports, by an industry specific professional. A provisional year end audit date of 3rd June had been reserved, which the Clerk would now confirm.

202. Fixed Wire Testing

Further to the EICR of the premises on 18th March 2025, Members considered the report findings. A C2 item had been noted regarding poor standard of wiring protective trunking, and recommendation of urgent action to remediate this. The contractor had quoted £310 + VAT to replace the trunking. Members discussed the options of alternative pricing and solutions, however on balance, given the category of urgent work requiring immediate attention, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the quote and appoint the work to UK Safety Management as per their quotation.

203. Annual Parish Meeting

Members approved the draft agenda for final publishing for the 6th May Annual Parish (Electors) Meeting at 6.30pm.

204. Devolution

The Chair reported on attendance by him, Cllr Thas and the Clerk at the WSALC/ADALC Devolution Conference on 31st March 2025. Presentations had been given by Arun DC CEO, WSCC Leader and the Police & Crime Commissioner. It was notable that the Government's stated intention was for money saving, though it was debatable whether this would be the achieved outcome. Members queried whether the likelihood of parish/town councils being dissolved, and it was noted that there were no known plans for this. The Chair said that one theme emerging from all discussions was the opportunity for parish/town councils to work together to manage services currently under principal authority remit. However, there was still very little known about the process as it continues to evolve. Members felt on balance that there was nothing to be done at the present time until things became clearer.

205. Public Engagement and Communications

This item had been deferred from a previous meeting. After brief discussion, it was **AGREED** to again defer the item to a future meeting, when more time could be given to consideration.

206. NHS Hospital Laundry Collection

Members considered a request from an NHS Transport Co-Ordinator for venues and support of a scheme to collect NHS laundry items that gone home with discharged patients, the intention being to regularly collect, clean and re-use wherever possible to save NHS funds. On balance, members did not consider the Parish Office premises to be a suitable location. The Clerk was asked to instead direct the sender to the GP surgery.

207. Safety of Lithium-Ion Batterie Campaign

This item had been considered over six months ago and another request had been received with updated information on the number of councils and related bodies now supporting the campaign. Following brief discussion, Members remained of the view that the matter was something that the Parish Council would consider supporting.

208. VE Day 80th Celebration, Friday 8th May 2025

The Clerk drew attention to the event and asked whether the Council would wish to purchase a specific flag, as an alternative to the raising of the Union flag. Unfortunately, there did not seem to be much choice of sizing available to fit the Council's small flagpole. Members confirmed that the Union flag should be raised.

209. Health and Wellbeing in West Sussex - Consultation

Members noted the public consultation by WSCC Public Health Department on the draft West Sussex Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030, closing 27th April 2025. Following brief discussion, Members did not feel a formal response was necessary and no submission would be made.

210. School Admissions – Consultation

Members noted the WSCC parish council consultation on review of School Admissions Relevant Area, deadline 23rd May 2025. Following brief discussion, Members did not feel a formal response was necessary and no submission would be made.

211. Rowland Rank Centre

The Clerk reported that it had come to attention that the Rowland Rank Centre, managed by Bognor Regis Lions Club, would be closing at the end of April 2025. Members discussed the potential loss of the facility and any impact that may have for the community. It was **RESOLVED** that an nomination would be made for the premises to be registered as an Asset of Community Value.

212. Representatives to External Bodies

There were no reports of external meetings attended.

213. Correspondence

The Clerk highlighted correspondence items of note as follows:

- Various NALC bulletins, items of note were publication of the new Practitioner Guide for 2025.
- Various WSCC Member Bulletins, of note Highways and Transport – consultation on proposed countywide locations of new electric vehicle chargepoints (phase 4), there did not appear to be any further Aldwick locations identified.
- WSCC Press Release 21/03/25 – West Sussex Councils submit Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation and seek clarity on key issues.
- Planning Inspectorate – Rampion Extension Development Limited, consent granted.
- Sussex Alerts/Sussex police Monthly Bulletin Arun

214. Date and time of next Council Meeting: Annual Council Meeting, Tuesday 20th May 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 9.34pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATED