



# ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman: Cllr Guy Purser Clerk: Heather Knight

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Minutes of the **ANNUAL MEETING (471) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**  
Held on **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.15pm** in the Aldwick Parish Council Office.

**Present:** Cllrs Purser (Chairman), Bence, Buckley, Gotheridge, Huntley, Patel, Rufey, Thas and Warden (from Min. 7)

**In attendance:** H Knight (Clerk), and 1 member of the public (to Min. 7)

*The meeting opened at 7.15pm.*

**1. Appointment of Chairman**

The outgoing Chairman, Cllr Purser, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

One nomination for Chairman was proposed and seconded and following voting, it was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Guy Purser as Chairman of the Council for the civic year 2025-2026. Cllr Purser duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and presided thereafter.

**2. Appointment of Vice Chairman**

One nomination was received, proposed and seconded. Following voting, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Jan Rufey as Vice Chairman of the Council, and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**3. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received, and reason approved, from Cllr Basford (personal reason).

**4. Declarations of Interest**

4.1 There were no declarations of interest made.

4.2 A new Register of Interests form had been circulated to Members, who were asked to complete and return their register to the Clerk as soon as possible and within 28 days to meet legal requirements.

**5. Minutes of the Council Meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 were a correct record and that the Chairman sign them.

**Clerk's Report and Actions**

Min. 195 Clerk's Report – Lt Prior Plaque Rededication: The RNA had now confirmed details of the Rededication Service, circulated to Members, at 3pm on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025.

Min. 195 Clerk's Report – Public seat Barrack Lane beach entrance: Following a letter received from a member of the public, it appeared that this seat had actually been repaired by a resident, not as reported by the Council's contractor. The misunderstanding arose because the resident apparently undertook the repair, without the Clerk's knowledge, in the same week that the contractor was scheduled to carry out the work. Because the work appeared to a good standard, with professional fixings used, the contractor on arriving assumed the work had been placed with another contractor. The Clerk was therefore none the wiser until the letter arrived pointing out that information in the Council's May Newsletter was incorrect. The Clerk would respond to the writer and correct the situation in the July Newsletter, the June one having already gone to print.

Min. 211 – Rowland Rank Centre: This had not yet been nominated for registration as an Asset of Community Value as land ownership evidence was required, for which if using the land registry resource, a search fee of £25 was payable. The Chair had agreed to pay this from the Chairman's Allowance. The Clerk had also had some useful communications with a member of Bognor Regis Lions Club about the building.

6. **Any such matters as the Chairman may wish to bring to the attention of the Committee for information only**  
None were raised.
7. **Co-options to the Council**  
Members considered one application received, and the Chair invited the applicant to say a few words. Following proposal and seconding, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Michael Warden to the Council. Cllr Warden duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.
8. **Adjournment for public questions**  
There were no public present.
9. **Reports from the District and County Councillors representing Aldwick**  
C.Cllr Bence updated members regarding devolution and local government reorganisation: Mayoral elections will take place in May 2025 and a shadow council will be in place by May 2027. Four options for area governance are being investigated by the stakeholder working group for forwarding to the Government in September 2025. Some options include either horizontal or vertical division of some areas. A Government decision is awaited regarding the transfer of Crawley to Surrey.  
  
D.Cllr Bence reported on district council matters: Additional park security following recent traveller incursion – Boulders are in situ at the Silverston Avenue gates into West Park and the gates are being repaired to prevent hinges being lifted off; Arun DC will be increasing the height of the bunding at Avisford Park; All parks access points are being reviewed, with concrete blocks and more robust locks where possible. Rat infestation, Marine Drive West – the issue is being managed, with numbers now decreasing. Surface water drainage issues – joint stakeholders have agreed to appoint a contractor, via the Arun DC procurement process, to extend the pipe outlets at Dark Lane and Silverston Avenue.
10. **Review of Standing Orders, Delegated Authority and Financial Regulations for the 2025-26 municipal year**  
Members noted the draft papers circulated and the Clerk's recommendations following the recently updated NALC model Standing Orders (SOs) and Financial Regulations (FRs). Some discussion and clarification ensued regarding understanding of some points within the documents. The Clerk advised that a full, detailed review was undertaken by the council in 2024.
  - 10.1 Standing Orders: The Clerk reported that model SOs had been updated by NALC primarily to comply with new procurement legislation and ensure consistency with model financial regulations. There had also been a change to SO 14 to better reflect Code of Conduct requirements, and the overall language in the document had been updated to gender-neutral terms in line with the Civility & Respect Project. Following proposal and seconding, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the amended Standing Orders as recommended, without further amendment.
  - 10.2 Financial Regulations: The model FRs had been updated in line with the Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulation 2024, which came into effect in March. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the amended Financial Regulations as recommended, without further amendment.
11. **Bank signatories**  
It was **RESOLVED** that the current signatories of Cllrs Gotheridge, Purser, Rufey and the Clerk would be retained, with the addition of the Chair, Cllr Purser, for authorisation of the Council's bank accounts, cheque signing and online banking, the latter requiring the Clerk to set payments up and an authorised Councillor to approve fund release.
12. **Appointments**  
It was **RESOLVED** as follows:
  - a) To note the previously agreed appointment of Mulberry Local Authority Services as the Internal Auditor for 2025/2026, and to receive the Letter of Engagement.

- b) Noted that Moore is the external auditor for 2025/2026 as assigned by the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments body.
- c) To confirm that Irwin Mitchell be appointed as Solicitors for 2025/2026, and that the Deeds and Trust Instruments of the Council remain in their custody.

### 13. Council committee structure and cycle of meetings

Members considered the Clerk's report on options for the re-introduction of a Finance Committee and an Amenities Committee, with Council meetings moved to 6 or 8 weekly. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to maintain only the Planning Committee and the Staffing Committee at this time, with relevant Working Groups to continue to operate as necessary for Budget, Business Plan and Grounds Maintenance items: The matter would be kept under review for the future, and all business not covered by the Planning or Staffing Committees would continue to be taken to full Council together with any working group recommendations.

With regard to the Planning Committee, the Clerk reported that the Assistant Clerk had been successfully moving planning applications on to the monthly full committee meeting, thereby negating the need for the short committee meeting preceding Council meetings. Members felt that they preferred the option of having the 'short' meetings if needed. It was therefore **AGREED** to keep the 'short' Planning Committee meetings scheduled, which would continue to be cancelled if not required.

### 14. Committee Membership, Chair and Vice Chair Appointments

- 14.1 It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the Planning Committee membership as: Cllrs Purser, Rufey, Thas, Huntley Buckley, Bence and Warden, noting that the Council Chair and Vice Chair are ex-officio members. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Rufey as Committee Chair and Cllr Warden as Committee Vice Chair.
- 14.2 It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the Staffing Committee membership as: Cllrs Gotheridge, Purser, Rufey and Warden, noting that the Council Chair and Vice Chair are ex-officio members. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Gotheridge as Committee Chair. No appointment of Vice Chair was made at this time.

### 15. Committee Terms of Reference

The previously circulated Terms of Reference and delegation arrangements for the Planning Committee and the Staffing Committee were considered. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt these en bloc without amendment.

### 16. Calendar of Meetings

Members noted the draft suggestions from the Clerk for the remaining six months July-December 2025, using the same scheduling pattern as the previous six month period. It was **RESOLVED** to approve those meeting dates, and the Clerk would produce the final version for publication and issue to Members.

### 17. Representatives to outside bodies

Following discussion, the following representation was **RESOLVED**:

- a) Emergency Planning (Arun Link) – Cllr G Purser
- b) Youth Activities – Cllr J Rufey
- c) Aldwick & Pagham Advisory Committee – Cllr G Purser
- d) West Bersted Advisory Committee – Cllr G Purser
- e) West Sussex Association of Local Councils – Chair (Cllr Purser) and Vice Chair (Cllr Rufey)
- f) Arun District Association of Local Councils – Chair (Cllr Purser) and Vice Chair (Cllr Rufey)

### 18. Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) annual subscription

It was **RESOLVED** to continue to pay the annual cost for the Clerk's membership.

### 19. Parish Online annual subscription

It was **RESOLVED** to renew the Parish Online annual subscription at the subsidised cost of £25.00 + VAT.

### 20. To receive Committee meeting Minutes

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 were received and noted.

**21. Members' Allowance**

The Members' Allowance is payable, if Council so resolves to adopt, to eligible councillors only, the criteria being to have been elected by residents, as opposed to being co-opted by council. Three members of Aldwick Parish Council are eligible to receive this. It was **RESOLVED** that the previously resolved and budgeted Elected Members Allowance of £688.40 is paid half yearly in May 2025 and November 2025 to those eligible Members (Min. 145.3 21/01/25 refers), being 10% of the District Councillor basic allowance. The Clerk advised that any Eligible Members not wishing to receive the Member Allowance must confirm this in writing to the Clerk.

**22. Chair's Allowance**

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Chair's Allowance for 2025-26 of £600 as budgeted, with £300 to be paid to the Chair in May and £300 payable in November.

**23. Financial Reports**

The Clerk reported that due to the year end accounts awaiting finalisation, the year end closedown had not yet taken place and therefore the new financial year had not commenced. The April financial reports would therefore be received at the next meeting.

**24. Insurance Revaluation of Council Premises**

As reported at the previous meeting, the Clerk had recently actioned a premises re-valuation. This is recommended to be done every 3-5 years and did not appear to have been undertaken for considerably longer. Buildings costs had risen significantly post Covid and it was therefore prudent to ensure the council was appropriately insured. Consideration had needed to be given as to whether the insured sum should include or exclude VAT. Having investigated, the Clerk reported that whilst the Council is VAT registered and able to reclaim VAT normally, the matter of premises VAT reclaim is complicated and not necessarily able to be reclaimed. The reinsurance exercise therefore included all VAT costs. Members noted that the reinstatement valuation was now £815,472 including VAT, an increase of £253,168 or 159% on the previous reinstatement valuation of £426,392 (which was not thought to include VAT).

**25. Youth Services - Summer Play Scheme**

The Clerk had, as previously agreed, investigated additional youth activities for the summer school break, within budget and to complement the already agreed play sessions. Members considered details of providing 10 free to user skateboard sessions to be delivered by South Coast Skate Club, at Avisford Park twice a day on all Fridays in August, at a cost of £226 per session including helmet and board hire. Subject to the necessary event application being consented by Arun District Council, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of South Coast Skate Club to provide 10x skateboard coaching sessions throughout August at a total cost of £2,226.00 (excl. VAT).

**26. Representatives to External Bodies**

There were no reports made.

**27. Correspondence**

The Clerk reported on items of note, including:

- The previously reported letter from a member of the public regarding the repair to the bench at Barrack Lane beach entrance
- Southern Water press release - £4m to improve water quality in Bognor Regis (forwarded to Cllrs)
- WSCC Member Bulletin 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025
- WSCC press release - Statement by Leader on local government reorganisation (forwarded to Cllrs)
- WSCC press release – Public Realm improvements for Bognor Regis Esplanade
- Sussex Alerts: Action Fraud – Rise of extortion phishing email reports
- Sussex Alerts: Neighbourhood Watch – Our News May 2025 edition available
- NALC Chief Executive's Bulletin 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – NALC and CPRE launch new guide to empower communities to shape local development (forwarded to Cllrs)

- Clerks & Councils Direct – May 2025 Issue 159 available
- Cllr Bence stated that a member of the public had thanked him for forwarding details this evening of the forthcoming Rededication Service for the Lt Walter Prior plaque.

## 28. Payments for authorisation

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the List of Payments for Authorisation, as shown below, and that the payment schedule be duly signed:-

Staff, HMRC, Nest Pension Services	£3,563.23
Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
Perry Turner-Hogg	£790.00
Business Stream	£47.20
Rialtas Business Solutions	£382.80
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
WSALC	£42.00
ParishOnline	£30.00
Castle Water	£11.05
Castle Water	£8.31
Cardinus	£180.00
Octopus Energy	£53.26
Perry Turner-Hogg	£913.08
Monkey Nuts Ltd	£103.20
Barclays Bank	£10.30
WSALC	£2,610.90
Zen	£72.64
Barclaycard Commercial	£147.74

## 29. Date and time of next Council Meeting

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 7.00pm (if no preceding Planning Committee), or approximately 7.15pm (if preceded by short Planning Committee at 7.00pm).

***The meeting closed at 9.00pm.***

CHAIRMAN .....

DATED .....