



ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman: Cllr Guy Purser Clerk: Heather Knight

Minutes of the MEETING (472) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Held on **Tuesday 17th June 2025 at 7.00pm** in the Council Chamber

Present: Cllrs Rufey (Chair), Buckley, Gotheridge, Huntley, Patel, Sapsed (from Min. 7), Thas and Warden

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

The meeting opened at 7.00pm.

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

30. Apologies for absence

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

31. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

32. Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting of 20th May 2025

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 20th May 2025 were a correct record and that the Chair of the meeting sign them.

Clerk's Report and Actions

Min. 193, 22/04/25, Apologies for Absence/Resignation: Following required formal advertising of the casual vacancy, Arun DC had confirmed that no by-election had been called by public and the vacancy was now available for co-option along with existing co-option vacancies.

Min. 4.1, Register of Interests: The Clerk reminded those that hadn't yet done so to return their completed Register of Interests form urgently.

Min. 5, Clerk's Report/ Rowland Rank Centre: A land registry search, required by Arun DC for evidence of ownership, had been unsuccessful. The Clerk now had some details for a key contact relevant to the land ownership and thought that a direct approach would be sensible, if Members supported this. Members concurred agreement to this.

Min. 24, Insurance Revaluation: The reinstatement revaluation was noted at the previous meeting but the additional premium was unknown. The insurance broker had now confirmed that an additional premium of £494.01 (inc. IPT) would be payable for this year, and £570.61 thereafter. Members noted that this would result in an overspend of £254.01 on the 2025-26 insurance budget.

Min. 25, Summer Play Scheme: Consent had been received for the 39 Youth Club play sessions at Avisford Park and West Park on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so these are confirmed. The application and Event Management Plan had been submitted to Arun DC for hosting the free skateboard coaching sessions at Avisford Park every Friday in August.

Local Council Clerk week: The Clerk highlighted that 7-14th June 2025 was Local Council Clerk Week, with press release and coverage by SLCC and NALC. Clerks and councils were encouraged to help celebrate the profession and raise awareness to inspire the next generation of clerks to step forward.

33. Any such matters as the Chairman may wish to bring to attention

None were raised.

34. Adjournment for public speaking

There were no speakers.

35. To receive reports from the District Councillors and County Councillors representing Aldwick

District/County Cllr Bence had sent apologies. District Cllr Purser had sent apologies.

County Cllr Patel gave brief reports on recent initiatives and statistics for WSCC related matters: Trading Standards work to enforce the ban on sale/supply of single-use vapes; free cycling skills course starting 26th June; roadworks and closures affecting Fernhurst Gardens and Willowhale in July; Arun DC managed car parking could now be paid for by cash or contactless. Following query, it was confirmed that the 2hr free parking at West Park car park was retained.

36. 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 David Sapsed to the Council. Cllr Sapsed duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

37. Committee Meetings**37.1** The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 20th May and 3rd June 2025 were received and noted.**38. Internal Audit Report**

Members received and noted the Internal Final Audit Report from Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd., which found no areas of concern and that systems and internal procedures of the Council are well established and followed.

Members also received and noted the Internal Audit section of the Annual Governance & Accounting Return (AGAR) with the Internal Auditor's positive affirmation of all sections and duly signed, for submission with the Council's return to the External Auditor under the following agenda items.

39. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024-25

The Clerk had circulated background and supporting papers relating to the AGAR for year ending 31st March 2025 for Members' information. These included, in addition to the AGAR Section 1 and Section 2, the Income & Expenditure report, Trial Balance, Nominal Ledger, Bank Reconciliations, Reserves Breakdown, Explanation of Significant Variances report, Internal Audit AGAR report, and the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights 2024-25. The Clerk advised that the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return/Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2025 would be posted on the Council's website for the period 23rd June-1st August 2025. The Notice explains public rights to inspect or question the accounting records.

39.1 Annual Governance Statement (Section 1, AGAR)

Having regard to the Internal Audit reports, Members reviewed and responded to each of the 9 statements of Section 1 and approved that the Chairman and Clerk duly sign the form – **RESOLVED**.

39.2 Annual Accounting Statement (Section 2, AGAR)

Having regard to the supporting papers reviewed, and noting that the RFO had as required prepared and certified the accounts beforehand, Members reviewed these and approved that the Chair duly sign the form – **RESOLVED**.

40. To review and adopt Council policies

Members considered the following policies, as follows:

40.1 Disciplinary Policy

In line with the latest NALC model recommendations, the policy had several minor amendments to reflect gender neutral wording and clearer timescales. Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Disciplinary Policy as amended, without further change.

40.2 Grievance Policy

In line with the latest NALC model recommendations, the policy had been amended with several new insertions reflecting updated guidance, together with updating to gender neutral language and simpler timescale references. Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Grievance policy as amended, without further change.

40.3 Data Protection Policy

No amendments had been made. Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the Data Protection Policy without amendment.

40.4 Councillor IT Security Policy

No amendments had been made. A Member queried some wording where it implied that councillors were issued with APC devices/equipment, which was not currently the case. It was clarified that wording covered the potential future issue of APC equipment but also included ownership of the Members' council email address/account. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that this policy will not be adopted in its current form but that the Clerk would amend wording to be clearer in relation to Council owned/issued equipment, and a revised version brought to a future agenda for consideration.

40.5 Staff IT Security Policy

No amendments had been made. Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the Staff IT Security Policy without amendment.

40.6 Website Privacy Notice

Other than an update to the email address shown, no amendments had been made. Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the website Privacy Notice without amendment.

41. Bus Shelter, Aldwick Road

The Clerk's written report was noted. This item was to be reconsidered in light of new information and options.

Having previously agreed to proceed with a replacement approach window in Perspex, the appointed contractor's quote had expired due to the time lapse. Their own price was unchanged but the materials costs had increased. Whilst awaiting a revised estimate, the Clerk had researched alternatives for comparison and best practice. This revealed that the use of Perspex may not be prudent due to its tendency to become brittle. Cost and advice had been sought from a dedicated bus shelter contractor. This supplier would only use polycarbonate, which was dearer but more durable and should have greater longevity. On a site visit they had noticed a small area of graffiti on the opposite (departure) window and had quoted an option for replacement of this panel as well.

Members considered the options and the two contractor quotations available. It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with replacing the original approach window only, with polycarbonate, to be undertaken by GS Shelter Solutions at a cost of £334.63 (exc. VAT). It was additionally **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should arrange for removal of the small area of graffiti on the departure window, noting that this may result in ghosting but should not affect visibility.

42. Disposal of Redundant Property

The Clerk's written report was noted. The first floor rooms needed to be cleared of surplus paperwork for safety and economic reasons, either by recycling or shredding as appropriate, and redundant furniture in poor condition (office chairs/desk/book case) needed to be disposed of. There were also numerous items of electrical / IT equipment that either were not working or not required, used ink/toner cartridges for recycling and on the ground floor the large photocopier which was not operational and could not be repaired. Some items needed professional removal and/or destruction of data held. The Council's IT contractor can remove the items requiring professional/licensed disposal at £35 per item +VAT, and £180 + VAT for the large Canon copier. Ordinary electrical items (non data storing) can be disposed of through the ADC small electricals kerbside collections or at the amenity tip. Various books had been donated to charities or local fetes. Boxes of function tableware items had been moved to a kitchen cupboard.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Pronetic Ltd for the professional removal and disposal of 5x computer/printer items and 1x Canon floor standing copier, at a total cost of £355.00 + VAT, and in addition also several computer hard drives at the cost of £35 each. The Clerk would arrange disposal of other items as noted and would liaise with Members to assist with some items of furniture. This would be paid from either the Professional Services code or the Premises Expenses code, noting that the latter would likely be over budget by year end.

43. Hire of First Floor Large Office

The Clerk updated Members on current regular and ad hoc hire of the Council Chamber, which was noticeably increasing. An approach had been received for hire of the ground floor hall and simultaneously the first floor large office from September. Unfortunately, there was a timing clash with an established regular hire. Members were asked how they wished to proceed and to decide the hire charge for the first floor room, noting the current charge for the meeting hall. The Clerk sought Members' views on the appropriate and safe use of the first floor room, once cleared, for hiring out. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the hire of the first floor large office, once cleared of redundant items, at the cost of £5 per hour. It was noted that the Fire Risk Assessment should be reviewed and updated to include this. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the established hirer to see if a mutually acceptable changeover arrangement could be agreed to accommodate the potential new hire if possible.

44. WSCC Tree Planting Scheme

Cllr Gotheridge reported on his research into suitable locations for the annual tree planting scheme, as previously agreed, and as budgeted. One location was the result of a request by a resident for a replacement tree. The WSCC officer had submitted a schedule showing the approved locations and recommended species for 10 trees in the parish, which the Clerk had circulated. It was **RESOLVED** to approve placing the order for 10 trees, at a cost of £257.00 each (exc. VAT) as per the schedule, to be funded from the Open Spaces Improvements code.

45. Finance

45.1 Members' Allowances

The Clerk reported that instead of paying only the first instalment of the 3x Member Allowances previously agreed, the full amount had inadvertently been processed, and apologised for the error. Members were asked whether Council wished to ask those councillors in receipt to repay the 2nd instalment portion to await reissue in November or to ratify payment of the full annual amount. It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the payment of the full and final Member Allowance payments.

45.2 Cashbook Reconciliations and Income & Expenditure Reports

Members received the bank reconciliation for Cash book 1 to 30th April 2025. The Clerk reported that she was endeavouring to resolve the previous year's issue of how best to allocate the separate expenditure for council and staff tax and national insurance contributions. This was taking considerable time in liaising with Rialtas support and adjusting the data input. Unfortunately this had delayed completion of remaining cashbook reconciliations for April and May accounting. These would therefore be deferred to the next meeting.

46. Grant Aid 2025-26

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the commencement of the Grant Aid 2025-26 application process from 1st July 2025, as budgeted, and to appoint Cllrs Rufey, Huntley and Warden to a Grant Aid Working Group, which would review applications for recommendation to Council after the closing date.

47. Calendar of Meetings – change to November Full Council

Subsequent to approving the meeting dates for July to December, a member had requested that the meeting scheduled for 18th November be moved to 25th November if possible. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the change of date to 25th November 2025. This will include moving the 'short' Planning Committee meeting should that be required.

48. Middleton-on-Sea Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Formal notice by Arun District Council of the Middleton-on-Sea NDP Reg 16 consultation was received and noted. It was **AGREED** that no formal response would be made to the consultation.

49. Amenities**49.1 Gardening/Grounds Maintenance Review**

Following a verbal update from the Clerk, Members briefly discussed the new grounds maintenance arrangements and forward plans. It was noted that the contractor had asked for the Council's wishes regarding choice of winter plants, which would be a future agenda item.

49.2 Allotments

The Clerk and Cllr Huntley gave brief updates on plot conditions and request to assist with heavy clearance for some plots. Quotes were being sought for the work and this would form an agenda item at the July meeting.

50. Representatives to External Bodies

There were no reports made.

51. Payments for authorisation

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

Chichester Payroll Services	£30.00
Salaries	£2,464.91
J Rufey	£688.40
A Patel	£550.80
R Gotheridge	£550.80
HMRC	£1,260.17
Nest Pension Services	£235.48
Perry Turner-Hogg/West Sussex mowing	£230.00
Barclays Bank	£15.64
Octopus Energy	£19.12
UK Safety Management Ltd	£372.00
Monkey Nuts Ltd	£51.60
Perry Turner-Hogg/West Sussex mowing	£913.08
Pronetic Ltd	£225.00
SSE Energy Solutions	£84.16
Viking Office UK Ltd	£288.60
Sussex Views magazine	£120.00
Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd	£435.24
Castle Water	£9.44
Castle Water	£7.61

52. Correspondence

The Clerk highlighted some items of correspondence, as follows:

- WSCC Highways Transport & Planning Newsletter 28.05.25
- ADC – Local Plan / Call for Sites 2025
- NALC – new digital edition of Local Councils Explained published
- NALC – Various e-newsletters and CEO's Bulletins
- SALC – Summer e-newsletter (forwarded)
- Southern Water – received this week, a request for an initial meeting with Councillors with a view to establishing a community feedback group. Further details had been requested and response awaited, the Clerk would report back further;

- Southern Water Stakeholder Team – SW published Final Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (forwarded)
- Sussex Alerts – Sussex Police: PCC’s Safer in Sussex Survey (forwarded)
- BRTA Guildford-Horsham Cranleigh questionnaire
- CAGNE – June bulletin

53. Date and time of next Council Meeting

Tuesday 22nd July 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 8.52pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATED