



ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Aldwick Parish Offices, 88 Pryors Lane, Aldwick, West Sussex. PO21 4JF

Tel: 01243 263330 E-mail: office@aldwickparishcouncil.gov.uk

Chairman: Cllr Guy Purser Clerk: Heather Knight

Minutes of the MEETING (473) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Held on **Tuesday 22nd July 2025 at 7.00pm** in the Council Chamber

Present: Cllrs Purser (Chair), Gotheridge, Huntley, Patel, Rufey, Sapsed, Thas and Warden

In attendance: H Knight (Clerk)
1 member of the public (part of meeting)

The meeting opened at 7.00pm.

54. Apologies for absence

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

55. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Patel declared an interest in any planning matters, due to his role at Arun District Council.

56. Minutes of the Council Meeting of 17th June 2025

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17th June 2025 were a correct record and that the Chair sign them.

Clerk's Report and Actions

Min. 32 Clerk's Report – Rowland Rank Centre: Arun DC criteria appeared to have been amended and a land registry ownership document was not now required. The application for a Community Asset registration had therefore been submitted.

Min. 41, Bus Shelter, Aldwick Road: The contractor had been appointed as agreed to replace the approach window but could not undertake the work until mid-August unfortunately, due to other programmed work.

Premises - Fire Extinguisher Inspection: The annual fire extinguisher service visit had taken place on 18th June.

Pension Auto Enrolment: The Clerk had submitted a re-declaration to The Pensions Regulator, as required every three years in compliance with legislation.

WSCC Highways, Clerk Briefings: The Clerk reported briefly on recent online briefings on Community Highway Schemes, and Highway Network management Team. Slides and associated documents were available if Members would like to see these.

Staff Annual Leave: The Clerk advised annual leave dates for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk in August and September and would also email this to councillors.

Blue Plaque at Sandmartins: Following approach from a local press reporter, who had been contacted by a member of the public, the Clerk had made some enquires about the removal of the blue plaque on the former Sandmartins Care Home, commemorating the author RC Sherriff. This had been removed by the premises owners whilst the building was awaiting demolition and was intended to be given to the RC Sherriff Trust in Surrey. Anticipating the Council's likely preference and local historical interest, the Clerk had enquired about the plaque remaining in Aldwick instead, with the Parish Council as custodian should Members be supportive, but this now seemed an unlikely outcome. Members voiced their support for retaining the plaque if at all possible. The Clerk would update Council in due course.

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

The Chair reported briefly on his attendance with the Vice Chair at the Armed Forces Day commemorations, which were as usual well organised. The Chair reported that he continues to receive and respond to various residents' enquiries.

58. Adjournment for public speaking

One member of the public wished to speak regarding agenda item 8.1 West Meads TRO, but at the Chairman's discretion it was **AGREED** that they would be permitted to speak at that agenda point.

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

District/County Cllr Bence had sent apologies.

D.Cllr Purser had been dealing with a number of residents' enquiries, both as a district and parish councillor, but in terms of district matters had nothing specific to update the Council on. The Bathing Water Partnership group last met in March and was due to meet again in August.

C.Cllr Patel gave brief reports on WSCC related matters: The Local Government Review survey was published and available for all residents to complete; A recent campaign highlighted correct disposal of batteries and the fire risk of batteries thrown away with ordinary refuse; Leftover/unused paint can be taken to WSCC refuse sites for others to use.

A Member commented on the recent resurfacing of Willowhale Avenue: The Parish Council had been noting the worst roads in the parish that needed attention, should WSCC Highways be in contact for input. Grosvenor Gardens and Blondell Drive needed to be dealt with, probably also Westminster Drive. The Member had spoken with a County Cllr covering North Mundham, where there had been very bad traffic delays due to temporary traffic lights for a prolonged period. There had been various delays and issues but the county council had been able to liaise with the developer concerned to successfully shorten the length of the works. Perhaps this was something Cllr Patel could follow up for this ward area? Cllr Patel indicated he would do so.

60. Committee Meetings

60.1 The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 8th July 2025 were received and noted.

61. Amenities:**61.1 West Meads TRO update**

Members noted the previously circulated update: WSCC had advised that, contrary to the original understanding, their legal team now confirmed that it was not possible to apply yellow lines to West Meads car park. The Traffic Engineer leading on this had apologised for the misunderstanding and was proposing instead to extend an existing Access Protection Line (APL) to cover the footway along both car parks. APLs are advisory only, with no signage or legal standing for enforcement. However this would provide a clear indication to drivers that they should not park there, and would emphasise the edge of carriageway and change to a footway.

At the Chairman's discretion, a member of the public representing West Meads Residents Association was permitted to speak to this agenda item. **Meeting adjourned at 7.24pm.** The resident expressed disappointment at the situation, whilst appreciating having been kept informed and the efforts of the Parish Council and WSCC Traffic Engineer. The resident confirmed that West Meads Residents Association supported the proposal as the remaining option. **Meeting reconvened at 7.30pm.**

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the Council's support for Access Protection Lines to be applied by WSCC Highways.

61.2 West Meads weed spray / planters tidy up

The Clerk reported that the shopping precinct at West Meads was looking neglected, with extensive weed growth and the planted beds needing weeding and shrub maintenance. It was known that a member of the public voluntarily tackles weed removal but they are finding it difficult to keep up with. The Council's appointed Grounds Maintenance contractor had been asked to quote for this work as an

ad hoc task but did not wish to do so. Other contractors could be contacted if Members wished. Having contacted WSCC Highways, the Clerk had been advised that the precinct is part of WSCC Highways cyclical programme and had last been weed sprayed on 16th June 2025.

Members noted that the weeds in the shopping precinct area are the responsibility of WSCC, commenting also on the poor appearance of this busy precinct, and the burden on taxpayers. There were differing understandings on whether the West Meads planters had previously been maintained by the Parish Council. No records had been available to the Clerk, and the previous gardening contractor had said that they did not form part of routine maintenance. On balance, Members felt that positive action should be taken to improve the look of the area as soon as possible, and it seemed unlikely that WSCC would prioritise the weed spraying. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to give the Clerk delegated authority to spend up to £750 (ex VAT) for a competent contractor to tidy up the raised planters and beds, and if sufficient funds within that to also have the shopping precinct weed sprayed. This would be funded from the Open Spaces & Improvement budget code.

61.3 Allotments – Vegetation and plot clearing

Cllr Huntley reported on regular inspections undertaken by her with the Assistant Clerk to monitor that plots are being cultivated and any issues. Plots 13 and 14 had been left in poor condition by previous tenants. New tenants were doing their best to clear but a very overgrown hedge and brambles were hindering progress. The Council had previously agreed to the cost of a reduction of the hedge but unfortunately this had not had the desired impact. It was now felt that the best solution would be complete removal of the hedge and of other overgrown brambles, after which the tenants should be able to keep vegetation under control. Members considered the circulated 3 quotations for the work. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from JS Garden & Property Services up to a value of £2,000 (+ VAT), to be funded from the Allotments budget code principally with any balance spend from the Open Spaces & Improvements Earmarked Reserve 327.

Cllr Gotheridge reported that he had recently contacted the County Council and Arun District Council about a public open space at The Oaks that could potentially become a wildflower meadow. As it was close to an Arun DC play park and maintained by them, the Arun DC parks team had advised that the site would be discussed shortly for possible inclusion in the 2026 wildflower programme. Cllr Gotheridge was thanked for his actions.

62. Finance:

62.1 Financial Reports, Cashbook reconciliations

Members received cashbook reconciliations for cashbooks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to months ending 30th April and 31st May 2025, and confirmed that these agreed to bank statements. Accounts for month ending 30th June 2025 were in progress. The Clerk reported on follow up action of an unpresented cheque dating from February. The recipient had lost the cheque, which had now been cancelled and payment would be made by bank transfer. Following a query, the Clerk confirmed that the opening of a Redwood bank account to spread financial risk was still to be actioned. She would contact the authorising Members as soon as possible regarding personal details needed to open the account.

62.2 Income & Expenditure reports

Members received and considered Income and Expenditure reports compared to budget for months ending 30th April and 31st May 2025.

62.3 Earmarked Reserves Summary

Members received and noted the Earmarked Reserves summary as at 31st May 2025.

63. Office refurbishment:

Cllr Purser declared a personal interest in the following item as one of the suppliers is known to him, and stated that he would not participate in voting.

63.1 Window blinds

Members noted the original intention to use the balance of the earmarked reserve for new flooring (EMR 324) on new blinds and flooring for the staff office, once new flooring and refurbishments of the

hall, entrance lobby and kitchen were completed pre-2023. The two office window blinds were now several years old and broken. Three quotes had therefore been obtained for options for replacements but for faux wood venetian blinds, which should be more durable than the more delicate plastic linked verticals.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Regnum Blinds Ltd for venetian blinds at a cost of £533.48 (inc. VAT), funded from EMR 324 New Flooring.

63.2 Flooring

As in the previous item, members discussed options for flooring renewal of the staff office. Several quotations had been obtained for new carpet tiles and also for steam cleaning of existing carpet. The Clerk advised that the carpet was still in serviceable condition if cleaned and with some spot treatment. It was noted that removal of office furniture and desks for flooring renewal presented issues, whereas a steam clean did not require complete clearing. New carpet could remain a future option, should a clean not produce good results.

Following consideration of the options and quotations, it was **RESOLVED** to proceed with carpet cleaning and to accept the quotation from Conway Cleaning at a cost of £80.00 (exc. VAT), funded from EMR 324 New Flooring.

63.3 Desk drawer unit

The Clerk reported that her under desk drawer pedestal unit had a missing handle and missing hanging file support rods. Attempts to source replacement parts had been unsuccessful. Council was therefore asked for approval to purchase a replacement pedestal, several quotations having been sought. It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the Clerk spend up to £300 (excl. VAT) on a replacement drawer unit, to be funded from EMR 324 New Flooring.

64. Use of Earmarked Reserve 321

Members considered appropriate use of this historical earmarked reserve (EMR), which had remained unspent for some time with a balance of £3,549.88, its original purpose having been Post Covid 19 Grants. Members asked whether there were any restrictions on the use of this EMR, and it was established that there were no known caveats. The Clerk advised on options for re-allocating the funds to boost other earmarked reserves or absorbing into general reserves. Members discussed several preferred EMR allocations. It was **RESOLVED** that the balance of EMR 321 be repurposed as a new earmarked reserve for Allotments & Allotments Improvements.

65. Replacement computer/s due to Windows 10 support withdrawal

The Clerk reported that Windows 10 support will become end of life in October. Following checks by the Council's IT provider, of the four computers, one desktop and one laptop (both for Assistant Clerk) did not meet specification requirements for Windows 11 and would therefore not be supported or updated by Microsoft. The IT provider had been asked to quote for replacement of both items but unfortunately this had not been received to date. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the September meeting.

66. Appointment of Budget Working Group

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint a Budget Working Group 2025-26 comprising Cllrs Gotheridge, Warden, Thas, Buckley (subject to his confirmation) and Basford (subject to his confirmation), with Cllr Gotheridge as Chair and Cllr Purser as a reserve member. The Clerk would contact the Working Group to arrange a meeting to discuss the draft Budget 2025-26.

67. Councillor Training

67.1 It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the attendance at training sessions on Council Finance Essentials, delivered by Mulberry Local Authority Services, on 14th July by Cllrs Buckley and Huntley, and on 9th September by Cllrs Gotheridge, Warden, Rufey and Thas, at a cost of £45 each, total cost £270.00 (+ VAT), funded from the councillor training budget.

67.2 The Clerk would liaise with Cllr Sapsed regarding new councillor training, provided free of charge by WSALC, forthcoming dates of online sessions being 29th July and 16th September.

- 67.3** The Clerk advised that WSALC provides 2 x free Business Planning sessions, delivered by the CEO. It was **RESOLVED** to take up this offer, as the Council's existing Business Plan is overdue for review.

68. Council Policies for adoption

Members considered two draft versions of the IT Security Policy, previously circulated, the policy having been referred from the last meeting (Min. 40.4 refers). V1 was the original policy with adjusted wording, as requested by Council, to clarify that devices are not currently issued by the Council. V2 was an alternative and much simpler policy. Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt V1 Councillor IT Security Policy. The Clerk advised that following adoption, Members would be required to sign individual acknowledgement and acceptance of the Council's policy.

69. Devolution and Local Government Review (LGR)

The Chair and Clerk reported on their attendance at the online meeting on 17th July, convened as a precursor to the launch of the public engagement survey Shaping West Sussex – The future of local government in West Sussex. Unfortunately, the survey had a very short consultation period and would close on 13th August 2025, due to tight timeframe around collating results and formulating the business case options that would be go forward to Government in September. Members were encouraged to complete the survey individually. The link to the survey had been circulated to Members, who were asked to decide if Aldwick Parish Council wished to send a formal response. Following some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that no formal survey response would be submitted but that the Clerk contact Arun District Council to convey the request that no changes be made to parish/town council statutory responsibilities without prior consultation.

70. Southern Water - Bathing Water Community Group

Following a recent invitation from Southern Water, the Chair reported that he, the Vice Chair and the Clerk would be meeting with Southern Water on 25th July to discuss plans for an Aldwick/Bognor Regis area Bathing Water Community Group. The framework and intended outcomes for the initiative were as yet unknown and Council would be updated in due course.

71. Representatives to External Bodies

There were no reports from Members.

The Clerk reported on attendance as an observer at the Aldwick & Pagham Advisory Group meeting on 26th June. The focus had been mostly around feedback on the concepts for the new play areas within the developments. Provision of allotment land to Pagham Parish Council had also been discussed. It now appeared that considerably less land will be made available after all. The Clerk had emphasised the need for the Pagham area, evidenced by the number of Pagham residents seeking a plot from Aldwick Parish Council and the lengthy waiting list.

72. Payments for authorisation

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

H Knight and A Colban	£3,128.49
HMRC	£862.84
NEST Pension Service	£235.48
Chichester Payroll Services	£15.00
C&M Fire Alarms Ltd	£91.80
Barclaycard Commercial	£321.21
Guy Purser	£300.00
Zen internet Ltd	£60.91
Barclays Bank	£8.50
Perry Turner-Hogg	£913.08
Monkey Nuts Cleaning Ltd	£200.40
Octopus Energy Ltd	£17.68
Copiers & Printers	£74.99

Business Stream	£60.27
Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd	£324.00
Zen internet Ltd	£71.83
Barclaycard Commercial	£160.83

73. Correspondence

The Clerk highlighted some items of correspondence, as follows:

- WSCC Member Bulletin 18th June – Section 19 flood investigations/link to full reports (forwarded to Cllrs)
- WSCC Fire & Rescue, public consultation in proposals for next Community Risk Management Plan
- WSCC Local government reorganisation progress, public engagement survey
- ADC Devolution and Local government reorganisation July Update
- ADC Neighbourhood Planning Funding – Government withdrawal of grant funding to support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans
- NALC Chief Executive's bulletin 10.07.25 – updates on Martyn's Law and Parish Polls
- Sussex Alerts – Neighbourhood Watch/Sussex Police: StreetSafe, an online tool where you can anonymously report locations where you feel unsafe (not for crime reporting) link: <https://orlo.uk/ruDbC> (-> s-url.co) (forwarded to Cllrs)
- Sussex Alerts – Neighbourhood Watch/Sussex Police: Safer Streets Summer – active patrolling of hotspot areas to tackle anti-social behaviour, which can be reported here: <https://orlo.uk/nfRVu> (-> s-url.co) (forwarded to Cllrs)
- Clerks & Councils Direct, July 2025, issue 160

74. Date and time of next Council Meeting

Tuesday 23rd September 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 9.15pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATED