ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Aldwick Parish Offices, 88 Pryors Lane, Aldwick, West Sussex. P021 4JF
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Chairman: Cllr Guy Purser **Clerk**: Heather Knight

Minutes of the **MEETING (484) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**
Held on **Tuesday 23rd June 2026 at 7.00pm** in the Council Chamber

Present: Cllrs: Purser (Chair), Huntley, Maxwell (from Min. 38), Pinnelli, Rufey, Smith, Thas, Warden and West (from Min. 42.2)

In attendance: H Knight (Clerk), and 1 member of the public (to Min. 38)

The meeting opened at 7.00pm.
The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and explained the fire/emergency evacuation procedure in the event of the alarm sounding.

32. Apologies for absence
Apologies were received, and reason approved, from Cllr Bence (District Council commitment). Cllr West had given apologies that he would arrive late to the meeting due to a prior personal commitment.

33. Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest made on items on the agenda.

34. Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting of 19th May 2026.
It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 19th May 2026 were a correct record and that the Chairman sign them.

Clerk's Report and Actions
Min. 4.2, Registers of Interest
The Clerk brought to attention information previously circulated to Members. Following an amendment to legislation, the new section 32A of the Localism Act 2011 meant that a member's home address should no longer be disclosed on public registers of interest, unless a Member requests this. They must still be declared on the original authority held copy. Updated public registers of interest would be published on the Parish Council and District Council websites accordingly.

Min. 5, Summer Play Scheme: Formal Arun DC consent had been received for both the sports coaching sessions and the skateboard coaching sessions in July and August. The Clerk was meeting with South Coast Sports on Monday.

Min. 5, Premises and Assets: The quote for the fire alarm replacement equipment had been received. The Clerk would arrange for the replacement smoke detectors x7, heat detector x1 and standby batteries x2 to be undertaken at the next service visit by C&M Fire Alarms Ltd at a cost of £427.00 + VAT, funded from Equipment Renewal/Purchase budget 4105.

Min. 26.1, Christmas Tree: The tree had been ordered, with anticipated installation in late November. Sourcing contractors and quotes for investigating/installing recessed ground hooks was proving difficult, and unlikely to reach fruition in time for this year. The tree pit would therefore need to be the primary stabilising element again and the Clerk was looking into ways of removing pre-2024 swollen tree trunk debris from the pit. It was understood that Epsom salts could be safely and successfully used to break down the wood to enable removal.

Bognor & Aldwick Bathing Water Community Group: A second stakeholder/community meeting was being planned by Southern Water, at Aldwick PC premises, for late July. As agreed at the previous meeting, Southern Water was arranging a tour of Lidsey Water Treatment Works on 9th July. The Clerk asked whether any Cllrs wished to attend in addition to Cllr Purser and herself. Cllrs Huntley and Pinnelli confirmed they wished to join, and Cllr Rufey asked to be added to a waitlist for a future date

Councillor Surgery: The Clerk reminded Members of the Councillor Surgery/public drop-in arranged for Friday 26th June. Cllr Purser advised that he was unfortunately no longer able to attend, and Cllr Smith offered to cover this. It was noted that the next surgery date advertised was Friday 31st July, with no surgery in August. A review would be taken in September on arranging future dates.

35. Any such matters as the Chairman may wish to bring to attention
The Chairman thanked the Vice Chairman for representing the Council at the recent Armed Forces Day event.

36. Public Questions on agenda items
There were no public requests to speak.

37. To receive reports from the District Councillors and County Councillors representing Aldwick
District/County Cllr Bence had sent apologies. D.Cllr Purser advised that the District Council had submitted its response to the additional Government consultation on modifications to Local Government Reorganisation proposals, the DC stance being to restate commitment to its original proposal of Option 2. The Government's decision was expected within the next few weeks.

C.Cllr Pinnelli advised that he was settling into his new role as county ward member and had nothing to report for this meeting but would be providing regular updates in future.

38. Co-option 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 Joshua Maxwell to the Council. Cllr Maxwell duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

39. Committee Meetings

39.1 The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 2nd June 2026 were received and noted.

40. Working Group Reports

40.1 Route 600 Bus Shelter WG: Cllr Warden reported on the meeting of 5th June 2026, notes circulated. Grant funds are available for providing bus shelters or refurbishing bus stop furniture. The Working Group is actively auditing the bus shelters, stops, benches etc. along the Aldwick section of the bus route, for data inclusion and review with WSCC Highways. The group had met a second time to evaluate audit data so far with further research results awaited. It had been felt useful to get input from residents using the 600 bus and a message had been included in the Council's July Newsletter.

40.2 Business Plan WG: Cllr Thas gave a verbal report on the meeting of 12th June. The Working Group had discussed producing a questionnaire for residents asking what they'd like to see the Council spending money on or doing on behalf of the community. Expectations would need to be managed and production and delivery costs and methods would need full consideration by Council. Members discussed the logistics of a questionnaire and whether for clarity a summary of what the council currently does or can do be available at the outset, possibly with an article for the Newsletter. It was **AGREED** that as a starting point, the Working Group would work on a draft questionnaire for Council consideration.

41. Social Media Presence
The Clerk reported that the Council had previously not felt minded to implement a social presence but may wish to consider this now in light of activities where the council might wish to actively seek resident interaction. Both the Route 600 Bus Shelter Working Group and the Business Plan Working Group had discussed seeking residents' input on projects. Whilst social media was by no means the only route by which to do this, it was a proactive way of engaging with a considerable section of the community. Members were generally supportive, noting that this would likely increase administrative workload but on balance would be a positive action. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would arrange setting up a Facebook account for the Council, with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk as administrative / monitoring roles.

42. Internal Audit Report

42.1 Members received and noted the Internal Final Audit Report for Year Ending 31st March 2026 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. The Clerk highlighted the recommendation regarding implementation of recorded data audit reviews, and Members were assured that action was already commenced on this.

42.2 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.

43. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025-26

The Clerk had circulated background and supporting papers relating to the AGAR for year ending 31st March 2026 for Members' information. These included, in addition to the AGAR Section 1 and Section 2, the Income & Expenditure report, Bank Reconciliations, Reserves Breakdown, Explanation of Significant Variances report, Internal Audit AGAR report, and the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights 2025-26. 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 2026 would be issued the following day, and posted on the Council's website for the period 25th June-5th August 2026. The Notice explains public rights to inspect or question the accounting records.

43.1 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**.

43.2 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**.

44. To review and adopt Council policies

Members considered the following policies, as follows:

44.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to approve re-adoption, with no amendment.

44.2 Data Protection Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to approve re-adoption with no amendment.

44.3 Councillor IT Security Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to approve re-adoption, with no amendment.

44.4 Staff IT Security Policy

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

44.5 Risk management Policy and Risk Register

The Clerk advised that having been reviewed earlier this year, there were no amendments proposed but that it was being brought forward into a more practical timeline of review early in the financial year. Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to approve re-adoption, with no amendment.

45. Finance

45.1 Cashbook Reconciliations and Income & Expenditure Reports

Members received the bank reconciliation for cashbooks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to 30th April 2026, and for cashbooks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to 31st May 2026. These were approved for signature by two Members.

45.2 Income & Expenditure Reports

Members considered the Income & Expenditure reports to 30th April and to 31st May 2026. The Clerk went through some items and Members noted that finances were generally as expected for the early part of the fiscal year, and in line with budget.

45.3 Earmarked Reserves

Members noted the Earmarked Reserves report to 31st May 2026.

46 Nat West Bank Account

The Clerk updated members regarding the Nat West account and issues around accessing this due to changes of staff and councillor signatories. Cllr Smith was already a mandated signatory. The bank had recently notified the requirement to complete a business profile review, during which the Clerk had been able to verify the process for updating signatories. It was **RESOLVED** to approve mandated signatories for the Nat West bank account as the Clerk (Heather Knight), Cllr Guy Purser and Cllr Alan Smith (retained), confirmed within the letter of authority signed by all signatories and appended to the signed Minutes as Appendix A. It was further **RESOLVED** to remove from the mandate past signatories, as detailed in the letter at Appendix A.

47. Premises Repairs and Maintenance – roof/ceiling leak

Members considered the Clerk's report which detailed options and quotes for both roof repair work and internal roof space investigations to ascertain the cause of water ingress through the ceilings in the landing and entrance lobby. It was noted that the internal investigation would cost more and did not include cost of remedial work but should result in identifying and addressing the issue. It would be possible to deal with roof issues at a later stage when the water source was known. It was noted that in any event, some roof ridge tiles need to be replaced. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Arkview Ltd to undertake internal investigations and report, at the cost of £895.00 + VAT. It was further **RESOLVED** to repurpose the Earmarked Reserve 324 New Flooring to become Premises maintenance & Repairs, and that the foregoing work be funded from this EMR. It was **AGREED** that the separate roof work would be postponed for the time being until findings of the investigative work were assessed.

48. Grant Aid 2026-27

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the commencement of the Grant Aid 2026-27 application process from 1st July 2026, as budgeted, and to appoint Cllrs Rufey, Thas, Huntley and Pinnelli to a Grant Aid Task & Finish Working Group). The Working Group would review applications after the closing deadline and make recommendations to Full Council.

49. Amenities

49.1 Gardening/Grounds Maintenance Review

The Clerk gave a brief verbal update on the new grounds maintenance contract work. Review of spring/summer planting was being evaluated and members were asked for their views. The Clerk would be discussing some elements with the contractor shortly.

49.2 Allotments

The Clerk and Cllr Huntley gave verbal reports, as follows.

Part of the perimeter fencing had been damaged following an incident on Saturday 13th June, when a car reportedly collided into it. This had been reported to Sussex Police and a case reference number issued. Quotes were being obtained for repair work to reinstate three metal posts and chain-link fencing and the work would be undertaken as soon as possible.

Quotes had been obtained and circulated for replacing a broken water butt and associated guttering. Members were asked to approve the purchase. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of 2x 200l water butts, including ancillary kit items, up to a value of £50.00 each together with the additional cost of guttering, downpipes and battens needed, to be funded from the Allotments Maintenance budget code 4480.

50. Representatives to External Bodies
There were no reports made.

51. Calendar of Meetings – Change to 2027 dates
The Clerk reported that unfortunately the previously agreed meeting dates for 2027 would need to be altered, due to the May elections and legal period for holding the Annual Meeting of the Council after this. This then had a knock-on effect on the preceding meetings. It was **RESOLVED** to move back by one week the March, April and May 2027 meetings, the new dates being 23rd March, 20th April and 18th May 2027.

52. 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	£20.00
H Knight / A Colban	£2,904.73
A Patel / J Rufey	£639.40
HMRC	£1,226.52
NEST	£343.22
G Purser	£300.00
South Coast Sports Coastal CIC	£2,320.00
Pronetic Ltd	£205.43
Pines & Needles	£2,354.84
Monkey Nuts Cleaning Ltd	£103.20
Barclays Bank	£11.86
Octopus Energy	£40.54
Castle Water	£8.52
Castle Water	£32.20
Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd	£246.24
Monkey Nuts Cleaning Ltd	£148.80
Westons Group Ltd	£652.00
Sussex Views Magazine	£120.00
Barclaycard Commercial	£330.55

53. Correspondence
The Clerk highlighted some items of correspondence of note, as follows:

- Arun DC: CEO June Newsletter on Local Government Reorganisation (forwarded to Cllrs);
- Arun DC: Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan (LCWIP) – Details/invitation, Phase 2 Briefing on 9th June; Notice of LCWIP public consultation postponement to commence 29th June to 9th August (details to be circulated for a July agenda item);
- WSALC: Summer Newsletter (forwarded to Cllrs);
- ADALC: Minutes of meeting held 12th May 2026 (forwarded to Cllrs);
- Southern Water: Copy of letter to residents of Barrack Lane - Surface overflow Relief Pipe project (forwarded to Cllrs);
- Southern Water: Quarterly Stakeholder Update/customer newsletter (forwarded to Cllrs);
- SLCC: Local Council Clerk week took place 8th-12th June to raise awareness of the role/profession and the work of local councils;
- Residents: Emails to/from residents regarding maintenance of Bluebell Wood, referred to Arun DC and responded to proactively by Parks & Cemeteries Manager.

54. Date and time of next Council Meeting
Tuesday 21st July 2026 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 8.29pm.

CHAIRMAN ………………………………………………………….

DATED ………………………………………………………….