



ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

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

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Chairman: Cllr Guy Purser Clerk: Heather Knight

Minutes of the **ANNUAL MEETING (483) OF THE PARISH COUNCIL** Held on **Tuesday 19th May 2026** at the Aldwick Parish Council Offices.

Present: Cllrs Purser (Chairman), Bence, Huntley, Patel, Rufey, Smith (from Min. 7), Thas, Warden and West

In attendance: H Knight (Clerk), and 3 members of the public (part of meeting)

The meeting opened at 7.22pm.

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

1. Appointment of Chairman

The outgoing Chairman, Cllr Purser, opened the meeting.

One nomination for Chairman was received, proposed and seconded. Following voting, it was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Guy Purser as Chairman of the Council for the civic year 2026-2027. 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 Cllr Rufey signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received, and reason approved, from Cllr Pinnelli (work commitment).

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 21st April 2026

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2026 were a correct record and that the Chairman sign them.

Clerk's Report and Actions

Min. 223 Traffic Regulation Order, Marine Drive West/Silverston Avenue: No further communications had been received from WSCC regarding progress. C.Cllr Bence commented that the application was progressing.

Min. 228.2 Summer Play/Sports Schemes: Preliminary approval had been given by Arun DC for the sports sessions at Avisford Park and Queens Field Park, subject to some final queries and formal consent. The Clerk would very shortly be applying for the skateboard coaching sessions at Avisford Park.

Premises and Assets: The annual service visit for fire extinguisher checks took place on 28th April. The half yearly fire alarm service visit took place the same day. Quotes are awaited for some replacement equipment with imminent life expiry dates.

The honours board of chairmen's names and dates had now been updated with the missing details. The 4 watercolour paintings had now been framed, as agreed, and would soon be on display.

Staff training: The Clerk and Assistant Clerk recently undertook Legionella training, as agreed, and are now competent persons. Cllr West had kindly contributed advice regarding some aspects of premises maintenance and management practices.

- 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, seconding and voting, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Alan Smith to the Council. Cllr Smith duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

The Chairman reported that written resignations had been received from Cllr Buckley and Cllr Gotheridge. The Clerk advised that currently there were 3 vacant seats, 1 being already available for co-option. The 2 resulting from the most recent resignations would first need to be advertised for public to call a by-election, then if none were called these can also be co-opted to.

8. Public questions

A member of the public expressed an interest in being co-opted to the council and was advised to speak with the Clerk regarding an application form and process.

A member of the public expressed concern about trees in the area being overgrown with ivy, to the detriment of the trees. The Chairman advised that the parish council doesn't own any trees but if the resident contacted the Clerk we would try to help look into the matter, alternatively this could be reported online to the county or district council. The resident said that they would probably contact the District or County Council.

9. Brief Reports from the District and County Councillors representing Aldwick

C.Cllr Bence reported that in liaison with the Clerk arrangements had been made to install 'Business as usual' signs at the Nyetimber Lane gas work/roadworks to help local retailers.

D.Cllr Bence reported that in liaison with the Clerk, he was asking Arun DC to re-look at clearing stones away from the seat at Dark Lane beach entrance. Cllr Bence reported that as a measure to further improve park security, Arun DC would be sealing off the Southern Water entrance gate of West Park: All access would then be from the car park area, with separate Southern Water only access and public/authorised user access gates.

D.Cllr Purser reported on a District Councillors' meeting with the Chief Executive, called to discuss the Government's recent proposal for local government reorganisation.

It was noted that following the recent county council elections, Cllr Bence now represented Nyetimber county ward, covering Pagham and part of Aldwick, and Cllr Pinnelli represented Bognor Regis West and Aldwick county ward.

10. Review of Standing Orders, Delegated Authority and Financial Regulations for the 2026-27 municipal year

10.1 Standing Orders:

Following proposal and seconding, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the amended Standing Orders as presented, there being no amendments.

10.2 Financial Regulations: Following recommendation in the Internal Audit interim report of 20th October 2026, the Clerk had proposed one amendment, as per the draft circulated, for clause 5.15. This would increase the level of financial delegated authority for the clerk to purchase items within budget, from £500 to £1,000, excluding VAT. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the amended Financial Regulations as recommended, without no other amendment.

11. Bank signatories

It was **RESOLVED** that the current bank account signatories of Cllrs, Purser, Rufey and the Clerk would be retained, and that Cllrs Patel and Huntley would be added as signatories. It was **RESOLVED** that past Cllr Gotheridge would be removed as a bank signatory.

12. Appointments

It was **RESOLVED** as follows:

12.1 To note the previously agreed appointment of Mulberry Local Authority Services as the Internal Auditor for 2026/2027, as per the original Letter of Engagement for a three year period.

12.2 Noted that Moore is the external auditor for 2026/2027, as assigned by the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments body.

12.3 To confirm that Irwin Mitchell be appointed as Solicitors for 2026/2027, and that the Deeds and Trust Instruments of the Council remain in their custody.

13. Appointment of Committees, Membership, Chair and Vice Chair Appointments

13.1 It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the Planning Committee, with membership as: Cllrs Purser, Rufey, Thas Warden and West, 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.

13.2 It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the Staffing Committee membership as: Cllrs Purser, Rufey, Smith and Warden, noting that the Council Chair and Vice Chair are ex-officio members. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Warden as Committee Chair and Cllr Purser as Vice Chair.

14. 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.

15. Appointment of Working Groups, Membership, Chair and Vice Chair appointments

15.1 It was **RESOLVED** to appoint a Budget Working Group, with membership as: Cllrs Patel, Purser, Rufey, Warden and Thas. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Patel as Chair and Cllr Thas as Vice Chair.

15.2 It was **RESOLVED** to appoint a Business Plan Working Group, with membership as: Cllrs Huntley, Patel, Purser and Thas. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Thas as Chair and Cllr Purser as Vice Chair.

16. Calendar of Meetings

Members noted the draft suggestions from the Clerk for January-December 2027, using the same scheduling pattern as currently. It was **RESOLVED** to approve those meeting dates, and the Clerk would produce the final version for publication and circulation to Members in due course.

17. Representatives to outside bodies

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

- a) Aldwick and Pagham Advisory Committee – Cllr T Bence (Cllr Purser reserve)
- b) West Bersted Advisory Committee - remove from list, no longer relevant
- c) West Sussex Association of Local Councils/Sussex Association of Local Councils – Chair (Cllr Purser) and Vice Chair (Cllr Rufey)
- d) Arun District Association of Local Councils – Chair (Cllr Purser) and Vice Chair (Cllr Rufey)
- e) Aldwick & Bognor Bathing Water Quality Community Group –Cllr Purser and Cllr Rufey
- f) Youth Activities – leave on list but no specific lead cllr or representative appointed
- g) Allotments lead councillor – Cllr Huntley

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 5th May 2026 were received and noted.

21. Members' Parish Basic Allowance

If Council resolves to adopt, the Members' Basic Parish Allowance is payable to elected councillors (not co-opted Members). Two members of Aldwick Parish Council were currently eligible to receive this. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council would re-adopt payment of this to eligible Members as budgeted, in the sum of £710.40, being 10% of the District Council Members' Basic Allowance, to be paid in two equal instalments in May and November. The Clerk advised that any eligible Members not wishing to receive the Members' Allowance must confirm this in writing to the Clerk.

22. Chair's Allowance

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of the budgeted Chair's Allowance for 2026-27 of £600, in two equal instalments in May and 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 uploading had not commenced. The April financial reports would therefore be received at the next meeting. The most up to date Earmarked Reserves Report was circulated to Members, showing the recently agreed year end transfers and total reserves held.

24. Honorary Freeman and Freewoman Policy

Cllr Purser presented his proposal and draft policy for consideration, to enable the Council to formally confer civic honour and recognition on someone demonstrating lengthy service to the parish. The Clerk advised that there was currently no related budget from which any costs of an award might be met, other than use of the Chairman's Allowance or the Parish Function (civic reception) code 4505 budget. Comment was made that it might be unfair to presume that any future chair of the Council was happy to have their allowance used for this. The Chairman confirmed that he would be happy to endorse payment from the Chairman's Allowance this year, for review in 2027-28 budget setting as to whether to set up a new budget line. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy without amendment. It was noted that the nomination process may need a sensitive approach to avoid embarrassment to anyone being considered.

25. Photographs of Chairmen of Council

The Clerk sought approval to progress arranging for framed photographs of past and current Chairmen/women to add to the existing display in the foyer, which had not been done for several years. It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the Clerk arrange for 4 missing framed photographs to be displayed, to be paid from the Chairman's Allowance, budget code 4070.

26. Christmas Tree 2026

26.1 Members considered the quotation from the 2025 tree installation contractor for provision of a 19ft Norway Spruce and associated installation costs. The price had increased by around £76 from 2025. The Clerk had not had time to seek alternative quotes due to the timeframe for a 15% discount and free of charge picket fencing from the same provider if an order was placed before 31st May. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation of £1,962.37 + VAT, which was within budget, and appoint Pines and Needles to supply, install, light and remove the 2026 Christmas tree, on the same basis as for 2025. A provisional date of 14th November had been allocated, which the Clerk hoped to put back to late November.

26.2 Members considered a quotation for essential work to the electrical supply equipment for the Christmas tree lighting. The clerk reported that the timer switch had not worked for two years and additionally in 2025 there had been two supply interruptions, necessitating emergency electrician attendance. It was therefore now prudent to ensure that the equipment was fit for purpose. The competent electrician reviewing the work required recommended replacing faulty and incorrectly wired equipment. It was

RESOLVED to appoint Lowen Electrical Services Ltd to carry out the work, at an estimated cost of £370.00 (ex. VAT).

- 26.3** The Clerk asked Members whether the Council might wish to arrange or participate in a community Christmas event centred on the Christmas tree 'switch on' This may need to be a soft launch, depending on operation of the timer device. In 2025, a local business had approached the Council about partnering a community event but there had been insufficient time to arrange this. Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Clerk liaising with the local business and others to arrange a community Christmas event to coincide with the tree installation: Carol singing could be featured with local schools and churches invited to participate. Cllrs Purser and Rufey offered to assist with arrangements.

27. Grove House Surgery Christmas Fair

Members noted the invitation from the Grove House Surgery Patients Group to once again participate in their Christmas Fair. It was **RESOLVED** to have a Council stand at the fair on Saturday 28h November, 10am-12.30pm, with Cllrs Huntley and Rufey attending.

28. Representatives to External Bodies – Brief Reports

- Cllr Purser reported on the ADALC meeting in Arundel, which Cllr Warden also attended. The Arun DC CEO gave a presentation on LGR and the Government's latest proposals.
- Cllr Warden reported on the inaugural meeting of the WSCC Route 600 Bus Shelters Working Group meeting of 13th May. The County Council officers had subsequently provided a spreadsheet so that parish/towns could input data from reviewing bus stops/shelters in their area. Some additional member input would be helpful for an internal working party/task & finish group to undertake the shelter audit. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Smith would join Cllrs Warden and Rufey and all three would arrange a meeting shortly.

29. Correspondence

The Clerk reported on items of note, including:

- Arun DC CEO's latest update (May) on Local Government Reorganisation and second phase of consultation, closing 15th June – forwarded to Cllrs;
- WSALC survey on the Local Government Reorganisation consultation – forwarded to Cllrs. The Clerk sought members' views on a consensus for her to send a response to WSALC, which would help shape their own response to the Government consultation. It was **AGREED** that the Council's overall response was aligned with not supporting the Government's new proposed modification, which was not considered likely to deliver any benefits from the original proposal.
- Arun DC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Phase 2 Briefing – forwarded to Cllrs. The Clerk had circulated this, asking any Members wishing to attend the 9th June Teams meeting to let her know.
- Sussex Alerts/Neighbourhood Watch, Survey on Government proposals to merge police forces – forwarded to Cllrs;
- Local Clerks & Councils Direct, May 2026, issue 165.

30. Payments for authorisation

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

Chichester Payroll Services	£ 15.00
H Knight / A Colban	£ 2,904.73
HMRC	£ 1,155.52
NEST	£ 343.22
Signet Signs	£ 79.80
Barclays Bank	£ 9.22
SLCC	£ 46.20
Octopus Energy	£ 44.92
Pronetic Ltd	£ 205.43
Westons Group Ltd	£ 652.00

Local Authority Technology CIC	£ 30.00
C&M Fire Alarms Ltd	£ 109.98
C&M Fire Alarms Ltd	£ 192.00
Sussex Views Magazine	£ 120.00
SLCC	£ 495.00
Castle Water	£ 8.28
Castle Water	£ 26.56
Zen Internet Ltd	£ 42.30
Barclaycard Commercial	£ 54.16

31. Date and time of next Council MeetingTuesday 23rd June 2026 at 7.00pm.***The meeting closed at 9.09pm.***

CHAIRMAN

DATED