

ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN 2013-2018



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Introduction

This is the first Aldwick Parish Council Business Plan. Councillors found that the process of preparing the plan gave an added focus as to how the Council delivers its services and the need for future planning. The Plan sets out the vision and priorities of the Parish Council for the next five years.

Public meetings were held to enable the Parish Council to investigate projects within the Parish. Suggestions were requested from the audience on the type of improvements they would like to see taking place within the parish.

List of proposed suggestions:

- *Improving car parking in the parish.*
- *Upgrading green spaces including children's play areas.*
- *Providing a Pelican crossing in Nyetimber Lane.*
- *Traffic calming in Fish Lane.*
- *Tree planting.*
- *To conduct a feasibility study of council facilities to establish if they meet the requirements of the residents.*
- *Investigating, in partnership with West Sussex County Council, possible cycle routes in the parish.*
- *To establish a litter strategy.*

Initially these suggested projects will be prioritised by the Amenities Committee before being put to the Council as a whole to agree the priorities.

Some improvements could incur extra funding. This can be achieved through grants and partnerships but may necessitate an increase in the precept spread over a number of years.

All projects will be very strictly managed so that the parishioners get value for money.

Accompanying the list of projects will be objectives to enable the results to be measured.

The purpose of the Business Plan is to:

- *Set out the objectives and plans (actions) of the Parish Council, recognising the role of community groups who share a common vision with the Parish Council.*
- *Enable the Parish Council to fulfil its role within the community.*
- *Communicate the Parish Council's vision and plans to the residents.*
- *Encourage the community to become involved in the future of its parish.*

The Business Plan will be reviewed annually and progress reported to the community.

The Parish Council



Parish Council Building

Situated off Nyetimber Lane adjacent to the Willowhale Public Library the Parish Council offices are well placed to encourage the public to drop in for information or to discuss

issues.

Aldwick Parish Council has fourteen elected or co-opted councillors who, by attending meetings, discuss debate and decide on matters that relate to our community.

Councillors are elected to serve on one or more of the following committees:

- *Finance Committee*
- *Planning Committee*
- *Amenities Committee*
- *Plus sub-committees and working parties set up by the three main committees.*

Areas of responsibility include:

- *Ensuring all statutory and legal requirements are complied with.*

- *Management of Parish Council's budgets and facilities.*
- *Discussion of Planning Applications and submission of comments to Arun District Council.*
- *All the parish amenities.*

The Parish Council has a working relationship with West Sussex County Council (WSCC), Arun District Council(ADC),Sussex Police and our County and District Councillors. The Parish Council is represented on a number of local, district and county organisations.

Aldwick Parish Council holds a number of meetings at the Parish office throughout the year which members of the public are welcome to attend:

- **Full Council Meetings** take place every six weeks - the dates and agendas are available on the council website and notice boards.
- **The Amenities and Finance Committees** meet every six weeks the dates and agendas are available on the council website and notice boards.
- **Planning Meetings** take place every two weeks to consider and respond to planning applications submitted to Arun District Council dates and agendas are available on the council website and notice boards.
- **The Annual Parish Electors Meeting** is held in April each year.

Vision

Our vision is to put in place policies and initiatives that will help improve Aldwick and encourage a greater sense of involvement and pride in the community.

The Parish Council recognises the need for good, clear communication, as this helps residents understand what the Council is doing on behalf of the community.

By ensuring that the work and deliberations of the Council are conveyed to residents on a regular basis, in a format that is easily understood, the Council hopes to encourage feedback to ensure that the needs of the community are reflected in all decisions.

The Parish Council will conduct its business by means that are transparent, sustainable, and environmentally friendly and which present the best value in achieving the actions laid out in this Plan.

Summary of Current Activity

The Parish Council has undertaken the following projects this year which will be ongoing in future years and subject to periodic review.

- *Management of the Parish Council's budget, staff and facilities.*
- *Maintaining the Parish facilities (building etc), running an information service and responding to resident enquiries.*
- *Joint funding of parish public toilets with Arun District Council.*
- *Allotments at The Nurseries.*
- *Upgrading Parish notice boards.*
- *Horticulture. (Flower beds and planters in Rose Green and West Meads).*
- *Parish newsletter. (Placed in Sussex Views and on the Parish website).*
- *Street furniture (seats, some bus shelters and dog and litter bins).*
- *Discretionary Grants to local charities, societies and youth organisations.*
- *when dealing with planning issues.*
- *In the financial year, 2013/14, the Council funded from its reserves a footpath across Avisford Park - from Nyetimber Lane to Carlton Avenue.*

- ***Producing the Parish Design Statement which will be used by Councillors and Development Control Officers at relevant planning applications. It also has to be taken into account by planners, developers and other applicants when dealing with planning issues.***

The Parish Council works in conjunction with Arun District Council (ADC) on local planning applications and on the evolution of the Local Development Framework by West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) on highway matters.

The Parish Council works with and contributes to a number of voluntary organisations that make up the ‘Community of Aldwick’. As the Parish Council recognises the value of, and commitment and achievements that these local voluntary groups contribute, it will seek to become more active, supportive and involved in their various initiatives.

The Parish Council has a working relationship with the Police, in particular the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), which helps the Police to respond to anti-social behaviour issues.

A positive relationship exists with local schools. Continuing liaison with our neighbouring parishes and towns has contributed to a greater understanding of issues affecting the local Sussex area.

Objectives

The Parish Council will endeavour to:

- *Expand its role within the community.*
- *Improve its communication with the community.*
- *Enhance the facilities available to the community.*
- *Further promote local democracy by encouraging more residents to stand for election to the Parish Council.*
- *Work closely with local schools and other local youth organisations to ensure that the needs of young people are adequately addressed.*
- *Carry forward and promote the recommendations of the Parish Design Statement, particularly in respect of the open areas, building development, transport strategies and environment.*
- *Improve the approaches to the parish and welcome signs.*
- *Maintain continuing professional development for staff and Parish Councillors.*



Communications

- *Review the Parish Council's new website via (www.arun.gov.uk) and continue its development.*
- *Produce a monthly newsletter and occasional special articles to be published in Sussex Views.*
- *Work with local media representatives to promote Parish Council initiatives and ensure accurate and unbiased reporting.*
- *The Parish Council will investigate, with other organisations, the feasibility of improving publicity for events in the area, e.g. on the Parish Council's website and Sussex Views.*

A Sense of Community



The Parish Council will:

- *In association with West Sussex County Council as the Highways Authority, endeavour to improve the local environment.*
- *In association with Arun District Council endeavour to expand and upgrade children's play areas and open spaces.*
- *In association with Arun District Council, ensure the three public conveniences in the parish are safeguarded.*

Sporting and Leisure Facilities



Aldwick has a varied balance of recreation grounds, parks, village greens and public gardens. There is a reasonable mix of facilities available, including football pitches, play areas and a skateboard park.

West Park and Marine Gardens,

Two of Aldwick's open areas Avisford Park and the Queensfield at West Meads are used as recreational grounds. West Park and Marine Park Gardens are open spaces. We also have a play area at The Nurseries. Aldwick Green, Bluebell Wood and the Duck Pond are further amenities.

The Parish Council will encourage organisations in the community which promote cultural and sporting activities.

A Safe Community

Although Police statistics define Aldwick as an area of low crime, surveys have identified four areas of concern:

- Anti-social behaviour
- A fear of crime
- Traffic speed
- Litter/dog-fouling

The Police work closely with the Parish Council, as evidenced by the Residents Panel (a liaison between residents and the Police). Two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have been allocated to the area enabling the Parish Council to address problems directly with the Police.

The Parish Council will:

- *Participate in Police initiatives that address anti-social behaviour and continue to work with other authorities (Police, County and District Councils) in reducing crime and the perception of crime*
- *Work with Sussex Police to increase the number of patrols within the parish.*
- *Seek to deal with the problems of litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly posting, noise pollution etc., by helping to foster a responsible attitude and enhancing the sense of community and good neighbourliness.*

Creating a Better Environment



It is incumbent upon the Parish Council to ensure the environment continues to be enhanced for the benefit of all residents. Therefore, the Parish Council will monitor the environment and support initiatives that protect and improve local wildlife habitats, tree cover, hedgerows and other important landscape features.

Existing parks and open spaces within Aldwick add to the ambience of the area while at the same time helping to break up the built- up environment.

Street Planting and Street Scene



The Parish Council will:

- *Maintain and expand its planting programme to improve the appearance of the area through floral and plant displays.*
- *Continue with the tree planting/replanting strategy.*
- *Undertake an audit to identify unnecessary signs and seek to have them removed or re-sited.*
- *Identify areas where litter is a problem and work with the community to tidy these areas.*

Allotments

All of the available allotments have been allocated, but the Parish Council will investigate the feasibility of further improvements to the allotment area and look at the possibility of securing additional land for use as allotments.

Transport Strategy

The Parish Council has no responsibility for transport and related matters other than the provision of seating and shelter at bus stops. Thus, its role is principally one of advocacy in the interest of the parish.

The Parish Council, in association with interested partners will:

- *Lobby bus companies for improved services.*
- *Continue to provide bus shelters and seats where feasible at principal stops in the area.*

Traffic Control

- *The Parish Council works in partnership with West Sussex County Council, as the highways authority, for the provision of improved pothole repair, markings at bus stops and appropriate kerbs.*
- *Work with West Sussex County Council on the provision of pedestrian crossings at strategic places in the parish.*
- *The Parish Council recognises residents' concerns about speeding and illegal parking. The Parish Council will lobby WSCC and the Police for appropriate traffic calming measures and other controls, and consider contributing to the cost thereof.*

Pedestrians &

In association with West Sussex County (WSCC) the Parish seek improvements environment, and monitor the footways, street road surfaces and seek to ensure they are properly maintained.



Cycling

the Police and Council, Council will to the pedestrian will continue to condition of lighting and

The Parish Council wishes to see an increase in walking and cycling and will investigate the provision of, and environment for these modes of transport.

Financial Strategy

The Annual Precept (charge) is the money required by Aldwick Parish Council to provide additional services within the Parish that are not covered by Arun District Council, West Sussex County Council or any other statutory body.

Arun District Council collects this money on behalf of Aldwick Parish Council through the Council Tax. However, the Parish Council decides how much is required. The Parish Council is aware of the financial pressure on residents and will, therefore, always attempt to limit any increases in its precept.

- **The Parish Council is duty bound to provide value for money and will always examine proposals for expenditure carefully to ensure they are necessary and represent best value for the Parish**
- **Accounts are audited annually. A summary of the audited accounts together with estimates will be available on the Parish Council website.**
- **Strong financial checks and risk assessments will be undertaken periodically and investments and reserves will be reviewed regularly.**
- **Work with Arun District Council and other local councils to use shared contractors and suppliers to reduce overall costs.**
- **An annual budget and precept will be agreed. Forecasts for 2-3 years ahead will be supported by an information document that gives details of information relevant to forward planning.**

- **The Council will include in its budget a healthy reserve so that it can be proactive in its service to the community.**
- **Grant support for community organisations will be considered after certain conditions are met. Local organisations will also be encouraged and supported to apply for grants from other bodies.**

Aldwick Parish Council will:

- *Work with Arun District Council and other local councils to use shared contractors and suppliers to reduce overall costs.*
- *Ensure there are sufficient reserves to cover contingencies.*
- *Review, and where practicable reduce, expenditure.*
- *Investigate, and where applicable, take advantage of available grants.*

Aldwick Parish Council Precept

The table below shows the Aldwick Parish Council Annual Precept since April 2009/10.

Year	Parish Precept
2009/10	£80,000
2010/11	£70,000
2011/12	£70,000
2012/13	£70,000
2013/14	£75,023

Business Plan Time Table

This summary outlines possible target dates for achieving outcomes for key objectives outlined in this document.

2013/14

- Investigate, and if applicable, take advantage of available grants.
- Work with Sussex Police to increase the number of patrols within the parish.
- Investigate holding Councillor Drop-in Clinics.
- Review and investigate ways to enhance the Parish Council website.
- Produce a Parish Design Statement that reflects the opinions of the majority of residents as to how the parish could evolve.
- Work with Arun District Council to update and improve the Parish children's play areas and open spaces.
- Investigate and work with West Sussex County Council to provide a Pelican crossing in Nyetimber Lane.
- Investigate and work with West Sussex County Council to address the traffic calming problems in Fish Lane.

2014/15

- Continue to work with Arun District Council to update and improve the Parish play areas and open spaces.
- Conduct a feasibility study of council facilities to establish if they meet the needs of the community.
- Look at the possibility of securing additional land for use as allotments.
- Investigate with Arun District Council how to make Aldwick's parks attractive and valued areas for use by all residents.

- Research the practicalities and benefits to the Council and community of local government initiatives.
- Report on conclusions of the feasibility study regarding the parish facilities.

2015/16/17

- Continue to work with Arun District Council to update and improve the Parish Play Areas and open spaces.
- Review the Parish facilities to ensure they meet the needs of the community.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This document illustrates the commitment the Council has to enhance the infrastructure of the parish and to improve the lives of the residents. Implementing some, or all, of the proposals may require extra funding.. This can be achieved through grants and partnerships but may include an increase in the precept spread over a number of years.

- The current document is not project specific with regard to the delivery of these aims so further work must be completed to identify the projects that will deliver the aims.
- The projects identified in the plan and agreed by the council need to be incorporated into a work programme to ensure that their implementation is managed efficiently.
- Initially these projects will be prioritised by the Amenities Committee before being put to the Council as a whole to agree the priority.
- An effective process of monitoring and reporting should be developed to ensure that projects are delivered efficiently within agreed time limits.
- The Council must ensure that as part of its project initiation the cost of implementing and the on-going management of any services is considered and a suitable budget identified in the start-up year and the following years.
- The implementation of the above recommendations will provide the Parish Council with a clear structure of performance management against which the Parish

Council can measure its own performance in an open and public way to its residents all the year round and at the Annual Meeting of Electors.

Challenges for the Future; Questionnaire

This is the first Business Plan produced by Aldwick Parish Council with a vision for Aldwick.

It is the intention of the Parish Council to review the Business Plan annually and publish progress.

Please contribute to this process and forward your constructive comments to the Council.

Please complete and return this form (details overleaf) and let the Council know your views, aspirations and concerns for the future of your parish.

What is your opinion of Aldwick Parish Council's first Business Plan?

What future targets should Aldwick Parish Council be prioritising?

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Your name (optional)	
Contact telephone number (optional)	
Contact /email (optional)	
Contact address (optional)	

Do you have any other suggestions/proposals/comments that you would like Aldwick Parish Council to consider?

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Please respond to:

Mrs S Batey

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