



# Aldwick Parish Council

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Electors Meeting

### Thursday, 25th April 2019 at 7pm at Aldwick Parish Council Offices

Chairman: Cllr Mrs L. Richardson    Clerk/RFO: Sue Batey    Asst Clerk: Mary Halpin

- Present:** Cllr Mrs L Richardson (Chairman), Cllr Mr A Smith, Cllr Mr T Mullings, Cllr Mr A. Patel, Cllr Mr. J. Bass (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs S. Coppard, Cllr Mr R. Dyer, Cllr Mrs S. Stallard, Cllr Mrs J Rufey & Cllr Mr R Gotheridge.
- In Attendance:** The Clerk, The Assistant Clerk, County Cllr Mrs D Hall, District Cllr Mrs G. Brown, District Cllr Mr M Smith; 18 Electors, 1 member of the Press.
- Apologies:** Cllr Mr Lineham – family matters. Cllr Mr Manion – no reason given.

The meeting opened at 7.00 p.m.

- 01.19pm Welcome by the Chairman and introduction of the Parish Councillors Present.**  
The Chairman Cllr Mrs Richardson thanked those who came and introduced herself. The Councillors present introduced themselves and stated their role in the Council.
- 02.19pm To receive and approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 26th April, 2018.**  
All those present agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting and the Chairman duly signed them.
- 03.19pm To receive the Annual Report of the Parish Council from the Chairman.**  
**Chairman of the Parish Council – Report as read out by the Chairman, Cllr Mrs L. Richardson.**  
Good Evening ladies and gentlemen. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2019 Aldwick Parish Electors Meeting. My name is Lilian Richardson and I am the Chairman of the Parish Council, a position which I am very proud to hold but which is only a small part of a Council which is orientated solely to Aldwick.

This meeting is dedicated to and focussed on the residents of Aldwick and is your opportunity to question us, make suggestions regarding future business and perhaps tell us about organisations in which you might be involved and which benefit the parish.

This is the fourth year that I have chaired this meeting but the first time in an election year so, in order to prevent me from rehearsing what the Committee chairs are going to tell you later, and to put their work into context, I thought it might be helpful for me to start by providing some background on how we work.

Firstly, you may or may not know that Adwick, confusingly, is divided into 4 wards – Aldwick East, Aldwick West, Barrack Lane and St Richards – not the same borders as the District or County wards. Each councillor here, represents one of these parish wards and does so from a purely non-political standpoint so that Aldwick and not a party policy, is put at the heart of any decisions we may make. The Council meets about 9 times each year but much of its work is undertaken by the three standing committees – Amenities, Finance and Planning. Each committee has its own Chairman who will report to you in a moment or two and councillors sit on at least one of these, more often than not two - and there are a couple of councillors who sit on all three.

The Committees are the workhorses of the Council and we generally have at least one Committee meeting each week – partly due to the fact that the Planning Committee – our busiest committee – meets practically every week because it has to adhere to a very strict timescale in order to get decisions to Arun District Council within an allotted time.

These Committees may form Working Parties to do work which would take up too much time at their main meetings but which report directly into them. For example, the Amenities Committee set up a Facilities Working Party to cost and plan the work on the toilets which is now nearing completion and which you may want to view following our meeting and the Finance Committee had a Budget Setting working party.

However, it is at the Council meeting where this work is brought together and put to the vote or where proposals are allocated to the Committees for further work. This is where all councillors have an opportunity to comment on and discuss issues and where they ratify – or not, the recommendations of the committees. You are welcome to the meetings of the Committees and the Council. The dates and agendas are published on the website and in the parish notice boards and there is a slot for questions from members of the public.

Apart from Committee work, there are various organisations or groups which councillors are voted onto at the AGM. There are, for example the Joint Western Arun Area Committee, the Highways and Transport Committee and the Emergency Planning Committee – to name but a few.

I am relating this not to try to get your sympathy or to put you off applying as councillors yourselves, I just want you to know how much work goes on behind the scenes and how proud I am of the work and effort put in by your representatives.

I am also very proud of the work put in by dedicated volunteer groups around the parish. The Aldwick Preservation Society does us all proud by their work and the duck pond and its environs look particularly good at this time of year, and the Aldwick Green Conservation Society has made the Green a real haven though I don't underestimate the work it takes to keep both those areas looking that way.

The parish hall hosts the Willows Coffee morning attended by residents from the Willowhale Estate and another coffee morning – Coffee Pot run by a local church. I am sure that you are aware of the issue of social isolation and events such as these are exactly what we should be encouraging to reduce these effects – particularly on our elderly.

We also have groups that attract younger people such as TS Montrose and the Sea Scouts and two of our councillors are mandated with representing us on youth activities.

The West Meads Community Group play an active part in community life with their own coffee morning and social events and the numerous residents' associations around the parish do their best to keep Aldwick a green, pleasant and safe place in which to live and bring up children as does the Neighbourhood Forum affiliated to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

So, throughout the parish, small local groups beaver away mostly un-noticed. Individuals also play their part. The winners of this year's Aldwick Parish Community Awards went to a group of ladies who consistently, quietly and without any prompting, give their support, time and skills to supporting the Remembrance Day Commemorations. When the event is over, they quietly withdraw only to appear again the following year to repeat their efforts.

I am hoping that this report does not make us seem self-satisfied. We have had our challenges – and will continue to do so, that is what democracy is all about. What I can tell you is that we have had a busy year and Committee Chairs will outline this work to you.

We have very few powers (apart from those relating to allotments and yes we have a councillor who is responsible for liaising with ours) but we are consultees on some things including planning and we have some influence. A friend of mine always refers to parish councils as the pond life of local government and I never tire of reminding him that although the pond life sits at the bottom of the pond, it works to keep the pond clean and enables the fish to thrive and the water lilies to look beautiful.

So, I will now hand you over to the Committee Chairs who I would like to thank again together with my fellow councillors and our two hard working and dedicated clerks. Thank you all for your work, your good humour and your support. Aldwick is lucky to have you.

**04.19pm To receive the draft unaudited accounts for the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.**

The documents were made available at the beginning of the meeting to all attendees and no questions were raised.

**05.19pm To receive the approved budget for 2019/2020**

The documents were made available at the beginning of the meeting to all attendees.

**06.19pm To receive reports from the Chairman of the following committees:****Chairman of Planning – Report as read out by the Chairman, Cllr Mr Terry Mullings**

In July 2018, Arun adopted its new modified Local Plan. This is a large document that provides a guide to all planning applications. This means that new policies have been implemented and replaced the previous ones. These may not be familiar to you. However, we, as a Parish Planning Committee, are referring to the newly revised document and our own Parish Design Statement.

Members of the committee have access to referred applications, and carefully examine **all** the documents, and where possible and appropriate, conduct site visits in their own time. We will always listen to residents' observations and comments presented at our fortnightly meetings. Our decisions are always based on the individual application as it submitted, without speculation.

After careful and thorough examination and discussion of each application, we decide whether to object or record a "No objection" response. To retain our credibility, and comply with Planning Regulations, our objections must be based on materialistic grounds, within the guidelines provided by the National Planning Policy Framework, the Arun Local Plan, and our own Parish Design Statement. The local Ward Member will also be informed of any objection recorded at the meeting. At all times as a group, we acknowledge our responsibility for protecting the character, and promoting the special qualities of the parish that we enjoy, living in Aldwick.

Some of the applications we review relate to the care of trees, which can include their removal. As none of us are specialists on this subject, these are always automatically referred to the Arboriculturist and a "No objection" recorded in the minutes. However, if we feel that the proposed attention is inappropriate or unnecessary, we will register an objection.

We are still proactively monitoring a number of proposed new developments in the surrounding area, including Pagham and Bersted, and we are committed to challenging any application that may have a negative impact on Aldwick. In fact on our agenda for our next Planning Committee Meeting on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April, is Application P/30/19/OUT: At land North of Hook Lane, Pagham. It's an outline application for the construction of up to 300 new homes, a care home with up to 80 beds, and a 2 form entry primary school.

Applications for outline planning permission seek to establish whether the scale and nature of a proposed development would be acceptable to the local planning authority before a fully detailed proposal is submitted.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Planning Committee for their continued personal commitment, contribution and enthusiasm, and I must publically thank our Clerk, Mary Halpin for her hard work, preparing for our meetings, her accurate minute taking and her very professional and knowledgeable support.

**Chairman of Amenities – Report as read out by the Chairman, Cllr Mr John Bass**

The Amenities committee is held approximately every six weeks and carries out proposals and ongoing commitments on behalf of the Parish Council and our parishioners including setting up working parties to undertake and report to finance and Full Council. It has been a privilege to have been chairman of Amenities over the last year and I would like to thank all the committee members and both of our clerks for their commitment.

We have again had a fruitful and rewarding and productive year with a number of ongoing projects plus those that have been completed, these include the following:

- £20,000 contribution to ADC for new play equipment at West Park.
- Contribution to running costs for toilets at West Meads and Avisford Park.
- £10,000 grant acquired from Operation Watershed for repairs to the drainage pipe running under Aldwick Road (now completed).
- Installing two silent soldiers in Aldwick one by the memorial and another at West Park in the Poppy field.
- Three new replacement oak planters with plants and metal trellis in the Millennium Gardens, the upkeep of plants at Rose Green Shops.
- Christmas tree and lights at Rose Green.
- Monthly newsletter printed via Sussex Views (by Mary).
- A brand-new Website visit it at [www.aldwickparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.aldwickparishcouncil.gov.uk) .

We are very pleased to carry on funding the Play Rangers for another year, sessions will take place at both Avisford Park and West Park, these sessions will be run on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May through to Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August please see website for dates. These are greatly enjoyed by the children and parents.

We pass on to both finance and full council the names of local people and organisations put forward who may benefit from our grant system.

The other ongoing projects that the amenities committee will carry on through this year are as follows:-

New Parish signs (now installed).

Refurbishment of the building including new unisex toilets (disabled and baby changing room), LED lighting, completely new gas central heating system and insulation - this is being helped with a Big Lotto grant of £8,500 towards costs.

The Amenities committee also look after the allotments at the Nurseries, report on local footpaths, antisocial behaviour and concerns brought up by parishioners so please contact us if you require help.

I would like to finish this report with thanking all councillors who voted on the projects mentioned and the clerks as this will enable the Amenities committee to carry on working on behalf of the parishioners of Aldwick.

#### **Chairman of Finance – Report as read out by the Chairman, Cllr Mr Alan Smith**

The Budget for 2019/2020 has been set by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by full Council. The Precept for the financial year 2019/2020 is set again at 90k with no increase, a Band D property in Aldwick will pay £16.93 and this is one of the lowest in the Arun District.

The 2018/2019 Budget of the Parish was within the Budget Prediction and included the following;

- 20k was earmarked and contributed towards the upgrading of the play equipment at West Park.
- A grant of £10,105 was awarded by operation Watershed to repair the drainage pipe running under the Aldwick Road – this has been successfully completed.

For this I thank the hard work of the Finance Committee.

Each Year the Parish Awards Discretionary Grants to worthwhile causes, this year a total of 7.8% of 2017/2018 precept given out this was allocated to 19 Charities/Voluntary Organisations benefiting Aldwick residents. If you would like to see the list please see me after the meeting.

Each year the Budget working group prepare the Budget for the following year, this is under the control of the Clerk/RFO to ensure the requested precept is truthful and will be spent.

Internal Audit checks are carried out and documented at each Finance meeting, this ensures good Governance and ensures that members get involved with payments and with checking that Financial Regulations have been adhered to.

All Members of the Parish Council receive the rolling format money records, these are also put on line for members of the Public to view. The Expenditure and Income Balances are checked every 6 weeks at the Finance Meeting.

Each Year the Finances are Audited by an Outside Company, We thank the hard working Clerks/RFO for their help and co-operation in ensuring that these are passed by the Auditors

**07.19pm To receive the observations of County Councillors and District Councillors for the Division in which the Parish is situated.**

**County Cllr Patel** reported that WSCC is promoting solar panels and electric cars in order to decrease pollution.

**County Cllr Mrs Hall** reported that the waste disposal centre at Westhamptnett has opened recycling for garden waste following the recent fire. The waste disposal centres at Bognor Regis and Littlehampton are open 7 days a week till further notice to alleviate situation.

**County Cllr Mrs Hall** reported that Operation Watershed is making available about £300,000 for projects in 2019/2020.

**County Cllr Mrs Hall** congratulated the Chairman and councillors for the job they do, stating that it is always a pleasure to attend meetings at Aldwick Parish Council. She thanked the council for its support of Pagham in relation to proposed new developments.

**Dist. Cllr Mrs Brown** – thanked councillors for outlining what the parish council does. She emphasised that parish is an important level of local government.

**Dist. Cllr Mr Smith** – reported that this time last year the toilets at Avisford Park were not open due to the roof needing to be repaired. He was pleased to report that they were opened last summer and that they are well used by all users of the park for sports/play rangers/tourists and residents. He warmly thanked Cllr Alan Smith for keeping a close eye on the cleanliness of the toilets and reporting any problems to the Arun Officers, stating that Cllr Smith had done a fantastic job.

**Local Plan** – D. Cllr Smith reported that this was adopted in July of this year by the District Council after strong debate. The local plan will see the neighbouring parishes of Pagham and Bersted as strategic sites for housing. District councillors for Aldwick, County councillors and the parish must work together, to make sure services and infrastructure in Aldwick are looked after, as if these houses drop there will be a massive increase in demand for services which locally are already feeling stretched.

**Anti-social Behaviour** – **D. Cllr Smith** reported that as he had already informed councillors, there will be an increase in police officers and police presence across the district, especially to target substance abuse and anti-social behaviour.

**Potholes** – **D. Cllr Smith** reported that last year he took on the task of potholes in Aldwick. He posted it on Bognor Regis Matters, and ended up with just under 120 potholes across the Arun Area to report. By September they were all filled bar 2. As far as he is aware, they are all now filled in properly. He requested that if anyone was aware of any new potholes (In Aldwick) that have appeared, they should speak to him after the meeting.

**08.19pm To receive the reports of Parish Council representatives appointed by the Council to local Organisations.**

**Cllr Mr Dyer** – stated that he has volunteered as a parish representative to Rose Green Infants and Rose Green Junior School. Although the position is a recent one, he emphasised his hope that it will be a fruitful engagement.

**Cllr Mrs Rufey** – stated that the youth councillors attended the TS Montrose AGM and were pleased to see how popular the scheme was, with more children than ever signed up.

**09.19pm To receive, discuss and vote upon business raised by the Electors of Aldwick.**

Business raised	By whom	Agreed Action
Seabrook Close resident called on residents to object to application no. P/30/19/OUT	Aldwick Resident	Councillors will determine a response at the Planning Committee meeting of 29 <sup>th</sup> April.
A query as to why the budget for councillor allowances is greater for	Aldwick Resident	The Chairman responded that because councillors are likely to be

<p>2019/20 than in 2017/2018.</p> <p>A resident requested that comments regarding the A29 be passed to the Highways Committee of WSCC.</p> <p>A resident commented on the poor state of the parish sign on the corner of Nyewood Lane and Aldwick Lane.</p> <p>A resident commented that the footpath on Aldwick Road at Silverstone Avenue and the Martletts roundabout is very uneven.</p> <p>A resident commented that shops at Victoria Drive to where Esplanade used to be have put signs on the kerb and you have to walk round them.</p> <p>A resident commented that Bognor Cricket Club have begun games at West Meads and may seek funding.</p> <p>A resident invited members of the public to meet and greet the Sunday work parties at the Aldwick Green on this Sunday at 11.00. a.m.</p>	<p>Aldwick resident</p> <p>Aldwick resident</p> <p>Aldwick resident</p> <p>Aldwick resident</p> <p>Aldwick resident</p> <p>Aldwick resident (Chairman of the Aldwick Green Conservation Society)</p>	<p>elected in an election year the budget accounted for 14 allowances for 14 seats.</p> <p>This will be communicated by the Parish representative on the WSCC Highways and Transport sub-committee.</p> <p>An assessment will be made and appropriate action taken</p> <p>An assessment will be made and appropriate action taken.</p> <p>County Cllr Patel will look into the matter and WSCC will take the appropriate action. The resident was advised that this area lies within BRTC</p> <p>The Chairman suggested that the group apply for an Aldwick Parish Council discretionary grant.</p> <p>The Chairman said that she would attend and felt sure others present would to.</p>
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Carried by all present.

The Chairman thanked residents for coming to this meeting, which closed at 7.55 p.m.

Date and time of next annual meeting: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020