

ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2025]

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Albourne Parish Council

held on: Tuesday, 1st April, 2025 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr John Drew (JD) – Chairman
Cllr Joy Parks (JP) – Vice Chairman
Cllr Di Smith (DS)
Cllr Suzanne Sawyer (SS)
Cllr John Spencer (JS)
Cllr Imelda Spencer (IS)
Cllr Shane Axtell (SA)

In attendance: Iain McLean; Parish Council Clerk (attending remotely via Zoom);
Councillor Geoff Zeidler (MSDC) (from 7.25 p.m.) and 2 members of the public.

1. **(2025/033) - Councillor JD formally opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and received apologies for absence.** There were no apologies for absence received on this occasion. For the purposes of item 5 below, Cllr JD (WSCC) was not present.
2. **(2025/034) – Declarations of interest.** There were no such declarations received.
3. **(2025/035) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public.** (i) A resident reported that since the speed reduction to 40 mph on the B2116, the advisory 30 mph signs have been taken down. This means that if anything, traffic is moving faster than before. This will be taken up with WSCC Highways, and Cllr IS also thought that Steve O’Connell (Sussex Police) should be informed. In addition, Cllr JD will add the matter to the list of highway issues to be discussed at the regular meetings with WSCC officers. There is also a concern over the size of the lorries on the road, and the regular incursions on to the other side of the carriageway at certain points. This can be taken up with the Firstrand Industrial Estate, where it is believed that the majority of heavy goods vehicles are heading to or leaving. (ii) A resident asked about any updates regarding the progress of the Wellcroft Green retirement Village development. Cllr IS has recently received an email from Inspired Villages, and this indicates that the expectation is that some enabling works will start in June lasting for up to 23 weeks, and then the main works (everything above ground) in January 2026. (iii) A concern was raised about some severe hedge and tree cutting back on land near Church Lane. It was reported that this is part of some “catch up” land management by the land owner in terms of ditch clearance and fencing work. As a resident Geoff Zeidler is aware

of the matter through his contacts, and will endeavour to keep the Parish Council informed, although it would be preferable if the land owner could advise the Parish Council directly.

4. **(2025/036) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th March 2025 were duly approved and will be signed off, as a true record, by the Chairman as soon as possible.

5. **(2025/037) – To receive reports (if any) from WSCC Councillor Joy Dennis (JD), and MSDC Councillor Geoff Zeidler (GZ).**

(i) GZ said that there is still no progress (stage 2) with regard to the District Plan and the matter is with the Planning Inspector. The delay is not expected to prejudice the developers' delivery schedules, as regards their development proposals, and generally, they are not seeking to take advantage of the situation. Overall, it was still felt that it would be better to engage with the process, because MSDC is keen to find out what existing communities want to see out of the development, e.g. around road and increased traffic concerns. It will also be important to get the developers on board in terms of the required infrastructure to go with the development. (ii) On a point raised by Cllr JP, the situation regarding the road cleansing on the Street, opposite the Village Hall, will be looked into. The gulley is blocked there but this has been reported to WSCC. However, it was explained by GZ that there are insufficient kerbs on that part of the road to carry out clearance. It was also reported that the lay-by on the B2116 needs clearing, because the debris and mud on the road is causing the gulley to become blocked. (iii) The springs on the gates to the play area at the Recreation Ground still need to be adjusted, and it was agreed that the Clerk will take this up again with Glendale (the contractor for MSDC). (iv) There is concern about the general lack of local consultation regarding MSDC's proposal to introduce car parking charges in the town and village car parks, and given that local people use the one at Hurstpierpoint, this could affect Albourne residents (v) Finally, GZ outlined the next steps on the devolution proposals. The County Council elections in May have been cancelled, and the application for a unitary Authority (West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove), along with associated local government re-organisation is now with central Government to assess.

6. **(2025/038) – Planning matters.**

6.1 One planning application was considered, and the plans and relevant policies presented and discussed. It was therefore **RESOLVED to comment to Mid Sussex District Council as follows**, with Cllr IS proposing and Cllr JD seconding -

PROPERTY	PROPOSAL	AGREED RESPONSE
SDNP/25/00891/LDE – The Coach House, Brighton Road, Woodmancote.	Retention of an existing ancillary building and related timber decking.	The bar in the National Park being higher, the issue for the Parish Council is whether the building would have achieved planning consent, and complied with relevant building regulations and standards. This is difficult to assess from the information provided, which is very descriptive in nature. It is also misleading to describe it as an outbuilding.

		There may be legal considerations but the Parish Council is also concerned about the precedent effect of granting such Lawful Development Certificates. The Council must therefore object to this application. However, if it was to be successful, then we assume that conditions can be attached, such as the building only being used for purposes ancillary to the main house, and not as a separate property.
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6.2 On traffic and highway matters, Cllr JD reported on the meeting with WSCC on 13th March. In the light of the petition, the review of the Traffic Regulation Order for the speed reduction on the stretch of the B2116 (and throughout the Village area) is with WSCC officers and the County Councillor, Joy Dennis, to assess. Other actions were agreed, and the Parish Council will continue to press for the resolution of the School parking, overgrown hedges, blocked and dropped gullies, street debris, potholes, the issue of the lane indication signage on the B2118 traffic lights with the junction of the B2116, and the proper maintenance of footpaths.

6.3. On planning, the situation on the District Plan had been discussed in the context of GZ's report above. On a separate point, Cllr JS reported that he had been to a conference on the devolution proposals, at which the CEO of MSDC had been present. If it goes ahead, the intention is to have a seamless transfer of local services. It was also noted that Town and Parish Councils could have the opportunity to do more, and that in some cases a merger of Parish areas might be appropriate. The time table has been set out, with Mayoral elections in 2026, and vesting of powers in the new Authority taking effect in 2028. However, the whole matter is rather short on detail at present. The Parish Council will therefore be watching for further developments, and monitoring the situation closely.

7. (2025/039) – Finance report and matters.

7.1 The financial summary and the Bank reconciliation for the month, were received, noted, and approved, with Cllr SA proposing, and Cllr JP seconding.

7.2 The invoices were presented for payment, and it **was RESOLVED to agree and to make the following payments:-**

AMOUNT	PROCUREMENT	PAYEE
£577-45	Clerk's salary + on costs (March)	West Sussex County Council
£230-88	Dog bin collection service 2024/25	Mid Sussex District Council
£25-00	Grass cut (1) in Millennium Garden (2025)	Brian Truran
£400-00	Grant donation to KSS Air Ambulance Service	KSS Air Ambulance Charity
£155-88	Annual Zoom fee	Zoom (reimbursement for

		Shane Axtell)
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7.3 The outturn budget for the financial year end 2024/25 was received, noted, and approved. This shows that the Council had spent just over 60% of its budget, but that many of the budget heads were contingent on events, and so are unspent. However, there were also a few overspent budgets, and the Clerk explained the reasons for this in each case.

7.4 The Clerk reported that the internal audit to be carried out by Mulberry and Co. for the financial year 2024/25, will take place on 12th May 2025 (and will be carried out remotely).

7.5 It was noted that because neither income nor expenditure for the financial year 2023/24 exceeded £25,000 the Parish Council can (as for the last three years) certify itself as exempt from a limited assurance review (i.e. the requirement to submit a full set of financial papers for external audit). Having reminded the Council of the qualifying criteria, the Council therefore **RESOLVED** to accept the Clerk's recommendation to proceed accordingly.

7.6 After discussion, when alternatives were considered, the Council **AGREED** (with IS proposing and SS seconding) a request for a £400 grant/donation to the Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Service. It was noted that the Council does have a budget for grants, which will cover the donation in full.

7.7 It was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk to proceed with the updating/renewing of the Parish Council's website along the lines of the proposal set out by Vision ICT Limited and circulated to Councillors. The price is in line with other providers, and as the Company already hosts the email domain, it makes sense to maintain this relationship.

8. (2025/040) – Current issues. Cllr JD went through the rolling list of actions, and updated the document as necessary. This will be published separately. The main points were (i) on flooding issues, Cllr SA us looking at the ongoing problems at Oakvale Cottages. There appears to be some dumping of rubbish in the nearby pond. The document on riparian responsibilities, mentioned by Cllr Joy Dennis (WSCC) at a recent meeting, is still awaited from WSCC. (ii) The go ahead for the routine spring work to the Millennium Garden has been given to Adie Rowe and this should be done soon. (iii) The purchase of the strimmer for grass cutting just needs to be checked against any insurance issues. (iv) The purchase of a further silent soldier especially in view of the 80th VE day celebrations this year was agreed. (v) It was agreed to purchase two new water butts for the allotments at £28 each. Cllr SS will take this forward. (vi) Cllr SA has done the notices for the fly-tipping warnings. He will circulate the mock ups for this as soon as possible. (vii) Peter Holding will be carrying out the maintenance work at the bus shelter as soon as the weather dries up. It was agreed to reimburse him for any materials or costs incurred. (viii) On the provision of a new bus shelter on the other side of the road, Cllr IS will seek some further quotes, but it was noted that WSCC has no issue with the idea, and should grant any appropriate highway Licences. (ix) The mowing and wild flower seeding of the re-wilding area will be done as soon as the daffodils have finished. (x) The next Speed-watch monitoring will be carried out on Truslers Hill lane in due course.

9. (2025/041) - Annual Parish Meeting. It was agreed to proceed on the basis of the draft Agenda that the Clerk had circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and preparations will continue for the annual Parish Meeting of Electors in the Village Hall on Tuesday, 6th May 2025 at 7.30 p.m. The appropriate notice and Agenda will be published at the appropriate times. It was also agreed to move the annual Parish Council meeting to 6.00 p.m. on the same day (from the originally scheduled date of 13th May).

10. (2025/042) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters. No information items, or new matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

SIGNED.....John Drew/Joy Parks
Chairman/Vice Chairman

***NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 6th MAY 2025 @ 6.00 p.m. BEING
THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING***

Note: This meeting originally scheduled for Tuesday, 13th May at 7.00 p.m. has now changed to the above, and will pre-cede the Annual meeting of Electors.