

ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2025]

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Albourne Parish Council

held on: Tuesday, 3rd June, 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 Shane Axtell (SA)

In attendance: Iain McLean; Parish Council Clerk, Councillor Geoff Zeidler (MSDC), and 2 members of the public.

1. **(2025/056) - Councillor JD formally opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and received apologies for absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Imelda Spencer and John Spencer, and the reasons accepted.
2. **(2025/057) – Declarations of interest.** There were none declared on this occasion.
3. **(2025/058) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public.** None were raised on this occasion, although it was recognised that the issue of the District Plan and the Sayers Common Village development proposal, would come up under item 5 below.
4. **(2025/059) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 6th May 2025 were duly approved and will be signed off, as a true record, by the Chairman as soon as possible.
5. **(2025/060) – To receive reports (if any) from WSCC Councillor Joy Dennis (JD), and MSDC Councillor Geoff Zeidler (GZ).** Cllr GZ gave his report. The main points were (i) an update on the prospects for establishing a unitary Authority for Sussex, and how the associated local Government re-organisation will work out. There is a lot of work going on, and a number of options being considered. The mayoral area will be determined by the Government, but the likelihood is that there will be three unitary Authorities covering West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton and Hove. There is the issue of how the proposal will be funded, and what the income powers will be. To what extent will there be adequate Government support? The assessments are ongoing, but the aim is to ensure that whatever the outcome, the transfer of services should be as

seamless as possible, if and when the District and Borough Councils disappear. (ii) It has been well reported that the District Plan has hit the buffers in that the examiner is minded to fail the Plan on the basis that the duty to co-operate has not been met. The response is that the issue goes to the soundness of the Plan and could be dealt with by a main modification. MSDC is likely to judicially review the examiner's decision if confirmed. There is a view that the issue has become politically motivated, in order to force MSDC to come up with a Plan that includes even higher housing numbers. (iii) There remains a concern about some rope swings that have been hung to some trees in the Recreation Ground. This is a matter for MSDC, but the Parish Council recognises the health and safety concerns. The Clerk will therefore take the matter up with the relevant officer at MSDC.

6. (2025/061) – Review of Governance documents. It was agreed to defer the review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to the 1st July Parish Council meeting in order to give more time to consider them. On the Risk Assessment document, the Clerk had circulated the document, and as it had been thoroughly reviewed and amended in June 2024, it was therefore **AGREED** to confirm the document in its current form. On the Forward Action Plan, the updates that the Clerk had added to the document were noted and confirmed. However, it was agreed to add to the projects, the aim to provide a new bus shelter on the B2118. Cllr JP noted that in regard to the improvements to the basketball hoops mentioned in the document, the plastic clips are once again breaking, and the Clerk will take this up with Glendale (the MSDC contractor).

7. (2025/062) – Planning matters.

7.1 There were no planning applications to consider this cycle.

7.2 The planning update had been given in item 5 above.

7.3. Current traffic and highway matters are covered in item 11 below.

8. (2025/063) – Finance report and matters.

8.1 The financial summary and the Bank reconciliation for the month, were received, noted, and approved. The Clerk reported that the VAT refund in the sum of £1,677-93 had just been received, as confirmed in the May Bank Statement.

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

AMOUNT	PROCUREMENT	PAYEE
£601-52	Clerk's salary + on costs (May)	West Sussex County Council
£25-00	Grass cutting in the Millennium Garden	Brian Truran
£140-00	Annual spring clearance of the Millennium Garden and the Medieval Pound	Adie Rowe
£226-02	Annual streetlights maintenance contract (Payment 1 of 2)	Streetlights
£33-59	Refreshments for the Annual meeting of Electors on 06/05/25	Village Hall (Pop-up-pub) (reimbursement)
£214-50	Internal audit fee for 2024/25	Mulberry Local Authority Services Limited

8.3 Internal audit 2024/25. The completed part of the audit form, and the full report by the auditor had been circulated to Members by the Clerk. The Clerk referred to the actions that the auditor had recommended should be taken going forward. It was noted that these would be acted on and resolved (e.g. the review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will now be going to the July meeting, and the development of the new website is ongoing). Otherwise, the audit had given the Parish Council a clean bill of financial health.

8.4 External audit. The completed Certificate of Exemption for 2024/25, was received, noted and approved, and the Chairman and the Clerk were duly authorised to sign the document accordingly. It will be sent to the external Auditor, Moore, prior to the 30th June as required.

8.5 External Audit. The completed Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25, was received, noted and approved, and the Chairman and the Clerk were duly authorised to sign the document accordingly.

8.6 External audit. The completed Accounting Statements for 2024/25, were received, noted, and approved, and the Chairman and the Clerk duly were authorised to sign the document accordingly.

8.7 Insurance. Regarding the decision taken at the last meeting, the Clerk confirmed that in accordance with the recommendation from Gallagher & Co, the Parish Council's insurance arrangements for 2025/26, including public liability, have been renewed with Hiscox. The position was duly noted, and the Certificate of Public Liability will be posted in the Village Hall, in accordance with the legal requirements, as soon as circumstances allow.

9. (2025/064) - Annual Parish Meeting. The meeting was held in the Village Hall on 6th May 2025, in the presence of some 30 residents, and there had been good participation. There are no particular action points to address, although the matter that was raised regarding the rope swings has been referred to above. There was a particularly detailed discussion around the District Plan and the Sayers Common Village housing development proposal. The Parish Council remains fully engaged in the process in order to try and ensure the best outcome for the existing settlements, and that concerns around traffic, flooding, and infrastructure are properly addressed. The draft minutes will be published as soon as possible for approval at next year's meeting.

10. (2025/65) - Report from Village Hall Management Committee. The Chairman of the VHMC reported on the meeting held on 27th May 2025. The main points were (i) it was felt that the issue of whether to share the bar, and pop-up-pub facilities had been dealt with, (ii) it was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would share the costs on a 50/50 basis of installing the metal cabinets for document storage, and for the proposed projector, which will be useful for Council meetings. The Council acknowledged the need to appoint a handyman for routine maintenance jobs in the Village Hall, and the Chairman of the VHMC will be looking into this, (iii) the flushing of the boiler was noted and agreed, prior to any question of renewing it. However, it was agreed that the boiler should also be serviced at the same time within the same cost/quote.

11. (2025/066) – Current issues. Cllr JD went through the rolling list of actions, and updated the document as necessary. This will be published separately. The main updates were (i) the Traffic Regulation Order application for the 20 mph speed reduction on the stretch of the B2116 should remain on the list, as although the review of the application has not been successful, despite the petition, the Parish Council do not regard the matter as closed, and there may be alternative solutions. (ii) A small team needs to be put together to take forward the cleaning and maintenance of the village gateway signs. (iii) The riparian toolkit has now been provided by WSCC. The Clerk will additionally send a copy to Cllr JP. (iv) The proposal to provide a strimmer to help with the maintenance of the Millennium Garden is ongoing, and Cllr JP will speak with Brian Truran. Storage of the item is also still an issue. (v) The Council may need to engage a handyman to deal with the installation of the new water butts at the allotment site, and Clarion may need to be involved as the run-off is from their adjoining garage block. (vi) The blocked gulley in the lay-by in the Street, which has previously been reported by Cllr JP, still needs to be cleared by WSCC, and this will be reported to them again. Cllr SA will add to the report it, as it can led to flooding at times of heavy rain. (vii) The spring clean of the Millennium Garden and the Medieval Pound could have been done better, and alternatives may need to be considered. (viii) Most of the trimming back of overgrown hedges from private property in Church Lane has been done, but there is still some left to do on the corner, and in terms of obstructing a road sign.

12. (2025/067) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters. The Clerk confirmed that the proposed liaison meeting with Mid Sussex MP, Alison Bennett, will now take place between 11.00 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Thursday, 28th August in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

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

NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 1st JULY 2025 @ 7.00 p.m.