

ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2025]

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Albourne Parish Council

held on: Tuesday, 7th October, 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 Imelda Spencer (IS)
Cllr Suzanne Sawyer (SS)
Cllr Shane Axtell (SA)
Cllr John Spencer (JS)

In attendance: Iain McLean; Parish Council Clerk (attending remotely via Zoom),
Councillor Geoff Zeidler (MSDC), and 4 members of the public.

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- 1. (2025/087) - Councillor JD formally opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and received apologies for absence.** There were no apologies for absence.
 - 2. (2025/088) – Declarations of interest.** There were none declared on this occasion.
 - 3. (2025/089) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public.** (i) A resident raised the issue of the potential conflict regarding traffic entering or exiting Starley Close, with those entering or exiting Church Lane on the B2118 London Road almost immediately opposite. This needs an expert traffic assessment. A reduction in the speed limit might help, and it was agreed that the matter would be added to the list of traffic and highway items in the Parish that the Council discuss at one of its regular meetings with WSCC Highway officers, and that the Clerk would specifically take the matter up with Highways in order to set the ball rolling. (ii) It was noted that the repair and improvement of the fingerpost on the B2116 Henfield Road (see later in these minutes) may also help with drivers looking for directions at this three-way junction.
 - 4. (2025/090) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd September 2025 were duly approved and will be signed off, as a true record, by the Chairman as soon as possible.

5. (2025/091) – To receive reports (if any) from WSCC Councillor Joy Dennis (JD), and MSDC Councillor Geoff Zeidler (GZ). Cllr GZ gave his report. *“At the last MSDC Council meeting on 24th September the Council voted to support the establishment of a smaller unitary authority comprising only Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex; rather than the whole of West Sussex which would be the second largest Unitary Authority in the UK. Under either option Council Tax is likely to rise by 10%. This smaller option would have £6m higher implementation costs and £30m lower savings which, at the “base case” of forecasts, would be negligible. It would require the disaggregation of Education; Health and Social Care; and Transport Services. Its benefits would be that it has a higher density of Councillors to residents and may be based more locally. The Government will consult on the options in November and make a decision, heavily influenced by the Treasury, in 2026. The next MSDC Council meeting is 10th December. At the Cabinet meeting on 15th September the Cabinet decided to progress Parking Charges for the villages. The papers did not analyse the financial case but only focused on the discount. The Council has failed to consult as it promised prior to preparing a Pricing Policy and a consultation will now occur a month before implementation in April 2026. I believe that the Cabinet has not fully engaged with or considered submissions from Parishes; and did not consider suggestions I had made about deferral if health and safety issues were not resolved. One Cabinet member noted that the technology options were not tested and that the plan was challenging. The deadlock between MSDC and the Planning Inspectorate on the District Plan remains; although the Council has taken some steps to protect its position. As MSDC currently has no 5 year land supply speculative development applications are being seen; and none of the Reg19 Policies carry weight in decisions. Generally house building is slow and Brookleigh (Burgess Hill Northern Arc) is behind plan with the school development postponed. MSDC are seeking to maintain the objectives of the “Sayers Village” Master-plan although the 4 smaller developments are all progressing. This is through co-ordination with Berkley and pressing for s106 requirements as the route to infrastructure funding. There was a second “Liaison Committee” meeting with Albourne, Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common, and Twineham Parishes hosted by MSDC on 6th October, and agreement to a continuing programme of meetings to ensure progress (which appeared very limited since the meeting in May).”*

6. (2025/092) – Planning matters.

6.1 One planning application was considered, and the plans and relevant policies presented and discussed. It being proposed by Cllr JS and seconded by Cllr DS, the Council therefore **RESOLVED to comment to MSDC and the SDNPA as follows:-**

PROPERTY	PROPOSAL	AGREED RESPONSE
DM/25/2161 - Middle House, Lanehurst, Twineham Lane	Proposed erection of a summer house with ground floor and a mezzanine level	Albourne Parish Council has no objections to this application provided a condition is attached to ensure that the summerhouse cannot be occupied, lived in, or permitted to be a B&B establishment. Parking could also be an issue.

6.2 On the District Plan and the master-planning for the Sayers Village development proposal, Cllr JS reported on the 6th October meeting as referred to in Councillor Zeidler’s report above. The intention is still have to have a finalised Master-plan in place by March next year, with Berkeleys (the main developer of the land south of Reeds leading on the process. The other developers have indicated they are on board, but are pursuing their

individual planning applications. There is a need in any event, which MSDC fully recognise, to ensure that through the s.106 financial contribution process the infrastructure that is needed for the whole area, is properly thought out, co-ordinated, and provided. It is intended to have a Workshop meeting to discuss such infrastructure requirements on 10th November, with a further main Liaison Group meeting on 24th November.

6.3. On current traffic and highway matters, there were no updates to report at this meeting. All the outstanding issues remain under review.

6.4. The item on the Agenda regarding the Starley Close issue had been discussed and dealt with at item 3 above.

7. (2025/093) – Finance report and matters.

7.1 The financial summary and the Bank reconciliation for the month, were received, noted, and approved.

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

AMOUNT	PROCUREMENT	PAYEE
£729-03	Clerk's salary + on costs (September)	West Sussex County Council
£25-00	Grass cutting in the Millennium Garden (August)	Brian Truran
£196-96	Purchase of new strimmer for Mill. Garden maintenance, etc	John Drew (reimbursement) – Toolstore Limited

7.3 The three quotes regarding the provision and installation of a new bus shelter on the B2118 were discussed. It was then unanimously **RESOLVED** (Cllr IS proposing and Cllr SS seconding) that the quote from G W Shelters be accepted. It was noted that the contractor will deal with any services survey that may be required and any License issues with WSCC. It was also agreed that the shelter should be black in colour.

7.4 On the issue of the repair and refurbishment of the fingerpost on the B2116 Henfield Road it was unanimously **RESOLVED** (with Cllr IS proposing and Cllr JP seconding) to accept the quote from Ralph Restorations, and that this should be for the full repair as quoted, rather than the patch up repair. It was also agreed to waive standing orders to enable this one quote to be accepted, given that the contractor is a specialist and recommended restorer, and that to find comparable contractors will just delay the need to get this work done before further deterioration of the sign takes place.

7.5 The half yearly budget monitoring report for the period 01.04.25 to 30.09.25 was received, noted and approved. The Council has spent just under half its budget for the year, and whilst three budget heads are marginally over-spent, others remain unused or under-spent.

8. (2025/94) – Report from Village Hall Management Committee. The Chair of the VHMC gave her report. The main points were (i) the pop-up-pub continues to cover its costs, (ii) the year end accounts have been produced by the Treasurer for submission to the Charity Commission. She has some queries on some of the figures and is working through these with

the Treasurer. (iii) She reported that the steps at the front of the Hall are continuing to crumble and have now reached the point where work will be required. This could be expensive. (iv) All the electrics and lighting improvements in the Hall have been done. (v) There is a quiz night on the 22nd November. (vi) It was reported that measures are being taken to resolve the various issues around the Under5s use of the building and adjoining garden area.

9. (2025/095) – 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 are (i) Operation Speed-watch is ongoing. There has been an issue with a speeding motorbike. (ii) MSDC has removed the re-wilding area, without any consultation or notice to the Parish Council. They will be chased up for an explanation, and requested to remove the post that previously advertised the area. The repair to the fence at Hunters Mead also needs to be chased up. (iii) Cllr JP will look into planting some wild flowers in the Millennium Garden. (iv) The WSCC Riparian tool kit ought ideally to be sent to landowners, and it will need to be established who they are. Cllr SA knows of a few. (v) It was agreed to authorise the Clerk to proceed with the new website and to make any decisions regarding it. (vi) The overgrown pathway on the B2118 from the traffic lights going south needs to be reported again (to Tim Boxhall). (vii) the ongoing pavement issue on the B2116 needs to be taken up with Cllr Geoff Zeidler again, as no progress has been made so far. (viii) Adie Rowe will be asked to do the autumn trimming of the hedges in the Millennium Garden, and Brian Truran will be asked to cut back the summer growth vegetation in the Medieval Pound. (vix) on the broken “Singing Hills” tourist sign on the B2118, Cllr JP has taken this up again with the Golf Club, as has Tim Boxhall (WSCC). It is clearly their responsibility to either fix or remove it. (x) Cllr SS is still dealing with auditing the condition of the street signs in the parish. (xi) The need to trim some of the trees in the Recreation Ground is still outstanding. The Clerk has written to the owner of the land from where one of the trees is growing (overhanging the footpath).

10. (2025/096) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters. No such matters were reported on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 8.58 p.m.

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

NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 4th NOVEMBER 2025 @ 7.00 p.m.