

ALBOURNE PARISH [2021]

Minutes of the meeting of the Annual meeting of

the electors in the Parish of Albourne

held on: Tuesday, 4th May 2021, at 7.30 p.m. via the Zoom platform

Present: **Albourne Parish Councillors:** Cllr Graham Stafford – Chairman, Cllr Jerry Butler, Cllr Di Howard, Cllr Nikki Ernest, Cllr Joy Parks, Cllr Suzi Sawyer, Cllr John Drew.

Iain McLean (Parish Council Clerk).

Cllr Joy Dennis (WSSC), Cllr Judy Llewellyn- Burke (MSDC).

3 local residents (being electors of the Parish)

1. Chairman's introduction and review of the previous year.

The Chairman opened the meeting, and referred to the difficulties of the past year, due to the pandemic. The Parish Council had continued to meet remotely via the Zoom platform, and been able to carry on with its business in a more or less full way. He referred to the planning application at the former Hazeldens Garden Nursery site, and thanked everyone who had been involved in the appeal process. The Chairman also took the opportunity to thank all fellow Parish Councillors, the Clerk, and District and County representatives for all their help and work throughout the past year, in helping to achieve the aims of the Parish Council, despite the problems of the pandemic. Cllr Butler was especially thanked for setting up and arranging the various Zoom meetings.

2. Minutes of Annual Parish meeting held on 21st May 2019.

These were unanimously approved, and signed as a true record by the Chairman, subject to a correction requested by Cllr Ernest. It was noted that there was no meeting in 2020 due to the pandemic.

3. Reports from WSSC and MSDC Councillors.

Cllr Joy Dennis (WSSC) gave her report on behalf of West Sussex County Council. She set out an overview of what the Council does and the services it provides. She mentioned that considerable amount of work had gone into resolving concerns around school admissions. Cllr Judy Llewellyn-Burke gave her report on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council. It had been a year dominated by the pandemic. Some £26m in grants had been given out to local businesses. Also, loans, and extra Council tax support had been extended to those in need. However, most businesses had been able to continue fairly normally. There had been the need to carry out extra cleaning, e.g. to playgrounds

and leisure facilities. However, it was noted that Leisure centres had taken a particular financial hit for obvious reasons. The scheme to re-wild certain areas in the District, through Parishes and local communities, would be progressed throughout the coming year. It may be something that the Parish Council could look into.

4. HGV/ Traffic issues/Village Gateways.

Cllr John Drew gave his report. The Parish Council's Traffic Management scheme, aiming for a reduction in the speed limits along the local roads, is currently with West Sussex County Council for assessment. This will need a Traffic Regulation Order to be made. There are some issues to resolve, and there is to be a meeting with the Project Officer at WSCC later this month. The project for the installation of the Village Gateways at the various entrances to the Village is progressing well, and the aim is to have these put up in the next few months. It is also hoped to arrange a meeting with the WSCC officer dealing with the removal and appropriate replacement of the redundant road traffic signs, in order to take this matter forward. Funding and design still appear to be the main issues. Finally, the Speed Indication Device is being placed at various locations around the Village's roads, and is producing very helpful data in terms of determining traffic speeds and frequency of road use.

5. Planning issues/District Plan.

Cllr Nikki Ernest gave her report. It has been a relatively quiet year for planning applications, and most have been fairly non-contentions. There have been 4 appeals, with 2 allowed, 1 dismissed, and 1 currently awaiting determination. The decision to allow the retirement Village application at the former Hazeldens Garden nursery site was a disappointment, and was at odds with a number of District Plan policies. However, the Planning Inspector has decided overall, that the benefits outweighed the disadvantages. The revised MSDC District Plan, outlining the need for additional housing in the District, and where these should go, will be going to examination with the Governments Planning Inspector, with the hearings scheduled to start on the 1st June 2021. There are currently no particular implications for Albourne, but the pressure for housing has not gone away.

6. Trees/hedges/footpaths/Millennium Garden.

Cllr Suzanne Sawyer gave her report. It was noted that trees in the Conservation Area need planning consent before anything can be done with them. Following representations from the Parish Council, MSDC has planted a new Beech hedge alongside the footpath by the Village Hall. The South Downs National Park has produced an initiative for a tree re-planting scheme. This is something that the Parish Council wants to consider. The idea is to improve the rural, green feel to the Village. On footpaths, the Parish Council continues to work with the Public Rights of Way team at WSCC, with a view to ensuring that the many footpaths around the Village are kept fit for purpose. People are encouraged to report directly to PROW if they spot anything untoward with any public footpath. On the Millennium Garden, the Parish Council has carried out a number of significant improvements and repair works to the Garden, in order to enhance it as a safe and green space for people to enjoy. This has included the provision of a new bench.

7. Village Hall/Social Group/Pop up Pub report.

Cllr Jerry Butler, as the Chairman of the VH Management Committee, gave his report. Obviously, the Hall had taken a hit in terms of use and hiring through the pandemic, but in

fact, the financial loss has so far quite small, and can be managed. Risk assessments on the possibility of re-opening the Hall are periodically carried out, and it has been agreed to assess the situation again on 1st July, taking on board the latest Government advice or rules applicable at that time. The Albourne Arms pub has of course had to be closed, but it is hoped that it can re-open as soon as circumstances allow. The CCTV installation around the Hall in order to prevent anti-social activity is ongoing, but will be installed as soon as possible. There will be a clear policy for how this is to be used. The project to rationalise the storage requirements in the Hall and Garage is ongoing. The project to deal with the dilapidated state of the garage is also ongoing, and a decision as to whether to repair it, replace it, or demolish it, will be taken in due course. Ongoing projects include the proposal to lay a new, hard wearing floor replacement in the Hall, and to deal with rationalising and renewing the chairs used with the Hall. The Committee is also looking at the exterior re-decoration of the Hall, soffits and fascias, and possible window replacement.

8. General session for the public.

A resident raised a number of issue and concerns about the Village Hall. This included security issues, consultation, and use of contractors. It was also put to the meeting that the Garage was structurally unsound and should be demolished. It was agreed that the best course of action would be for Cllr Jerry Butler to meet with the resident in order to discuss and resolve all these matters. Another resident noted that the gate to the playground in the Recreation Ground is constantly left open, leaving the possibility of dogs getting onto it, and it needs a polite “Shut the gate” sign, or appropriate signage. The Parish Council will consider this in conjunction with MSDC, who are responsible for the playground.

9. Chairman’s concluding remarks and close.

Finally, the Chairman thanked all for attending, and mentioned that the Annual Parish Council meeting follows this meeting on 6th May 2021, and he encouraged residents to attend if they can, albeit that the meeting will be held remotely.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

SIGNED.....Graham Stafford (Chairman)