

# ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2024]

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## Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Albourne Parish Council

held on: Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 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 Shane Axtell (SA)  
Cllr John Spencer (JS)

*In attendance:* Iain McLean; Parish Council Clerk (via remote means), Councillor Geoff Zeidler (MSDC), Councillor Joy Dennis (WSCC), and 3 members of the public.

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- 1. (2024/057) - Councillor JD formally opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and received apologies for absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Suzanne Sawyer, and the reason accepted.
- 2. (2024/058) – Declarations of interest.** There were none declared on this occasion.
- 3. (2024/059) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public.** A brief update was given by WILD (Watchdog for Intrusive Local Development) regarding the Sayers Village proposal in the revised District Plan. The situation is being monitored, but at the moment the matter is with MSDC, who are analysing the responses to the Regulation 19 consultation process. For further updates and information, residents are urged to visit WILD's website.
- 4. (2024/060) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 were duly approved and will be signed off, as a true record, by the Chairman as soon as possible.
- 5. (2024/061) – 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) there is a political purdah ongoing at the moment in view of the general election on 4<sup>th</sup> July, (ii) GZ is pursuing a theme of how best to try and ensure that developers comply with their promises and planning conditions, when building out planning consents (e.g. on-site parking of construction vehicles), (iii) there is a funding issue for Parish Councils regarding playgrounds, and this is being looked at, (iv) the carbon literate initiative (mentioned at the last meeting) is ongoing, and will likely start

with schools, (v) the goalposts on the Recreation Ground are still not in-situ (the ground conditions to allow this have improved), and so the Clerk will pursue this (with a copy to GZ), (vi) there is a similar issue with regard to the netting on the basketball hoops (broken clips). Cllr JD gave her report, and updated the meeting on a number of County Council matters. The main points for the Parish were (i) the issue of the non collection of highways signage after road works have been completed, (ii) the problem of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Team at WSCC, not responding to reports of overgrown footpaths, or updating on any action taken.

**6. (2024/062) – Review of Governance documents** - (i) The Council reviewed, and confirmed that both current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were considered to be satisfactory. However, the Clerk reported that the National Association of Local Councils had just published a new draft model of the latter, and the Clerk will review this with a view to possibly adopting the document in due course, (ii) on the Risk Assessment document, the Clerk had circulated a revised document with some updating changes. A few additional comments were made by Councillors, which the Clerk will include (e.g. ensuring that the review date is inserted), and the new document was therefore **AGREED** accordingly.

**7. (2024/063) – Planning matters.**

7.1 Two planning applications were considered, and the plans and relevant policies presented and discussed. It was therefore **RESOLVED to comment to MSDC as follows** – (with Cllr JP proposing and Cllr IS seconding for both applications)

PROPERTY	PROPOSAL	AGREED RESPONSE
DM/24/0912 - Albourne Equestrian Centre, Melrose Farm, Henfield Road	Proposed temporary change of use for retrospective planning application, mixed site use comprising equine with trailer and caravan training site, to mixed site use comprising equine with open storage of motor vehicles and associated activities with an expiry date of 6th October 2026.	Albourne Parish Council finds no reason to change its response to the original application. Accordingly, it maintains its strong objection to this application, as the proposal is contrary to a number of policies in the Mid Sussex District Plan, given the nature of the proposal, and its countryside location. These are DP 12 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside. The proposal to store a considerable number of vehicles in an equestrian centre in no way enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and is entirely anomalous with the main function and purpose of the site for rural activities. Notwithstanding DP12, the proposal is incompatible with the requirements of DP14 - Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy. The proposal will not contribute to the rural economy, and is of such a

		<p>scale as to be in breach of the express provisions of that policy. DP29 – Noise, Air and Light Pollution. The expansion of the business to include a substantial car storage area, with any number of vehicle movements, will have an adverse affect in terms of the objectives of that policy. In terms of transport policies, the proposal will add even more pressure to the existing rural road structure, with vehicle transporters and other heavy goods vehicles using the roads, thereby increasing the noise and vibration to properties along the B2116 Henfield Road. Furthermore, the proposal is in clear breach of Albourne’s Neighbourhood Plan policy, ALC1 Conserving and enhancing the character of the area, and is outside the objectives of policy ALE1. In summary, the proposal is completely unsuitable and inappropriate for a rural, countryside setting. By way of comment on the background, we understand that the previous permission for the trailer training was only granted because it was very small in scale (i.e. up to 10 vehicles) and had some connection with the equestrian centre, since it was primarily aimed at training for drivers of horse trailers. This proposal is for a fivefold increase in vehicle storage. The Parish Council has previously observed 40/50 vehicles parked on the site. We are also aware of people waiting around the Village whilst their vehicles are serviced on this site. There does not appear to be any mention of this additional, unauthorised activity in the application. The application should therefore be refused.</p>
DM/24/1195 - 9 Hunters Mead	Proposed single storey side extension.	Albourne Parish Council has no objections to this particular

		application.
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7.2 Cllr JD mentioned that it is intended to pursue the complaint about the Traffic Regulation Order for speed limit reductions, which had been rejected by WSCC, to the next stage of the complaints procedure. It was hoped that in this context Cllr Joy Dennis, who has steadfastly supported the process, will be involved. The dangers to school children of crossing the B2116 to get to the School particularly need to be emphasised, and a reduction in the speed limit on that stretch will significantly help to address the issue. The Council will also continue to pursue other speeding and related traffic issues, such as along Truslers Hill Lane.

7.3. Cllr JS mentioned that the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, which in itself depends on what results from the revised MSDC District Plan, is ongoing, and he is looking at sourcing some outside expertise, and seeking quotes.

## 8. (2024/064) – Finance report and matters.

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

8.2 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 (May)	West Sussex County Council
£8-25	Refreshments for annual Parish meeting of electors on 07/05/24	Councillor Suzanne Sawyer (reimbursement)
£175-50	Internal audit fee for 2023/4	Mulberry Local Authority Services Limited
£150-00	Work to the Millennium Garden and the Pound (spring clearance)	Adie Rowe
£25-00	Grass cutting at the Millennium Garden (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Brian Truran
£77-39	Pads for community defibrillator	The Defib Pad (reimbursement for John Parks)

8.3 Internal audit. 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. Otherwise, the audit had given the Parish Council a full bill of financial health and it was particularly noted that the 2023 financial accounts for the Village Hall charitable funds had in fact been submitted to the Charity Commission by the Treasurer on time, and so the Commission had corrected the record. The audit papers had also been corrected in order to confirm this.

8.4 External audit. The completed Certificate of Exemption for 2023/24, was received, noted and approved, and the Chairman and the Clerk were duly authorised to sign the document accordingly.

8.5 External Audit. The completed Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24, 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 2023/24, 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 2024/25, 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. (2024/065) - Annual Parish Meeting.** The meeting was held in the Village Hall on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024, in the presence of some 30 residents, and there had been good participation. The main points that the Parish Council need to keep pursuing are the many flooding issues in the Parish (with possible use of Operation Watershed funding), and the speeding issues on the local roads. The Council's ongoing Speed-watch programme will help to gather the appropriate evidence in order to support any applications for speed reductions. The Sayers Village proposal in the revised District Plan remains a major issue, and the Parish Council will continue to input this at each stage of the process. The draft minutes will be published as soon as possible for approval at next year's meeting.

**10. (2024/066) – Current issues.** Cllr JD went through the rolling list of actions, and updated the document as necessary. This will be published separately. However, it was **AGREED** to accept the quote from Adie Rowe to lay further much needed wood chippings on the paths in the Millennium Garden (MG). It was noted that Adie Rowe is the retained contractor for routine maintenance at the MG, and so the work would be covered within the existing arrangement as previously authorised by Council.

**11. (2024/067) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters.** The Clerk will arrange the proposed meeting as agreed by Councillors, with Sam Smith (Park Services Manager at Glendale) in order to look at improvement ideas particularly within the Recreation Ground. Cllr DS referred to the need for WSCC to carry out some hedge trimming, as the footpath on the B2116 towards the traffic lights from Hurstpierpoint is overgrown, and is now even encroaching out onto the road.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

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

***NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 2<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2024 @ 7.00 p.m.***