

ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2016]

Minutes of the meeting of Albourne Parish Council

held on: Tuesday, 5th January 2016, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr Meg Price (MP) - Chairman
Cllr Graham Stafford (GS) – Vice Chairman
Cllr Heather Jordan (HJ)
Cllr Nikki Ernest (NE)
Cllr Di Howard (DH) (from 7.05 p.m.)
Cllr Barry Compton (BC)

In attendance: Iain McLean (Parish Council Clerk), Councillor Peter Griffiths (WSCC) (from 7.10 p.m.), and 4 members of the public (for parts or all of the meeting).

- 1. (2016/001) – Chairman formally opens the meeting, welcomes those present, and receives apologies for absence.** Apologies were received from Councillor Nick Wergan, and Councillor John Allen (MSDC).
- 2. (2016/002) – Declarations of interest.** Councillor HJ declared a personal, prejudicial interest in the planning application at item 6.1 below (Hunters Cottage), since she and her husband were the applicants. She therefore indicated that she would leave the room for the duration of the discussion of this item.
- 3. (2016/003) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public** – There were no new issues raised that would not be coming up separately on the Agenda.
- 4. (2016/004) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st December 2015 were duly approved and signed, as a true record, by the Chairman. On matters arising, it was noted that Councillor Allen should be asked by the Clerk if he had been able to find out anything about the funding of possible improvements to the playground in the Recreation Ground. Councillor GS referred to the correspondence with regard to the quiet run tarmac issue, and to find out if Henry Smith had been able to obtain any answers from the MP.

5. (2016/005) – To receive reports (if any) from WSCC Councillor Peter Griffiths (PG), and MSDC Councillor John Allen. (i) PG explained how the Government’s fundamental spending review had filtered down to WSCC, and then to Towns and Parishes. The costs of care will be rising by 2.5%. All WSCC budgets will be performance based, and must add value. The Police and Crime Commissioners’ elections were coming up. It is possible that WSCC will be asking for a 1.95% rise in their precept request for 2016/17. There was comment from Councillors to the effect that WSCC needs to show a real improvement in actions, and that it needs to spend the money it already has much more efficiently. Its contracting arrangements particularly need to be looked at, and the Parish Council’s experience with regard to Operation Watershed, where it made considerable savings on WSCC’s projections, was a prime example. The Reeds Lane/ north side of the B2116 flooding issues were discussed, and WSCC need to get on top of this. GS is having a meeting with Richard Speller from WSCC soon in order to discuss all the flooding and drainage issues. There is a particular risk to Oakvale Cottages. PG will send the Clerk an article/link about local businesses applying for grants to further their operations. Cllr NE referred to the ongoing Firland/Olus planning issue, and said that there had been no response from the WSCC officer. The dust suppression plan issue needed urgent resolution, as this is a serious issue. PG will chase these matters up. PG will also chase up the quiet run tarmac issue with the new minister and MPs.

6. (2016/006) – Planning matters.

6.1 The responses dealt with under delegated authority (in view of the timescales) for the first two applications set out below, were noted and confirmed. Three further planning applications were considered, and the plans and relevant policies discussed. It was therefore **RESOLVED to comment to MSDC as follows:-**

PROPERTY	PROPOSAL	AGREED RESPONSE
DM/15/4548 - Box 2, Unit 5, High Cross Farm	Single storey side and rear extension. Planning statement received 02.12.15.	No change to previous comments.
DM/15/4817 - Land adjacent to Yew Tree Cottage, Church Lane	T1 – Horse Chestnut – remove up to 1.4m of branch and length starting from outer canopy. Crown reduce by 35%.	No comments.
AE/DM/15/4636 – Finches, The Street	Sycamore (Maple) reduce canopy by approximately 1.5-2m.	Albourne Parish Council has no comments on this application.
AE/DM/15/4937 – Hunters	Single storey side extension, 3 replacement windows and	Albourne Parish Council has no objections to this

Cottage, The Street	conversion of the ground floor wc to shower room.	application.
AE/DM/15/4956 – Singing Hills Golf Course, Muddleswood Road	Demolition of existing covered teaching bay and extension, to create new fully covered range over existing driving bays and ball dispenser.	Albourne Parish Council has no objections to this application but would request a condition that no external lighting, other than that which already has explicit planning permission should be installed.

[Note: In accordance with her declaration of interest above, Councillor HJ left the room for the duration of the discussion of the application in respect of Hunters Cottage.]

6.2 On the Neighbourhood Plan, it was noted that the regulation 16 consultation period ends in two days' time on 7th January 2016. A number of sessions and events had been held about the content of the Plan (as revised), but not all had been well attended. Cllr NE and Mick Gratton will be reviewing the consultation responses and input, once provided by MSDC.

6.3 The issue of the Firland/Olus/Winterpick unresolved planning enforcement issues had been discussed under PG's report at item 5 above.

6.4 On other planning enforcement matters, the issue of possible breaches of planning and environmental regulations concerning a farming operation in Albourne, which had come to the attention of the Parish Council from concerned residents, was discussed. Councillors GS and NE declared a personal interest at this point, as they lived fairly close by to the farm in question. The Clerk reported that the planning aspects were being looked into by MSDC, and further information had been requested on the environmental side. On the Albourne Equestrian Centre matter, Councillor NE had contacted Andrew Clarke, the Head of Enforcement at MSDC, and he would be contacting the Clerk in due course. On the field to the west of the access leading to Albourne Place, the Clerk would chase up the Planning Officer for a further response, as the situation appeared to have been misunderstood regarding the deposited hardcore/soil, etc. Councillor MP raised a new possible matter relating to the construction of a new cinder track access-way running south towards Singing Hills Golf Course, but it was noted that this is probably related to the existing permission for the agricultural building situated at the property.

7. (2016/007) – Finance report and matters.

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

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

AMOUNT	PROCUREMENT	PAYEE
£25-99	Printing ink (HP Store)	Meg Price (reimbursement)
£402-80	Clerk's salary plus on costs (November)	WSCC
£72-00	Membership of Action in Rural Sussex (annual subscription fee)	Action in rural Sussex
£349-20	Grass cutting Albourne 6 -12 of 12, trim hedge, trim side hedge at Mill. Garden	Barcombe Landscapes Limited
£418-46	Clerk's salary plus on costs (December)	WSCC

7.3 The proposed budget for 2016/17 was discussed, and it was noted that the salary budget, the general maintenance budget, and the miscellaneous budget would need modest increases. However, the water supply budget head could be deleted, as no bills were received, and this was a VH matter. The proposal overall therefore, is that the budget should rise by £1,150 on the current year's in hand budget. It was anticipated however, that the bank balances, the precept, and the expected VAT refund, will cover the increase. **It was therefore resolved to agree the Council's budget for 2016/17 as above.**

7.4 The Clerk reported that because the tax base had gone up for 2016/17, due to an increase in paying households, the individual bills, so far as the Parish Council's current precept is concerned, would fall. However, it was considered that whilst an increase is inappropriate this coming financial year, there should not be an effective decrease either. **It was therefore resolved that the precept should rise by an amount equivalent to the tax base increase, so that individual bills do not change.** The Clerk was therefore instructed to agree the calculation with MSDC, and to make the appropriate precept request accordingly.

8. (2016/008) – Operation Watershed. Councillor GS is making some headway in his dealings with WSCC. The flooding outside Ernest Doe on the B2118 appears to be because of a blocked gully. WSCC is investigating how the gullies along the B2116 (Henfield Road) flow. Councillor NE said that WSCC's efforts need to be focussed on where housing is affected. It was noted that the problem is the ditches. In heavy rain, the capacity of the existing drains cannot cope with the amount of water. Councillor GS said that whilst OW has resolved many of the problems, there are still quite a few flooding issues in the Parish that need to be resolved. **GS will be having a further meeting with Richard Speller (WSCC) in the next few weeks.**

9. (2016/009) – Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC). It was noted that the pop-in pub (Albourne Arms) will be carrying on once a week on a Friday evening. Ann Higginson is promoting the tea parties in the Hall. Endon Blatch (MSDC) is looking at the lease issues regarding the refurbishment of the kitchen, and the garage replacement issue. PG said that there may be some unspent monies via the County Local Committee funding route to help with the costs of the project, and the VHMC could make another application, as it did for the refurbishment work. There are apparently no s.106 monies available for this, as the Clerk previously reported and explained, but this needs to be further investigated by reference to recent housing developments (s.106 Planning Agreements). The next VHMC meeting is on the 26th January 2016.

10. (2016/010) – Current issues. (i) On traffic issues, John Couling is still trying to do the volunteer training so as to be able to undertake the Speed-watch task. (ii) On road signs, Cllr GS said that he had taken Richard Speller to view the signs. There was a concern that these were now rusting, and could end up being dangerous. It was hoped that this may allow WSCC to bring forward the removal. It is on the amber list, but needs to be on the red list. Cllr GS confirmed the quote he had duly received for the Parish Council to do the work itself, but at £1,100, it was agreed that this was too expensive. It was noted that any “no entry” signs for HGVs that the PC wanted to put up, can only be advisory, as otherwise a Traffic Regulation Order (a difficult and time consuming exercise) would be needed. Cllr NE said that the temporary “new road layout” signs were still in-situ, and so still need to be removed. Richard Speller is aware of this. It may be that if there is no action soon, the PC will have to do the work itself. (iii) On winter management, it was noted that the salt supply issue for the bin at (which had had its supply stolen) needs to be chased up by the Clerk. (iv) On the issue of the ownership of the trees/land behind Softech House, the Footpath Ranger will be looking at this as part of the routine footpaths survey. (v) On the issue of blocking the entrance/exit routes around the Recreation Ground in order to try and help prevent anti-social behaviour, the matter is ongoing. Cllr MP has been corresponding with the officer at MSDC. (vi) On the remaining works to be done to the Millennium Garden, John Couling has confirmed that he plans to do this over the winter period.

11. (2016/011) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters. MP raised the issue of the Chairmen’s and Clerks board that goes in the Village Hall, and that it needs updating before it goes back up. Councillor GS and the Clerk will see if they can find out anything about the sign writers. It was noted that the situation regarding former Councillor and Chairman Jerry Butler’s brief tenure, needs to be checked with him, and either Councillor GS or MP will do this. DH raised the issue of a rickety stile situated along the path that goes into the water meadow. It was agreed that this is best brought to the attention of Sue Philipson, the Footpaths Ranger at WSCC, when she does her forthcoming survey and inspection of the footpath network. GS raised the issue of the “common” land in the Street, and mentioned that WSCC advice was to

consider registering it as a Village Green. He will obtain the exact measurements of the area, where there is no apparent ownership, in order to inform the process. The Clerk will look into the law on Village Greens in order to assess whether this might be possible, and will report back.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

SIGNED.....Meg Price/Graham Stafford
Chairman/Vice Chairman

NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 2nd FEBRUARY 2016 @ 7.00 p.m.