

ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2015]

Minutes of the meeting of Albourne Parish Council

held on: Tuesday, 3rd March 2015, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr Meg Price (MP) - Chairman
Cllr Graham Stafford (GS) – Vice Chairman
Cllr Mick Gratton (MG)
Cllr Nikki Ernest (NE)
Cllr Barry Compton (BC)
Cllr Nick Wergan (NW)

In attendance: Iain McLean (Parish Council Clerk), Councillor Peter Griffiths (WSCC), and 8 members of the public (for parts of the meeting).

- 1. (2015/409) – Chairman opens meeting and receives any apologies for absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Heather Jordan (HJ), and Cllr John Allen (MSDC), who was attending a meeting at MSDC regarding the progress of the District Plan.
- 2. (2015/410) – Declarations of interest.** There were none declared.
- 3. (2015/411) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public.** (i) A resident raised the issue of speeding traffic along the Henfield Road, B2116, and the dangers this presented at the two junctions with Truslers Hill lane, and Twineham lane. In two years of living at her property, she had witnessed nine accidents at these two junctions. There was also an issue with the “Give Way” sign, and this might need to be removed or modified, as it meant that the view of particularly agricultural vehicles was limited. It was noted that traffic issues generally, are part of what needs to be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan, but there are no suggested solutions as yet. Reducing the speed limit in this area to 40 mph needs to be revisited. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to WSCC Highways, and the resident would write to Councillor Peter Griffiths outlining the concerns in more detail, and with a view to him possibly being able to access some community funding for any solutions put forward, (ii) A member of the public noted that the telephone box in The Street had been repaired and was working. This had been raised at the last meeting, and the Parish Council had actioned. He suggested that if there was any repeat of damage or vandalism, BT should be asked to reconsider relocating the box to a more appropriate and

possibly safer site.

4. **(2015/412) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd February 2015 were approved and signed, as a true record, by the Chairman. Updates: The issue of the loud bangs being made by the bird scaring device was mentioned. It had improved for a while, but was now very loud again. MG has been requested to raise a formal report with MSDC, and has met on site with the Club with a view to (i) stopping the double bang, (ii) changing the timer to stop the bangs at night, and (iii) that the device should be baffled with straw bales. The matter is ongoing, but people affected (including individual Councillors) are urged to use the on line reporting system to make their own complaints. This will add to the profile of the matter.

5. **(2015/413) – To receive reports (if any) from WSCC Councillor Peter Griffiths, and MSDC Councillor John Allen.** Councillor PG said that the issue of the road signs was still on his radar, but that the Parish Council needed to be patient. There was an ongoing re-organisation of the Department at WSCC, and that Mr Geoff Mee was now the main officer, although in a temporary capacity (he has since been replaced by Nicola Debnam, Highways Director, starting on 14th April 2015). PG would revisit the emails so far from WSCC (Andrew Pledge), and the Clerk would send these on to him. However, there might be a self-help solution, which he would investigate further in terms of dealing with out of date road signs. He updated the meeting on social care, and the mental health/think family initiative. This needs to particularly service areas of rural deprivation. He brought to the Council's attention the "Be the Business" initiative and the funding that was available under this scheme. He urged small businesses to take advantage of it, and the Council agreed to advertise this on the village community intranet. Under this item, NE proposed a vote of thanks to PG for his work in proposing the successful motion at WSCC to reverse its decision to support the second runway at Gatwick Airport. This was endorsed by Council.

6. **(2015/414) – West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.** GS outlined the issues and concerns relating to the proposed changes by WSCC to the service. He was very concerned that the service will find it increasingly difficult to cope with emergency situations, particularly on a large scale. The service is already very stretched. He urged Councillors to review the email from, and the link to the petition, and to think very hard about signing up to it. He also agreed to put something on the community intranet in order to advertise the issue to residents. The Clerk was asked to re-circulate the email (from early February). NW asked if there might be another side to the story, so that Councillors have all the relevant information. Councillor Peter Griffiths suggested that the PC write to the Cabinet member at WSCC responsible for the matter, Councillor David Barling, so as to try and establish an evidence base for the proposals. The Clerk was asked to put

the matter back on the Agenda for the April meeting.

7. (2015/415) – Provision of benches in the Parish. MP reminded Councillors of the email approach from the Plymouth Brethren (Peter Holding). It was noted that there were very few benches in the Parish, and that the proposed location by the bus stop was quite sensible. There was a query about the exact proposal being made, and who would fund it. The Parish Council had a budget for street furniture, but this was quite small. However, it was noted that WSCC had a fund that could be tapped into for e.g. benches and bus shelters. Also, the responsibility for future repairs and maintenance would be an issue. It was therefore agreed that before taking any further, MP would contact Peter with a view to establishing a bit more firmly what was being proposed. It was also felt that the Council would want to be involved in the style and design of the bench.

Action:	Cllr MP
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8. (2015/416) – Parish Council elections 2015 (7th May). The Clerk outlined the process and the possible scenarios, e.g. more candidates than Councillor vacancies would mean an election, not enough would mean the need to co-opt later on. Nomination forms have to be hand delivered to MSDC personally, although it was possible that an Agent, if permitted at PC level, could be used. It was also more difficult to withdraw now. Therefore, there were a number of further questions that needed answering. However, it was agreed that the election should be advertised as widely as possible, in the hope of getting more people to come forward. It was noted that SSALC had some promotional material, which the Council would tap into.

9. (2015/417) – Planning matters.

9.1 Three planning applications were considered, and the plans and relevant policies discussed. It was therefore **resolved to comment to MSDC as follows:-**

APPLICATION/PROPERTY	PROPOSAL	AGREED RESPONSE
AE/DM/15/0501 (LBC) – The Old Rectory, Church Lane	Proposed demolition of a bay window and construction of a covered loggia at the rear of the house	No objections
AE/DM/15/0505 (FUL) – The Old Rectory, Church Lane	Ditto	Ditto
AE/DM/15/0603 – Wellfont,	Amendments to application granted	No objections

Truslers Hill Lane	permission under 14/02901/FUL – see Agenda for the full details	
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9.2 On the Neighbourhood Plan, it was noted that this is currently with the planning consultant for checking. MG is also working on the consultation statement, but it was agreed that the consultant should prepare the basic conditions statement. An estimate of the time this might take is awaited. MG referred to the issues that the change in the Plan period from 2011-2031, to 2014-2031, had on the Plan in terms of housing numbers, given that a number of the sites had been consented and were being built. However, there was a view that because Councils could work from completion dates, the effects could be mitigated. Cllr NE updated the meeting on the District Plan meeting that she (and the Clerk) had attended on 27th February at MSDC, and the overall housing number now included. The revised Plan, and all the background papers are now on the MSDC website.

9.3 On planning enforcement matters, MG went through the list and updated the meeting – various emails circulated to Councillors also referred. NE said that a date needed to be attached to each action taken under an item. On a forthcoming application at the Singing Hills Golf Club for lighting to the range, he said that the South Downs National Park Authority appeared to be happy with it. MG’s view was that he would now be comfortable with it, in view of the efforts that the applicant had taken to mitigate the effects, if SDNPA and MSDC are OK with it. After discussion, it was noted that this application would most likely be formally received later in the week, with a response deadline of 27th February. Therefore an extraordinary (planning) meeting would be needed. It was felt that the optimum date for this would be 31st March, and so the Clerk would still need to try and obtain an extension of time from the planning officer. Finally, MG referred to a number of recent planning outcomes recently (as also circulated by the Clerk), i.e. Gessings – approved. The Oaks – refused (see previous agendas and minutes).

Action:	Cllrs MG/Clerk
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10. (2015/418) – Finance report and matters.

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

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

AMOUNT	PROCUREMENT	PAYEE
£358-05	Clerk’s salary & on costs (February)	WSSC

£411-10	Neighbourhood Plan consultancy work	Maroon Planning Limited
£8,400-00	Drainage works, etc., under Operation Watershed programme	Edburton Contractors Limited
£10-00*	Annual subscription for membership of MSALC*	Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils*
£91-20	Village hall hiring costs x 4 bookings	Albourne Village Hall

* See resolution at minute (2015/423) below.

10.3 It was agreed that on the need to comply with the governance requirements set out in Financial Regulations, relating to the checking and signing off, of the Bank reconciliations and statements, Cllr NW would undertake the appropriate duties, and he and the Clerk would liaise as necessary in order to make the appropriate arrangements.

11. (2015/419) – Albourne Parish Council; Trust arrangements and VAT. It was noted that there is still a body of opinion (SSALC), which says that VAT cannot be reclaimed in the circumstances of the Trust set up, but that AiRS (ACRE) are saying that it can be reclaimed. It was therefore agreed that an opinion from HMRC should be sought, but that it was important to put the question in the right way. John Rose therefore agreed to draft a paper for these purposes, which he would send to the Clerk and to NW in draft, so that it could be approved before sending out.

12. (2015/420) – Operation Watershed (OW). Cllr PG in the context of his report above, also referred to the Operation Watershed project, and said that there was a WSCC fund to help riparian owners comply with their obligations to prevent flooding from their land. The flooding issue along Reeds Lane was being addressed by WSCC officers. GS said that Conway Limited was investigating issues along the B2116, but that there appeared to be quite a lot of problems to resolve. The work had been done along Church Lane, and the problems largely resolved, but that it was too muddy and wet at present, to complete this work. There is a need to tap into more OW money next year (2015/16).

Action:	Cllrs GS/BC
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13. (2015/421) – Village Hall Management Committee. Elaine Makey, the Chairman of the Village Hall Management Trust Committee, gave her report. The previous minutes, and the next meeting of the Trust Committee on 24th March, refer.

14. (2015/422) – Current issues. The Clerk had nothing further to report (given that a number of matters had already been discussed earlier in the meeting).

15. (2015/423) – Clerk’s report. (i) The Clerk set out the value of MSALC in terms of what it does, and that it being the local Mid Sussex branch of the Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils it was a useful forum for more local and relevant issues to be discussed across the various Parishes in Mid Sussex. **It was therefore resolved to continue with membership, and (as above) to pay the nominal £10 subscription fee.** It was also noted that the Chairman would try and get along to future meetings, and that the Clerk would circulate future Agendas and minutes. (ii) The Clerk reported that he had now heard from Peter Simpson formally giving up his allotment, and that he and Cllr HJ were corresponding with a husband and wife, who lived in the Village, about them taking over the plot (from 1st April 2015).

16. (2015/424) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters. GS said that he had attended the County Local Committee, and OW had been discussed. BC mentioned a house that was being demolished, but it was noted that this was not in the area of the parish. He reported the radar speed sign on the B2116. NE referred to her email to Lord Taylor on the Mayfields’ issue (as circulated to Councillors), but had not so far received a response. She updated the meeting on the documents supporting the revised draft District Plan, and said that she had some particular concerns with the village hierarchy settlement, e.g. transport issues. She has a meeting with the Head of Planning at MSDC, and the Cabinet Member responsible in order to discuss the matter, and also to see how APC can have a seat at the table, when the Plan gets to examination by the Planning Inspector. MG mentioned the anti-social activity and car parking issue at Hunters Mead. He noted that there were some loose boxes in the field next to Ernest Doe, but NE said that a planning application had just gone in for this. MP mentioned that she and GS had a meeting with the PCSO on 4th March, at which the Council’s strategy on speeding issues would be discussed. She also referred to the contact with Sue Philipson, the new Public Rights of Way (PROW) officer at MSDC, but noted that the periodic footpaths’ inspection in Albourne, wasn’t scheduled until January 2016.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

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

NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 7th APRIL 2015 @ 7.00 p.m.