

ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2016]

Minutes of the meeting of Albourne Parish Council

held on: Tuesday, 1st March 2016, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr Meg Price (MP) - Chairman
Cllr Graham Stafford (GS) – Vice Chairman
Cllr Nick Wergan (NW) (from 7.07 p.m.)
Cllr Nikki Ernest (NE)

In attendance: Iain McLean (Parish Council Clerk), Councillor Peter Griffiths (WSCC), Councillor John Allen (MSDC) (from 8.09 p.m.), Councillor Annie Hirst (Twineham Parish Council), Councillor Colin Brook (Woodmancote Parish Council), and 12 members of the public (for parts or all of the meeting).

- 1. (2016/024) – Chairman formally opens the meeting, welcomes those present, and receives apologies for absence.** Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Compton, Heather Jordan, and Di Howard. Councillor NW had indicated that he may be a little late to the meeting.
- 2. (2016/025) – Declarations of interest.** Councillor NE declared a personal interest in the planning application DM/16/0373, referred to in minute 2016/029 below, as she was a near neighbour of the property concerned, and so said that she would not take part in any discussion or decision relating to the item. No other declarations of interest were made.
- 3. (2016/026) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public** – A member of the public asked if there was any update in respect of the common “copse” land in the Street. There was still no substantive reply from West Sussex County Council, although it seemed unlikely that the suggestion of trying to register the land as a Village Green would be possible. Otherwise, progress towards putting Tree Preservation Orders on the remaining trees was ongoing with Mid Sussex District Council, and Councillor HJ will be asked to pursue this again.
- 4. (2016/027) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd February 2016 were duly approved and signed, as a true record, by the Chairman. Councillor MP referred to the issue of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and the inherent unfairness to small Parishes of the threshold for any development to provide for at least 6 houses, before financial contributions kicked in. This policy is set out in MSDC’s

Supplementary Planning Document. It was agreed that this should be raised with Councillor John Allen (MSDC), and beyond that, with the local MP, Sir Nicholas Soames.

5. (2016/028) – To receive reports (if any) from WSCC Councillor Peter Griffiths (PG), and MSDC Councillor John Allen (JA). Councillor PG reminded the meeting that there will be a County Local Committee meeting on 8th March 2016. The CIF application for a grant for the Village Hall kitchen refurbishment is in, and will be on the Agenda. He reported on an asbestos issue in the culverts along Reeds Lane, but a purchase order has been made so as to enable remedial work to take place. There had been a particular traffic issue recently, which had not been handled well, and had caused considerable delays. This seemed to show that the cumulative effects of development were taking effect. He is pursuing the matter with the Cabinet member for Highways, and will send the Clerk a written report. He reported that WSCC will be making a further tranche of Operation Watershed money available in the new financial year (starting 1st April 2016) and urged the Parish Council to consider applying so as to help with the remaining flooding issues in the Parish. Finally, he referred to the mounting pressure on school places throughout West Sussex, and that this was imposing big challenges. NE questioned how WSCC were dealing with the Firsland Industrial Estate planning issues (see further below at minute 2016/029 6.3), and PG said that he was applying pressure to try and get the matters resolved. NE also questioned whether it was correct that WSCC were planning to buy a site near Horsham to develop a Science and Technology Park similar to the one being proposed in Mid Sussex. Councillor PG said that WSCC were not buying the site, but did intend to invest in such a project, if it moves forward.

Councillor JA noted the good session from the last meeting with the leader of MSDC, Councillor Garry Wall. He confirmed that he will attend APC meetings whenever he can, or try and send another Ward Councillor. He said that he is happy to try and open the door at MSDC to the possibility of obtaining some New Homes Bonus money from MSDC to refurbish the play equipment in the Recreation Ground. He will advise the Clerk of the right contact officer at MSDC. He updated the Council on the MSDC budget for 2016/17 and advised that there will be a 1.99% rise in Council tax, although this is the first such rise in 5 years. Councillor NE requested that he do whatever is necessary to have the above planning application, DM/16/0269, called in for a Committee decision rather than an officer's delegated decision. Councillor NE also asked why there was a further delay in the submission of the District Plan, and JA said that he was not aware of the reasons, but would find out.

6. (2016/029) – Planning matters.

6.1 Four planning applications were considered, and the plans and relevant policies presented and discussed. It was therefore **RESOLVED to comment to MSDC as follows:-**

PROPERTY	PROPOSAL	AGREED RESPONSE
DM/16/0269 Field to the southeast of Firsland Park Industrial Estate, Twineham Lane	Installation of a water tank for the supply of fire-fighting water for the whole estate.	Albourne Parish Council strongly opposes this application. It proposes a large, visually intrusive industrial structure, situated on agricultural land and is therefore

		<p>contrary to the following planning policies:- (1) Albourne Neighbourhood Plan – ALC1 (2) Mid Sussex 2004 Plan – C1 (3) Emerging Mid Sussex District Plan – DP10 If such infrastructure is required by the Firstrand Industrial estate it should be contained within the site itself, and not external to the site on open agricultural land. In addition to it being installed within the Firstrand Industrial site, sufficient screening should be agreed, and no external lighting should be installed. The Council has asked our District Councillor to call this application in if MSDC planning officers are minded to approve it, in view of its contentious nature.</p>
DM/16/0373 The Heblands, Henfield Road	Ground floor extensions and addition of first floor to form two storey dwelling.	<p>Albourne Parish Council is happy with the extended floor plan in this proposal. However, it was felt that the size and appearance of the two story elevation is out of keeping with the rural setting, and therefore the current application cannot be supported. As an observation, the Parish Council would therefore wish to see a revised design before approving such an application.</p>
DM/16/0408 Land north Pottersfield Cottage, Henfield Road	Three detached 2 storey, 3 bedroom dwellings with detached garages. Electric gate with side pedestrian access.	<p>Albourne Parish Council strongly opposes, and objects to this application. It proposes the development of 3 dwellings in open countryside, in an area of countryside development constraint, detached from the built up area boundary, and in a local gap between Albourne and Sayers Common. It will also have a detrimental impact on a public footpath which runs adjacent to the west of the site. The proposal therefore conflicts with the following planning policies:- (1) Albourne Neighbourhood Plan – ALC1, ALC3 and ALH1. (2) Mid Sussex 2004 Local Plan – C1 and C3. (3) Emerging Mid Sussex District Plan – DP10 and DP11. The proposal makes little contribution to the MSDC 5 year land supply, and provides no affordable housing. As such,</p>

		<p>it is clear that the harm would significantly outweigh the benefits of this application. A recent appeal decision for Paykins Garden Cottage is a comparable example, where planning was refused and the appeal dismissed due to the harm, which would be caused to the environmental character and appearance of the countryside, and the separate identity of settlements. There are also some detailed issues with this plan. Access to the site is proposed through the private off-site development of Albourne Court, and there is no evidence that the landowner will permit access, or that the traffic implications of such access have been fully assessed. Further, it is noted that drainage from the site is proposed via a pond, which will overflow to the ditch system running to Reeds Lane. There is a long history of this ditch system simply not coping with surface water, at least once a year (and now more frequently), leading to severe backing up of the sheer volume of water, and causing flooding to cottages on the Henfield Road. This issue is well documented with Richard Speller, Highways Officer at WSCC, and the problem remains entirely unresolved. The Parish Council cannot support any development which causes additional run off into this ditch system, until the flooding issues are properly resolved, and any solutions tried and tested. Finally, it is believed that there is a Roman road running through the site, and yet no archaeological survey has been provided with the plans, which assesses the exact position. This possibility therefore needs to be properly investigated, so as to accord with the objectives of both local and national planning policy. In summary therefore, there are a number of policy and NPPF issues arising from this application, such that the</p>
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		principle of development on this site should be refused.
DM/16/0482 Ocean Independence UK Ltd, Unit 3, High Cross Farm, Henfield Road	Proposed extension forming new reception area, conference room and facilities to the ground floor and new balcony to the first floor.	Albourne Parish Council does not oppose this application. However, it is concerned that the balcony element causes issues with overlooking High Cross House and grounds. We would therefore request that the balcony is reduced in size, and does not extend beyond the edge of the existing northern wall, and ideally a foot or so short of the edge. In addition, as with the previous application for High Cross Farm, we would request that the screening condition as part of a previous permission is required to be implemented. In the Parish Council's submission it is both important and fair that existing planning conditions should be properly enforced, if further consents are to be granted. Finally, there should be an additional condition against the provision of any exterior lighting.

Note: In respect of application DM/16/0269, the Parish Councillors from Twineham and Woodmancote Parish Councils both spoke in support of the Parish Council's agreed response, although they will be considering the application formally at their own forthcoming Parish Council meetings.

Note: In accordance with her declaration of interest above, Councillor NE took no part in the consideration of application DM/16/0373 and did not vote in the matter.

6.2 On the Neighbourhood Plan, Councillor NE confirmed that the appointment of the independent examiner had been made by MSDC, following the Parish Council's input. It was hoped that the examination report will be available later this month, or in April. Subject to that, the Plan can then be put to the referendum. The Council will at that point, need to decide how best to publicise this important event, but the use of posters, banners, and a leaflet drop to all households, will almost certainly be required.

6.3 On the Firmland Industrial Estate Park planning application, Councillor NE explained for the benefit of those present, what the Parish Council (PC) has been doing in terms of trying to ensure that WSCC properly enforce the conditions that are attached to the planning consent. The response from WSCC so far has been very weak, and the PC has now reached an impasse with the planning officer. There is still a perception that WSCC have a conflict of interest, being both the Waste Authority, and the Planning Authority. The matter should now be escalated to the local MPs, and NE agreed to draft a letter in order to start the process, although it was noted that protocol directs that Twineham and Woodmancote PCs, who are very sympathetic to the problems of traffic, pollution, etc., in their own Parishes need to pursue this with their own MP. However, they will be discussing the matter at their own respective PC meetings coming up. Councillor Peter Griffiths agreed to pursue

the matter at his next meeting with Nick Herbert (MP) at their meeting on 11th March 2016. It will also be necessary to involve the leader of WSCC.

6.4 On other planning enforcement matters: (i) there is now a need to chase progress on Foxglove Cottage, (ii) On Albourne Equestrian Centre, MSDC appear to be satisfied that there are no current breaches, (iii) On the field off Albourne Place, the owner has been invited to submit a planning application in order to regularise the situation, (iv) On Copyhold Farm, the planning and environmental aspects are still with MSDC, and a further report is awaited, (v) on the track of Bishops Place, the owner has been invited to submit a planning application in order to regularise the situation. One new matter needs to be added to the list relating to the screening conditions at High Cross Farm. Councillor NE and the Clerk will be looking into this matter further.

On planning outcomes recently reported to the Parish Council by MSDC – DM/15/4937 Hunters Cottage: approved. DM/15/4956 Singing Hills Golf Course: approved, subject to conditions. DM/15/4548 Box 2 Unit 5, High Cross Farm: approved, subject to conditions.

7. (2016/030) – 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
£69-00	Village Hall hire charges for meetings x 3	Albourne Village Hall
£410-63*	Clerk's salary plus on costs*	West Sussex County Council*

* This invoice had arrived too late to be included on the payment list with the Agenda, but was reported orally at the meeting by the Clerk.

7.3 After discussion, **it was RESOLVED not to agree to renew the subscription to the Local Council Review Magazine.** This could always be reviewed in the future.

8. (2016/031) – Operation Watershed. Councillor GS reported that unfortunately he had still not been able to obtain responses from Richard Speller at WSCC about the outstanding issues. It was noted and agreed that the Parish Council should therefore look into the possibility of obtaining further Operation Watershed monies (see Councillor Peter Griffiths's report) in order to try and sort out the gullies along the B2116. These needed to be surveyed all the way from The Oaks right up to Ernest Doe's. Councillor GS will try and find out with Councillor PG, the timeframe for new applications.

9. (2016/32) – Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These were noted and reviewed. It was agreed that they were fit for purpose, and did not require any changes. However, some of the monitoring tasks needed to be done, particularly the annual financial independent health check by a Parish Councillor. It was agreed that as Councillor NW had

undertaken the last internal “audit” of financial controls, he would be happy to do so again. The Clerk is to arrange this with Councillor NW as soon as possible.

10. (2016/033) – Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC). The report from the Chairman of the VHMC on the suggested operating principles for the Committee was tabled. Councillor MP has responded on one or two of the issues, and that the paper would also be going to the VHMC meeting on 22nd March 2016. The issue of the best way of delegating authority to incur expenditure particularly needs to be decided, so as to help avoid the need for frequent meetings. The Clerk said that the whole nature of the constitutional set up of the VHMC, as against the Parish Council as sole Trustee of the Hall, needs to be looked at in the light of other models that existed in other Parishes with similar VH arrangements. On the back of this, it may be that the whole relationship between the two bodies would need to be re-examined and changed. The Clerk said that he would put a paper together on this complex and difficult question in due course, but that it will need some research. It was noted that the paper will need to go to both the Parish Council and the VHMC. The issue would also be raised at the next VHMC meeting (see further below).

11. (2016/034) – Current issues. (i) On the traffic issues, it was noted that once again, Richard Speller (WSSC) needed to be pressed for a response (ii) similarly in regard to the outdated road signage issue. Councillor GS will try and pursue these matters, and Cllr PG needs to be copied in. Councillor GS also reported that the salt bin, which had incurred the theft, had now been re-filled by WSSC as promised following the correspondence with the Clerk.

12. (2016/035) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters. MP noted that the Chairman/Clerks service board updating still needs to be actioned. The Clerk will take this forward. He has been in contact with a Signs Company in Burgess Hill, but needs to take a photograph of the board and send it to them. She also referred to the meeting of the Social Work Shop Group on 16th February 2016, and outlined a number of events that were being organised in the Village Hall, such as a quiz in May, a fun day in July, a table top sale in the autumn, and the Christmas carols in December. She said that there had been a good range of volunteers, with a young age group as well, which was encouraging. All these matters would be discussed at the next meeting of the VHMC, which will be taking place on Tuesday, 22nd March 2016. NE said that although the website had been tidied up, the links to the Neighbourhood Plan documents need to be restored to the main page. The Clerk will look into this.

The meeting closed at 8.56 p.m.

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

NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 5th APRIL 2016 @ 7.00 p.m.