

# ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2021]

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

held on: Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2021 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

*Present:* Cllr Graham Stafford (GS) – Chairman  
Cllr Nikki Ernest (NE)  
Cllr Jerry Butler (JB) – Vice Chairman  
Cllr Joy Parks (JP)  
Cllr Di Smith (DS)  
Cllr John Drew (JD)

*In attendance:* Iain McLean; Parish Council Clerk, Councillor Suzanne Sawyer (via remote means), and five members of the public.

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- 1. (2021/086) - Councillor GS 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. Councillor Judy Llewellyn-Burke (MSDC), and Councillor Joy Dennis (WSCC) had also sent apologies.
- 2. (2021/087) – Declarations of interest.** There were none declared.
- 3. (2021/088) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public.** Magnolia Court residents raised the issue of the signage for the Gateway on the B2116, and their disappointment that the agreement taken at the September meeting to include “Albourne” on the gateway, had been changed at the October meeting. Councillor JD mentioned that there had been some issue about the nature of the September meeting debate, and given the uncertainty, the agreement needed to be revisited. The Clerk explained that unlike the September agreement, because the decision subsequently taken at the October meeting was achieved by way of a formal resolution, the Council’s Standing Orders state that this cannot be reversed for a period of at least 6 months, unless four Councillors notify the Clerk in writing, that they wish to have the matter reviewed by way of a special resolution at a following meeting. After a further discussion, it was clear that this requirement was not met, and so the October decision stands. However, it is noted for the record that Cllr JD's proposal to consider a compromise solution, and for the matter to be formally revisited at the next meeting, was unsuccessful.
- 4. (2021/089) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021 were duly approved and will be signed, as a true record, by the

Chairman, as soon as possible. Cllr NE mentioned that there had been an error in the original draft concerning the order of the planning responses, but this has now been corrected, and a re-draft circulated prior to the meeting.

**5. (2021/090) – To receive reports (if any) from WSCC Councillor Joy Dennis (JD), and MSDC Councillor Judy Llewellyn-Burke (JLB).** No reports were given, as neither Councillor was present.

**6. (2021/091) – Planning matters.**

6.1 There were no planning applications to consider this cycle.

6.2 (i) On the replacement of the redundant road signs, there has still been no response from WSCC despite emails sent to Councillor Joy Dennis by both the Clerk and Councillor JD. Councillor JB asked whether there was anything else that can be done to progress the matter, but it was felt that the only course of action possible, is for the Clerk to write yet again to Councillor Joy Dennis, (ii) on the possible resurrection of the Parish Council's submitted Road Traffic calming scheme, there has also been no response as yet from WSCC.

6.3. There were no updates since the last meeting, but the opportunity was taken to report a village streetlight not working at the Village Hall. The Clerk will report this on to the maintenance contractors.

**7. (2021/92) – Finance report and matters.**

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

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

AMOUNT	PROCUREMENT	PAYEE
£427-83	Clerk's salary + on costs (October 2021)	West Sussex County Council
£165.00 *	Work to the SID machine	Stocksigns Limited
£206-99	Payment 2 of 2 street lights maintenance contract	Streetlights
£47-74	Payroll administration charges (1.04.21 – 30.09.21)	West Sussex County Council
£528-00 **	Various maintenance work to the Millennium Garden	Arbor Cura Tree Surgery Limited

\* This payment was approved under delegated authority and reported to the Parish Council on 03/08/2021, and has therefore already been paid.

\*\* This work and payment was approved by virtue of the decision taken at the Parish Council meeting on 05/10/21, and in subsequent correspondence, and has therefore already been authorised.

7.3 The half yearly budget monitoring report for the period 01.04.21 to 30.09.21 was noted and approved. The Council has only spent about a quarter of its budget so far, and is unlikely to overspend for the year. It was noted that many of the budget heads are contingent

on events, and so may not need to be used.

**8. (2021/093) - Works to the Millennium Garden.** It was noted for the record, the decision taken by the Council in correspondence (following the discussion at the last meeting in October) to commission the contractor to carry out various garden maintenance work to the Millennium Garden. The work has been carried out, but there are a few standard of work concerns that Councillor JP is dealing with (the hedge needs further cutting back, and the brambles need clearing), and so there is an on-site meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November with the contractor, in order to try and resolve these.

**9. (2021/094) – Current issues.** It was noted that the overhanging vegetation on the footpath alongside the B2116 from the traffic lights to Ubleys Farm has been cut back by volunteers. The Clerk will write thanking them for doing this. WSCC had said that they would attend to this, and a works order issued. However, it was suggested that this could be transferred to the requirement to clear the footpath on the B2118 from Butts Cottages up to the traffic lights, which remains unresolved. The Clerk will pursue this. Councillor SS is still looking into the tree canopy replanting scheme for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee next year, and the grants that are available for this. The Chairman of WSALC hopes that West Sussex Towns and Parishes will make a good show of this initiative.

**10. (2021/095) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters.**

Cllr NE revisited item 6.3 of the Agenda, and referred to the proposal that Geoff Zeidler be appointed as the Parish Council's planning consultant on major planning issues.

Accordingly, the idea was proposed by Cllr NE and seconded by Cllr JP. It was then unanimously **RESOLVED** to make the appointment. Prior to this it was proposed by Cllr JB and seconded by Cllr JD to waive Standing Orders requiring a competitive process, on the basis that Geoff Zeidler has local, specialist knowledge, and has volunteered his services. It was therefore unanimously **RESOLVED** to waive Standing Orders accordingly. Cllr DS mentioned the bad state of a concrete bridge on a footpath, which needs reporting to WSCC (Public Rights of Way team). She will forward the details to the Clerk so that he can pursue the matter with WSCC. She also referred to the Black Locust plant invasion along the footpath at the Village Hall. It is now interfering with the Safer Route to school path, and is growing at an alarming rate. The Clerk has not had a response to his previous email to MSDC about this issue, and so will chase it up again. Cllr JP reported that WSCC Public Rights of Way team do not generally respond to reports of issues with footpaths, and that she is losing faith in the service. The general lack of responsiveness from WSCC to issues raised with them was noted, and is something that the Parish Council will wish to take up with Councillor Joy Dennis at the next meeting. There is an issue of leaves being blown from Holders out onto the road, with the potential to block drains. It is believed that the property is managed by the Church Commissioners, and the Clerk will seek to take this up with them. She also reported that a gap in the beech hedge along the safer route to schools next to the Village Hall has been deliberately made by someone, and that garden rubbish is being dumped between the back of the hedge and the fencing at the rear of some properties in Barn Close. This needs to be investigated further. Cllr JD reported that the data capture from the SID machine indicates that there has been some reduction in the average traffic speeds since the installation of the Village Gateways, which is pleasing. Albourne Court residents had reported an issue to him of leaves being swept into the drains by a contractor and it was

gratifying that when the matter was taken up, the contractor was called back to the site, and the issue rectified. The email received from a resident about having a bench or bus shelter for the southbound buses on the B2118 was discussed. There were issues with its location, and a Licence would be needed from WSCC. It will also be quite expensive, and it was pointed out that the shelter on the other side of the road could be used, as southbound buses can be seen coming from quite some way. In the circumstances, it was decided not to take the matter any further for the time being. The Clerk will respond accordingly. Cllr JB gave an update on the broadband issue for the Village Hall. There are only four companies that could do the work, and the cheapest and optimal solution is looking like Plusnet. A further report will go to the VHMC meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, and then back to the Council at its next meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December. In the light of the rising figures, JB will be carrying out a further Covid risk assessment for the continued use of the Village Hall, and if the Hall has to close again, there will be consequences for Parish Council meetings, given that remote meetings are not currently permitted. The Government is still looking into the possibility of legislating to allow for this, and the Clerk noted that if future meetings have to be cancelled, the requirement to meet at least four times a year, including the Annual Parish Council meeting, has in any event, been met at least for this year. Cllr GS confirmed that the Silent Soldier is being brought back to be displayed in the Street, in time for the Remembrance Day commemorations.

(At this point, the meeting was effectively adjourned in order to allow a member of the public to challenge the taking of separate notes of the meeting by a regular attendee for apparently commercial purposes, and the possible Data Protection implications involved. This needs to be further researched by the parties concerned.)

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

SIGNED.....Graham Stafford/Jerry Butler  
Chairman/Vice Chairman

***NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2021 @ 7.00 p.m.***