

# ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL [2019]

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## Minutes of the meeting of Albourne Parish Council

held on: Tuesday, 1st October 2019, at 7.00 p.m.

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

*In attendance:* Iain McLean (Parish Council Clerk), and 5 members of the public (for all or parts of the meeting).

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- 1. (2019/097) – Councillor GS formally opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and received apologies for absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Di Smith, and the reason accepted. Councillor Judy Llewellyn-Burke (MSDC) had also sent her apologies.
- 2. (2019/098) – Declarations of interest.** There were none declared on this occasion.
- 3. (2019/099) – Adjournment for any questions or issues raised by members of the public.** An overgrown hedge issue was raised over a footpath that straddles Albourne and the neighbouring parish on the B2116. The Hurst section has been cut back, but the Albourne stretch needs doing. However, the ownership of the offending land is uncertain, and will need to be checked (Cllr GS agreed to look into this further).
- 4. (2019/100) – Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 were duly approved and signed, as a true record, by the Chairman.
- 5. (2019/101) – To receive reports (if any) from WSCC Councillor Joy Dennis (JD), and MSDC Councillor Judy Llewellyn-Burke (JLB).** (i) JD advised that in order to try and increase the points scored following the assessment of the Parish Council's Highways Scheme, it would be necessary to combine the scheme with the Shermanbury stretch of the B2116. The speed/accident data for the whole road will assist with the evidence base. Cllr John Drew said that he was concerned at the amount of time the project was taking, and asked to be kept fully informed, (ii) On the Stone Pound road works (see previous minutes), the road has now re-opened and the works

are on track. There is a phased completion. Cllr GS expressed a concern about the marshalling, and JD agreed that this was an issue, and is being looked into. JD also said that on the back of the project, the cycling paths in the area had been much improved; (iii) the preparatory works to increase the carriageway on the A2300 are ongoing, and tree clearance is taking place. This needs to be done with care, and there is a replanting scheme to help mitigate the loss. The work to the actual road is scheduled to start in the Spring, (iv) JD said that she is trying to pilot a scheme to reclaim the rural roads in the area, due to the inappropriate use of such lanes through Sat-nav use. Such schemes elsewhere have been quite successful.

## 6. (2019/102) – Planning matters.

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

PROPERTY	PROPOSAL	AGREED RESPONSE
AE/DM/19/3551 - 3 Barleycroft	First floor rear extension creating a two storey extension to part and a dormer to an extended roof line abutting the neighbours' property. Also, create a master bedroom with en-suite facilities in the roof space with Velux type windows only. Finally, to remove existing porch and rebuild with WC.	Albourne Parish Council has no objections to this application.

6.2 (i) Cllr JD confirmed that three of the Ombudsman complaints into WSCC's handling of the Firland planning applications, are currently in train. One of them has now had a response, in the form of a telephone conversation with the complainants. However, the investigator has taken a very legalistic approach to the matter, and didn't look like upholding the complaint. He is not accepting the "contrary to policy" argument. He said that the only other option would be for the matter to go to Judicial Review. In terms of the failure to provide so called commercially confidential information, it may be that the Information Commissioner would have to be asked to investigate. However, he hasn't yet fully completed the investigation, and will write further in due course. The other complainants may have different investigating officers, and so it is to be hoped that a different approach will be taken, (ii) Richard Speller (WSCC) has acknowledged the letter from Olus in support of the measures set out in the Highways scheme, (iii) on the Village Gateway signs, a paper has been circulated to Councillors setting out the basis of a proposal, but this does need to be worked up in more detail. After some discussion, Cllr JD recommended that the proposal be approved in principle, so that the more detailed design work, and the exact locations of the gates, can be progressed. This was seconded by Cllr SS, and **AGREED** unanimously. It was acknowledged that there will need to be some resident consultation on the locations, once agreed. It was also noted that the signs could be combined with appropriate road markings to try and make them more effective, e.g. dragon's teeth.

6.3 On current planning, and planning enforcement matters, Cllr NE has once again chased up MSDC about the Equestrian Centre floodlighting issue, and the barn issue at the property in Twineham Lane, but there has still been no response on either matter as yet. Cllr JLB (MSDC) will now need to help with having these issues dealt with. On outcomes, it was noted that DM/19/1993 (removal of Oak trees at 2 Oak Cottages, Truslers Hill Lane) had been refused by MSDC. DM/19/2289 (new barns at and parcel to the east of London Road) had also been refused. DM/19/3018 (new garage at 1, Cottage Homes, Truslers Hill Lane) has been approved. On the recent Inter Parishes Group meeting, Cllr NE reported that Horsham District Council had not been very clear or forthcoming about their District Plan policies, although have indicated that there no major changes are planned to them. In terms of the Duty to Co-operate, contact with MSDC seems to have been quite minimal. However, it is clear that HDC need to increase their housing numbers and the uplift in the figure is 974 houses per annum plus some unmet need from neighbouring authorities yet to be defined. The timeline for approving the revised Plan seems at odds with what needs to be done in terms of the work yet to be completed. Further, there is a risk that decisions could be taken on political grounds rather than planning grounds. Finally, NE said that the flooding report commissioned by the Parish Councils has been received, and she will circulate this to Councillors. The cost was not as much as expected, and so the Parish Council's share has reduced accordingly.

## 7. (2019/103) – Finance report and matters.

7.1 The financial summary and the Bank reconciliation for the month, were received, noted, and approved. It was noted that the second half of the annual precept in the sum of £7,511 had just been received from MSDC. The Bank balance was therefore healthy, although this still included the Operation Watershed grant from WSCC of some £29K, which is expected to be spent soon, and there are also a number of capital projects coming up. However, Cllr JD requested the Clerk look into investing some of the money (say £10K) in a higher interest bank account, and the Clerk will investigate this accordingly.

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 (September)	West Sussex County Council
£222-00	Grass cutting/hedge trimming at Millennium Garden (cuts 4-8 of 12)	Barcombe Landscapes Limited
£180-00	Crown lift various Oak trees in the Millennium Garden	Arbor Cura Tree Surgery Limited

7.3 The half yearly budget monitoring report (for the period 01.04.19 to 30.09.19) was presented and noted. The Council has spent just less than a third of the budget so far, although it was noted that a number of the budget heads are contingent on future events.

**8. (2019/104) – Current issues.** (i) On the tidying up of the Millennium Garden, the work to crown lift the Oak trees has been done, and done well. On the other work (i.e. dealing with the paths, and the tarmac around the central tree) one further quote is awaited, but three have been received (albeit with some variances around the work proposed to be done). Cllr GS

suggested that PHB at Firsland could also be asked to give a quote, and Cllr JP will look into this. It was therefore **AGREED** to review all the quotes in correspondence, and if necessary, to deal with accepting a quote and commissioning the work under delegated authority; (ii) on the Common Copse land, Cllr GS has visited the site with a contractor to do the fencing work, but there are still no measurements on the plan provided to him by Richard Speller (WSCC), and so Cllr JD (WSCC) was asked to take this up with the officer; (iii) on the overgrown trees at Barleycroft, the Clerk has had a response from MSDC to confirm that they will carry out the cutting back work as soon as possible; (iv) on the Church Lane burning of rubbish issue, there has been no response from WSCC yet on establishing the owner of the land, and Cllr JD (WSCC) said that she would take this matter up further; (v) on the School black rubbish sacks issue, the School has responded asking for further information as to how and when this is happening, and so Councillors will keep an eye on the situation; (vi) the waste freighters will be at the Village Hall car park on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019, and the Clerk has advertised this on the website and on the VH notice-board. It was also agreed to put this on the Albourne face- book page, and Councillors will do what they can to inform people of the event, e.g. at the Albourne Arms pub nights.

**9. (2019/105) – Operation Watershed (OW).** Councillor GS said that the contractor (Landbuild) had confirmed that the start date for the next phase of the OW work along the B2116 (Henfield Road) was now scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019. There had been a slight delay because of the recent adverse weather conditions.

**10. (2019/106) - Village Hall Management Committee.** (i) The appointment (agreed in correspondence) to the VHMC of Councillor John Drew following the resignation from the Committee of Councillor Joy Parks, was noted and confirmed. (ii) The notes of the VHMC meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019 are not yet available for circulation, but there are no actions for the Parish Council to take at the present time.

**11. (2019/107) - Phone box in the Street.** BT has consulted the Parish Council on their proposal to remove the phone box on the basis that it is very rarely used. It was pointed out that the contingency of having a public landline in the Village was very important. It may be that this would be better located near the Village Hall. There is also the question of ongoing maintenance, and keeping the box clean and tidy. After discussion, it was **AGREED** to ask the Clerk to respond to the consultation by objecting to the proposed removal of the box.

**12. (2019/108) - Delegated Decision.** The decision of the Council, taken under delegated authority (on the grounds of urgency) to commission Arbor Cura Tree Surgery to carry out crown lifting work to the Oak trees in the Millennium Garden at a price of £150 plus VAT, was noted and confirmed.

**13. (2019/109) - Councillors exchange of information/new matters.** Cllr SS said that in respect of the proposed tree replanting scheme for Albourne, Rowan trees might be a good choice. She is suggesting three trees for the land near Doe's and two for verge land in the Street. Cllr JD (WSCC) said that it would be good to plant clean air trees. MSDC will therefore need to be asked if they have a list of preferred trees, and whether any grants are available for the cost. It was also noted that highway Licenses from WSCC will be needed. There is still the issue of the state of the Beech hedge alongside the footpath by the Village Hall, and

MSDC is aware of the issues. There is also still the issue of the broken fence along the footpath, which the Clerk has raised with WSCC, and which WSCC need to address urgently. The Clerk has written to WSCC, and Cllr JD will chase this up. Cllr SS also raised the continuing issue of the Church Lane flooding, but the problems of rectifying the matter have been discussed in the past. A future OW project however, remains a possibility. It was reported by Cllr JP that there is a man-hole cover near Church Lane that is raised up, and although a temporary repair has been made, it needs a permanent fix. The Clerk will take this up with South East Water. The hedge alongside the allotments footpath is much overgrown. The sign near the School about the HGVs has been spun round, and needs to be fixed. The Clerk will report this to WSCC. The hedge alongside Hunters Mead is still a bit of a mess, and will be reported once again to MSDC.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

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

***NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY, 12<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2019 @ 7.00 p.m.***