

Alwington Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in the Village Hall Committee Room on Tuesday 11 October 2022, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Gordon Lester (Chair), Neil Rothney, Alison Browning, Christine Moore, Brian Adams, and Sarah Bourke. Also Elaine Beresford, appointed at Item 5.

In attendance: Cathy Lester-Walker (minute secretary), Michael Olley (Parish Clerk designate), Cllr Phil Pennington Torridge District Council (TDC), and one member of the public.

1. [Min 20: 22/23] Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded those present that it had been postponed following the death of the late Queen.

Apologies: Cllr Jeffrey Wilton-Love Devon District Council (DCC)

2. [Min 21:22/23] Declarations of Interests

No declarations were received in respect of personal interests

No declarations were received in respect of prejudicial interests

3. [Min 22: 22/23] Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 were approved as a true record.

Proposed by Cllr Alison Browning; seconded by Cllr Brian Adams.

Matters arising. There were no matters arising.

4. [Min 23: 22/23] Retirement of Parish Clerk

The Chair proposed that a vote of thanks be made to Malcolm Harris, who has provided service as parish clerk for eight years. He and all the councillors wished Malcolm well in the future.

Proposed by Cllr Gordon Lester; seconded by Cllr Sarah Bourke.

5. [Min 24: 22/23] Councillor vacancy

To co-opt Elaine Beresford as Councillor.

Proposed by Cllr Gordon Lester; seconded by Cllr Neil Rothney.

6. [Min 25: 22/23] Correspondence and Communication

6.1 Correspondence

Bulletins had been circulated to Councillors from Devon Association of Local Councils, Devon County Council and Devon Communities Together.

6.2 Website

Cathy Lester-Walker tabled a report on website activity. The home page and upcoming events were most viewed but that the next most popular pages were all related to the parish council.

6.3 County/District Council Reports

Cllr Phil Pennington reported that the death of the late Queen had resulted in many meetings being put on hold or postponed. The budget was the biggest concern as TDC had to publish a balanced budget yet inflation was running at 9 or 10%. Discretionary services would have to be examined.

It was not clear what was going to happen to the “levelling up” bid to provide modernisation of the “graving-dock” area in Appledore.

Planners continue to approve the building of new houses but there is a concern now about who would be able to buy them, given the emerging housing crisis.

TDC will be considering its 2031 local plan at a meeting next week.

A new culture strategy has been produced but unfortunately it is town-focused and may not benefit rural areas.

7. [Min 26: 22/23] Allocation of Section 106 monies

7.1 The Council had to approve relevant details in the email from Adrian Avery, Community Engagement Project Officer TDC, circulated on 6 September 2022 about the Section 106 monies that were destined for Alwington (*in bold italics*):

1. **DM10 – Play Space child - £1,054.09 (plus £208.29 maintenance sum). To purchase play equipment suitable for young children to be installed within the grounds (outdoor space) at the church and Old School Room in Alwington.**
2. DM10 – Play Space Youth - £1054.09 (plus £208.29 maintenance sum) – Equipment for those of an older age and suitable facilities such as skate parks, muga's etc. To be used on required improvements to Bideford Skate Park
3. **ST23 – Community Hall - £3,961.39. To only be used for physical improvements of the Old School Room, Alwington, Fairy Cross, EX39 5DA**
4. DM10 – Sports and recreation – £8,29103 (plus £1,415.94 maintenance sum). To be used on a 50/50 split between (1) Improvements of Bideford, Westward Ho! & Littleham Cricket Club changing room and clubhouse facilities/boundary netting improvements; and (2) Improving changing room facilities (Former cricket pavilion) and additional goal at Victoria Park/King George V Fields

7.2 Councillors confirmed their agreement to the allocation of monies.

Proposed by Cllr Neil Rothney; seconded by Cllr Sarah Bourke.

7.3 Cllr Phil Pennington thanked the Chair and left the meeting.

PUBLIC SESSION - at the discretion of the Chairman, any members of the public may speak

Council noted the request made on behalf of Norman Lee to consider maintaining a bench in memory of his wife that is on his land. Access would need to be granted for this to happen.

8. [Min 27: 22/23] Financial Matters:

8.1 To receive an update on the current financial position:

Balance in bank on 14 September 2022 was £9,788.55. It is now £12,328 because of second instalment of precept.

The Annual Parish Council insurance policy was paid on 4 August 2022.

Malcolm Harris's final salary has now been paid.

8.2 To receive any accounts to pay:

None

8.3 To note any income received:

None

8.4 Any other financial issues:

None

8.5 Small Grant Applications:

The Alwington Residents Association grant application provided no detailed costings. Councillors were concerned that the money was essentially towards running costs although they discussed how to provide a helping hand. More information was needed and it was agreed that the new parish clerk should contact the Alwington Residents Association Chair.

Action: Clerk.

St Andrew's Church has an outstanding application, deferred from the last meeting. However, the church is going to benefit from the Section 106 monies (see Item 7 above) and the application needed to be resubmitted in the light of that. It was agreed that a Church Warden should be invited to the next meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

9. [Min 28: 22/23] Planning Matters:

9.1 To receive any applications for consideration:

None

9.2 To note any permissions granted:

Application has been granted permission for Ref:1/1133/2021/REMM - Reserved matters application for details of appearance in respect of 274 dwellings on land to the south of Clovelly Road, Bideford (near Atlantic Village).

9.3 To note any refusals advised:

None

9.4 Any other planning matters arising:

None

10. [Min 29: 22/23] Maintenance & Highways

10.1 Cllr Neil Rothney and Cllr Brian Adams had driven round the parish and intended to report ten potholes. They were careful only to report potholes that fell within the guidelines and felt that this was why they were acknowledged and dealt with swiftly. The Chair thanked them for their diligence.

10.2 Cllr Brian Adams reported that a drain has collapsed in Woodtown, causing tarmac to wash away outside Yeo Vale Farm. This needed to be reported to TDC. **Action: Cllr Rothney.**

11 [Min 30: 22/23] Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

A recent burglary in Woodtown had highlighted the fact that the Woodtown WhatsApp group was far more efficient in notifying concerns than Neighbourhood Watch, which took at least two weeks to highlight the burglary. The Chair was keen for the Council to consider how we as a community can support its residents in the most efficient way.

It was agreed to invite the current Neighbourhood Watch representative to the next meeting to discuss this matter. **Action: Clerk.**

12 [Min 31: 22/23] Parish Council representation at Remembrance Service

Cllrs Gordon Lester and Alison Browning will be attending the Remembrance Service at St Andrew's Church on Sunday 13 November 2022. The Council will make a donation of £50 to the Royal British Legion. **Action: Clerk.**

13. [Min 32: 22/23] Alwington Parish Plan & other projects - for action in 2022/23

13.1 AirBand

AirBand is contracted to deliver FTTP through a contract with Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) but has so far failed on many counts. It is clear that they have over committed and under-performed and there is a certain amount of despair at having been so badly let down by an organisation that now has no credibility locally.

The Chair circulated list of 29 in-contract premises (those which AirBand is contracted to connect) and said he would plot these on a map. He feared that despite promises by AirBand, only these properties would be connected. **Action: Chair.**

There was a view that it was time to complain as a Parish Council to DCC and CDS.

Meanwhile the Chair said that he had been telephoned by Tony Watkins of AirBand, who asked what the problem was and offered free connection to the Village Hall. Cllr Alison Browning (Chair of the Village Hall Committee) said she would only be interested if there was no service charge. The Chair agreed to feed that back. **Action: Chair.**

13.2 Bus stops

The Chair informed the Council that Neil Beresford had agreed to do the necessary work on the bus stops, probably in the Spring if the weather is suitable, and will give us an estimate nearer the time.

14. [Min 33: 22/23] Appointment of parish clerk

14.1 To appoint Michael Olley as Parish Clerk with immediate effect, at a salary at SCP 19, which is £13.48 per hour currently.

Proposed by Cllr Brian Adams; seconded by Cllr Neil Rothney.

14.2 To approve the terms and conditions of contract previously circulated for Michael Olley's contract.

Proposed by Cllr Neil Rothney; seconded by Cllr Sarah Bourke.

14.3 After signed contracts were exchanged the Chair welcomed Michael Olley formally to the Council.

15. [Min 34: 22/23] Action grid

- 15.1 The latest Action Grid was tabled each serial was discussed and updated. The revised Action Grid will be circulated separately to Councillors. **Action: Chair.**
- 15.2 There was some concern about the Parish Clerk not having an email address directly associated with the website (it is currently parishclerkalwington@gmail.com) The Chair agreed to look into creating one that would be @alwingtonparish.org. **Action: Chair.**

16. [Min 35: 22/23] Any Other Business

- 16.1 Cllr Brian Adams said there were now enough dogs either resident in, or visiting, Alwington for there to be a requirement for a dog poo bin there. Bags were being left on the grass next to the bench. A request to TDC should be based on changing need. **Action: Clerk.**
- 16.2 Cllr Alison Browning highlighted the “Save Energy” event that will take place in the Village Hall on 26 October 2022.
- 16.3 Cllr Christine Moore said that there had been complaints about chickens running about in the road while Devon is in prevention measures for bird flu.
Post meeting note: On 17 October 2022 a national avian influenza Prevention Zone was declared across Great Britain making it a legal requirement for all bird keepers to follow strict biosecurity measures. Consequently the Chair contacted the TDC Councillors to help to support action by Environmental Health and DEFRA.
- 16.4 Cllr Christine Moore said there were complaints about parking in Portledge Place, potentially blocking access by emergency vehicles. This was a traffic matter and the Council would follow this up. **Action: Clerk.**

17. [Min 36: 22/23] DONM

- 17.1 Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 7:30pm in the Alwington Village Hall Committee Room.
- 17.2 Future meetings: Tuesday 10 January 2023; Tuesday 28 March 2023; Wednesday 3 May 2023.

Signature _____ (Chairman) Date _____