

Alwington Parish Council

Annual Parish Council Meeting held at Alwington Village Hall on 10 May 2023, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Gordon Lester (Chair), Brian Adams, Elaine Beresford, Sarah Bourke, Alison Browning, and Neil Rothney.

In attendance : Michael Olley (Parish Clerk), Cllr Jeffrey Wilton-Love, Devon County Council and five members of the public.

1. APM.1:23/24 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Moore and Mrs Joy Payne.

2. APM.2:23/24 Declarations of Interests

No declarations were received in respect of personal or prejudicial interests

3. APM.3:23/24 Chairman's Report

The Chair gave his report which outlined the work of the Parish Council over the next few years. This included work to ensure roads within the Parish are repaired in a timely manner, whilst recognising the pressure on resources; employing a local contractor to ensure ditches remain clear; alongside continuing work on planning and other issues within the Parish and maintaining the Parish Council website to ensure the Council meets its governance requirements for openness and transparency. The chair gave thanks to Julie Harper and Hilary Dodge and Councillor Browning for their work on the local newsletter 'Alwington News'. He also gave thanks to his fellow councillors for their support throughout the year.

4. APM:4:23/24 District and County Council Reports

Cllr Wilton-Love reported that the year had proved difficult, with price rises and a deficit within provision of children's services, but that after much work, a balanced budget had been set.

With regards to road maintenance, he stated that challenging weather conditions had made maintaining roads more difficult, and that climate change may make this a permanent feature that would need to be managed. Manpower within Devon County Council had been switched to assist with this issue and a dragon patcher would be used to assist within the Torridge district which would allow a lot of potholes to be repaired within a relatively short period of time. This work would be managed through Neighbourhood Highways Officers.

Cllr Wilton-Love also outlined work being undertaken to ensure Devon County Council was inclusive and work to secure a devolution deal for Devon. If a devolution deal was achieved he thought it would prove excellent for Devon and put more power in the hands of local authorities to allocate finances according to local need.

Following a question from Cllr Adams, Cllr Wilton-Love stated that he was undertaking a re-appraisal to ensure that money on tenders was spent wisely.

5. APM: 5:23/24 Other Reports

Village Hall Committee

Cllr Browning gave a report on behalf of the Village Hall Committee. She stated that the hall continued to be well used by both regular and one off users, with events organised during the last year including a Platinum Jubilee lunch, the first post Covid Horticultural Show, a coffee morning to raise money for Ukrainian Refugees in Devon, an Autumn Hearty Breakfast, an Energy Saving Information Evening, coffee mornings from November to March (average attendance 22), an hour of music with tea in April, and continuing through the summer (average attendance 25), a community Information afternoon supported by the Alwington Residents Association, a Spring Hearty Breakfast and a Coronation Bring and Share lunch.

The Village Hall Committee had been affected by increased oil and electricity costs and the withdrawal by Torridge of the 20% Council tax relief. The Committee were currently trying to secure grants in order to install solar panels with a view to reducing energy costs and to cover some of the costs for holding community events.

The Alwington Residents Association (ARA)

Cllr Browning gave a report on behalf of Cllr Moore. The ARA had continued to find its feet and grow its membership throughout the year. The ARA had represented the views and concerns of local residents, raised awareness of local planning applications and supported members so that they could respond appropriately to applications. Alongside this the ARA held a Christmas event and a Curry and Beer night and have plans to hold a fund-raising quiz and a fish and chip/beer night. The ARA also plan to develop a working party to help maintain local green spaces and protect and encourage wildlife.

The Parish Church of St. Andrew in Alwington

James Clarke reported that the PCC continues to raise funds towards the improvement of the Old School Room with the aim to proceed with the internal and external redecorations as soon as funds are to hand.

The PCC were working to obtain a quotation for the works, which would allow a Small Grants Application to be made to the Parish Council. Unfortunately, the PCC had not yet been able to find a contractor who can fit the work into their programme; but they were hopeful of doing so shortly. Given this, the work is likely to be carried out in stages, which will suit the PCC from a fund raising point of view as well as fitting work into a contractor's work schedule. One other difficulty for contractors is that the price of materials is rising rapidly and therefore it is not practical for them to quote on a fixed price basis.

6. APM 6:23/24 Matters raised by Parish Residents

Confusion over the start time of the meeting as originally published in "Alwington News" was raised by one member of the public, for which the Chair apologised. The Chair requested that the copy and publication dates of "Alwington News" were shared with the Clerk and the website administrator in future.

7. APM:7:23/24 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Cllr Adams nominated Cllr Lester as Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Browning. No other nominations were received.

Cllr Lester nominated Cllr Adams as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Bourke. No other nominations were received.

It was resolved that Cllr Lester be appointed as Chair for 2023/24 and Cllr Adams be appointed as Vice Chair for 2023/24.

8. APM: 8:23/24 To agree and approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 3 May 2022.

It was resolved to approve and sign the minutes as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Rothney, seconded by Cllr Adams.

9. APM: 9:23/24 To receive and approve the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023.

The clerk outlined the accounts, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was resolved to approve the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023. Proposed Cllr Beresford, seconded Cllr Adams.

10. APM: 10:23/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

It was resolved to approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption, the Annual Governance Statement at section 1 of the AGAR and the Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the AGAR. Proposed Cllr Lester, seconded Cllr Adams.

11. APM: 11:23/24. Appoint the Internal Auditor for 2023/24

It was resolved to appoint Julie Snooks as Internal Auditor for the Parish Council for 2023/24. Proposed Cllr Bourke, seconded Cllr Adams.

12. APM:12:23/24 Agree meeting dates for 2023/24.

The meeting dates for 2023/24 were agreed as:

18 July, 5 September, 7 November, 9 January, 12 March (all at 7.30 pm in the Committee Room in Alwington Village Hall), and 14 May (at 7.30 pm in The Old School Room, Alwington).

Signature_____ (Chair) Date_____