# **ALRESFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

# **Parish Council Meeting**

# **MINUTES**

## **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd of October 2024**

## **Held at 7.30pm the Pavilion, Ford Lane**, **Alresford**

**Cllrs. Present:** Cllr. F. Belgrove (Chairman), Cllr E Osborne, Cllr B Swash, Cllr V Dalzell, Cllr S Clark, Cllr. G. Scott, Cllr J Claremont-Brown, Cllr C Muller

Also present: The Clerk, County Councillor A Goggin, Members of the public x5

**Meeting opens:** 19.30 hrs transacting the following business:

**Agenda**

**10.24.181 Announcements.** TheChairman made the following announcements.

A: Alresford Parish council has responded to the consultation on the draft National Planning Policy Framework, and thanked Cllr S Clerk and Mr M Cooke for their work on ensuring it was responded to by the deadline. He mentions that a discussion with the Head of Planning Mr G Guiver indicates that the draft NPPF would have a significant impact on Tendring, with a reckoning of 1043 houses needing to be built every year over the next term of government office.

B: The following parish councillors have been co-opted onto the Tendring District Council Standards Committee: Cllr F Belgrove, Cllr L Belgrove of Alresford, Cllr D Botterell of Weeley and Little Clacton. Cllr A Wiggins as District Councillor will also sit on the committee and the committee hears complaints relating to Councillors in the Tendring Area.

C: There was a successful consultation event held on the 11th of September in regard to quiet lane status for Cockaynes lane. The comments made by all attendees were positive and there was no negative critique. The chairman thanked County Councillor Alan Goggin and Mr James Drabwell of Essex Highways for attending and answering so many questions.

D: Father Christmas: A free event to be held 2pm - 4.30pm on Sunday December 1st by Alresford Fete Organising Group (AFOG) in the village hall. The event will be publicised in the Alresford Advertiser, and through the Alresford Community Facebook Page, enquiries through either Facebook or to Cllr C Muller.

**10.24.182 Apologies for Absence.** Cllr L Belgrove, Cllr K Doulai, Cllr A Wiggins.

**10.24.183 Minutes of the last monthly meeting:** To approve the minutes of the meeting of the 4th of September 2024. Minor spelling modifications to be made.

Proposed Cllr C Muller, seconded Cllr V Dalzell, Carried, 3 for, 4 abstentions (as councillors not present at the previous meeting).

**10.24.184 Declarations of Interest.** Councillors present to declare pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest in agenda items.

Cllr C Muller, declares interest in Item 188.

The clerk also indicates that Cllr G Scott would declare (if he were present- he is at another meeting) interest in items 197, 194 and 189.

**10.24.185 Public Forum** under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1 (1) This council is committed to community engagement and welcomes members of the public to contribute in this part of the meeting. Time limit 3 mins per person. Item limited to 10 minutes.

**During the public forum:** Members of the public and guests can address the Council on matters presented on the publicised agenda. The Council can only take decisions on agenda items. Matters raised and not on the agenda can be carried forward for a response later. Any questions not presented to the council far enough in advance may be noted and responded to at another time.

**After the public forum:** Members of the public are asked to respect that this is a meeting to conduct council business and interruptions during the remainder of the meeting are not permitted.

No members of the public raised any issues. Chairman closed the public forum.

**10.24.186 External Audit Update:** PKF Littlejohn response. Cllr F Belgrove introduces a full and clean audit response provided by the external auditor, and the statutory notices and availability of accounts are published and available to the public. The chairman and clerk gave their thanks to the RFO Mrs Baxter and to the internal Auditor Mrs J Stobbart, as well as to all councillors for their diligence in ensuring council is well run and maintains a clean bill of health regarding its management and fiscal prudence.

**10.24.187 Finance Matters.** September finance report - Council to review and approve.

Cllr F Belgrove introduces, advises on key cost codes for clarification, that the moneys on specific items for Staunton Gate will be reimbursed by S10 money. He also highlighted the Defibrillator Battery needing to be replace having been used a few times at a cost of £280 plus.

Proposed to accept the finance report: Cllr B Swash, Seconded Cllr V Dalzell, Carried.

**10.24.188 Planning Matters:**

**A: Application number:** [24/01247/FULHH](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=SIGLRJQB0RE00)

Mr R Ekins **Location**: 42 Station Road, Alresford, Essex, CO7 8BU **Proposal** Householder Planning Application – Single storey rear extension.

Item introduced by Cllr F Belgrove, who hands over to Cllr E Osborne. Cllr E Osborne suggests a neutral response as the application falls under permissible development.

Proposed a neutral response: Cllr S Clark, Seconded Cllr E Osborne. Carried. Neutral No Comment.

**B: Application number:** [24/01421/VOC](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=SKBI0KQB0OT00)

**Location:** Alresford Hall Ford Lane Alresford Colchester **Proposal:** Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act for Variation of Condition 20 (Opening times and during the seasonal period outlined) of application 22/01306/VOC to enable greater flexibility for Wyvernwood to open over the Christmas period for (a) breakfast with Santa; (b) normal trading day and (c) exclusive timed entry visits for families to meet Father Christmas in his grotto.

Cllr F Belgrove introduces, Cllr E Osborne reminds all present that this is a further extension to operations already applied for in previous years. Cllr V Dalzell sees no issue as the venue provides local employment and is aimed at children. Cllr J Claremont-Brown agrees with Cllr V Dalzell. Cllr E Osborne reminds all councillors of a need to be vigilant as the company will continue to push their boundaries. Cllr C Muller is largely in support of the application, asking if the application is for the whole site, the main adventure park or includes the woodland. Cllr F Belgrove suggests that any lighting of the woodland area could be a breach of planning permission as it would affect the wildlife. Cllr S Clark also comments on the impact on the sites neighbours, and asks if council would be able to obtain local employment figures.

Cllr V Dalzell proposes a neutral response, Seconded Cllr B Swash, Carried. Neutral No Comment

1x abstention Cllr G Scott as he arrives during the item.

* + 1. **Staunton Gate Administration**: Time spent by the clerk and staff to be logged and claimed from ring fenced S106 monies. No comments agreed. Proposed Cllr F Belgrove, Seconded Cllr E Osborne, Carried unanimously.
    2. **Personnel Committee Delegation**: It is resolved to delegate the setting of Spinal Column PayScale points for staff to the Personnel Committee. Cllr F Belgrove introduces, stating that all staff members are now on the SCP. The advice from the clerk and RFO is that matters relating to variance in the SCP should be delegated to the Personnel Committee to avoid needing to hold in camera sessions of full council where confidential staff matters and personal details are discussed. No Comments from councillors.

Proposed Cllr F Belgrove, Seconded Cllr S Clark, Carried unanimously.

* + 1. **Armistice Day- Monday November 11th** – arrangements to be agreed by council.

Cllr F Belgrove introduces and announces that Cllr A Wiggins has ordered a wreath. Cllr G Scott clarifies that the remembrance Sunday will be held the day before on the 10th. Cllr F Belgrove announces that all councillors are invited to attend on either or both the Sunday service and the Monday 11th two minute silence at the war memorial where the wreath will be laid. Cllr C Muller asks if the Parish Office sells poppies?It is clarified that council does not offer thee for sale at the office due to the temporary opening and manned hours of the Pavilion.

* + 1. **Upkeep of Essex Highways VAS units:** Proposed for Alresford Parish Council to take over repair and maintenance of Vehicle Activated Speed devices (VAS units) as Essex County Council Highways no longer repair VAS units in their ownership.

Cllr F Belgrove introduces the item.

Cllr G Scott seeks clarification of VAS ownership, in reference to Mitchells Farm Shop located VAS sign, the flyover/Alresford Viaduct sign (one purchased by APC at the Farm Shop and permission to install granted by highways taken by a portfolio holder overruling an officer decision), and the two on the Wivenhoe Road. Both Cllr G Scott and Cllr E Osborne are concerned of the cost of maintenance and of the contractors licensed to maintain them suggesting it forms yet again double payment of council taxpayers to obtain adequate services.

Proposal is that we take over the repairs. Cllr V Dalzell asks if they are calibrated and suggests that if they are being calibrated the contractor should be maintaining the items. Cllr E Osborne asks if there is an associated cost?

Cllr G Scott suggests that the item is deferred until council have an indication of cost to maintain and repair the VAS signs owned by Essex County Council. Agreed by all in attendance.

Takes vote on a substantive motion:

Proposed Cllr F Belgrove to take on repairs subject to costs, Seconded Cllr V Dalzell. Carried.

Cllr G Scott counter proposes to defer to November. But the motion is not seconded and does not proceed.

**Action:** Seek costing of repair under the highways partnership with Ringway Jacobs to repair the items. Bring Costs to council.

* + 1. **ACRFC Requests**: Council to discuss requests.

**A:** Request from ACRFC to paint their home side changing rooms.

Debated widely. Cllr G scott asks why, as does Cllr E Osborne. The clerk clarifies, regarding the decoration made in the away and referee changing rooms, and why the football club wanted their walls painted. The clerk clarifies that the council has not paid for the decoration and the walls are not painted due to boots being knocked off. Cllr E Osborne reminds all present that the changing rooms do not belong to ACRFC.

Suggest as a compromise a large Logoed Chalkboard is installed.

Proposed Cllr G Scott

Seconded Cllr E Osborne

Carried.

**Action:** Discuss with Landlord and ACRFC the options and resolution taken above.

Cllr E Osborne asks for it to be minuted that the Pavilion is a village asset and is not the HQ of ACRFC.

**B:** Request to add a second container on the playing field.

Proposed: Cllr E Osborne

Seconded: Cllr G Scott

Agreed by all councillors present.

**Action:** Consult with Sport England and respond to ACRFC.

* + 1. **St Peters Churchyard** – It is proposed that a “compact” is entered into with St Andrews Church, so that the churchyard at St Peters receives regular grass cutting. Anticipated costs Circa £1900 per annum. Cllr F Belgrove introduces the item as the law has changed over contributing to church yard maintenance. Cllr G Scott asks on what areas are to be maintained. It is clarified to council that it is just the churchyard. The existing agreement over maintenance by the council will continue with the non-churchyard land as before. Cllr G Scott reminds all in attendance that there are trees present that are memorial trees and that trees within the churchyard should be respected referring to the “severe” pruning of the Yew Trees.

Cllr F Belgrove states that the money is in effect a grant, and the Church and its congregation/working party will be solely responsible for the maintenance as it sees fit.

Cllr G Scott asks if major works can be informed as a matter of courtesy to the council.

Cllr E Osborne reminds all that the contractor is well known to council, and that the works are making a significant positive impact. Cllr S Clark also agrees that Cllr Scott has a relevant point and we should have some oversight on the works undertaken.

**Motion Proposed:** Cllr G Scott, Seconded Cllr C Muller Carried

* + 1. **Christmas Arrangements:** Council to discuss arrangements for: a Village Tree, Christmas decorations, December post Parish Council meeting catering. Suggested budget for all £350.00

Cllr F Belgrove introduces. Cllr V Dalzell comments that the money usually placed behind the bar is using public funds for the few and suggests that all councillors should be able to ensure that there are adequate funds to buy those in attendance a drink. He doesn’t believe it is a prudent use of public funds. Secondly he raises the Risk Assessment over the Christmas Tree installation and decoration and mentions that it omitted the risk of falling from or working at height. He asks for this to be included as a high percentage.  
  
Cllr E Osborne asks over the Christmas tree. Cllr E Osborne asks for the Christmas tree to be prioritised. Cllr G Scott agrees.

Cllr F Belgrove ask to divide it up the motion into three sections:  
**Tree:** Agreed

**Decorations:** Agreed. Some left from last year, and more to be purchased.

**Post Meeting Drinks:** Asks for Cllrs view points. Cllr G Scott agrees in the light of the ongoing issue of the costs of living to the below.

Cllr F Belgrove asks if the budget of £100 to catering is revoked? Cllr G Scott agrees. Cllr S Clark agrees.

Cllr V Dalzell asks what we are charged to open the bar. Agrees to cover the costs personally.  
Cllr E Osborne asks re Nibbles, and Cllr Muller asks how to address food and nibbles organise purchases.

Cllr G Scott suggests that £10 contribution per councillor would be adequate.

**Proposal:** Cllr G Scott proposed that we remove the £100 budget for any catering

Seconded Cllr C Muller

Carried.

Cllr C Muller asks re the decoration of the Christmas tree and the involvement of school children.

Cllr Muller asks if there is scope to make it a bigger event. Carols and or warm drinks (Tea, Coffee, Hot Chocolate) and raise money for charity? Chairman suggests if Cllr Muller wishes to take charge it can be.

* + 1. **Village Bulb Planting:** Council to consider and propose a budget for the purchase of bulbs to be planted around the village for the 2025 flowering season. Cllr G Scott asked about this in 2023, and asks if they were planted. The chairman confirms that Council did purchase and plant them. It is confirmed that Mr Spurgeon planted them out and they did come up in significant swathes.

Cllr G Scott proposes a budget of £100for bulbs, rather than £50. Seconded Cllr B Swash. Carried

* + 1. **District Councillor’s report (Written Report)** and 5 min verbal report.

Cllr G Scott delivers district councillors report indicating meetings, committees, awards ceremonies and events attended. Questions are invited and fielded by the district councillor. Cllr G Scott and Cllr S Clark enter a significant conversation over the Garden community and infrastructure and it is agreed to email and include the clerk in those emails in order for a discussion to be opened with TDC Planning.

* + 1. **Essex County Councillor Report (Written Report)** and 5 min verbal report.

County Councillor A Goggin delivers his report and asks councils to gently nudge residents over overgrown vegetation and cut back. Essex County Council are the ultimate arbiter however before we get to County Intervention residents and parish Councils can engage. Cllr Goggin mentions the locality fund. Applications need to be made, awarded and spent by February.

* + 1. **Fire Safety Audit:** A month ago new legislation came into force in relation to buildings for public assembly. A competent qualified and trained person must be used to perform a fire safety audit. What is a competent person: Must hold UKAS accreditation and certification and be suitably trained to ISO9001 by a competent body. Cllr F Belgrove invites councillors to recommend suppliers. Cllr G Scott suggests the auditors who performed the checks for the Autumn Centre and will ask their secretary to send the details to the parish council.

**Action:** The clerk agrees to obtain a quote but reminds councillors that it is a statutory requirement and provided the cost is below the delegated threshold to authorise (Circa £800), he will commission the fire safety audit as part of councils operational costs.

* + 1. **Risk Assessment for Attenuation Ponds Staunton Gate North and South.** Council to discuss a Risk Assessment and pond management strategy to the council. The developer has sent the risk assessment Cllr V Dalzell informs council that he is qualified to perform Risk Assessment but will need to see the Strategy, the Design, Depth and Drainage to complete this. **Action:** Clerk to approach Taylor Wimpey East London (TWEL) for design drawings. Cllr Dalzell +1 other to perform the RA.
    2. **Toilet Block Update:** Contractor instructed- further report. Cllr F Belgrove introduces as a for information item.Clerk updates council. **Action:** Follow up on permissions/licences with contractor,
    3. **Solar Panel Update:** installation and running report.

Chairman Cllr F Belgrove introduces as an information item. The solar panels are running and generating electricity, but the feed-back tariff has yet to be finalised, The RFO is researching and driving this aspect forwards.

* + 1. **Website Upgrade:** Clerk to present costs received so far. Recommendation to council. He brings the costings to council and council agree that as the clerk will be managing the site it should be the clerks recommendation. Clerk recommends Aubergine as a web developer to council, as the clerk is familiar with their wordpress back end and the costs are comparable. **Proposa**l to accept the clerks recommendation and received costings: Cllr C Muller, Seconded Cllr S Clark, Carried. **Action:** Clerk to instruct Aubergine and begin the process of migrating to a .gov.uk website and email addresses to become fully accessible and compliant.
    2. **Applications for the Community Locality Fund:** council to discuss what project to apply for. Council agree that Cllr C Mullers initiative should apply Cllr Muller intends to run a last Friday of every month family board game evening in the village hall. Has funding until January, for October November and December events for families with or without children. The Clerk would hope councillors will have a discussion on what they wish to apply for from the levelling up fund and bring those ideas to the next meeting, and the county councillor asks councillors to review the criteria to ensure that the requirements are met.
    3. **PCSO/Police Report**. Cllr F Belgrove introduces the PCSO report, highlighting two significant events- A planned rave, and a speeding vehicle caught twice in the same day once at 59mph.
    4. **Clerks Report**: The clerk delivers his report to council and takes any questions. The clerk reminds council that January 2025’s meeting would be on the 1st which is the first Wednesday of the month and is a bank holiday. Councillors agree that the meeting should be held on the 8th and ask the clerk to minute this.
    5. **Meeting Ends:** 21:18hrs.