

Alwington Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Alwington Village Hall on 25 March 2025, commencing at 7.30 pm.

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

In attendance: Michael Olley (Parish Clerk), Cathy Lester-Walker (as Website Administrator), Jon Boyd, Public Rights of Way Officer, Devon County Council and 2 members of the public.

1. Min. 56:24/25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Christine Moore and Cllr Elaine Beresford.

2. Min. 57:24/25 Declarations of Interests

No declarations were received in respect of personal or prejudicial interests.

3. Min. 58:24/25 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 14 January 2025 were approved as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Browning, and seconded by Cllr Rothney.

4. Min. 59:24/25 Correspondence and Communication:

a) Correspondence

Various bulletins and correspondence from Devon Association of Local Councils, Devon County Council, Royal Devon University Healthcare, Torridge District Council, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Devon Climate Emergency, Children's Hospice South West, Ron Bailey, Assistant to Lord Foster, Devon Community Resilience Forum, Keep Britain Tidy, and Devon Communities Together were noted.

Correspondence from Xlinks had been circulated to Councillors. This stated that the Xlinks application would be examined by the Planning Inspectorate, with a decision expected to be made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero by the end of 2025. The lack of involvement or support given directly to local communities was discussed.

ACTION: Clerk to write to Geoffrey Cox KC MP to express the council's concern on the lack of local involvement given the impact on local communities.

It was also recorded that TDC had refused the request from the Council for a dog waste bin within Alwington hamlet.

b) County/District Council Reports

No reports were given.

c) Update from Jon Boyd

Jon Boyd gave information about Devon County Council's Parish Paths Partnership Scheme and in particular the grants and support available for those councils within the scheme. Parish councils in the scheme are required to undertake a survey of the footpaths and in return will receive a grant to undertake rights of way work. In addition councils can apply for a major maintenance grant or improvement grant if required. It was agreed that the Parish Council should join the scheme, proposed by Cllr Browning, seconded by Cllr Rothney.

d) Update from the Vice Chair

Cllr Adams updated the group on the Torridge Collaborative Chairs and Designated Councillors Meeting on 7 February he attended. The meeting had discussed housing development targets, renewable energy planning applications and issues with inconsistency between the planning support and enforcement provided by Torridge District Council. Also covered were poor rail infrastructure, inconsistency in pothole repairs, electricity supply issues and issues with South West Water and Airband.

PUBLIC SESSION

A short discussion on issues with installation of fibre broadband by Airband took place. The Chair asked if those with a fibre connection available to them that Airband had failed to install could let the council know.

5. Min. 60:24/25 Financial Matters:

a) To receive an update on the current financial position

As at 24 March 2025 the total in the bank account was £10,562.69. Monthly subscriptions continued to Ionos, with payments totalling £50.40 having been made since the last meeting. Postage costs of £2.80 were incurred by the Chair. The first monthly bank charge of £4.25 was paid to Lloyds.

b) To receive any accounts to pay

No accounts to pay were discussed.

c) To note any income received

No income received..

d) To note any other financial matters arising and consider any small grant applications received

No other matters were discussed.

6. Min. 61:24/25 Planning Matters:

a) To note and consider any applications received

The council had been consulted on an application (1/0017/2025/FUL) for agricultural access and trackland at grid reference 241041 123326. No comment was made.

The Council had also been consulted on application (1/0203/2025/FUL) for conversion and extension of redundant barn into 1no. dwelling (affecting a public right of way) (self-build) at grid reference 241893 124226 Fairy Cross.

b) To note any permissions granted

It was noted that the application 1/1014/2024/FUL) for conversion of a redundant farm building to one holiday cottage and one dwelling with office (removal of condition 1 of the planning approval 1/1759/2000) at Church Town Farm, Fairy Cross was granted. It was also noted that the application (1/0753/2024/FUL) for 3no. stables and access track at land to the North of the Old Post Office, at grid reference 240657 124682 was granted.

c) To note any refusals advised

No applications had been refused.

d) Any other planning matters arising

The Chair had been contacted by a resident to seek feedback from the Council, prior to application, on plans to rebuild a barn. The Council thought if the re-build was on the existing footprint this would be likely to attract no comments from the council.

7. Min. 62:24/25. Maintenance and highways

Cllr Rothney updated that he and Cllr Adams would be reporting 28 potholes and one issue with a drain to the Highways team at Devon County Council.

Cllr Rothney offered to investigate if the Council could be supported/funded by Devon County Council to undertake repairs to potholes not repaired by the Highways team. It was agreed that Cllr Rothney be given authority to work with the Clerk to investigate and pay any reasonable costs involved in undertaking the repairs. Proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Browning.

ACTION: Cllr Rothney to undertake investigations/work as appropriate.

It was agreed that the Clerk contact the Highways Team to request that the centre hatched lines be added to the recently painted lines on the A39.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Devon CC as appropriate.

Thanks were given to Roger Pratt, Cllr Adams and others involved in the repair work to the two signposts within Alwington.

8. Min.63:24/25. To review and approve the Asset Register and Risk Register procedures.

It was noted that the Fixed Asset Register gave an incorrect location for the two planters. It was agreed that subject to the location of the planters being changed to Fairy Cross, both the Fixed Asset Register and Risk Assessment be approved. Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Browning.

9. Min. 64:24/25. Alwington Parish Plan & other issues for action in 2024/25:

a) To consider actions to reduce speed concerns on the A39

The Chair would follow up concerns with the Cabinet member on the Highways Committee at Devon County Council.

ACTION: Chair to discuss speeding concerns with Devon County Council

b) To consider actions taken to ensure there is no reduction in green space, or new houses throughout the Parish

No issues were raised.

c) To consider actions to improve the rollout of fibre broadband throughout the Parish

The concerns were raised by the Vice Chair and others as detailed in 4d above.

Concerns around the lack of clarity in the direction of proposed devolution and local Government reorganisation and the effects of the changes with Devon were discussed. It was agreed that the paper on the current position be made available on the Parish website.

ACTION: Cathy Lester-Walker to make necessary arrangements.

A draft co-coption procedure was approved. Proposed by Cllr Rothney, seconded by Cllr Adams.

It was noted that the Chair had an upcoming meeting in April with the Council's legal adviser to discuss legal aspects of providing land for the Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Gardens. A report would be given at a future meeting as appropriate.

Cllr Browning raised a potential issue with the noticeboard in Ford. As the Old Chapel had now been sold there was uncertainty whether the noticeboard provision was contained within a covenant or if it would be removed.

ACTION: Clerk to make enquiries with Devon Association of Local Councils on the legal issues involved.

Date of next meeting: 13 May 2025. Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm followed by the full council meeting in The Old School Room, Alwington.

Signature _____ (Chairman) Date _____