

Alwington Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Alwington Village Hall on 12 November 2024, commencing at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllrs Brian Adams (Meeting Chair), Elaine Beresford, Alison Browning and Christine Moore.

In attendance: Michael Olley (Parish Clerk), Cllr Jeffrey Wilton-Love (Devon County Council), Cllr Phil Pennington (Torrige District Council) and 2 members of the public.

1. Min. 39:24/25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Lester and Cllr Rothney.

2. Min. 40:24/25 Declarations of Interests

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

3. Min. 41:24/25 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 10 September 2024 were approved as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Browning, and seconded by Cllr Beresford.

4. Min. 42:24/25 Correspondence and Communication:

a) Correspondence

Various bulletins and correspondence from Devon Association of Local Councils, Devon County Council, Devon Climate Emergency, Royal Devon University Healthcare, Torrige District Council, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Alun Griffiths (Contractors), Devon Countryside Access Forum and Devon Communities Together were noted.

Correspondence from Scott Pettitt, Head of Devon Archives and Local Studies Service seeking funding was discussed. Funding would assist with the continuation of an archive service for northern Devon at the North Devon Record Office in Barnstaple during the financial year 2025-26. A grant payment of £200 was approved, proposed by Cllr Beresford, seconded by Cllr Moore.

Lloyds Bank had given notification of the introduction of bank charges on the Parish Council's bank account. It was agreed that the account remain with Lloyds, with payment of relevant fees approved. A watching brief should be kept on any cheaper appropriate alternatives. Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Browning.

Correspondence from Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) was discussed. CDS had informed the council that the planned roll-out of broadband in Alwington parish under the Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) programme will not be going ahead. CDS informed the council that they are liaising with government, through the Building Digital UK agency (BDUK), to discuss alternative options, including the Project Gigabit Programme and voucher schemes and are considering any local

investment opportunities. CDS will let the council know once they have clarity on the measures to re-procure a supplier for Alwington Parish. Cllr Wilton-Love had been in contact with Geoffrey Cox MP and CDS regarding this issue and would inform the council when he knew more.

b) County/District Council Reports

Cllr Wilton-Love reported that a future delivery model for highways work was due to be discussed shortly. He hoped this would result in a streamlined system that could be more easily monitored and controlled. Speeding on the A39 throughout the parish was discussed, with Cllr Wilton-Love agreeing to investigate actions that could be taken.

Cllr Pennington gave an update on plans for the Appledore Maritime Centre. Quotes were being obtained with building needing to be completed by March 2026. The need for proper due diligence when awarding the contract was discussed. He also gave an update on the new waste and recycling operational centre in East the Water. Actions being taken by Torridge District Council (TDC) to support households under financial pressure was also discussed with more information on the Household Support Fund provided by TDC available at torridge.gov.uk/householdfund.

Cllr Pennington reported that revised housing targets for TDC were due to be set by the new Government, with a significant increase expected. The effect within Torridge of biodiversity net gains that now needed to be shown by developers was also discussed, as was the lack of supporting infrastructure, and the need for TDC to maintain a five-year land supply.

Both Cllr Wilton-Love and Cllr Pennington reminded the council that they could apply for locality grants for appropriate projects.

PUBLIC SESSION

A recent instruction from Devon County Council requiring a local resident to trim/remove their hedge to allow easier sight lines for road users of the lane from Alwington hamlet to the A39 (between Woodmans Cottage and Greencleave) was raised, including making the road one-way, with entry only, to solve the issues.

5. Min. 43:24/25 Financial Matters:

a) To receive an update on the current financial position

As at 4 September 24 the total in the bank account was £10, 539.05. The monthly subscription of £16.20 continued to Ionos, rising to £31.80 from October. Payment of £1512 was made to TDC for recharge of the clerks' salary, £450 to St. Andrew's Church for a small grant, £767.95 to Neil Beresford on completion of the repair work to the Fairy Cross Bus Stops and £143.62 to Neil Rothney for reimbursement of his purchase of PPE items.

b) To receive any accounts to pay

No accounts to pay were discussed.

c) To note any income received

£2553 was received from DCC for the second half of the precept, £500 from DCC for a locality grant and £355 towards the cost of Cllr Rothney's course fees.

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

The grant application for £300 from Citizens Advice Torridge North Mid and West Devon to assist with the provision of services to local residents was agreed. Proposed Cllr Beresford, seconded Cllr Moore.

Changes to the financial agreement with Ionos for provision of email services were agreed, with future monthly payments rising to just below £30 per month, with a six-monthly discount period provided. Proposed Cllr Moore, seconded Cllr Browning.

e) To approve updated terms and conditions of service for the role of parish clerk.

A paper from Cllr Lester had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting. Cllrs agreed to increase the Clerk's salary to SCP20 (£16.37 p/h) for 200 hours per annum, back dated to 1 April 2024. Proposed Cllr Browning, seconded Cllr Beresford.

ACTION: Chair of the Council to notify TDC of this change.

6. Min. 44:24/25 Planning Matters:

a) To note and consider any applications received

The council had been consulted on an application (1/0823/2024/REM) for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 3 dwellings pursuant to a previous application. Following contact with local residents, no comments were made.

b) To note any permissions granted

It was noted that the retrospective application (1/0758/2024/FUL) for the erection of an equestrian building with storage (affecting a public right of way) at Winscott Barton had been granted.

c) To note any refusals advised

No applications had been refused.

d) Any other planning matters arising

No other matters were raised.

7. Min. 45:24/25. Maintenance and highways

Cllr Adams highlighted that reporting of highways issues had been suspended due to the absence of Cllr Rothney. This would resume on his return.

Repairs of two finger post signs within the parish were discussed. A budget of £300 had been agreed in January 2024 (Min. 47:23/24), but further funds were now needed. Quotes of £625 plus VAT had been given for supply of the wood needed. It was agreed that the budget for the work be increased to £625. Proposed Cllr Browning, seconded Cllr Beresford. It was also agreed that the clerk would make an application for a locality grant to assist with funding the work. Cllr Adams thanked Roger Pratt for his great assistance with this matter.

ACTION: Clerk to make locality grant application.

8. Min. 46:24/25. Alwington Parish Plan & other issues for action in 2024/25:

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

Speed concerns were raised above (Min. 42:24/25).

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

A watching brief was maintained on this item.

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

This item had been discussed earlier under (Min. 42:24/25).

d) To consider requesting installation of a dog waste bin in Alwington

The lack of a dog waste bin in Alwington hamlet was discussed. It was agreed a request be made to TDC to install a bin in the pull-in just outside Alwington hamlet on the road towards the A39.

Proposed Cllr Beresford, seconded Cllr Browning.

ACTION; Clerk to make request to TDC

e) To consider actions to support biodiversity (rewilding project)

Following provision for a £500 locality grant from Cllr Wilton-Love it was agreed that Cllrs Browning and Moore be given permission to purchase items to the value of £500 to enable this work to be undertaken. Proposed Cllr Beresford, seconded Cllr Adams.

Ideas to mark the anniversary of VE day were discussed, with consideration to be given to a bonfire on Thursday 8 May and a bring and share lunch the following Saturday.

Problems with the manhole cover, westbound on the A39 in Fairy Cross, were discussed. With reports being given that the manhole had become loose and was rocking in its hole, causing a banging noise as vehicles passed over it. The Clerk agreed to report this to DCC via their online portal.

ACTION: Clerk to report this matter via the DCC online portal.

Thanks were given to Cllr Rothney for his assistance in the provision of PPE and to Neil Beresford for his work restoring the Fairy Cross bus stop seats.

Date of next meeting: 14 January at 7.30 pm in The Committee Room, Alwington Village Hall.

Signature _____ (Chairman) Date _____