

Alwington Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Alwington Village Hall on 14 January 2025, commencing at 7.30 pm.

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

In attendance: Michael Olley (Parish Clerk), Cllr Jeffrey Wilton-Love (Devon County Council), PCSO Liz Rendle, Jenny Carey-Wood and 1 member of the public.

1. Min. 47:24/25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Elaine Beresford and Cathy Lester-Walker (as Website Administrator).

2. Min. 48:24/25 Declarations of Interests

Cllr Adams declared an interest in the planning application at Church Town Farm, no further declarations were received in respect of personal or prejudicial interests.

3. Min. 49:24/25 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 12 November 2024 were approved as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Adams, and seconded by Cllr Browning.

4. Min. 50:24/25 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 Wildlife Trust and Devon Communities Together were noted.

Correspondence from John Rowlands was discussed. The kind offer of John Rowlands to donate two framed watercolours was very gratefully accepted. It was agreed arrangements should be made to collect the pictures, with the necessary costs being met by the Parish Council. Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Browning. The picture of the church should be donated by the Parish Council to the Church and the picture of the toll house should be offered to the North Devon Records Office.

ACTION; The Clerk to arrange collection and donation.

b) County/District Council Reports

Cllr Wilton-Love updated the Council on actions being taken by the Government on plans for devolution. It was highly unlikely that any elections would take place in May. He stressed the importance of involvement with any decision making around the introduction of devolution. He

thought that would be the most likely way to ensure the best possible outcome in a difficult situation. The outcome for Parish Councils and local democracy was unclear, but could result in decision making becoming further detached from local communities.

ACTION: The Chair to write to the Deputy Prime Minister detailing the concerns expressed on possible outcomes of the introduction of devolution.

Cllr Wilton-Love discussed the upcoming meeting at which the Devon County Council annual budget would be set. The impact of budgets on social care, highways and rural deprivation were discussed.

The problems of plastic waste being blown from the building site on Atlantic Way was discussed. Cllr Wilton-Love suggested concerns might be best reported to the TDC Environmental Team.

c) Update from PCSO Liz Rendle

PCSO Liz Rendle stated that four crimes had been recorded within the Parish within the last year. 1 for assault, 1 for harassment and two for theft. Speed issues on the A39 and actions undertaken with the vehicles in the A39 layby were also discussed.

d) Update from North Devon National Landscape

Jenny Carey-Wood gave a presentation on the North Devon Coast National Landscape. The area was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1960 and covers 171 square kilometres. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 placed a duty on public bodies and organisations carrying out statutory functions to “have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty”. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Clause 245) imposed a duty to “seek to further the statutory purposes of protected landscapes”. This meant that the team advised and made representations on planning applications within, or near to, areas covered.

e) Update on meetings with the leader of Devon County Council and TDC Planning Manager

The Chair gave details of his meeting with the leader of Devon County Council and the TDC Planning Manager. TDC was looking at a housing target of 25,000 homes. He had discussed concerns with development within the Parish. The Planning Manager had helpfully shared with the Chair details of the material considerations the planning team would take into account when considering applications and how best to structure responses to consultations.

PUBLIC SESSION

5. Min. 51:24/25 Financial Matters:

a) To receive an update on the current financial position

As at 4 January 2025 the total held in the bank account was £10,620.14. Monthly subscription continued to Ionos with payments of £48.60 having been made since the last meeting. A donation of £50 was made to the Royal British Legion, a grant of £300 was paid to the Citizens Advice Bureau and a grant of £200 was made to the South West Heritage Trust.

b) To receive any accounts to pay

No accounts to pay were discussed.

c) To note any income received

A VAT refund of £310.01 was received, £119.68 from Devon County Council was received for repayment of the purchase of PPE items and £250 was received from Torridge District Council as a grant from Cllr PEnnington towards the cost of repairs to two signposts.

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

No other matters were discussed.

e) To review and approve the draft budget and precept for 2025/26.

Following discussion it was agreed to raise the precept to £5616. Proposed Cllr Rothney, seconded Cllr Adams.

6. Min. 52:24/25 Planning Matters:

a) To note and consider any applications received

The council had been consulted on an 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. Cllr Adams had an interest in this item and was excluded from the consultation. No comment was made.

b) To note any permissions granted

It was noted that the application (1/0823/2024/REM - land To The north east Of Council Cottages, Fairy Cross) for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 3 dwellings pursuant to a previous application 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. 53:24/25. Maintenance and highways

Cllr Rothney updated that he and Cllr Adams had reported 21 potholes/repairs needed to roads within the Parish. Of these seven were rejected as being too extensive for local repairs to be successfully undertaken, four were already planned for repair, seven would be completed by 10 February with the remaining three repairs undertaken by 13 April. It was noted that repairs had been undertaken earlier in the day.

Cllr Adams reported that work had begun on repairing the two broken signposts and that work would be complete by the end of March.

8. Min. 54:24/25. Alwington Parish Plan & other issues for action in 2024/25:

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

Following investigatory discussions by the Chair, it was agreed that he should raise local concerns of speeding on the A39 and give details of the four recent accidents to the Cabinet member on the Highways Committee at Devon County Council.

ACTION: Chair to raise 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

This item was discussed above.

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

The concerns were raised by the Chair when he met with the leader of Devon County Council. A watching brief would be maintained.

Date of next meeting: 25 March at 7.30 pm in The Committee Room, Alwington Village Hall.

Signature _____ (Chairman) Date _____