

COLDWALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD

ON TUESDAY 15TH JULY 2025 7.30PM

SANDHAM HALL, LONDON ROAD, COLDWALTHAM

Those Present:

**Cllr G Nelson
Cllr J Evans
Cllr O Dudman
Cllr C Dennis
Cllr K Coughtrey
Cllr I Dreger
Cllr J Stevens
Cllr A Lane
Cllr A Davies**

**Chairman
Vice-Chairman**

D Cllr P Clarke

District Councillor

Mrs LD Sherlock-Fuidge Clerk

Parishioners:

**Mr S & Mrs J Berry
Mr J Connor
Mr R & Mrs S Mellersh
Mrs C Spackman**

**Mr J Malcolmson
Mrs A Scriven
Mrs R Glithero**

Cllr Nelson welcomed members of the public to the meeting:

Mr Berry spoke to council, regarding the running and funding of the Post Office, highlighting that it was a major feat to be able to reopen a post office once it has closed, but that this showed the whole community's effort. He highlighted a number of things which are required to achieve this: including: a strong demand from the community, a willing postmistress, suitable facilities, Post Office Limited's agreement, continued examination of usage numbers and continued funding.

A detailed summary of Mr Berry's comments was made available at the meeting.

Mr Connor spoke to council, as previous treasurer to both the Sandham Hall and Village Help Scheme, highlighting that some £4K had been donated to the funding of the Post Office, noting that obviously the VHS support is a one off. He suggested that perhaps we need to formalise this with a group of "A Friends of the Post Office" to coordinate the effort and pass the money to the PC to disburse. But the main thing he highlighted was that community was at the heart the village which is made up of various facilities, the school, church and pub, and that the village Post office is another vital factor within this community.

Mr Malcolmson spoke to council asking for a better understanding of the current funding of the Post Office and was grateful for the financial information provided at the meeting.

Cllr Nelson thanked members of the public for their comments.

25 / 09.00

TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted D Cllrs Ellis Brown and Campbell.

25 / 10.00

TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS, AND ANY CHANGES SINCE THEIR LAST DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No new declarations were received, except that Cllr Nelson advised that he hoped he would shortly be appointed as a governor to St James school.

Cllrs Davies and Lane completed Register of Members' Interest update forms for 2025.

25 / 11.00

TO APPROVE AND SIGN MINUTES

Minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 13th May 2025 was accepted and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Dreger, clarified item 25 / 06.02 in the last meeting's minutes: correcting the typo error; at for as: also clarifying that it was "expenditure removed from the budget due to Post Office Funding"

"Cllr Nelson noted that **as** the bank account has a good balance now would be the time to look at funding items **removed in the budget** due to Post Office Funding."

25 / 12.00

FINANCE

25 / 12.01

Account Summary:

The Clerk distributed the accounts for Parish Council and Alban Head Playing Fields Committee to members prior to the meeting. These are attached as Appendix A & B respectively.

25 / 12.02

Payments:

payments were authorised for:

Consentino Outreach	Post Office Salaries (May)	£240.00
Travis Perkins Trading Company	Building Supplies for Container base	£344.41
Consentino Outreach	Post Office Salaries (June)	£240.00
Mrs LD Sherlock Fudge	Replacement CCTV Camera	£33.49
Mrs LD Sherlock Fudge	Repairs to Laptop	£169.99
Sandham Memorial Village Hall	Meeting Fees	£30.00
Adfield Electrical Limited	Electrical Works to the Pavilion	£728.64

25 / 13.00

POST OFFICE 2025 TO 2026

Cllr Nelson recommended that the Parish Council would step back from any commitment to leading the fundraising for the Post Office (PO) from June 2026. This echoes parishioner's comments, made tonight, for the community to provide the day-to-day fundraising going forward for the Post Office. This does not mean the PC would not continue to support the PO.

He raised concerns that the councillors would not have the capacity as there are many projects needing the Parish Council's time and consideration: Village Plan is due updating; Planning concerns at Kings Lane and Barlavington land south of A29; Alban Head's continued expansion to new users and disruption caused by works for the new Southern Water pipeline; Continued work on the A29 traffic improvements. There were a number of additional issues which may also involve the PC related to the new pipeline and the school and our local environment.

Cllr Dreger suggested that the funding being arranged by a separate body would be a good idea and would reflect the strong community support for the PO. He noted that the 7% increase in the precept, raised by the PC to support the PO at a time when the requirement for this funding was much greater than now, following the increased commitment by PO Ltd. He highlighted that the average precept rise for the last 3 years was 3%; therefore the 4% extra is supporting the PO. He would like to see the PC commit to 4% of the precept supporting the PC for future years.

Members agreed to step back from any commitment to leading future fundraising for the Post Office.

25 / 14.00

PLANNING UPDATES

25 / 14.01

The Clerk updated Council regarding recent applications decisions:

SDNP/25/00014/HOUS, Lilac Cottage, London Road, Coldwaltham, Permitted

SDNP/24/03470/REM, Briarsgate Homes, Lodge Hill Education Centre, London Road, Watersfield, Permitted

- SDNP/21/04423/FUL, St Boniface Old London Road Coldwaltham, Refused
- SDNP/25/01375/HOUS, The Old Post House Old London Road Coldwaltham, Permitted
- SDNP/25/01544/LIS, The Old Post House Old London Road Coldwaltham, Permitted
- SDNP/25/01111/FUL, Sand Martins Sandy Lane Watersfield, Permitted
- SDNP/23/03722/FUL, Hardham Business Mill Park London Road Hardham, Withdrawn
- SDNP/25/02367/APNB - Besley Farm, River Lane, Watersfield, Further Approval Required.

25 / 14.02

Cllr Dennis updated Council regarding recent planning applications.

- Kings Lane: received resident's concerns regarding a site in Kings Lane, Cllr Dennis advised that there was no indication that any further development of the site in the last two years. The track does not appear to have been improved recently. D Cllr Clarke advised that putting any track in across a field constitutes a planning issue. The clerk will contact the SDNP Enforcement regarding this.

25 / 15.00

TRANSPORT – A29 UPDATE

Cllr Dreger summarised the situation so far, CHSA was submitted in July 2024, this was adjudicated by WSCC in March 2025, ours was one of only three applications approved by WSCC. In June, Louise Brace and Iain Dreger met WSCC Highways project team who explained their draft plans, which are not yet finalised. These improvements to include changes to the speed limit along the whole of the A29 throughout the village, with improved signage to include painted roundels in the road surface. It is expected that the improvements will be implemented in 26-27.

WSCC also agreed that we can have village gates, but that the Parish Council would need to purchase and install these, which is expected to be about £6K. There is a possibility that funding might be available from SDNPA CIL funds.

In addition, Bury PC have requested a traffic regulation order for a 40 mph along the B2138 from Bury Gate to Tripp Hill, the expectation is that this might be agreed.

Finally, the current lease at Whiteways is expiring this year, and the café is expected to be closed for a couple of months not opening until next spring, it is hoped that this will reduce the disruption caused by motorbikes through the village.

25 / 16.00

ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL / PARISH CLERK

25 / 16.01

Assertion 10 – The clerk advised that she had attended a webinar on this issue, which raises some deficiencies in the PC website and email provision, which would be required as part of future Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) the annual audit. The Clerk will investigate the implications and report back in September.

25 / 16.02

2024/25 External Audit: The Clerk noted that Moore had requested further information regarding the purchase of the tractor for the Alban Head Playing Fields following submission of the AGAR Audit.

25 / 16.03

Cllr Lane noted that following planning permission for an outdoor classroom, St James School is looking to raise funding for the works and were considering an approach to the PC for support.

25 / 16.04

Cllr Evans had been approached by Fluid Solutions, who are willing to contribute for the use of the slipway. Fluid Solutions had previously approached Pulborough PC with this. Cllr Nelson noted that this is a contentious issue.

25 / 16.05

Cllr Evans welcomed the news that a new vicar has been appointed to the Arun Benefice. Cannon Martin is due to start in January 2026.

25 / 16.06

Cllr Evans drew attention to a new group: Wild Brooks Society, set up by Jim Glover and Chris Skinner. Wild Brooks Society will be a pressure group, looking to highlight the issues of the Arun Valley, which is the worst kept SSSI site, although it is a world important site for many species. Cllr Nelson expressed caution that the PC needs to be careful not to put themselves in a prejudicial position over any planning applications adjacent to the Wild Brooks.

25 / 16.09

D Cllr Clarke highlighted:

- At Local Government - there will be an election for a mayor next May 2026,
- There are ongoing discussions for how the unitary authority will look and how the 7 district councils will be reorganised. There is nothing in the current Governments' information mentioning parish councils. The change from the current two tier government to the Unitary Authority is expected in 2028.
- HDC have formally withdrawn their local plan.
- There are various changes proposed by Central Government on planning committees, including how they are made up and reducing the types of planning which can be discussed by committees.

25 / 16.10

Cllr Coughtrey highlighted the proposed new Southern Water Pipeline from Portsmouth to Hardham Waterworks. Raising concerns regarding the scale of the proposed work highlighting that the working site will be 20m wide and the work will take over two years.

25 / 16.11

Cllr Nelson welcomed new sports clubs to the Alban Head: West Chiltington Cricket Colts and this year two Storrington Youth Football teams, although the names might suggest that they are not local teams they all include village children. The tractor is continuing to prove a success, updated lighting has been completed in the club house.

25 / 17.00

VILLAGE PLAN UPDATE

Cllr Nelson highlighted that it had been over twenty years ago that the first Village Plan had been written, with a revision ten years later. Cllr Nelson and Coughtrey will start working on this and encouraged members to contribute ideas.

25 / 18.00

DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

Next meeting of Council is on Tuesday 23rd September 2025, at 7.30pm, in the Sandham Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Chairman:..... **Date:**.....

Distributed to those present and C Cllr Kenyon, and D Cllrs Campbell and Ellis Brown.