

# **Aylesford Parish Council**

## **Environmental Services Committee**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held in the Aylesford Parish Council Offices, on Tuesday 1 July 2025**

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**Present:** Councillor Mrs Gadd (Chair) and Councillors, Miss Anderson, Mrs Birkbeck, Chapman, Mrs Eves, Gledhill, Fuller, Ms Oyewusi, Rillie, Sharp, Shelley, Smith and Sullivan.

Melanie Randall (Clerk of the Council)

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#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence from Councillors Balcombe and Hammond were received, and the reasons for absence agreed.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members Interests; except Councillor Fuller declared an interest in item 6 as he is Chairman of Aylesford Football Club. Councillor Chapman declared an interest in item 9 as he is a Trustee of the Aylesford Community Centre. They left the room and took no part in the discussion or decision.

#### **3. To Agree the Minutes of the last meeting held on 3 June 2025**

It was **Resolved** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

#### **4. Any Matters Arising from the last minutes**

The Clerk informed the committee that the Cedar Tree in Ferryfield is scheduled to be felled on Thursday 3 July 2025.

#### **5. To consider renewing the Play Equipment at The Hollow, Aylesford**

No update

**Ongoing**

## **6. Proposed new Changing Rooms on land behind 3G Pitch**

Members considered the revised plans, and comment was made that the Council had previously requested the width of the door to the First Aid room to be amended as it needs to be a double door to allow for wheelchairs and stretchers. The Football Club will be asked to amend the plan.

It was **Resolved** that the Clerk is authorised to give final approval assuming that is the only change that is made. Should the Football Club make any last-minute amendments the plan will need to go back to committee. **Closed**

## **7. Proposed Tree works in Old Bridge Gardens**

The Clerk reported that various tree works need carrying out and this work was postponed from last year due to there not being the available budget. It was **Resolved** to proceed with the work. **Closed**

## **8. Correspondence received from the Wouldham Rewilding Project**

The Clerk reported that a gentleman contacted the office to offer the teams labour for free if the Council has any areas, it thinks they could help that need improving. The Clerk suggested Podkin Meadow and trying again to develop a Wildflower area. It was Resolved that the Clerk make some enquiries with the group and see if it is something they could help with.

**Ongoing**

## **9. Request received from Aylesford Community Centre**

The Committee considered a request for two additional keys to the height barrier, to be stored in key boxes for emergency use by hirers – one to be located inside the entrance to the two smaller halls and the other at the main entrance to the main hall.

The Clerk advised that this request has arisen from a recent emergency incident where an ambulance was called after approximately 3:30pm, which is when the height barrier is usually closed. In that instance, medical assistance was not delayed as a fast response vehicle, which was able to drive under the barrier, arrived first. The ambulance subsequently parked outside the main gates, and the paramedics entered on foot, transporting the patient to the ambulance via stretcher.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that, when the installation of the height barrier was originally considered, the Council had consulted with the Ambulance Service and the Fire Brigade regarding access in emergency situations. At that time, the Ambulance Service confirmed that if they needed to get the Ambulance as close to the patient as possible and no keyholder was available, the Fire Service would be called to cut the lock. The Fire Service also confirmed that they would do this themselves if necessary.

It is believed that both caretakers currently hold keys, and an additional key is available in the community centre's key box which was already requested for emergency use. Furthermore, Aylesford Football Club hold a key in the pavilion, and both the Clerk and the Maintenance Supervisor have keys and can be contacted by the caretakers if needed.

The Clerk also raised concerns regarding the provision of keys to members of the public, particularly in high-stress emergency situations. The Council's insurers advised on a previous occasion that any non-staff keyholders (such as members of the public) must receive training in the safe operation of the barrier and sign a declaration confirming their competence. Due to the number of hall hirers, this would be impractical to implement.

It was **Resolved** that no additional keys be issued, as the Council is satisfied that appropriate measures are already in place to enable emergency access to the site. **Closed**

#### **10. New Planters for Blue Bell Hill**

The Clerk reported that the planters in Blue Bell Hill need replacing due to their deteriorating condition. One planter had previously been removed following damage caused by an artic lorry. A quotation had been received for the removal and disposal of the existing planters and the installation of four new planters to be constructed from sleepers, including membrane, soil and peat.

It was **Resolved** to proceed with the proposed work as long as the quote does not exceed £4,000. **Closed**

#### **11. Any Other Correspondence**

##### **Tunbury Changing Rooms**

As Councillor Craig has resigned the Maintenance Supervisor will carry out the regular inspections of the Changing Rooms at Tunbury.

##### **Bollards Forstal Recreation Ground**

Councillor Fuller raised that the bollards at the top end of Forstal Recreation Ground were difficult to unlock for the Football Clubs recent Fun Day.

The Clerk advised that the Maintenance Supervisor had already made her aware of the issue, and she will arrange for Rhino to attend and carry out any necessary repairs. There are a couple more in the Parish with issues so they will be looked at and addressed at the same time.

##### **Vegetation**

Councillor Ludlow informed the committee that he has reported overgrown vegetation at the junction onto the A229 by the Lower Bell which makes it difficult to see cars coming off of the A229

#### **12. Duration of Meeting**

8:06pm to 8:34pm