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**Minutes of the Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council**

**held on Wednesday 28th January 2015 at 6.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

**Parish Councillors present:** Cllrs Nicky Bishop, Roger Burfoot (Chair), Richard Hann, Andy Proudfoot, Gill Ratcliffe, Richard White (Vice Chair)

**District / County Councillors present:** RDC Cllr Anghared Davies, ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field

**In attendance:** Clerk to the Council  
1 member of the public

**1) Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence has been received from Cllr Pat Winfield

**2) Disclosures of interest**

- a) Declarations of interest were made by Councillors in the Minutes as indicated below:  
Cllrs Bishop, Hann and White – Agenda item 9 (Minute 9) – Personal interest in so far as they are members of the Village Hall Management Committee.
- b) Members reviewed NALC Legal Topic Note 21 which suggested that Councillors who serve on related committees, such as village hall committees, are normally precluded from speaking on village hall matters unless they receive a dispensation.
- c) On the motion of the Chairman duly seconded and approved by those councillors not being members of the Village Hall Management Committee, Councillors who are members of that committee were granted a dispensation to speak and vote on matters relating to the village hall in Agenda item 9.
- d) Legal Topic Note 21 will be circulated for information by the clerk to all members.

**3) Adoption of Minutes**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 12th November 2014 as a correct record of the proceedings.

**4) Finance**

- a) The Chairman, as RFO, reported that the total of all bank balances is £15,636 (£15,672 in November) and the disposition of funds is as follows:
  - i) Current account £416
  - ii) Deposit account £3,006
  - iii) Scottish Widows 7 day account £1,941
  - iv) Scottish Widows one year bond £10,000
- b) Recent or forthcoming payments - none
- c) Budget 2015/16 – the budget was approved at the previous meeting with one amendment (relating to the forecast income from pavilion letting). The clerk circulated a fair copy of the amended budget.
- d) On the motion of the Chairman, duly seconded, the council approved the setting of the parish precept at £8,226 for the financial year 2015/16.

**5) Planning**

- a) *Existing applications*
  - RR/2014/2396/P - Corner House Farm, Brownbread Street - Erection of agricultural machinery store. - *Refused*
  - RR/2014/2456/P - Brays Hill Farmhouse, Brays Hill - Extensions to dwelling, internal alterations and replacement of two modern windows. - *Approved*
  - RR/2014/2457/L - Brays Hill Farmhouse, Brays Hill - Extensions to dwelling, internal

alterations and replacement of two modern windows. - *Approved*

b) *New applications*

RR/2014/2591L & 2591P - Old Barn, Lakehurst Lane, Ashburnham TN33 9PE - Proposed basement. Removal of existing tiles to all roof pitches to allow for a warm roof construction. Replace existing tiles. - *Approved*

RR/2014/3098 - The Bungalow, Freckley Hollow, Ashburnham TN33 9LZ. Conversion of upper storey (roof) of vehicle shelter/stores into domestic accommodation ancillary to The Bungalow. – *PC position discussed by Councillors*

**Resolved:** That the council position be notified to RDC as follows: “The parish council is opposed to this development as the need for ancillary accommodation has not been satisfactorily demonstrated.”

c) *Enforcement Update*

- i) ENF/ASH/2011/293 - Brays Hill - holiday let rules breached - enforcement action – prosecution process instituted 16 May 2013; prosecution commenced for non compliance 23 July 2013 - *Adjourned sine die while 'other matters' resolved – bring up in 12 months*
- ii) ENF/ASH/2013/10 - Oak Bank Farm - Breach Of Planning Permission regarding commercial parking – inspection visit made which confirms commercial parking – owner requested to address the issue or face prosecution. - *No Further Action - Not expedient to take further action in the public interest. Remove from future agendas.*
- iii) ENF/ASH/2013/229 – Oak Bank Farm - Breach Of Planning Permission And Control RR/2012/1053/P and RR/2013/298/P - inspection visit made which confirms breaches – owner requested to address the issue or face prosecution. - *NFA, no breach, not expedient. Remove from future agendas.*
- iv) ENF/ASH/2013/231 - Anderson Wood, Ashburnham - Importation of MoT type 1 onto bridle path. Application requested and received end of Sep 2013. Enforcement action eff 14/6/14 - 3 mths to comply. - *Application (retrospective) refused 22/11/13; enforcement June '14; Appeal Oct '14. Retain on agenda.*

6) **Governance**

- i) The clerk will produce a fair copy of the financial regulations incorporating the previously approved amendment to the ‘Three Quotations’ rule.
- ii) The clerk informed Councillors of some of the changes to the election procedure. In particular, the deadline for nominations and the deadline for the withdrawal of a nomination are now on the same day.

7) **Highways matters**

- a) Cllr Hann reported that
  - i) a good start has been made to developing a positive working relationship with the new Highway Steward for our area (Area 3), Andy Swanson.
  - ii) he and Ruth China-Roberts, the manager of the stewards, together with two local residents had toured both parishes noting remedial works required.
  - iii) jet patching has been promised in Penhurst Lane all the way from Stevens Crouch to Ponds Green.
  - iv) the finger post at the junction of Old Thatch Lane and Towerhouse Road is now under construction and is due for installation within the next few weeks.
- b) The Clerk reported that East Sussex Highways have agreed to provide parishes with a schedule of the grass verge cutting programme (which is for 3 cuts in rural areas).
- c) Cllr Proudfoot reported that the closure of Kitchenham Road, currently in its second phase, had led directly to a loss of revenue of some £5,000 from the tea room at Ashburnham Place. On the advice of ESCC Cllr Field, he intends to provide evidence to ESCC to support a claim for compensation.

## 8) Sports Pavilion

- a) The Clerk reported that he has had a meeting with Julia Shaw concerning the development of a master planning document for the whole sports field facility. It was agreed that no work could start on this until the future development of a new village hall has been agreed.
- b) The Clerk reported that the Lovett family have requested permission to place a bench on the sports field in memory of David Lovett. Councillors approved and the Clerk will communicate to the Lovetts that they will need to be responsible for securing it. The Clerk will liaise with the family to agree a location.

## 9) Village Hall

- a) Cllrs Bishop, Hann and White declared a personal interest in so far as they are members of the Village Hall Management Committee. The dispensation approved [Minute 2) c)] allows them to participate and vote on this item.
- b) Cllr Bishop reported on a meeting of the committee attended by Louise Beaton, the village hall expert from the Community Buildings Advisory Service of Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS). Her advice was that the role of the Parish Council is crucial in leveraging other funds for the building of a new village hall.
- c) The Chairman expressed concern that the intentions of ATT to make a donation to a new village hall have not been put into writing \_\_\_\_\_ Most other councillors expressed the view that they are comfortable with relying on the verbal assurances of trustees of ATT.
- d) The clerk reported that a letter has been received from Strutt & Parker advising that the trustees of ATT now take the same view as the parish council in that consultation and voting on a new village hall proposal by the village should be restricted to those living within the parish boundaries.
- e) The Clerk was instructed to write a reply to Strutt & Parker in which they are asked to quantify the size of any majority in favour of a new village hall, which would satisfy the ATT Trustees that the project is “the will of the village”.
- f) Borrowing powers were discussed again and the ability to apply to the Public Works Loan Board was noted. However, it was reiterated that any borrowing should be a last resort and kept to a minimum.
- g) Funding for instructing Baker Associates to develop detail plans and submit them for planning permission was discussed at some length. Baker Associates are currently working on stage (ii) at a cost to the Parish Council of £400, but stage (iii) and (iv) is expected to cost a further £6,955. The ability and willingness of the Village Hall Appeal Fund and the Village Hall Management Committee to contribute towards the cost was discussed.
- h) On the motion of Cllr Bishop, duly seconded by Cllr Hann, the council approved by a majority show of hands that the Parish Council engage Baker Associates to develop plans and submit a planning application for a new village hall subject to a maximum contribution to the cost of £3,500 from the Parish Council. This sum includes the cost of stages (i) and (ii) now in progress.

## 10) Community Matters

- a) Battle Area Community Transport are requesting a donation from the precept. On the motion of the Chairman, duly seconded, the granting of £100 to BACT was approved using the powers to make a grant under Section 137.
- b) Rother District Citizens Advice Bureau are requesting a donation from the precept. On the motion of the Chairman, duly seconded, the granting of £100 to the CAB was approved using the powers to make a grant under Section 137.

- c) Digital Broadband roll out – a recent progress report from ESCC has been circulated to members. Until the ‘fibre based solution’ is complete (2015/16?) consideration of alternative solutions is unlikely to start.
- d) Cllr Bishop reported that a number of tenders to build the new parish website have been received with more to come. All are based on Wordpress as the platform.

**11) Correspondence**

- a) Information from the police about Operation Crackdown has been received. Details will be circulated by email to members.

**12) Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items**

- a) At the next meeting Councillors will be asked to approve the placing of a contract with a website designer to build the new parish web site.

**13) Date of future meetings**

- a) The date of the next meeting is confirmed as Wednesday 25th March 2015 at 6.30 pm in the sports pavilion.

The chairman closed the meeting at 2020 hrs.

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Signed (Chairman)

Date .....