

Annual Assembly of the electors of Ashburnham & Penhurst
Thursday 27th April 2017 from 7.00 pm in the village hall

Approximately 45 members of the public plus five parish councillors and the parish clerk assembled from 7pm for a light buffet reception and to view the exhibits staged by a range of village organisations. The business meeting commenced at approximately 7.45 pm.

1. The Chair, Cllr Nicky Bishop welcomed all present to the fifth annual assembly in this format. Other parish councillors present were Cllrs Carol Andrews, Tina French, Richard Hann, Richard White.
2. **Apologies** for absence were recorded from ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field and parish Cllr Ron King.
3. **County Council report** – ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field sent a written report (attached).
4. **District Councillor report** – RDC Cllr Gary Curtis was not present.
5. **Parish Council Report** (from the Chair)
 - 5.1 The council has met 6 times during the year meeting on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm in the pavilion. We generally have 2 members of the public, sometimes more and extend our thanks to those who have attended. The council would welcome more regular attenders.
 - 5.2 Financial report (from the RFO) – The council has spent most of its earmarked reserves on supporting the planning process for the new hall. The precept of £8234 for this year is adequate and likely to be so (adjusted for inflation) until such time as a loan is taken out for the new hall or subsidy for this hall becomes onerous. General reserves are just under £4000 which represents about half of one year's precept which is in line with official guidance.
We shall again use the new internal auditor who is a qualified accountant and former parish clerk and he will undertake his second audit over the next 6 weeks.
 - 5.3 Planning applications monitoring: 20 planning applications were made in the 12 months. The council commented on 8, objected to 1 (which was nevertheless approved) and supported 3 which were approved. 6 others where we took no position were approved and another 6 on which we took no position were refused. 3 listed building consents on which we took no position were also approved. One application to which we objected was approved with conditions but the conditions have not been met. Enforcement action has been appealed against and the appeal is due to be heard shortly.
 - 5.4 A vacancy exists for a parish councillor to represent the Ashburnham ward (meaning that the new councillor does not need to live in the parish but must live within 3 miles of the boundary). Expressions of interest should be made to the clerk before the next meeting of the parish council on 16th May 2017 at which point the council may co-opt someone.
 - 5.5 The new web site has been completed and help is requested with upkeep of the home page. Numerous upgrades are in process including the posting of planning matters with links to the RDC portal..
 - 5.6 The Remembrance Sunday service on 12th November is in search of someone to lead it in the absence of a vicar at Ashburnham Church. An offer from Penhurst

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Church is conditional on changing the time of the service but the meeting was unanimous in rejecting any change from 11am.

6. Village Hall report – (from Brian Holdstock, Secretary and Treasurer)

- 6.1 The Village Hall Management Committee is now reduced to a core group to maintain the building following the completion of the application for planning permission for a new hall. Future new hall busieness will be for the parish council.
- 6.2 The hall continues to run at a loss every year but reserves are sufficient for another 3 years approximately after which there will either need to be fund raising or direct support from the parish council. The annual shortfall is a little over £1000.
- 6.3 Redecoration of main room is on the agenda (the W.I. having kindly refurbished the small room).
- 6.4 Lighting renewal and upgrading to low energy is under way and thanks are due to Keith Finch who continues to labour on this hugely time consuming project.

7. Pavilion maintenance report (from the clerk)

- 7.1 Landscaping work around the war memorial continues with the boundary hedge having been replaced. A stock proof fence is to be installed behind the hedge and cricket ball proof netting fixed to it. The fence will continue round the corner at the New Buildings Farm end with a field gate which will normally be kept shut – it is principally for access for the cricket field mower.
- 7.2 A more aesthetically pleasing sitting area is to be created without removing the concrete slab and a stepping stone pathway made as far as the road boundary. A dog control order is in force throughout Rother District and notices reminding people that they must not let their dog foul the area will be put up.

8. New Village Hall (from Cllr Richard White)

- 8.1 Following planning approval we need to discharge the planning conditions as soon as we can and obtain the Certificate of Lawful Development which removes the three year time limit on the approval. This will entail some costs which the parish council aims to meet concerning the new site entrance requirements.
- 8.2 (from the clerk) A new body to be responsible for the fund raising, possibly the construction and certainly the running of the new hall needs to be set up. It needs to be separate from the pc and registered as charity so that vat is not payable on the construction. Ultimately it may be sensible for the parish council to hand over the management of the pavilion and the sports field to the new body.
The new charity will also be incorporated as a company so it falls into the newly created category of Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Its trustees are also its directors. The composition of the board is up for discussion. Initial thinking is of some places for parish councillors, some elected members and some representation of village organisations. Views from local residents and organisations will be canvassed.

The new charity will need an official name Examples put to the meeting were ‘Ashburnham & Penhurst Village Hall’, ‘Ashburnham & Penhurst Community Centre’ and ‘Ashburnham & Penhurst Community Hall’. The meeting expressed a clear preference for Ashburnham & Penhurst Community Centre

- 8.3 Fund Raising Events (from Cllr Richard White) are crucial and a programme of events is being compiled. With a view to starting construction by 2020 the campaign name will be 2020 Vision. However, the scope of the programmes is limited by the number of volunteers willing to help and more volunteers are needed.
- 8.4 Grant Applications (from Cllr Richard Hann) are being written by Sherlyn Barrow, a professional fund raiser, who will quote a fee per bid. The pledge of £100,000 from

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ATT plus a potential loan from the Public Works Loan Board provides leverage when bidding. RDC also have grant funds available. The council is paying for advice from Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS).

9. Local Action Plan

The following are the councillors taking the lead on each topic:

- 9.1 New village hall – Cllr Richard White
- 9.2 Rural Broadband – Cllr Richard Hann
- 9.3 Village information – Cllr Nicky Bishop
- 9.4 Well being – Cllr Tina French
- 9.5 Public transport – Cllr Tina French
- 9.6 Affordable Housing – Cllr Tina French
- 9.7 Parish Design Statement – Cllr Nicky Bishop

10. Former BT payphone box

- 10.1 The phone box at The Pound has been purchased by the parish council for £1. Cllr Tina French is to organise a competition to find an appropriate use for it.

11. Highways (from Cllr Hann)

- 11.1 All the finger posts (12 in total) are in a fair state of repair and all have now been adopted by one or more people who will care for them.

12. Aircraft noise (from Clive O’Sullivan who attended the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign public meeting of its management committee)

- 12.1 Summer stacking – engine noise, especially from easyJet A320 planes, will be reduced by modifications to the air ducts to be completed by December 2017. Thereafter fines will be levied
- 12.2 In 2019 EXMAN, a cross border arrival management system, passes flight control to the arrival airport soon after take off which should lead to less stacking;
- 12.3 In 2022 stacking over water is planned to be operational.
- 12.4 Ambient noise is now recognised as a factor in determining acceptable noise levels meaning that noise levels tolerated in rural areas will be less than those in urban ones.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed.