

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

Thursday 7th October 2021 from 7.30 pm in the village hall

38 electors including all members of the Parish Council and the parish clerk plus ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field assembled from 7pm for a light buffet reception and to view the exhibits staged by the Art Club, the Chapel and Penhurst Retreat. The business meeting commenced at approximately 7.30 pm. In accordance with Local Government Act 1972 (c.70), Sch 12, s.17, the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Andrew Hoad, presided.

Ashburnham Parish meeting

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if there are additional agenda items people would like to discuss. None came forward at this time.
2. Apologies for absence
RDC Cllr Gary Curtis sent his apologies and continues to be indisposed.
3. Sussex Police report - PCSO Daryl Holter accompanied by PCSO Sarah Hunt
 - 3.1 PCSO Holter has returned to being our PCSO and covers from Normans Bay to Ticehurst following the increase in resources (prior to which he covered Hastings plus the whole of Rother).
 - 3.2 Crime in the parish in the last year consisted of 1 fly tipping, 1 bull loose, 2 farm breakins and 1 shed breakin. Whilst this is very light he urged all residents to continue to be vigilant and look out for anything odd - thieves are opportunistic.
 - 3.3 In response to a question about reporting fly tipping he said that if you saw it in progress it would be right to call 999, but if it was post-event then report to RDC. However, the police do like to be notified so that they have the opportunity to inspect the contents which might give a lead to the offender. He noted that the pandemic had resulted in there being more fly tipping.
4. County Councillor report – ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field.
The full report is available as a separate document but key points are:
 - 4.1 Although face to face meetings have resumed, only those members taking decisions are required to attend. Others may participate remotely. The result is a huge saving on expenses claimed.
 - 4.2 Covid-19 had a detrimental impact on many of our young people in residential care. Staff are performing amazingly to mitigate the damage caused by the pandemic.
 - 4.3 Adult Social Care is being reformed but continues to cause concern. Although there are headlines that care costs are to be capped at £86k, this relates to the care element only and what are care costs and what are “hotel” costs has yet to be determined.
 - 4.4 The Highway Management contract is currently being reprocedured and it is hoped that some of the problems with the current contract will be addressed.
 - 4.5 The County Council has been consulting on bus services and your parish council has responded. Improved reliability and predictability would improve services. Furthermore, although community bus services are not allowed to use commercial routes it would be very helpful if they could do so at times when commercial services were not using and Cllr Field is pursuing at Hastings and Rother Transport Action Group.

Mailing address: Dr Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council, Ashburnham & Penhurst Parish Council, Little Midge, Ashburnham, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9PB

5. District Councillor report – RDC Cllr Gary Curtis is indisposed.
6. Parish Council’s Report (for April 2020 to March 2021) - Chair
Cllr Andrew Hoad showed some slides introducing each of the parish councillors with an outline of the areas where they have lead responsibility.
- 6.1 Governance - the council and its committees had the following number of meetings in the year:
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 6 | Parish Council public meetings |
| 12+ | Covid Support ‘Sit Rep’ meetings |
| 1 | Planning Committee |
| 2 | New Hall Steering Committee |
| 1 | Finance & General Purposes Committee |
| 2 | Strengthening Local Relationships meetings with Highways |
- 6.2 Councillors
Chris Sinden was co-opted as a councillor in Sep 202.
This evening the parish bids farewell to Cllr Zoe O’Sullivan who is moving out of the parish and has to resign as a parish councillor. Zoe has performed great service not the least of which was to digitise all the parish council meeting minutes from the start in 1894 until the modern era.
- 6.3 Planning applications in Ashburnham
- In the year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 there were 8 planning applications.
5 approved of which 4 supported by parish council and one having an RFI.
1 withdrawn but opposed by parish council
2 refused and both opposed by parish council.
Ongoing enforcement actions - 3 or 4 in progress at different stages.
 - Good alignment of views between PC and RDC Planning
 - RDC Planning is undergoing a major improvement programme.
 - Long processing times at RDC set to continue for near term.
- 6.4 Financial report
Reserves at 31 March 2021 approximately £19,000 of which
£8,000 in earmarked reserves
£11,000 in general reserve
Annual precept income is £12,600
- 6.5 Community Village Action Plan and lead responsibilities.
Full details of the plan, which covers the next five years, are on the village website.
- 6.5.1. Rights of way, verges - wild flowers - Cllr Paul Spicer
Three sections of verge were designated this year as wild flower verges and the cutting was delayed until the autumn to allow seed heads to form and disperse. These are in Forge Lane, Brownbread Street and Church Road. More sections are planned to be added next year and to this end we need photographic evidence of identifiable species.
- 6.5.2. Affordable housing
The objective is to ensure that we have affordable housing for local people of any age that wish to stay in the village, people that may otherwise be unable to afford to do so. A Community Land Trust would be the favoured vehicle to manage any future project.

Mailing address: Dr Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council, Ashburnham & Penhurst Parish Council, Little Midge, Ashburnham, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9PB

Meetings with the East Sussex Rural Engagement Team are ongoing. A formal housing needs study is required plus evidence that the village is “sustainable”.

6.5.3.Highways - Cllr Ron King

A survey of the roads in the parish which are in need of more radical repair than pot hole patching has been distilled into five areas of the highest priority. Cllr King will be putting them to East Sussex Highways for inclusion in the major works programme in 2022.

Finger posts are in a good state of repair and there is an ongoing maintenance programme.

6.5.4.Rural broadband - Cllr Andrew Hoad

A Demand Led Community Fibre Partnership scheme covering 392 homes in Ashburnham, Penhurst and the fringes of Ninfield has been launched and approved as a scheme by Open Reach. The project cost is £475,000 which will be covered by aggregating all the Rural Gigabit Vouchers attributable to households. Additionally, East Sussex County Council have offered to supplement the vouchers by £1,000 per household. The result is that it requires only requires some 65% of households to pledge their vouchers towards meeting the total target to raise of £618,000 (the additional cost is a contingency required by Open Reach to protect them from the failure of some vouchers to be realised). The pledging process is due to commence on a dedicated web site portal by the end of November.

6.5.5.New village hall - Cllr Richard White

Following planning permission in 2017 some initial foundation work has been completed which ensures that there is no time limit on the planning permission. A new 50 year lease has been negotiated with the trustees of the Ashburnham Estate. The cost of a basic water tight structure has been estimated by a potential supplier but the cost of M&E, interior fittings, heating and waste management has yet to be determined.

7. Other matters raised by meeting attendees.

7.1 Becky Phillips asked a question on behalf of a number of people about the provision of a play area for small children somewhere in the village. Cllr Tina French commented that a needs survey could be undertaken. Mrs Jane Andrew cautioned that insurance for moving play equipment could be a major hurdle. Jay Ashworth noted that grants were widely available for projects which promoted health and fitness.

7.2 Nicky Bishop asked if the parish council had considered embarking on a Neighbourhood Development Plan as it can bring considerable financial benefits in the form of a Community Infrastructure Levy if development takes place.

7.3 Mr Bob Andrew urged people to take a carrier bag with them when they go out walking and to use it to pick up any litter they see. Cllr Hoad noted that the parish council would look at the possibility of surveillance cameras in some locations.

8. The Chairman declared the Ashburnham parish meeting to now be closed.

Parish of Penhurst agenda

1. The Chairman opened the Penhurst parish meeting and asked if there were any additional agenda items

Mailing address: Dr Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council, Ashburnham & Penhurst Parish Council, Little Midge, Ashburnham, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9PB

2. Parish council report - the Chairman reported that there had been two planning applications in Penhurst, that neither had been opposed by the parish council and that both had been approved.

3. The Chairman declared the Penhurst parish meeting to now be closed.