

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council
held on Wednesday 28th May 2014 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Councillors present: Cllrs Roger Burfoot, Richard Hann, Nicky Bishop, Gill Ratcliffe, Pat Winfield

In attendance: Brian Holdstock (Clerk), ESCC Cllr Katherine Field plus two members of the public.

1) Election of Chairman (conducted by the clerk)

Cllr R Burfoot was nominated by Cllr G Ratcliffe and seconded by Cllr P Winfield. There being no other nominations the clerk declared Cllr R Burfoot duly elected Chairman.

2) Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr R White was nominated by Cllr R Hann and seconded by Cllr G Ratcliffe. There being no other nominations the Chairman declared Cllr R White duly elected Vice Chairman.

3) Disclosures of interest

Agenda item 9: Personal interest – Cllrs Bishop and Hann – members of the Village Hall Management Committee

4) Apologies for absence

RDC Cllr Anghared Davies

5) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 2nd April and the special meeting held on 11th April 2014 were adopted and signed by the chairman.

6) Matters Arising from the minutes

a) From the minutes of the Special Meeting held on 11th April:

Councillors reviewed the conduct of the secret ballot that resulted in the co-option of Cllr Nicky Bishop. The clerk had declared the result without revealing the number of votes cast for each candidate and councillors now feel that this does not serve the interests of transparency. The Chairman proposed and Cllr R Hann seconded a proposal that the number of votes cast in a secret ballot should be declared and this was *agreed*. Accordingly the clerk reported that 3 votes had been cast for Simon Hollett and 4 votes had been cast for Nicky Bishop who was duly co-opted.

b) From the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 2nd April:

Standing Orders were amended at the April meeting so that a secret ballot could be held in lieu of a vote by a show of hands. This amendment was now confirmed with some additional detail incorporating the changes in 6) a) above. The relevant paragraph in Standing Orders is para 1 i which now reads as follows:

“Members shall vote by show of hands unless the meeting decides otherwise. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question by show of hands shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda. If the meeting decides to vote on any question by secret ballot, the clerk shall conduct the ballot and the clerk plus one councillor shall count and declare the number of votes cast for and against the question or, in the case of co-option of a councillor, the number of votes cast for each candidate.”

7) Casual vacancy for one Ashburnham councillor

- a) A vacancy for one councillor has arisen due to the resignation of Cllr Colin Baker on 3rd May 2014. The Chairman reported that he had replied to Colin's letter of resignation and now wished to record thanks of the parish council for all the years of Colin's service. These thanks were endorsed by all present.
- b) RDC confirmed today that no request for an election to fill the vacancy has been received by the due date which is today. It therefore falls to the parish council to co-opt someone to fill the vacancy.
- c) Expressions of interest in filling the vacancy have been invited and one has so far been received. Councillors decided that rather than relying solely on written submissions it would be preferable to also meet informally with those interested and a provisional date of 25th June was set. Approximately 20 minutes will be allocated to each person interested in filling the vacancy and, once all have been seen, a special meeting will be immediately convened for the purpose of voting to co-opt someone.

8) Sports Pavilion

- a) The clerk had previously circulated a briefing paper on a range of issues affecting the grounds around the pavilion and the war memorial. In order that some landscaping can be carried out some basic principles need establishing so that interested parties who use the facilities for recreation, especially the cricket club, can pursue individual projects. Accordingly, the council made the following decisions.
 - i) The concrete slab that formed the base of the previous cricket pavilion is to be removed and the ground reinstated.
 - ii) There is no possibility of a container or shed being erected between the pavilion and the lane for the purpose of housing the mowers. The Chairman will seek confirmation from the insurers that storing mowers in the pavilion does not contravene provisions of the policy.
 - iii) The cricket club are to be asked to participate in a joint scheme for completing the boundary hedging or fencing from the oak tree to the war memorial.
 - iv) Julia Shaw, a professional landscape architect and garden designer resident in the village, is to be invited to make a proposal for developing a master plan for the area with the war memorial as its centre piece.
- b) The car park surface has deteriorated and becomes very muddy in wet weather. An indicative quote has been received from Hailsham Roadways to supply, lay and roll some 40 tons of road planings at a cost of £1500 including vat. The Chairman proposed and Cllr G Ratcliffe seconded a proposal that the work be undertaken and this was *agreed*. The clerk will meet with the contractor to agree the details.
- c) Another one of the smoke alarms is bleeping indicating battery replacement is needed. It may be that a more fundamental review of the alarms, which may be coming to the end of their design life, is required. The Chairman proposed and Cllr G Ratcliffe seconded a proposal that Keith Finch, who has completed much of the electrical installation in the pavilion, be asked to undertake a review and remedial work and this was *agreed*.

9) Village Hall

- a) Cllr Hann reported that a consultation is now taking place throughout the village with a leaflet and ballot papers being inserted in the next edition of the parish magazine. People are being asked to give approval to detailed planning and costing investigations for a new village hall. If approval is given then detailed proposals would be the subject of a second round of consultation seeking approval to commit to a building project.

10) Community Matters

- a) There was a brief review of the **Annual Parish meeting** and some discussion about the lower turn out than last year and a view was expressed that the date, Maundy

Thursday, might have posed a problem for some. The search for a permanent date was fruitless as Easter is bound to fall within the period when the meeting would normally take place. The two roadside banners meant that wider publicity was given than last year, but next year other formats of roadside notice will be considered. Complimentary comments about the refreshments were noted.

- b) The cost of refurbishment of the **war memorial** was provisioned in the budget and councillors *agreed* that Arthur C Towner Ltd should be requested to put the work in hand. In September 2013 they quoted £720 plus vat.
- c) After discussion, councillors decided that the **Remembrance Day Service** in 2014 should commence at 11am to align with other national observances. Cllr Hann undertook to find someone to lead the service. Councillors also requested that the clerk apply for a road closure for the duration of the service. Village clubs and organisations will be asked if they will follow the lead set last year by PANTS and provide and lay a wreath. Refreshments in the pavilion will be provided after the service.
- d) A range of brochures and prices of **village notice boards** was examined and councillors selected an oak board supplied by Village and Urban. This will cost £950 (exclusive of vat) plus delivery, has two glazed doors and will accommodate 12 sheets of A4 (compared with 8 on the old board). The W.I. have made a donation of £500 towards the cost and the balance is provisioned in this year's budget.

11) Highways matters

- a) The uprooted signpost outside the Old Chapel near Lakehurst Lane is still down and nothing has been heard from our Highways Steward. The clerk was instructed to register in writing the council's dissatisfaction with the Highways Steward's poor communication and the lack of progress with reinstating this signpost.
- b) Little progress with repairing pot holes has been noted and the western half of Farthing Lane (between Glydes and Redpale) will become impassable if nothing is done before the winter. The clerk will include this in his letter of complaint to ESCC.

12) Planning

- a) *Existing applications*
 - i) RR2014/11/P - The Manor House, Penhurst - Replacement garden building to form garden store and studio. Approved 7 March 2014.
 - ii) RR2014/102/P - Springside Farm, Ashburnham - Removal of agricultural occupancy condition A/70/158 & A/70/626. Approved 13 March 2014.
 - iii) RR/2014/349/P - Burnt Barns Farm, Freckley Hollow, Ashburnham - Agricultural worker's dwelling, to replace existing temporary mobile home, to serve the essential needs of the holding – Approved 3 April 2014.
- b) *New applications*
 - i) None
- c) *Enforcement Update*
 - i) ENF/64/14/ASH - Lingham's Farm House, The Pound, Ashburnham - Internal alterations to Grade II listed building - conversion of roof space. Outcome: No Further Action - Not expedient to take further action in the public interest – 25 April 2014
 - ii) ENF/64/14/ASH - Burnt Barns Farm, Ashburnham - Unauthorised residential caravan. Application requested
 - iii) 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
 - iv) 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.

- v) 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.
- vi) 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.
- d) Cessation of provision of hard copy planning applications was noted and councillors decided that no action need be taken and that it is up to councillors to view applications online before council meetings.
- e) The issue of a permanent travellers' site at Coldharbour Farm (Brightling parish) has not gone away and it remains on the short list of options open to RDC. An action group has been formed and, together with Greg Barker MP, a further meeting with RDC is planned.

13) Finance

- a) The Chairman, as RFO, reported that bank balances are as follows:
 - i) £834 current account
 - ii) £1405 Money Manager
 - iii) £14,902 with Scottish Widows of which £10,000 is in a one year bond.
- b) Financial Regulations governing parish councils have been revised, but the existing regulations still apply. Cllr P Winfield proposed and Cllr G Ratcliffe seconded the proposal that council formally confirm the application of the existing regulations and this was *agreed*.
- c) The formal approval of the accounts is needed.
 - i) Cllr P Winfield proposed and Cllr R Hann seconded the proposal that the accounts be approved and this was *agreed*.
 - ii) Cllr N Bishop proposed and Cllr R Hann seconded the proposal that the Annual Governance Statement 2013/14 be approved and signed and this was *agreed*.
- d) Thanks were recorded to John Cumming for providing an internal audit of the accounts and an appropriate token of appreciation (cost £24) has been sent.

14) Correspondence

- a) A war memorials recording project is being undertaken by the Imperial War Museum and the private memorial in the church of St Michael, Penhurst has been noted as part of their pilot project.
- b) Bexhill Community First Responders have written a letter of thanks for the donation made by the parish council and presented at the Annual Assembly.

15) Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

- a) None

16) Date of next meeting

- a) The following dates were *agreed* for the calendar of regular parish council meetings.
 - Wed 30th July 2014 at 7.30 pm
 - Wed 24th September 2014 at 7.30 pm
 - Wed 26th November 2014 at 6.30 pm
 - Wed 28th January 2015 at 6.30 pm
 - Wed 25th March 2015 at 6.30 pm
 - Wed 27th May 2015 at 7.30 pm (AGM)