

Minutes of the Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council

held on Wednesday 12th November 2014 at 6.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion

Councillors present: Cllrs Roger Burfoot (Chair), Nicky Bishop, Richard Hann, Andy Proudfoot, Pat Winfield, Richard White (Vice Chair)

In attendance: Brian Holdstock (Clerk), RDC Cllr Anghared Davies

1) Disclosures of interest

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

Agenda item 5 b) RR/2014/2396/P – Cllr Winfield pecuniary interest – joint applicant

2) Apologies for absence

Cllr Gill Ratcliffe; ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field

3) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 24th September 2014 were adopted and signed by the chairman.

4) Finance

- a) The Chairman, as RFO, reported that the total of all bank balances is £15,672 (£12,848 in September)
- b) Recent or forthcoming payments are to -
 - i) Fast Maintenance Services - £48 incl VAT – pavilion plumbing issues
 - ii) Poppy Appeal wreaths £162 (to be fully reimbursed by village organisations)
 - iii) Poppy Appeal, Parish Council wreath - £18
 - iv) Nigel White – grounds cleared around war memorial - £120
 - v) **Resolved** that payments of the above be approved
- c) Budget preliminaries 2015/16
 - i) The clerk tabled a paper showing the history of the annual precept since 2005 and showing what that year's precept would be now if adjusted for inflation (CPI).
 - ii) A draft budget proposal was tabled showing the expected income and expenditure with an illustration of the effect of a precept of £8,826 (the 2007-08 precept of £7,000 adjusted for inflation).
 - iii) There was discussion about the forecast income from letting of the pavilion and it was **resolved** to increase the budget from £1,400 to £2,000 from this source. This meant that the illustrated precept could be correspondingly reduced from £8,826 to £8,226 without affecting the overall outcome.
 - iv) Cllr R.White proposed and Cllr. A. Proudfoot seconded the motion that the budget be adopted with these revisions and this was unanimously **agreed**.
 - v) The adopted budget implies a precept of £8,226 for 2015/16 and this will be put to the next meeting in January 2015.

5) Planning

- a) *Existing applications*
 - RR/2014/2199/P - Court Lodge Farm, Ashburnham, TN33 9PJ - General purpose agricultural building with solar panels – *Approved 17/10/14*
 - RR/2014/2258/P - The Timber Yard, Ashburnham TN33 9PE - Proposed new office space & staff facilities – *Approved 24/10/14*

b) *New applications*

Cllr Winfield's pecuniary interest in application 2396 was again declared.
RR/2014/2396/P - Corner House Farm, Brownbread Street - Erection of agricultural machinery store - *council had no comment at this meeting (previous email comments from three councillors were in favour and this has been noted at RDC planning portal subsequent to this meeting).*

RR/2014/2456/P & 2457/L - Brays Hill Farmhouse, Brays Hill - Extensions to dwelling, internal alterations and replacement of two modern windows – *councillor took the view that they would support the conservation officer's recommendation.*

c) *Enforcement Update*

The clerk reported that he had been unable to obtain an update from RDC about the status of these issues on the grounds that RDC lacked the resources. However, he had been assured that periodic enquiries would be answered with an update.

- i) ENF/67/14/ASH - Burnt Barns Farm, Ashburnham - Unauthorised residential caravan. *Application requested - No further action - 2014/1445/P approved*
- ii) 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 – update requested from RDC 20/11/14*
- iii) 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.*
- iv) 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.*
- v) 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. Appeal in process.*

6) Governance

- i) The clerk's employment contract needs to be revised with effect from 1st January 2015 to reflect the transition to paid employment. A revised contract was circulated prior to the meeting covering the following changes -
 - (1) 6. Salary
 - (2) 10. Hours of work
 - (3) 11. Annual leave
 - (4) 13. (new) Sick pay
 - (5) 15. Sickness absence
 - (6) Additional duties, para 9 of job specification – as circulated these duties will include the management of the pavilion including bookings.
- ii) With the clarification that the words 'up to' be inserted in front of each of the sick pay benefits bulleted in 13.1 the contract was approved and signed by both parties.

7) Highways matters

- a) Fingerpost maintenance has not been specifically provisioned for in the draft budget for 2015/16. However, the clerk advised that East Sussex Highways will fund 50% of the cost of maintenance, subject to their approval of the supplier and agreement with the requirement, but will limit funds to two fingerposts per year. In the draft budget a speculative sum of £500 had been included and it was **resolved** that this become a provision for finger post maintenance.
- b) The Restricted Byway from The Furnace to Little Sprays, which runs through the Beech Estate, has become impassable in some places on its original route. The ESCC Rights of Way team have been requested to visit the site and report.

- c) Cllr Hann reported that he continues to speak frequently to East Sussex Highways about potholes but that little action seems to result. RDC Cllr Anghared Davies advised that some highways stewards have been temporarily assigned to other duties and that it might be fruitful to speak to their manager, Ruth China-Roberts.
- d) Councillors discussed a range of options including an audit or survey of the potholes, a clearer definition of what constitutes a serious pothole requiring immediate attention and also the possibility of joint employment with neighbouring parishes of an operative to keep drainage ditches clear to improve surface water drainage. It was **resolved** to invite people to notify the parish council of potholes so that some central register and progress record could be kept.

8) Sports Pavilion

- a) The previously agreed plan to prepare a master plan for the layout of the area around the pavilion can now be implemented as the dormant season is the most suitable time, especially for any ground works such as the removal of the concrete foundation where the previous pavilion stood. The clerk will initiate a consultation process led by Julia Shaw and involving the cricket club.

9) Village Hall

- a) Cllr R. White reported that, following a visit from an RDC planning officer, he had received a written response that RDC were broadly in favour of the proposed building in the location proposed.
- b) VAT was discussed and it was assumed that the parish council will need to register in order to be able to reclaim vat on construction costs. Advice will be sought from AiRS Community Buildings Advisory Service to which the council now subscribes.
- c) Borrowing powers were discussed and the ability to apply to the Public Works Loan Board was noted. However, it was **resolved** that any borrowing should be a last resort and kept to a minimum.
RDC Cllr Anghared Davies suggested that, once planning permission has been obtained and the cost of the project determined, an application to Rother Communities Grant Scheme be made. She ventured that she would expect to see a grant of £30,000 from this source.
- d) The clerk tabled a paper describing the stages in developing proposals to a planning application submission with the costs of each stage. A quotation was tabled from Baker Architectural who have been advising the village hall committee. The next stage incurs a cost of some £400 plus vat (referred to as Stage ii) and will enable consultations with users and other stakeholders to take place prior to full documentation and submission of a proposal. It was **resolved** to instruct Baker Architectural to proceed at once with stage ii) with a view to being able to proceed to stage iii) in January 2015. The committee also committed themselves to the full application process and noted that the Village Hall Appeal Fund were ready to contribute towards the cost.
- e) Financial Regulations prescribe that contracts to a value of £5,000 or more require three quotations. Cllr R. Burfoot (RFO) proposed and Cllr R. Hann seconded a proposal that this limit be raised to at least £10,000 and that the NALC recommended wording about exceptions be adopted and this was **agreed** unanimously.
- f) Cllrs expressed concern that ATT and other relevant estate trusts be fully appraised of the pace at which the project might proceed. The clerk and Cllr N. Bishop are to seek a meeting with Richard Bickersteth.

10) Community Matters

- a) The Annual fete and flower show was discussed. It was noted that the role of the parish council might be to pay for a marquee of a size purely to accommodate the flower show and that the council might take powers to do so either under section 137 or by earmarking reserves for the support of village events. Either way, existing

sponsors will be asked to make their donations to the parish council rather than to the gardening club.

- b) The Remembrance Sunday service was noted as a success and council were minded to support the view expressed by a majority of attendees that the service of remembrance should continue to be held at 11am rather than in the afternoon.
- c) New parish web site.
 - i) Cllr N.Bishop reported that plans for a new village web site were proceeding and that three contractors, Python, eMango and LightBulbHead, were being invited to submit proposals following wide ranging research. The design brief will go out within 7 days with proposals due in mid December. The plan is for design work to start mid January with a launch in mid March so that invoicing would fall into the next financial year where there is a budget provision. It was *resolved* to proceed with the work on this basis.
 - ii) Council noted that the current provider license expires in the Spring next year.
 - iii) Given that the site will have its content managed by a range of people from different village organisations it was noted that house styles must be consistent throughout and that a strict content management system protocol will be needed.
 - iv) Domain names were discussed and it was *resolved* that ashburnhamandpenhurst.uk should be the preferred name but that ashburnhamandpenhurst.co.uk be purchased as well.

11) Correspondence

- a) A recruitment reminder from the Oil Club has been received with some recruiting literature.

12) Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

- a) The Localism Act 2011 has a major section on ‘Transparency and Openness’ and a briefing paper is available which the clerk will circulate to members before the next council meeting. General practice is now for councils to set aside a specific time, generally about 10 minutes at the start of a meeting, when members of the public may address the council for a limited time (typically three minutes) and on only those topics on the published agenda.
- b) The clerk will circulate a proposal for a revision to the wording of the standing order on voting which currently is at odds with approved practice.
- c) Cllr Proudfoot requested that an update be provided at the next meeting regarding the roll out of digital broadband and the options for high speed internet access.

13) Date of future meetings

- a) The date of the next meeting is confirmed as Wednesday 28th January 2015 at 6.30 pm in the sports pavilion.

The chairman closed the meeting at 2010 hrs.

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Signed (Chairman)

Date