
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council
held on Wednesday 9th March 2016 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Carol Andrews, Nicky Bishop (Chair), Tina French, Richard Hann, Ron King, Andy Proudfoot and Richard White.

Parish Councillors absent: None

District / County Councillors present: RDC Cllr Gary Curtis,

Also present: Clerk to the Council
1 member of the public
Mr John Collins, RDC Monitoring Officer

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence have been received from ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field.

2. Disclosures of interest

2.1 No interests were declared.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The draft minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 13th January 2016 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chair the minutes were adopted without amendment.

4. Open Forum

4.1 At the invitation of the parish council, Mr John Collins addressed the meeting.

4.1.1 Mr Collins is RDC Head of Corporate Services including HR. He also fulfils the role of Monitoring Officer (MO).

4.1.2 The MO is concerned only with the actions of individual councillors (members) and not of corporate bodies (such as the council). Standards are overseen by the MO plus 2 independent persons.

4.1.3 The interests which members must disclose fall into one of three categories –

4.1.3.1 Personal – meaning there is some link but they can remain and speak.

4.1.3.2 Prejudicial – the tests are financial interest or a licensing interest or an interest which in the reasonable view of a member of the public should be declared. They should withdraw.

4.1.3.3 Disclosable pecuniary – these must be shown on the Register of Interests available for public inspection. They should withdraw.

4.1.4 The first stage of the complaint process is for the MO to check with the 2 independent persons. Next, the complainant is given an explanation of why the complaint is not valid or else an officer is appointed to investigate. The investigating officer prepares a report which is shared with the 2 independent persons. Either the complaint is dealt with at this stage or else there is an RDC Committee Hearing who will pass a Resolution which they feel is appropriate including withdrawal.

4.1.5 Mr Collins answered questions from members after which he was thanked by the Chair and left the meeting.

4.2 RDC Cllr Gary Curtis reported as follows.

4.2.1 Refuse collection service.

4.2.1.1 He has met with representatives of Kier regarding failures of the refuse collection service. He requested that in future he be copied in to all communications from the

parish council regarding refuse collection failures as he found it difficult to pick up the thread when he only had part of the correspondence trail.

- 4.2.1.2 Cllr Hann registered his unhappiness with the system of penalties applied to the contractor which, firstly, seemed trivial and, secondly, could not be passed on the householder who receives no compensation. This is clearly at odds with other service failure compensation schemes such as those in force for power or telephone outages or train or plane lateness or cancellations. He asked to be advised when the contract with Kier comes up for review and urged RDC to redraft the contract to permit householders to be compensated. Cllr Hann believes there are 6 households at least who have suffered grievously and are due for compensation.
- 4.2.1.3 Cllr Hann asked if he could see a copy of the contract with Kier and proposed to compose an open letter for publication in the press regarding the failures of the refuse collection service.
- 4.2.2 Drainage – Cllr Curtis advised that the recently announced additional levy by the drainage board had already been budgeted for by RDC and no additional charge will fall on the parish.
- 4.2.3 Road signs – the provenance of the two new signs at the entrance to Akehurst Field has still not been established but he continues to pursue the matter.
- 4.2.4 Revenue Support Grant – the effect on RDC finance of the replacement of the grant by a new mechanism based on Business Rates alone is still far from clear.

5. RFO Report and Governance

- 5.1 The RFO reported that Cllr Tina French has now been added to the list of councillors who may authorise online payments from Unity Trust Bank. As with Cllr White, it only remains for her to telephone the bank to register passwords.
- 5.2 On the motion of the Chair members resolved to appoint Mr Keith Robertson, FCMA, as internal auditor for the period ending 31 March 2016 and approved the signing of the letter of engagement.
- 5.3 On the motion of the Chair, members approved the following payments –
 - 5.3.1 Parish Magazine advertisement 1 year - £20
 - 5.3.2 AiRS new hall consultancy - £180
 - 5.3.3 South East Water (pavilion) - £27.96
 - 5.3.4 AiRs annual subscription - £144
 - 5.3.5 Ion Safety (pavilion fire extinguisher annual maintenance) - £45
- 5.4 The following receipts were noted –
 - 5.4.1 ESCC finger post subsidy - £996.90
- 5.5 Governance – members noted the revised guidelines for the payment of parish councillor's Basic Allowance but resolved to continue to decline taking the allowance.
- 5.6 Governance – Annual Assembly 21st April 2016
 - 5.6.1 The clerk will prepare a draft agenda for the business meeting. This will include the Chair's review of the council year and an update on the new village hall. The clerk will advise the CPSO who may wish to have some input.
 - 5.6.2 Cllr White advised that arrangements are in hand for the preparation of the beacon, which is to be lit at the cricket field as part of the 90th birthday celebrations of HM The Queen, after the business meeting in the village hall.
 - 5.6.3 The clerk advised that village organisations are preparing table top exhibits in the pavilion where the reception will take place after the business meeting.
- 5.7 Local Action Plan – Cllr White suggested that the new plan, for 2015 – 2020, should follow the same format as the previous plan but he questioned whether there was a need for another questionnaire. A sub group, consisting of Cllrs White and French, undertook to do some initial work on the plan and present some ideas to the Annual Assembly.

6. Planning

6.1 The outcome or status of previous applications was noted as follows:

- 6.1.1 RR/2015/998/P – Ashburnham recreation ground – proposed new village hall *Undecided*
- 6.2 New applications – none
- 6.3 Updates to the following breaches and enforcement were noted:
 - 6.3.1 ENF/ASH/2011/293 - Brays Hill - holiday let rules breached - enforcement action. Holiday home used as permanent home. *Awaiting information*
 - 6.3.2 ENF/177/15/ASH - Naulakha, Lakehurst Lane, Ashburnham - Alterations to holiday let and possible permanent residential use.. *Visit being arranged.*
 - 6.3.3 ENF/193/15/ASH – Buckwell Ghyll, Lakehurst Lane, Ashburnham – caravan noted.
- 6.4 Appeals
 - 6.4.1 RR/2015/1480/P – 2356 Buckwell Ghyll, Olivers Hill Farm, Lakehurst Lane, TN33 9PE - Provision of integral residential accommodation within existing Care Farm Building – awaiting informal hearing

7. Highways matters

- 7.1 Finger posts
 - 7.1.1 Members noted that the replacement of posts at The Pound and Penhurst church have been installed and the ESCC subsidy received.
 - 7.1.2 Members resolved that the posts at Compass Lane and at Forge Lane are to be the next two to repair / replace with the benefit of 50% subsidy from ESCC. The clerk was instructed to accept the quotation from JKK and to adopt their suggestion of moving the post at Forge Lane T-junction to the other side of the road where there is a wide verge on one corner.
- 7.2 Rights of Way - Honey Lane (Warbleton Byway 82) – members noted the state of disrepair and liaison with Warbleton from which the byway emerges into Slivericks. It was noted that the Rights of Way team do not have the resources available to address the problem in the next financial year.
- 7.3 Drainage - Flooding in Farthing Lane below Peltham is caused by a blocked culvert. The clerk reported that, following posting to Fix My Street, the Highways Steward has visited and cleared the culvert which is now functioning again.
- 7.4 Potholes - Cllr Richard Hann reported that he continues to meet with the Highways Steward and together they tour the parish confirming the most urgent potholes to repair.

8. Premises

- 8.1 New Village Hall
 - 8.1.1 Members viewed the plans and elevations of the latest iteration which is version 2e. It was agreed that these should be printed and posted on public places so that people could see how far proposals had moved since the originals.
 - 8.1.2 The Chair reported that feedback from the planners was sufficiently encouraging for the architect to now be in process of working up the sketches into formal plans. RDC will then review them, and if thought to be acceptable, will recommend that the parish council submit the formally as an amendment to the original proposal. This would then go forward to the planning committee with an officers' recommendation for approval. Before that can happen there needs to be an accompanying document containing the rationale for the new hall and the Chair confirmed that she is in process of drafting this for wider consultation.
 - 8.1.3 Meetings are arranged to investigate how best to progress the proposal. A Skype meeting with Louise Beaton, AiRS CBAS, is confirmed for 30th April with various interest groups working under the aegis of the New Hall Steering Group. A training /information event is being held at Ringmer and two parish councillors plan to attend.
- 8.2 Village Hall (Cllr White reporting)
 - 8.2.1 The small meeting room has been redecorated by the W.I. who also bore the cost. Members expressed their gratitude.
 - 8.2.2 A team of volunteers, including volunteers from Ashburnham Place, are to tackle clearing the overgrowth from the garden area in front of the hall.

- 8.2.3 Renewal and replacement of some lighting is in hand.
- 8.2.4 The guttering is to be reviewed in the Spring and a quotation obtained for remedial work. ATT will be asked if they will treat it as eligible for the 3:1 subsidy as before.
- 8.3 Pavilion – the clerk reported that the approved landscaping works have commenced.

9. Community Matters

- 9.1 Refuse collection services – see minute 4.2 above.
- 9.2 New notice board at Penhurst – the clerk reported little progress as no response from the conservation officer at RDC has been received. Cllr Hann volunteered to assist in moving the matter forward.
- 9.3 Members noted the sudden death of former Chairman Roy White and expressed their condolences to Cllr Richard White and all the family. Roy White was elected to the parish council in May 1987 and served as its Chairman from 1991 until 2001.

10. Correspondence received

- 10.1 ESCC Consultation on Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

11. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

None

12. Circulation folder

- 12.1 Local Council Direct

13. Dates of Next Meetings

- 13.1 Councillors noted that the revised schedule of ordinary council meetings in 2016, which are on Wednesdays at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion, is as follows:
 - 11th May
 - 13th July
 - 14th September
 - 9th November
- 13.2 Councillors noted that the revised schedule of meetings of the Planning Committee in 2016, which are also on Wednesdays at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion, is as follows:
 - 13th April
 - 8th June
 - 10th August
 - 12th October
 - 14th December

If there are no planning matters to consider the meeting will be cancelled.

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Signed (Chair)

Date