

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council
held on Wednesday 11th May 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: none

Also present: Clerk to the Council
3 members of the public

1. Election of Chair

Cllr Richard Hann nominated Cllr Nicky Bishop. Cllr Ron King seconded the nomination and, there being no other nominations, Cllr Bishop was declared elected as Chair.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Ron King nominated Cllr Richard Hann. Cllr Andy Proudfoot seconded the nomination and, there being no other nominations, Cllr Hann was declared elected as Vice Chairman.

3. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

- 3.1 The Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office.
- 3.2 The Vice Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

4. Apologies for absence

- 4.1 Received from ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field.

5. To Approve the Asset Register of council property

- 5.1 On the motion of Cllr White, seconded by Cllr King, members approved the asset register of council property.

6. To appoint members to serve on Sussex Association of Local Councils

- 6.1 Members approved the continuation of Cllr Nicky Bishop as the nominated representative.

7. To confirm the dates of future meetings

- 7.1 Members resolved to continue to meet on the second Wednesday of alternate months, i.e. 13 July, 14 September, 9 November, 11 January (2017), 8 March and 10 May.
- 7.2 The Planning committee (if required to meet) will meet on the second Wednesday of June, August, October, December, February (2017) and April.

8. To set the date for the Annual Assembly 2017

- 8.1 Members resolved to set the date for the next Annual Parish Assembly as Thursday 27th April 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

9. Disclosures of interest

- 9.1 To receive any disclosure by Members of personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the personal interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.

9.2 There were no disclosures of interest.

10. Adoption of Minutes

10.1 The minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 16th March 2016 were adopted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. Open Forum

Members of the public were invited to speak about any matters they wished, whether or not they were on the agenda.

11.1 Mr R Ridley raised the following points –

11.1.1 he asked that the council be more careful about checking factual statements incorporated in responses to planning applications. A recent response referred to a barn conversion at The Furnace which was factually incorrect;

11.1.2 he challenged the council's impartiality when responding to planning applications referring specifically to RR/2015/1480/P. He believed that one or more declarations of interest should have been made and that support for the application had been based on friendship. Again, there were factual inaccuracies in the response.

11.2 Mr J Cummins raised the following points –

11.2.1 he expressed his unhappiness with the process by which the council formulated its response to planning decisions;

11.2.2 he believed that the council was biased and held personal views which were not declared;

11.2.3 he asserted that the response in support posted by the council did not reflect the views of the immediate neighbours and that the comments posted by neighbours had been discounted and not given due weight;

11.2.4 he believed that the council did not attach sufficient importance to the protection of the AONB;

11.2.5 he was present at the discussion of the application in the council meeting and listened to suggestions that some of those opposing the application may be opposed to the care farm per se. This is quite untrue and his opposition was based purely on what he perceived to be manipulative circumnavigation of planning laws to achieve the applicant's own development ends.

12. Annual Return

(Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015)

12.1 Members reviewed the effectiveness of the systems of internal control. All payments, whether by cheque or online, require two members to approve and the appropriate insurance is in place for public liability. Members considered the current systems of internal control to be effective.

12.2 On the motion of Cllr White seconded by Cllr Hann members approved the Annual Governance Statement and witnessed the signing thereof by the Chair and the Clerk.

12.3 On the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr Proudfoot members approved the accounting statements (previously signed by the RFO and circulated) and witnessed the signing thereof by the Chair.

13. Finance

13.1 Members received the following financial reports from the RFO -

13.1.1 4th quarter (full year) income and expenditure against budget for 2015/16

13.1.2 Bank reconciliation.

13.2 On the motion of the Chair, members approved the following payments en bloc:

13.2.1 Clerk gross salary – 30 hours per month at £9.21 per hour until 30 April 2017 (£276.21 per month).

13.2.2 EDF Energy – Electricity supply pavilion – £27 per month, paid by standing order. Approved retrospective 2015-16 and continuing through 2016-17.

- 13.2.3 JAKK Designs - £1524.72 (includes VAT £254)- Gross cost of signs at Forge Lane and Compass Lane.
- 13.2.4 Nigel White – £847 - first phase landscaping around war memorial (retrospective).
- 13.2.5 Nigel Turner - £25 - window cleaning, pavilion.
- 13.2.6 Society of Local Council Clerks - £250 – CiLCA registration fee.

14. Planning

- 14.1 Applications forming part of the agenda of previous meetings – none
- 14.2 New applications – (*RDC status*)
- 14.2.1 RR/2016/705/P - Naulakha, Lakehurst Lane, TN33 9LZ - Erection of three sheds (retrospective) – (*undecided*)
- 14.2.2 RR/2016/825/P - Burnt Barns Farm, Freckley Hollow, Ashburnham, TN33 9LZ - Relocation of former agricultural worker's cabin and its conversion to tourist accommodation. – (*undecided*)
- 14.2.3 RR/2016/982/P - Naulakha, Lakehurst Lane, TN33 9LZ - Deck with access slope to provide a fire exit (suitable for disabled), to balance the building as there is a deck on the west end of the building for access. (Part Retrospective) – *undecided*
Members reviewed the application but, given that the building is only designated as a holiday let, they took the view that the existing access is sufficient and that the application represents unnecessary further development in the AONB. The clerk was instructed to post these comments to the Rother portal.
- 14.2.4 RR/2016/1125/P - Burnt Barns Farm, Freckley Hollow, Ashburnham - Agricultural worker's dwelling to serve the essential needs of the holding. Variation of conditions 2 & 5 to provide ground floor extension – (*undecided*).
Members reviewed all the plans and elevations but decided that they had no strong views either way and instructed the clerk to post a 'no comment' at the RDC portal.
- 14.3 Breaches and Enforcement – updates noted
- 14.3.1 ENF/ASH/2011/293 - Brays Hill - holiday let rules breached - enforcement action. Holiday home used as permanent home. *Awaiting information*
- 14.3.2 ENF/177/15/ASH - Naulakha, Lakehurst Lane, Ashburnham - Alterations to holiday let and possible permanent residential use.. *Application received 14 March 2016.*
- 14.3.3 ENF/193/15/ASH – Buckwell Ghyll, Lakehurst Lane, Ashburnham – caravan noted.

15. Highways matters

- 15.1 Finger posts
- 15.1.1 Members reviewed ongoing maintenance following the replacement of posts at Forge Lane and Compass Lane. Rather than paying an annual fee of £75 per signpost for a contract with the fingerpost supplier, members felt it would be appropriate for the community to undertake periodic cleaning and removal of any obstructing vegetation. It was felt that each organisation in the village should be invited to adopt a finger post.
- 15.1.2 Road signs – the provenance of the two new signs at the entrance to Akehurst Field has still not been established but RDC Cllr Curtis continues to pursue the matter.
- 15.2 Potholes - Cllr Hann reported that he is to undertake a further review with the Highways Steward, Andy Swanson.

16. Premises

- 16.1 New village hall
- 16.1.1 Governance – a recommendation that a new independent body (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation) be the vehicle for construction and operation of the new hall has been received from AiRS CBAS (Louise Beaton). This will be given a public airing at the AGM of the Village Hall Management Committee on 16th June 2016.
- 16.2 Village Hall

16.2.1 Cllr Richard White urged as many people as possible to come the AGM of the VHMC.

16.3 Pavilion

16.3.1 The clerk reported that the entrance gate post needs resetting and members consented to a local contractor being engaged.

17. Community matters

17.1 Rural broadband - the Clerk reported that the Chairman of Brightling Parish Council (Cllr Andrew Wedmore) is waiting to give evidence to ESCC Scrutiny Committee and continues to press our MP, Mr Huw Merriman, to proceed with the parish conference he promised to set up.

17.2 Parish notice board for Penhurst – no progress, carry forward

17.3 Refuse collection – delivery of compensation packs to householders in Ponds Green is awaited.

17.4 Church Hall – the PCC have requested that the parish council support their application for continued use of the building. Usage has to be renewed every five years as it is a temporary building. Members confirmed that the application will receive the council’s support in due course.

17.5 Annual Assembly – members noted that attendance was about two thirds of previous years and felt that it needed to be promoted more actively. They also decided that starting with refreshments on arrival and before the business meeting was a preferable formula to this year which reversed the order because an adjournment to the pavilion for a beacon lighting had been the original plan.

18. Correspondence

18.1 Mr Simon Hollett has asked if the council would agree to an in memoriam bench being purchased and placed near the pavilion to honour the memory of Roy White, a long serving previous chairman of the parish council. Members were unanimous in their support.

19. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

None

20. Circulation folder

20.1 Local Councils Direct

21. Dates of Next Meetings

21.1 Parish Council: 13th July (second Wednesday)

21.2 Planning Committee: 8th June (second Wednesday)

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

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Signed (Chair)

Date