
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council
held on Wednesday 11th January 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

- Parish Councillors present:** Cllrs Nicky Bishop (Chair), Richard Hann, Ron King, Andy Proudfoot and Richard White.
- Parish Councillors absent:** Cllrs Carol Andrews, Tina French
- District / County Councillors present:** RDC Cllr Gary Curtis, ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field
- Also present:** Mr Stephen Hardy, Sec to Rother Rural Trust
Clerk to the Council
1 member of the public

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 The Chair notified in advance her late arrival. The Vice Chair, Cllr Richard Hann chaired the meeting until the arrival of the Chair.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence have also been received from Cllr Carol Andrews .

2. Disclosures of interest

- 2.1 Cllr Andy Proudfoot declared his interest in the planning application at 7.2.2 where he is the applicant.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The draft minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 9th November 2016 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chair the minutes were adopted without amendment.

4. Open Forum

- 4.1 Mr Stephen Hardy, secretary to Rother Rural Trust addressed members by invitation and briefed them about the trust. Members were advised of the provenance of the Trust, its aims, objectives and source of funds and the value of grants it makes. These range from £50 to £500 and are typically for household items such as carpets or domestic appliances, school uniform, young people's training. Awards are made not only to individuals but to some organisations such as after school clubs.
- The trustees meet twice a year to consider applications but also make awards via email consultation between meetings. Trustees include ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field and Cllr Graham Peters as a parish councillor representative. There are also 6 district councillors as trustees. Applications are informal and by letter to the secretary.
- 4.2 ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field reported that –
- 4.2.1 the County budget for 2017/18 required an increase in the council tax of 2% for Adult Social Care plus a further 1% as an advance payment of future tax revenues,
- 4.2.2 Clinical Commissioning Groups in East Sussex are now integrating with the County Council in respect of Adult Social Care, and
- 4.2.3 the situation with regard to Business Rates is no clearer. East Sussex is a net importer and the replacement arrangements once councils retain their own Business Rates has yet to be announced.
- 4.3 RDC Cllr Gary Curtis reported that the District Council –
- 4.3.1 continues to monitor the progress (or lack of) with the roll out of rural broadband, and
- 4.3.2 is aiming to resolve the governance situation in Bexhill where there is no parish or town council.

5. Community Matters (Cllr Bishop assumed the chair)

- 5.1 Local Action Plan – in the absence of Cllr French there was no wide ranging review, but members agreed to bring an update to the 8th March parish council meeting as a rehearsal for the Annual Assembly on 27th April.
Although not forming part of the meeting, these are the actions, numbered according to the previous plan, with the name of the lead councillor:
Action 1: New Village Hall on a new site. Richard White
Action 2: Rural broadband Richard Hann
Actions 3 and 6: Parish website, local information points. Publish a local produce directory for the parishes Nicky Bishop
Action 5: 'Well-being' Tina French
Actions 7&8: Community bus service and Investigate the need for a supermarket shopping bus. Lead to be appointed
Action 9: Explore the possibility of /need for commissioning a housing needs survey. Tina French
Action N 10: To develop a Parish Planning Design Statement. Nicky Bishop
Action 11: Quality Of Village Life, including Street lighting/ dark night sky, road signage, finger posts, phone boxes, verges and hedges, etc.. Richard Hann & Nicky Bishop
- 5.2 Rural Broadband
- 5.2.1 The meeting at Great Dixter, organised by Huw Merriman M.P., was noted.
- 5.2.2 The clerk represented the council at Great Dixter and will endeavour to obtain some or all of the presentations with a view to using the material in a presentation to the Annual Assembly.
- 5.2.3 Cllr Kathryn Field requested that examples of business which are struggling as a result of poor broadband provision be sent to her; Scrutiny Committee are holding an investigation. Cllrs Hann and Proudfoot cited The Retreat and Ashburnham Place as examples.
- 5.3 Parish Web Site
- 5.3.1 Following the review at the November pc meeting of enhancements which could be made to the website, members resolved to adopt the following at the costs already quoted –
- 5.3.1.1 Integrated events calendar £100
- 5.3.1.2 Revised page for displaying planning applications £200
- 5.3.1.3 Classified ads £40
- 5.4 Removal of public BT red phone box
- 5.4.1 BT are intent on removing all remaining red phone boxes in East Sussex but are consulting RDC asking the authority to either adopt, contest or agree to the removal. Adopting a phone box costs £1. The only remaining red phone box in the parishes is at The Pound.
- 5.4.2 Members resolved that the phone box be adopted by the parish council and consideration be given to an alternative community use. This will be added to the agenda for the Annual Assembly.
- 5.5 Annual Country Fair
- 5.5.1 In 2016 the parish council provided the fair with a marquee 100ft x 40ft at a cost of £1400 plus vat. Members discussed whether to provide similarly in 2017.
- 5.5.2 The consensus view was that a smaller marquee would suffice.
- 5.5.3 Members resolved to provide a 70ft x 30ft marquee which, in 2015, cost £700 plus vat.
- 5.6 Health and Social Care support - members noted the new single point of contact phone number of 0345 60 80 191. The publicising document has been posted to the village notice board and will be posted to other notice boards and the web site.

6. RFO Report and Governance

- 6.1 Members received the third quarter financial report of income and expenditure to date plus a bank reconciliation at 31st December 2016. Major variances from budget are the marquee for the Flower Show, where the cost was not fully planned and some offsetting from sponsorship had been envisaged, and the landscaping around the war memorial which was also not planned when the budget was set.

6.2 Receipts and payments

6.2.1 Members received the schedule or receipts and payments since the previous council meeting.

6.2.2 On the Chair's motion the following payments were approved

- 6.2.2.1 Carol Lovett £195.00 - pavilion cleaning 5mths to Dec 16
- 6.2.2.2 Nigel Turner £25.00 – pavilion window cleaning December
- 6.2.2.3 Ashburnham PCC £300 – burial grounds maintenance (retrospective)
- 6.2.2.4 Penhurst PCC £300 - burial grounds maintenance (retrospective)
- 6.2.2.5 Nigel White £360 – sports field maintenance for 2016 (retrospective)
- 6.2.2.6 Nigel White £752.34 – renewal of hedge along lane boundary.
- 6.2.2.7 Sec 137 budgeted support grants
 - 6.2.2.7.1. Ashburnham Chapel £100
 - 6.2.2.7.2. Ashburnham PCC magazine support £300
 - 6.2.2.7.3. Rother District CAB £100

6.2.3 To approve the following payments to be invoiced before the March meeting of the council:

- 6.2.3.1 Town & Country Planning £2,425 + £485vat – planning consultation.
- 6.2.3.2 Tim Wakeling £45 – Dec to Feb quarterly maintenance fee
- 6.2.3.3 Tim Wakeling £45 per quarter May, Aug and Nov 17, Feb '18 – web site maintenance.

6.3 Pavilion hire charges

6.3.1 Members reviewed the charges, as they are periodically obliged to do, and decided to maintain them at the current level, viz. Basic Rate:- £50 per session (50% reduction for Ashburnham and Penhurst residents). Local Ashburnham and Penhurst Groups/Clubs £15 per session

6.4 Budget proposals for 2017/18

6.4.1 The RFO tabled a draft budget compiled in consultation with Cllr Proudfoot, the lead member for finance.

6.4.2 The RFO suggested that good practice required the budget to show a surplus of income over normal running expenses so that the surplus could be allocated to projects. Members noted that in order to achieve this there either needed to be an increase in the precept or there would be minimal project expenditure. Projects which could not be undertaken were enhancements to the parish web site (£340), no provision for pavilion building maintenance and no provision of a marquee for the Country Fair.

6.4.3 Members resolved to adopt a budget at the March meeting which would show a revenue surplus after the adoption of the aforementioned projects albeit with a reduced provision for pavilion building maintenance and the reduced size marquee.

6.5 Parish precept for 2017/18

6.5.1 The precept currently stands at £8,234.

6.5.2 On the motion of the chair seconded by Cllr Proudfoot members set the precept for 2017/18 at £9,049.

6.5.3 The additional cost of this increase to a band D household for 12 months will be £4.21 making the total precept £46.70 per annum.

7. Planning

7.1 Applications on previous agendas – members noted the outcomes or current status of the following -

7.1.1 RR/2016/1792/L - Ashburnham Place, TN33 9NF - To extend existing chimney flue that has been redundant since the 1960's. *(Listed BC granted)*

7.1.2 RR/2016/2571/P - Burnt Barns Farm, Freckley Hollow, Ashburnham, TN33 9LZ - Proposed games room over existing garages. *Approved conditional*

7.2 Applications on the agenda for the first time – members determined the council's response to the following applications -

7.2.1 RR/2016/3035/P and /3098/L - Agmerhurst House, Kitchenham Road, Ashburnham/Catsfield TN33 9NB - Two storey rear extension with alterations to the ground floor courtyard. *(Parish council has already supported; remains undecided)*

- 7.2.2 RR/2016/3092/P & /3093/L - Ashburnham Place, Ashburnham, TN33 9NF - Conversion of redundant traditional 'bothy' style sheds into four artisan workshops. Cllr Proudfoot repeated his declaration of interest but members asked him to provide background information. Members learned that ESCC have provided a grant of £40,000 to support this project which should benefit the local economy. *Parish Council resolved to support this application with enthusiasm.*
- 7.3 Breaches and Enforcement – members noted the following breaches or enforcements -
- 7.3.1 ENF/244/16/ASH (new) – Land at Ponds Green – siting and residential use of caravan. *The clerk was instructed to ascertain the exact location which is not clear.*
- 7.3.2 Telegraph point – The deadline for the termination of the existing residential use is 17 Jul 2018.
- 7.3.3 ENF/14/15/ASH - Little Acre (Clear View Farm), Brays Hill, Ashburnham - New building and tarmac drive - *Enforcement effective 18/8/16 with 2mths to comply with requirement to remove unapproved drive and reinstate to agricultural use.*
- 7.4 Appeals – members noted the following undetermined appeal against the enforcement notice above, ENF/14/15/ASH -
- 7.4.1 APP/U1430/C/16/3156685 –(RDC portal ref 2408) - Little Acre (Clear View Farm), Brays Hill, Ashburnham - Appeal against Enforcement Notice RR/2016/2630/ENF requiring land to be reinstated to former use. *Status: current.*

8. Highways matters

- 8.1 Finger posts
- 8.1.1 Cllr Hann reported that all finger posts have been adopted by a ‘carer’ but reported some concern with the posts on two signs. He plans to discuss with the current contractor (JAKK Designs) and will report back.
- 8.1.2 Members considered future funding of repairs and reached a consensus that a provision of £500 per year be set aside in the reserves for finger post maintenance. The RFO will note this in the budget statement.
- 8.2 Drainage – the clerk reported that although there is an interactive map online showing all gully pots, there is nothing relating to ditches. He has asked ESCC Highways for the status of an asset register.
- 8.3 Potholes - Cllr Hann continues to monitor the situation in consultation with the new Highways Steward for Area 3, Isla Darcey.

9. Premises

- 9.1 New Village Hall
- 9.1.1 The Chair reported that consultations with RDC and carried out by Mike Pickup of Town & Country Planning have concluded and a formal revision to the original application is to be tabled. This will trigger a 28 day consultation period after which a decision can be expected.
- 9.1.2 The clerk reported that Mike Pickup has volunteered to cap his consultancy fee at the higher end of his estimate which was for his time involvement of 20 hours, In fact he has worked 38 to date. Members unanimously expressed a vote of heartfelt thanks to Mr Pickup for his generous gesture.
- 9.2 Village Hall
- 9.2.1 Cllr White reported that the vandalism episode had been drawn to a satisfactory conclusion with parents of the suspected offenders taking responsibility and with one of them repairing the damage to the plumbing.
- 9.2.2 No Ball Games notices have been posted in the car park together with liability disclaimers.
- 9.3 Pavilion
- 9.3.1 Cllr King has carried out an external inspection and recommended that leaf guards be fitted to the gutters. He also suggested that exterior woodwork be treated this summer as the

windows are definitely in need of it. The treatment to the exterior cladding may need renewing and the Clerk will take advice.

- 9.3.2 Members considered future funding of general building maintenance and reached a consensus that a provision of £800 per year be set aside in the reserves for pavilion maintenance. The RFO will note this in the budget statement.

10. Correspondence received

- 10.1 Jay Ashworth has written to the parish council deploring the laying of a wreath by UKIP at the annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony. Members whole heartedly agreed that it was quite inappropriate to lay a wreath with a clear logo of any organisation, especially a political one. The clerk was instructed to make it known that only wreaths from village based organisations which are apolitical are acceptable.
- 10.2 Gilly Pawson (Brays Hill) has written to the parish council, more in sorrow than in anger, chiding it for lack of vigour in upholding planning law and opposing breaches and cited a long history reaching back some decades. Members conceded that she had a point and the clerk was instructed to write a letter to RDC expressing the parish council's view that RDC should vigorously and promptly pursue and enforce enforcement notices, as to do otherwise undermines planning rules and the entire planning process
- 10.3 Penhurst Parochial Church Council have requested that the annual grant of £300 towards the cost of maintenance of the burial grounds be reviewed as it has remained the same for many years. Members considered the position but could not, of course, countenance an uplift for just one PCC and would need to be even handed. No similar request has been received from Ashburnham PCC and, given these times of austerity, members concluded that the annual support grant is at an appropriate level.

11. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

None

12. Dates of Next Meetings

- 12.1 Members noted that ordinary council meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of alternate months at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion and that the dates of meetings for the remainder of the council year are as follows:
8th March 2017
Annual Assembly 27th April 2017
10th May 2017 (Annual Council Meeting)
- 12.2 Members noted that planning committee meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of alternate months at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion. If there are no planning matters to consider the meeting will not be called, but the next meeting according to the schedule would be 8th February 2017.

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Signed (Chair)

Date