
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council
held on Wednesday 8th November 2017 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Nicky Bishop (Chair), Tina French, Richard Hann, Andrew Hoad, Ron King, and Richard White.

Parish Councillors absent: Cllr Carol Andrews

District / County Councillors present: RDC Cllr Gary Curtis, ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field

In attendance: Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council
2 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence have been received from Cllr Carol Andrews to whom members send their good wishes for a speedy recovery.

2. Disclosures of interest

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

3. Additional agenda items

- 3.1 7.1.6 To remove Andy Proudfoot from bank mandate
3.2 7.1.7 To add Cllr Tina French to signatory mandate
3.3 7.2.2.7 To add to the list of authorised payments: External audit fee
3.4 8.2.2 To consider a new planning application in Brownbread Street – The White Cottage.

4. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 13th September 2017 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chair the minutes were adopted without amendment.

5. Open Forum

5.1 ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field reported as follows:

- 5.1.1 The effect of the new schools funding formula on Dallington School is still not known.
5.1.2 Rural Broadband Contract 3 is due to be let by the end of this month.
5.1.3 The new proposals by the Boundary Commission, under which Etchingham and Ticehurst will move to a different parliamentary constituency, are attracting much opposition from elsewhere. Locally we are unaffected and these proposals are better than the previous ones.

5.2 RDC Cllr Gary Curtis reported as follows:

- 5.2.1 Civil Parking Enforcement consultations continue and the working group will report to Scrutiny and Overview Committee in January or February. However, early indications are that some on street parking will become chargeable, that such charges will be graduated in small increments and be standard through the district. 8 wardens would be employed of whom 6 would be patrolling at any one time. Revenue surpluses would materialise in the fourth year and could only be spent on capital projects but not on revenue. There was spirited debate among members on receiving this information.
5.2.2 The mooted business rate relief reduction (actually a smaller rate of increase) is viewed with mixed emotions as it would lead to lower revenue.

5.3 From members of the public present the following representations were made

- 5.3.1 Olivers Hill continues to cause alarm among local residents on several counts. Since the property on the corner of Lakehurst Lane was divided into Olivers Hill and Naulakha attention has moved to Naulakha which is supposedly a holiday let. The current (retrospective) planning application (agenda item 8.2.1 below) was invited by RDC as the

first step in regularising a notified breach. The parish council is asked to monitor the use as a holiday let to make sure that the conditions attaching to such use are met.

- 5.3.2 The business activity formerly associated with Olivers Hill continues at Buckwell Ghyll and a caravan is in use on site although for what purpose is not known.

6. Community Matters

- 6.1 Local Action Plan – members continue with activities although little has been publicised.
- 6.2 Rural Broadband
- 6.2.1 Cllr Andrew Hoad tabled a comprehensive report (attached to these minutes).
- 6.2.2 In addition to his report Cllr Hoad informed members that up to 7 technical solutions as alternatives to fibre are possible and currently on trial in the west country. A report is due and he has written to BDUK asking for an update.
- 6.2.3 The Chair and members thanked Cllr Hoad and the Chair proposed a new page on the village web site for broadband with Cllr Hoad as the author.
- 6.3 Parish Website – minor enhancements and removal of glitches continue thanks to Tim Wakeling’s maintenance.
- 6.4 Police liaison – Inspector Dan Russell, the recently appointed police commander, has expressed a wish to visit all parishes. Members instructed the clerk to invite him to the Annual Assembly.
- 6.5 BT payphone box
- 6.5.1 Cllr Tina French reported that she has received 19 proposals for the future use of the phone box. Its use as a rural museum of local history attracted the unanimous support of members.
- 6.5.2 The Chairman advised that she has been made aware that our phone box features as a clue on Geocaching
- 6.6 ESCC libraries consultation – members noted with regret that the closure of the mobile library is inevitable due to falling patronage, an ageing vehicle and scarce resources.
- 6.7 Refuse collection – interruption to recycling collection at TN33 9PB and 9QN was reported. Although the service restarted after one miss, the supposed collection within a couple of working days of the miss did not happen.
- 6.8 Drones
- 6.8.1 An isolated household in Penhurst (see 11.4 below) are concerned about repeated overflying of their property by two different drones and see it as an invasion of their privacy and a threat to their security.
- 6.8.2 It seems that such over flying is in blatant contravention of the law relating to drones part of which states that a drone must be within sight of the pilot at all times.
- 6.8.3 Members shared the concern and speculated if there is a link to a recent spike in rural crime. Cllr Hoad observed that although the pilot may not have visual contact with the drone there is an operational reason for it to be in line of sight in order to maintain the control signal. Therefore, the number of places where the ground is high enough to enable over flying would seem to be limited and it may be possible to observe pilots and apprehend them.
- 6.8.4 The clerk advised that he understands that Inspector Dan Russell is taking an interest and he will mention it to him when he sends the council’s invitation (see 6.4 above).

7. RFO Report and Governance

- 7.1 RFO report
- 7.1.1 Members were reminded that the clerk’s salary is subject to the national agreement with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC). The NJC has reached agreement on the following:
new pay scales for 2016-2017 to be implemented immediately and backdated to 1 April 2016, and new pay scales for 2017-2018 to be implemented from 1 April 2017.
- 7.1.2 On the motion of the chair seconded by Cllr French members resolved to adopt the new pay scales in accordance with the clerk contract of employment which defines the salary as point 18 within the 18-19 range in scale LC1 as set out in the National Agreement.

- 7.1.3 Bank reconciliation – members received the bank reconciliation which has been verified by Cllr Tina French.
- 7.1.4 Members received a report of spend against Budget to 30 October 2017. There are no new significant variances since those reported at the last meeting.
- 7.1.5 Budget for 2018/19
- 7.1.5.1 The first draft of the 2018/19 budget, which the RFO has prepared with the assistance of Cllr Richard White, was tabled.
- 7.1.5.2 The RFO made a short presentation on the strategy of creating a set of three ‘earmarked’ reserves for non routine expenditure. These reserves would be earmarked for finger post maintenance, pavilion and grounds maintenance and community support.
- 7.1.5.3 The draft budget proposes a precept of £12,000 but, even after such a large increase, the total of all reserves at the end of the budget period would amount to less than half of the annual precept. That is a level above which the external auditors expect an explanation but below which creates potential cash flow problems as the precept is paid by RDC to the parish council in two half yearly instalments.
- 7.1.5.4 Members discussed the draft budget at length and will revisit it next month when the budget must be adopted and the precept set.
- 7.1.5.5 Cllr Hoad suggested that the way the total cash in hand is allocated to the ‘earmarked’ reserves could adopt the approach that the general reserve need not be as high as half the precept as the unexpected expenses would be covered from within the earmarked reserves. The RFO will incorporate this approach in the next iteration of the budget.
- 7.1.6 Members approved the removal of former Cllr Andrew Proudfoot from the bank mandate and resolved to appoint Cllr Tina French to replace him as one of the three bank signatories.
- 7.2 Receipts and payments
- 7.2.1 Members received the schedule of receipts and payments for the months of September and October.
- 7.2.2 On the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr French, members approved the following payments *en bloc*:
- 7.2.2.1 Meridian Marquees – Country Fair marquee - £700 plus vat (*retrospective budget item*)
- 7.2.2.2 Clerk expenses to end September - £28.46 (*approved by the Chair in accordance with Standing Orders*).
- 7.2.2.3 Clerk back pay in accordance with 6.1.2 above - £66.42
- 7.2.2.4 Tim Wakeling, quarterly web maintenance June – Aug - £45 (*retrospective; in budget*)
- 7.2.2.5 Tim Wakeling, quarterly web maintenance Sep – Nov - £45 (*retrospective; in budget*)
- 7.2.2.6 Support grants as budgeted:
- 7.2.2.6.1 Rother CAB - £100
- 7.2.2.6.2 Battle Area Community Transport - £100
- 7.2.2.6.3 Parish Magazine - £300
- 7.2.2.6.4 Chapel - £100
- 7.2.2.6.5 Burial grounds – Penhurst PCC - £300
- 7.2.2.6.6 Burial grounds – Ashburnham PCC _ £300
- 7.2.2.7 External audit fee – PKF Littlejohn - £120
- 7.3 Governance
- 7.3.1 Standing Orders – On the motion of the chair members resolved to adopt the revision previewed at the previous meeting to allow additional agenda items subject to the published provisions.
- 7.3.2 Data Protection – the clerk advised members that he has completed an online ICO Self Assessment which indicates that the parish council has no need to be registered with the ICO even once the new General Data Protection Regulations come into force in May 2018.

7.3.3 Boundary commission – members noted that proposals are that Etchingham and Ticehurst will leave our parliamentary constituency (see 5.1.3 above).

7.4 Mapping licensing – A Public Sector Mapping Agreement (PSMA) has been registered with Ordnance Survey. This has enabled the new RALC group license for Parish Online to be activated.

8. Planning

8.1 Applications on previous agendas - members noted the current status *in italics*:

8.1.1 RR/2017/1678/L - Manor House, Tower House Road, Penhurst TN33 9QP - Proposed revisions to internal layout of attic, first floor and ground floor. *Listed Building Consent granted*.

8.1.2 RR/2017/1522/P - Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham TN33 9PB - Temporary agricultural workers' dwelling. *Undecided status regained after earlier refusal 'improperly made'*.

8.1.2.1 RDC Cllr Curtis asked for this application to be called in at the request of the parish council. RDC planners overlooked his request and refused the application. After being alerted to the mistake, RDC judged that the refusal decision was 'improperly made' and reverted to the status of 'undecided'.

8.1.2.2 Having agreed to call it in, RDC tabled the decision making as part of the November round of visits and planning committee meetings.

8.1.2.3 The applicant feels aggrieved claiming that she has effectively been denied an additional two weeks of preparation time and requested that the parish council support her application for deferral to the December round of planning committee decisions.

8.1.2.4 The Chair has visited the site accompanied by Cllrs French and Hoad and the clerk.

8.1.2.5 Members instructed the clerk to contact the head of planning supporting the request for a deferral but to make no change to the previously stated position that there is unequivocal support for a dwelling for the next generation of the farm but that an alternative position, less detrimental to the AONB landscape, needs to be found.

8.2 Applications on the agenda for the first time – the council determined its response as follows:

8.2.1 RR/2017/1879/P - Naulakha, Lakehurst Lane, Ashburnham, TN33 9PE – Erection of holiday let and use of caravan as holiday let (Retrospective) *Undecided*

8.2.1.1 Members noted that RDC invited the application as the first response to a registered breach of planning regulations.

8.2.1.2 Members resolved that the council's response to consultation should be to take no position on the establishment of a holiday let but to oppose the expansion of the facility by the addition of a caravan.

8.2.2 RR/2017/2343/P – The White Cottage, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham, TN33 9NX – Two storey extension and alterations.

8.2.2.1 Members strongly oppose this application as it creates a complete change of character of a country cottage and it represents a radical redevelopment which will be a dominant feature of the streetscape.

8.3 Breaches and Enforcement – to note updates and progress

8.3.1 Burnt Barns Farm, Freckley Hollow - ENF/11/17/ASH – breach of condition 3 of RR/2013/829/P “the boat house . . . shall be used only for purposes incidental to the occupation and enjoyment of the occupants of Burnt Barns Farm . . . and not for any trade or business.” *No further updates*

8.4 Appeals – to note updates and progress

8.4.1 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: Appeal dismissed; enforcement upheld; 19 June '17;*

Prosecution process commenced 14 Aug '17; Prosecution successful and track reinstated October '17 – No Further Action

9. Highways matters

- 9.1 Members noted that East Sussex Highways offer periodic meetings with members of their leadership team under the umbrella of Strengthening Local Relationships. After brief discussion members decided to take no further action.
- 9.2 Finger posts
 - 9.2.1 The only post in need of some remedial work is the damaged one at Ponds Green at the junction with Brownbread Street. Cllr Hann obtained an estimate for the work (around £800) and the net cost after a 50% subsidy from Highways will be incorporated into the 2018/19 budget
 - 9.2.2 All other fingerposts have been 'adopted' and are being routinely maintained. Adopters have commented that the quality of paint used seems very poor with a short life.
- 9.3 Potholes – Cllr Hann reported no new issues.
- 9.4 Bridleways
 - 9.4.1 Honey Lane runs from Slivericks towards and over into Warbleton parish. A number of electors have reported that it is overgrown.
 - 9.4.2 The clerk will take up the matter with the county Rights of Way team.
- 9.5 Private roads – the Chair raised the issue of the poor condition of the back track from The Pound into Ashburnham Place and commented that the bell ringers are forced to use it twice weekly for practice sessions as the main gates on the A271 are closed in the evening. Members felt that it was inappropriate to comment on a private road and that, although the main gates are closed, there is an intercom to Ashburnham Place and the gate is opened by them to admit bona fide visitors. This came as news to most members and there will be no further action save for informing the bell ringers.

10. Premises

- 10.1 New village hall – Cllr Richard White reported that:
 - 10.1.1 The design group has produced a list of modifications to the approved plans. They are now taking informal advice as to whether they are likely to be approved by RDC as minor amendments.
 - 10.1.2 The development of full working drawings suitable for Building Regulations and for tendering continues to progress but there is currently no funding in place to commission that work.
 - 10.1.3 A programme of fund raising events as far as the middle of next year is in embryo. It starts with the village bonfire at the end of this week, a jumble sale next January, a quiz night in February, a cycle ride in early summer and the Country Fair on 28th July 2018.
 - 10.1.4 Gillian Van Der Meer has indicated that she will resurrect the Ride and Walk which used to be such a good fund raiser but was understandably discontinued after the organisers had been doing it for some 25 years. Unfortunately, in the intervening years many other villages now have their own ride and walk.
- 10.2 Pavilion
 - 10.2.1 A review of the planned maintenance and other developments to be included in the budget for 2018/19 will be considered at the next meeting once more detailed costings have been obtained.
 - 10.2.2 The clerk reported that dog fouling has become more of a nuisance than usual with faeces being found right outside the changing room door. Members approved a step by step approach with firstly more notices to dog walkers, the closure of the open entrance at New Buildings Farm and the possible provision in next year's budget of a bag dispenser. Members noted that it is an offence throughout Rother District to allow a dog to foul public spaces.

- 10.2.3 Members reaffirmed their continued support for the Coffee Stop by waiving the hire charge for the pavilion.
- 10.2.4 Cllr King expressed concern at the erosion of the verge in front of the war memorial. It is the practice of some dog walkers to park there and then enter the field by the pedestrian gate to exercise their dog.
The clerk will explore options with highways and liaise with the new hall design group to see what off road parking may materialise once the main entrance gateway is modified.

10.3 Village Hall - Cllr Richard White reported that:

- 10.3.1 The garden area in front of the hall is now under the active management of Danny Whyman who has transformed it.
- 10.3.2 The neighbours in School House have joined in the spirit by improving their garden as well.
- 10.3.3 Insurers have requested the quinquennial inspection of the electrical installation as a result of which some modest remedial work is needed. ATT have indicated that in principle the work qualifies for their 75% subsidy support.

11. Correspondence received

11.1 Mrs Judy Petty and Mrs Jenny Yeo

- 11.1.1 Both have expressed concern at the almost industrial scale of organised pheasant shoots in the area. They feel that they are often too close to public footpaths and bridleways and that the attitude of organisers on the ground is sometimes aggressive amounting to hindrance.
- 11.1.2 Members with first hand knowledge of the issue advised that there is fierce competition between the shoots and they are hostile to suggestions that their shoots programme be given wide publicity such as online in case it attracts protestors.
- 11.1.3 At least one shoot will provide a copy of their programme on request and it may be that others would do the same.
- 11.1.4 Members did not resolve on any direct action but the clerk will endeavour to compile a list of the shoots as a start. Mrs Yeo is also seeking guidance from the British Horse Society about good practice around shoots.

11.2 Battle Area Community Transport have requested funding for 2018/19. This is a regular budget item and included in the draft budget.

11.3 Rother Rural Trust have requested a contribution to their funds (members received a presentation from the secretary in January 2017). Members will consider this as part of the next budget.

11.4 Mr Andrew Edgar wrote to express alarm at the increasing activity of unmanned drones (see 6.8 above).

12. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

None

13. Dates of Next Meetings

13.1 Council meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of alternate months at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion and the dates of the meetings for the remainder of the council year are 10th January, 14th March, Annual Assembly Thursday 26th April, 9th May (Annual Meeting)

13.2 Planning committee meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of alternate months at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion and the dates of the meetings for the remainder of the council year are 13th December, 14th February, 11th April

If there are no planning matters to consider the meeting will not be called.

.....

Signed (Chair)

Date