

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council
held on Wednesday 10th January 2018 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Nicky Bishop (Chair), Tina French and Andrew Hoad

Parish Councillors absent: Cllrs Carol Andrews, Richard Hann, Ron King, and Richard White

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

In attendance: Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council
No members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence have been received from Cllrs Carol Andrews, Richard Hann, Ron King, and Richard White

2. Disclosures of interest

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

3. Additional agenda items

In accordance with Standing Order 10.1.2 the Chair decided that the following urgent items be added to the agenda.

- 3.1 Litter (at 6.5)
3.2 Resignation of Cllr Hann (at 7.2.2)
3.3 Awards for All bid (at 10.1.3)
3.4 Constitution of Bids working group (at 10.1.4)

4. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 8th November 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 –
5.2 The county budget consultations continue but it is clear that in spite of yet further savings there will again be a deficit. Nearly half the budget is now spent on adult social care.
5.3 RDC Cllr Gary Curtis reported as follows –
5.3.1 UK Power Networks have given advance notice of road closures in March in Tower House Road, Penhurst.
5.3.2 The recent planning decision regarding White Cottage, Brownbread Street disconcerted some local residents as well as the parish council who opposed the granting of planning permission. Cllr Curtis reiterated that the parish council must make it clear to him in good time that they would like the decision called in to be decided by the RDC planning committee if the officer's report recommends granting under delegated powers.

6. Community Matters

- 6.1 Local Action Plan – nothing to report
6.2 Rural Broadband - Cllr Hoad tabled a written report of which the following are extracts –
6.2.1 On 23rd November last a meeting was held at which those present were Cllr Bishop and himself plus ESCC Cllr John Barnes and Brightling Cllr Andrew Wedmore (Chairman of Brightling plus the clerk. One outcome was that a further meeting has been arranged with the CEO of ESCC, Becky Shaw. He will attend as a representative of RALC as will

- Andrew Wedmore. The date, subject to confirmation, is 9th February 2018. The meeting will aim to set up a broadband liaison group with BT, ESCC and RALC as members so that communications can be improved.
- 6.2.2 Details of the awarding of Contract 3 have not appeared in spite of the information in the response to Andrew Wedmore's FOI request which indicated that the contract would be let in November. A further FOI request from Andrew Wedmore is anticipated.
- 6.2.3 Cllr Hoad has requested from BDUK more information about the trials of seven alternative technologies taking place in rural areas. He has received no response to date.
- 6.2.4 Other news is that due to the tenacious and unremitting pressure orchestrated by Dr Ashley Flett in Dallington, Dallington School is this week enjoying in excess of 300Mbps high speed broadband at least six months earlier than BT had planned.
- 6.3 Parish Website. The clerk reported that pavilion booking for the next 6 months may now be viewed on the website by selecting 'Venues' on the main menu.
- 6.4 Community Services
- 6.4.1 BT payphone box. Cllr French reported that further publicity of options for the future use of the phone box will be given in the parish magazine.
- 6.4.2 Bus services. Cllr French advised that following a review the Tuesday bus service to Battle will continue.
- 6.5 Litter. Cllr Hoad, having previously circulated photographs of his daily litter collection, raised concerns about the systematic discarding of litter in Penhurst. It would appear that daily commuters are discarding the same brand of beer cans every day and, given the low volume of traffic, we are probably dealing with one or two individuals and that it is concerning given that they are regularly drinking and driving around our Parish. He suggested that perhaps the Police could assist with some sort of an awareness campaign that may provoke a cultural change in behaviour from the offending people. Members concurred saying that although permanent street furniture with warning signs was undesirable, perhaps some temporary signage would be worth trying depending on what the Police suggest.
- It was suggested that police inspector Dan Russell might offer a view on this. Meanwhile, ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field suggested that the clerk contact RDC as Kier, who have the contract for refuse collection, also have a contractual duty regarding litter.

7. RFO Report and Governance

- 7.1 RFO report
- 7.1.1 Members received the schedule of receipts and payments for the months of November and December circulated with the agenda .
- 7.1.2 Members received the bank reconciliation as at 31st December 2017, circulated with the agenda. Cllr Tina French reported that she had checked the bank statement online and confirmed the balances.
- 7.1.3 There are no invoices awaiting approval for payment.
- 7.1.4 The budget, attached to these minutes. is broadly the same as that tabled at the previous meeting. On the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr Andrew Hoad members resolved to adopt the budget.
- 7.1.5 Following the adoption of the budget and on the motion of Cllr Andrew Hoad seconded by Cllr Tina French, members resolved to set the parish precept at £12,000 for 2018/19.
- 7.2 Governance
- 7.2.1 General Data Protection Regulations (effective May 2018)
- 7.2.1.1 Members reviewed the need to register with the Information Commissioner's Office. After discussion about the regulations and the outcome of a self assessment questionnaire on the ICO website, members concluded that the parish council is not legally obliged to register.
- However, at the suggestion of Cllr Hoad the clerk will draw up a policy document covering data management which will define what the parish council may and may not do if it is to remain unregistered.

- 7.2.2 Cllr Richard Hann resigned from the parish council on 4th January 2018. He did so with reluctance but the need to care for elderly relatives living far from here has become paramount. Members expressed their distress at his resignation and wished to record their heartfelt thanks for his great service since being elected in the May 2011.

The resignation of Cllr Hann also means that the council is without a vice chair until the annual meeting of the parish council on 9th May 2017.

The clerk will now proceed with the procedure to co-opt a person to fill the vacancy until the next elections in 2019.

8. Planning

- 8.1 Applications on previous agendas – members noted *the current status (in italics)* and commented where appropriate.

- 8.1.1 RR/ RR/2017/1522/P - Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham TN33 9PB - Temporary agricultural workers' dwelling. *Undecided status regained after earlier refusal 'improperly made'. Application refused 14 Dec '17.*

From subsequent conversations with the landowners it has been learned that there will be no appeal. However, the need for accommodation continues and the landowner has formally advised RDC that he has served notice on the occupant of a detached dwelling on the farm that his license to reside there is revoked with effect from 30 June 2018. There may be a further planning application at that time. For this reason there will be no further action at least until June 2018 regarding the alleged breach of an earlier planning approval regarding the use of an approved enlarged hard standing and vehicle turning area.

- 8.1.2 RR/2017/1879/P - Naulakha, Lakehurst Lane, Ashburnham, TN33 9PE – Erection of holiday let and use of caravan as holiday let (Retrospective) *Approved conversion to single unit rather than double and approved addition of caravan 11 Dec '17.. Usual holiday let conditions apply.*

Members expressed the view that the holiday let conditions regarding maximum length of stay of 56 days should be closely monitored.

- 8.1.3 RR/2017/2343/P – The White Cottage, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham, TN33 9NX – Two storey extension and alterations. *Strongly opposed by Parish Council. Approved 18 Dec '17.*

- 8.1.4 RR/2017/2444/P The White Cottage, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham, TN33 9NX – Construction of detached garage and hard standing on land opposite. *Strongly opposed by Parish Council. Refused 14 Dec '17.*

- 8.2 Applications on the agenda for the first time

There were no new applications

- 8.3 Breaches and Enforcement – members noted 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*

9. Highways matters

- 9.1 Finger posts

- 9.1.1 The clerk will contact Cllr Hann to obtain the list of adopters of the finger posts in the parish.

- 9.2 Rights of Way

- 9.2.1 The clerk received one verbal complaint from a horse rider about Honey Lane (Slivericks to Redpale). He contacted the Rights of Way officer at ESCC who advised that there is a management plan in place which prohibits wheeled vehicles using the byway in winter. This does not directly answer the question about the overhanging branches complained of but no further action was felt necessary at this time.

- 9.2.2 Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR). Members felt that the benefit of the SLR scheme is worth exploring further and instructed the clerk to set up an inaugural meeting.

10. Premises

10.1 New village hall

10.1.1 Communications with HMRC.

- 10.1.1.1 The clerk reported that there has been no response to the VAT Written Enquiries Branch concerning the proposed scheme of governance and its effect on meeting the criteria for vat zero rating of construction which is 'for a charitable purpose'.
- 10.1.1.2 In subsequent discussions with fellow Rother clerks, confirmed by a phone conversation with VAT enquiries, a written reply will not be forthcoming as the answers to the questions can readily be determined from VAT notice 708.
- 10.1.1.3 The clerk confirmed that he is now clear about the way forward and suggested that no further action is required in the matter of communication.

10.1.2 Legal advice.

- 10.1.2.1 The clerk recommended that the council appoint Wellers Hedleys to give it legal advice in negotiations with the Ashburnham Estate regarding the leases of the playing field and pavilion.
- 10.1.2.2 The clerk has sent them a copy of the leases and received a quotation for preparing a Notice of Variation of £650 plus vat.
- 10.1.2.3 Wellers Hedleys had a number of observations about the leases which are best followed up in a phone call which the clerk will initiate shortly.
- 10.1.2.4 Wellers Hedleys also questioned the council's drivers in wanting to form a charity to operate the new hall and outlined some of the pros and cons. In view of the important issues raised members asked the clerk to prepare a position paper to inform a decision on this point at the next meeting in March. The point needs to be decided before discussions can begin with the Ashburnham Estate regarding the leases.
- 10.1.2.5 Pump House Designs have been engaged to prepare specifications upon which contractors may tender and building regulations approval applied for.
- 10.1.2.6 The council has been advised by the committee of the Village Hall Appeal Fund that they will be making a further donation towards the pre construction costs of the new hall.

10.1.3 Awards for All bid.

- 10.1.3.1 This bid for funds has been prepared by Sherlyn Barrow and is for a little under the maximum of £10,000. It is to cover the costs of the changes to the site entrance which are a condition of planning approval.
- 10.1.3.2 Some proof reading has taken place and suggested amendments prepared by Jay Ashworth and Clive O'Sullivan. Members present requested that the clerk send them each copies of the bid document and the suggested changes so that they might comment. In particular, members want to ensure that the focus of the bid is for these enabling works and that any reference to the main project, which might disqualify the bid, are removed.

10.1.4 Constitution of Bids working group of New Hall Steering Group

- 10.1.4.1 Cllr Hann led this group so a new lead will need to be appointed. Members resolved to review membership of all the groups at the next council meeting in March.

10.2 Pavilion

- 10.2.1 The clerk reported that he has received estimates of the cost of recoating the exterior windows and doors and of painting the interior of the big room. These are well within the provision made in the 2018/19 budget for planned maintenance.

10.3 Village Hall

- 10.3.1 The clerk reported that the remedial work to the fixed electrical installation, required by the insurers following the quinquennial inspection they also require, has been completed and the insurers informed. He awaits the formal certificate to send to the insurers.
- 10.3.2 The cost of materials to redecorate the main hall has been ascertained as £400 but no further action has been planned.

11. Correspondence received

- 11.1 CPRE have made a written appeal for donations from this area of Rother which aims to raise funds to combat development applications which are outside of the development plan but which Rother have difficulty opposing in view of the deficit on their committed house building agreements with central government. On the motion of the Chair members resolved to make a donation of £50.
- 11.2 Thanks for support grants received from -
 - 11.2.1 Penhurst PCC (burial grounds £300)
 - 11.2.2 The Chapel £100
 - 11.2.3 Ashburnham PCC (burial grounds £300 and magazine support £300)

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
 - 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
 - 14th February
 - 11th April
- If there are no planning matters to consider the meeting will not be called.

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Signed (Chair)

Date