

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council  
held on Wednesday 14th March 2018 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

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

**Parish Councillors absent:** Cllrs Carol Andrews and Richard White

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

**In attendance:** Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council  
1 member of the public

**1. Apologies for absence**

1.1 Apologies for absence have been received from Cllrs Carol Andrews and Richard White.

**2. Disclosures of interest**

2.1 Cllr Andrew Hoad declared his pecuniary interest in planning item 9.2.2 where he is the applicant.

**3. Additional agenda items**

The Chair decided that the following are urgent and due notice of them has been given to the clerk by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

3.1 Add 9.2.2 planning application for Hill Farm, Penhurst.

3.2 Add 10.2.2 road naming questions.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 10th January 2018 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 Council Tax this year will rise by 6% which includes 1.9% for adult social care. However, the county council still need to find further savings of £17m this year which means that many front line services will be affected. Part of the large increase is due to the Fire Authority funding the installation of sprinkler systems in all high rise residential buildings.

5.1.2 The publicised library closures are proceeding but users of the new book borrowing app have reported that it is difficult to navigate.

5.2 RDC Cllr Gary Curtis reported as follows:

5.2.1 The Community Grant Scheme exists to support parish initiatives such as the construction of a new village hall and Cllr Curtis circulated copies of the Guidance Details and an application form. Applications are considered twice yearly.

5.2.2 Cllr Field suggested that it might be worth contacting the clerk at Cooksbridge as they have recently benefited from the scheme.

5.2.3 The Chair noted that page 6 states that 'Schemes involving costs of over £300,000 are not eligible . . .but may be considered separately' and that 'you need to contact the relevant Service Manager at the Council . . .' She asked Cllr Curtis to find out who the relevant service manager is.

5.3 Members of the public present made no representations.

**6. Community Matters**

- 6.1 Local Action Plan – no updates received but Cllr Hoad will review the text regarding broadband.
- 6.1.1 Community – a local resident has written to the council lamenting the lack of provision for 8-16 year olds. Members discussed this at some length and recalled that past provision of play areas had ended because of the cost of maintaining fixed facilities. Members took the view that the council could only provide a venue for activities but that it was up to volunteers in the community to organise them. Members also noted that some village organisations have active members in this age group, specifically table tennis and PANTS. The clerk was instructed to write a response to the resident conveying their sentiments.
- 6.2 Rural Broadband
- 6.2.1 Cllr Andrew Hoad tabled a written report on a meeting he attended at County Hall on 6th February. The meeting was at the request of him and Andrew Wedmore, chairman of Brightling Parish Council, both of them representing RALC and was led by Becky Shaw, Chief Executive of ESCC. Others present included elected members with responsibility for the economy and for broadband plus officers with responsibilities for broadband roll out.
- 6.2.2 Cllr Hoad reported that there was detailed discussion of Contract 3 on which many hopes are pinned for innovative solutions to reaching ‘hard to reach’ areas. However, detailed survey work will precede any physical work on Contract 3 and that is likely to take all of 2018. Details of the progress of Contract 3 were promised by the end of February but these have not materialised.
- 6.2.3 Cllr Hoad expressed the intention of writing a chaser note to Katy Thomas, Leader for Broadband and Cllr Field, who was also present at the meeting, requested that Cllr Hoad copy her to any email correspondence.
- 6.3 Parish Website
- 6.3.1 A number of new authors have been given editing rights.
- 6.4 Community Services
- 6.4.1 Cllr Andrew Hoad reported on his progress with tackling litter thrown from moving vehicles in Penhurst. He collected 40 beer cans, all of one of two different brands after which a highways compliance officer inspected the area and, inevitably, reported no litter problem. 30 days later Cllr Hoad did another collection and collected the same amount.

Cllr Hoad has exchanged correspondence with the police as well as highways for advice but it seems that unless someone is caught in the act little can be done except an education campaign. Therefore, he intends to contribute an article to the parish magazine highlighting Penhurst as a major problem area. The Chair asked him to include the area in Brownbread Street opposite The Ash Tree Inn.

## 7. RFO Report and Governance

- 7.1 RFO report
- 7.1.1 Members received the schedule of receipts and payments for the months of January and February 2018.
- 7.1.2 Members received the bank reconciliation to the end of February 2018.
- 7.1.3 On the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr Hoad members approved the following payments:
- 7.1.3.1 Nigel White – half yearly grounds maintenance - £400 (retrospective)
- 7.1.3.2 Carol Lovett – pavilion cleaning Aug – Dec 2017 - £255
- 7.1.3.3 Ashburnham PCC – 12mths pavilion advert in parish magazine - £25 (retrospective)
- 7.1.3.4 Pump House Designs – interim fee for preparation of new hall drawing for building regulations approval - £1200 plus £240 vat (retrospective)
- 7.1.3.5 Nigel Turner - window cleaning pavilion 6th Feb - £26 (retrospective)
- 7.1.3.6 Viking Direct – paper towels, pavilion - £24.39 plus £4.88 vat (card purchase)
- 7.1.3.7 Viking Direct – Filter bags - £14.85 plus £2.97 vat (card purchase)
- 7.1.3.8 Tim Wakeling – Quarterly web site maintenance and hosting - £45

7.1.3.9 Brian Holdstock – Clerk expenses - £21.91

7.2 Governance

7.2.1 Members reviewed the arrangements for the Annual Assembly on 26th April 2018. The clerk will produce statistics on planning applications received in the past 12 months. The new village hall will have a display and a presentation of the time plan will be made.

7.2.2 Parish councillor vacancy -

7.2.2.1 There being no call for an election the Parish Council may now co-opt to fill the casual vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Richard Hann.

7.2.2.2 On the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr Tina French members resolve to co-opt Dr Neil McConkey.

7.2.2.3 GDPR compliance – members noted that a privacy statement is to be posted to the parish website in compliance with the new (May 2018) General Data Protection Regulations.

**8. Premises**

8.1 New village hall (in the absence of Cllr Richard White to report as Chairman of the New Hall Steering Group, the clerk reported)

8.1.1 Operations

8.1.1.1 Members received a position report from the clerk regarding the relative merits of forming a new charity to lease and operate the new hall. Members expressed thanks to the clerk for the comprehensiveness of the report which might prove a useful document in the distant future when the decision to form a charity might be questioned.

8.1.1.2 Having considered the position report and on the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr Andrew Hoad, members resolved to register a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation named the Ashburnham & Penhurst Community Centre to be the lessee and operator of the new hall plus the existing pavilion and sports ground and to seek the necessary variations to the council's lease from the Ashburnham Estate.

8.1.1.3 On the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr Tina French members resolved to resource the registration process by paying for one day's consultancy with AiRS at a cost of £385 plus £77 vat.

8.1.2 Timetable

8.1.2.1 A time line chart was tabled by the clerk showing the various administrative tasks to be undertaken at intervals in order to support a target date of April 2020 for the start of a loan from the Public Works Loan Board and the commencement of the main construction project. Members adopted the time line proposed.

8.1.3 Constitution of New Hall Steering Group (an Advisory Committee of the parish council)

8.1.3.1 Some proposed changes to the working groups were tabled, the need to do so being occasioned not least by the departure of Richard Hann as a parish councillor. The three previous groups of Governance, Bid writing and Business Plan are to be combined into a single group. Thus there are now four groups instead of six which are led as follows:

Design and Construction – led by Clive O'Sullivan (no change)

Fund raising events – led by Cllr Richard White (no change)

Communications – led by Jay Ashworth (instead of Storm Hann)

Bidding for funds - led by the clerk (instead of Richard Hann).

8.1.3.2 The role of the working groups and their expected deliverables are as follows:

a) Design & Planning – specifying systems and materials, liaising with professional advisers, managing the tender process, project management.

b) Fund raising events – organise as many functions per year as can be resourced.

c) Communications – to devise and deliver a planned programme of communications both visual and textual before a second plebiscite in 2019.

d) Bidding for funds – bids to appropriate funders at intervals co-ordinated with the Design & Planning working group. Developing the necessary business plan to support bids.

8.1.4 Bidding for funding

8.1.4.1 Members were updated on the bid to Awards For All for monies to widen the entrance to the sports field. If the typical time taken for bids to be evaluated holds then a decision is likely just before the Annual Assembly on 26th April.

8.1.4.2 After the chequered history of developing the bid to Awards for All members reviewed the process for developing future bids. It was decided to generate the bid internally in future and then to submit it to Louise Beaton at AiRS who would act as a ‘critical friend’ to refine the bid.

8.2 Pavilion (Clerk report)

8.2.1 The clerk advised members that the new budget provided for internal redecoration of the pavilion below the ring beam and external coating of the doors and windows.

Outside, the concrete slab will be covered with a sympathetic type of stones or chippings to be contained within a raised surround composed of gravel boards. The area outside the gravel boards will be back filled with top soil and graded and sown with grass seed. The water stand pipe will be relocated to the side of the pavilion.

8.2.2 The clerk reported that a new hiring agreement, based on an ACRE template, is now being used for pavilion and sports ground lettings.

8.2.3 The clerk reported that a new long term let of an area of ground, between the cricket boundary and the site perimeter nearest Forge Lane, is under negotiation with a business person wanting to start up a dog training business. Consultations have been undertaken with existing pavilion and sports ground users and the necessary safeguards will be part of the hiring agreement.

8.3 Village Hall (the clerk reported on behalf of Cllr Richard White as Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee)

8.3.1 The redecoration of the main room in the hall has been completed thanks to Richard Di Stefano and Martin Jones who undertook the work. The village hall committee paid £400 for the materials but a donation of £100 has since been received from PANTS. Members resolved to make a public vote of thanks to Richard and Martin at the Annual Assembly.

8.3.2 The maintenance of the garden area will continue. After Danny Whyman cleared the area last year, he will continue to maintain it at no cost to the village. Again, members resolved to thank him publicly at the Annual Assembly.

**9. Planning**

9.1 Applications on previous agendas – none

9.2 Applications on the agenda for the first time

9.2.1 RR/2018/350/P - Brigden Hill Farm, The Barn, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham TN33 9PB - Hard surfaced tennis court for private use with surrounding fence and associated landscaping. *Members offered no objections.*

9.2.2 RR/2018/504/P - Hill Farm, Tower House Road, Penhurst, TN33 9QS – Repairs and changes to the use of outbuildings at Hill Farm including the renovation of Sussex Barn, the conversion of Oast to ancillary living accommodation, the replacement of dilapidated small barn with holiday let unit and removal of redundant modern barns.

Cllr Hoad restated his interest as the applicant and the item was moved to the end of the agenda at which point he left before discussions began.

*Members only voiced one concern and that was to ensure that ‘ancillary living*

*accommodation' could not ever become a separate dwelling. The clerk will seek assurances and then the council will offer support.*

**9.3 Breaches and Enforcement**

- 9.3.1 Buckwell Ghyll – the council has received a complaint alleging a planning breach by virtue of residential occupation of a trailer home.  
RDC Cllr Gary Curtis intervened and advised members that he is aware of this and is in discussions with the enforcement team at RDC. However, he is encountering resistance and would welcome some support from the parish council. Members instructed the clerk to write to RDC and, rather than lodge their own complaint, register their interest in the procedure being undertaken by Cllr Curtis and ask that they be kept informed of developments.

**10. Highways matters**

- 10.1 A date for an inaugural Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) meeting was first offered and then withdrawn by East Sussex Highways. A new date is to be arranged.
- 10.2 Other highways matters
  - 10.2.1 The Chair reported that drilling to take ground core samples has been taking place in Brownbread Street. No information has been made public as to their purpose.
  - 10.2.2 Road naming – RDC have written asking for the parish council’s view about a request received by RDC from a resident that the ‘official’ address of properties in Tower House Road, Penhurst be changed to Penhurst Lane.  
Much discussion ensued and the clerk was instructed to write to RDC to ask a series of questions including what purpose the ‘official’ street name serves when it only appears on planning applications and not on either the electoral roll nor Royal Mail addresses. There was no resolution to endorse the change request and the comment was made that the RDC record may be the only place where the names in use by local residents are preserved.

**11. Correspondence**

- 11.1 see 6.1.1 Local Action Plan correspondence

**12. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items**

None  
At this point Cllr Hoad left the meeting and agenda item 9.2.2 was taken.

**13. Dates of Next Meetings**

- 13.1 To note 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:
  - Annual Assembly Thursday 26th April
  - 9th May (Annual Meeting of the council)
- 13.2 To note that planning committee 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:
  - 11th April

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

..... Date .....

Signed (Chair)