

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council
held on Wednesday 9th May 2018 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

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

Parish Councillors absent: None

District / County Councillors present: ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field

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

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Nicky Bishop was proposed by Cllr Carol Andrews and seconded by Cllr Ron King. There being no other nominations Cllr Bishop was declared Chair.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

The Chair proposed Cllr Andrew Hoad who was seconded by Cllr Ron King. There being no other nominations Cllr Hoad was declared Vice Chairman.

3. Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Cllrs Bishop and Hoad signed their respective Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

4. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence have been received from RDC Cllr Gary Curtis.

5. Disclosures of interest

Cllr Hoad declared an interest in 18.1.2 where he is the applicant.

6. Additional agenda items

The Chair decided that the following items are urgent and due notice of them has been given to the clerk by 12 noon this day:

At 15.4 provision of additional public access defibrillator,

At 16.2.3.4 renewal of insurance – payment of premium.

7. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 14th March 2018 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chair the minutes were adopted without amendment.

8. Membership of Committees

8.1 Planning Committee – all parish councillors are de facto members of the planning committee.

8.2 New Hall Steering Group – Members appointed Cllr Richard White as Chairman of the committee and Cllrs Carol Andrews, Nicky Bishop and Andrew Hoad as members.

9. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

9.1 Standing Orders – last amended November 2017 to allow for late agenda items. Readopted without further amendment.

9.2 Financial Regulations – last amended July 2016 with amendment to spending authorisations. Readopted without further amendment.

10. Asset Register of Council Property

- 10.1 Members reviewed the asset register. Regulations require that asset values shown are purchase cost and assets are not depreciated. Accordingly, members approved restating the value of the former BT payphone box as £1 instead of the previously shown market value. The total of the values shown on the asset register is now £76,249.
- 10.2 Cllr Hoad, noting that assets are not revalued from purchase cost on the register, enquired what the insured value of property is. The pavilion cost is shown as £58,000 on the asset register and the insurance policy, due for renewal at 1st June 2018, shows its declared value as £80,000 and the insured value as £96,000. Cllr Hoad suggested that the rebuilding costs would be significantly higher than the insured value and members instructed the clerk to increase it before renewing the policy.

11. Members to serve on external bodies

- 11.1 Village Hall Management Committee – members reappointed Cllr White to represent the parish council.
- 11.2 Rother Association of Local Councils, East Sussex Association of Local Councils (RALC and ESALC) – Cllr Hoad expressed his willingness to continue his association which originated with rural broadband issues. Members appointed him to represent the parish council on both bodies.
- 11.3 Ashburnham & Penhurst Community Centre – once the new C.I.O. is registered the parish council will propose to its trustees that Cllr Richard White is appointed as a representative trustee representing the parish council.

12. Date and times of future meetings

Members resolved to change the date of ordinary parish council meetings from the second Wednesday to the last Wednesday of alternate months starting with July 2018. Likewise, Planning Committee meetings, when held, will also be the last Wednesday of the month in which they are held. The change of date is to better align with copy dates of the parish magazine.

13. Date of Annual Assembly in 2019

Members set the date for 2017 as Thursday 25th April 2019.

14. Open Forum

- 14.1 ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field reported that consultations continue on the proposed withdrawal of the music instrumental tuition service.

15. Community Matters

- 15.1 Local Action Plan – the chair and Cllr White agreed to meet, review the plan as a whole and then to publish it.
- 15.2 Rural Broadband – Cllr Hoad reported that there was no new information on the roll out programme. Meanwhile, he continues to watch and wait for the promised improvements in the county website and noted that, due to the delays in the fibre roll out programme, wireless solutions based on mobile phone technology have become much more popular.
- 15.3 Parish Website – the Chair advised members that she wants to relinquish or at least share responsibility for content management. Jay Ashworth has taken on responsibility for events posting but that still leaves home page material plus other pages, especially those neglected by their owner organisations. Cllr McConkey volunteered to become more familiar with the web site with a view to offering to assist.
- 15.4 Public Access Defibrillator – The Penhurst Retreat Centre has been given a defibrillator by St John Ambulance and are happy to site it in their entrance porch which is always open to the public. However, the device needs a cabinet which costs £214. On the motion of the Chair

members resolved to purchase the cabinet and donate it to the Retreat Centre. Members suggested that some signage will be required so that people are aware that the device is available to the public. The clerk will place a suitable notice on the public notice board on the wall of The Granary which is opposite the entrance to The Retreat.

16. RFO Report and Governance

16.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

- 16.1.1 Members reviewed the effectiveness of internal systems of control noting comments of the internal auditor which included a recommendation that evidence of the accuracy of salary payments reported be tabled and that the receipts and payments schedule be minuted as approved rather than noted. Members then approved the internal systems of control.
- 16.1.2 The Annual Governance Statement was read aloud by the Chair after which on her motion the statement was adopted and signed.
- 16.1.3 The Accounting Statement was tabled, having been previously circulated, and on the motion of Cllr White seconded by Cllr French the statement was approved.
- 16.1.4 New regulations for 2018/19 exempt parish councils from the need to submit the AGAR to the external auditor, and incur an automatic fee of £200 plus vat, if they meet certain criteria the principal of which is that gross income and expenditure are less than £25k. However, exempt councils must still publish the AGAR locally. The meeting authorised the Chair to sign the Certificate of Exemption.

16.2 RFO Report

- 16.2.1 The RFO tabled a schedule of receipts and payments for March 2018, the final month of the fiscal year. On the motion of the Chair members approved the schedule.
- 16.2.2 The RFO tabled the bank reconciliation to the end of March 2018.
- 16.2.3 On the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr French the following payments were approved:
 - 16.2.3.1 Pavilion fire extinguisher check, ION Safety - £45.00 (no vat)
 - 16.2.3.2 Annual Assembly buffet, Champagne & Caviar - £75.00 (no vat)
 - 16.2.3.3 Pavilion window cleaning 1/5/18, Nigel Turner - £26.00 (no vat)
 - 16.2.3.4 Insurance renewal (after revaluing property), BHIB Ltd – c.£450 (IPT included)
- 16.2.4 The RFO tabled the end of year statement of income and expenditure against budget. On the motion of the Chair the annual accounts were adopted.
- 16.2.5 The RFO reported on the national pay award for parish clerks which, on the motion of the Chair, members resolved to adopt. With effect from 1st April 2018 the National Pay Award set the salary of clerks on salary point 18 in the scale LC1 (the Ashburnham & Penhurst clerk's contract of employment pay scale) as £18,870 pa, £9.808 per hour. The clerk's contract is for 30 hours per month making the monthly gross pay £294.24. Members requested that their appreciation of the clerk's work be minuted.

16.3 Governance

- 16.3.1 Members reviewed the Annual Assembly on 26th April 2018 and expressed themselves as satisfied. No change to next year's format was proposed.
- 16.3.2 Data Protection – the clerk informed members that parish councils are to be exempted from the mandatory requirement of the General Data Protection Regulations to appoint a Data Protection Officer. The GDPR comes into force on 25th May 2018.

17. Premises

17.1 New Village Hall

- 17.1.1 Cllr White reported that, following the successful bid for funds from the National Lottery Awards For All for the entrance improvements, permission from the Estate trustees to proceed is the only thing preventing the work going ahead.
- 17.1.2 Cllr White reported that modifications to the approved plans require planning permission, that the application has been lodged and a decision is imminent. One approved, the next stage will be to work up the specification for building regulations approval and tenders.

17.1.3 The clerk reported that the application to register a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is about to be lodged with the Charity Commission. The registration process is being managed by the AiRS CBAS consultant, Louise Beaton.

17.2 Pavilion

17.2.1 The Clerk reported that two new long term letting prospects are being processed but he is only moderately hopeful that either will lead to a contract. The interior decoration budgeted for plus the exterior painting of windows and doors will be undertaken in the next three months.

17.3 Village Hall

17.3.1 Cllr White reported that at its Annual General Meeting on 3rd May 2018 the management committee resolved to raise the hire fees with effect from 1st September 2018.

17.3.2 Notwithstanding the modest increase in hire fees the committee estimates that it has sufficient reserves to sustain the village hall for about two years only. After that it will need to be subsidised in order to continue in operation.

18. Planning

18.1 Members noted updates (in italics) on applications on previous agendas –

18.1.1 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. RDC refused.*

18.1.2 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.
No further discussion - members have previously supported. Undecided by RDC.

18.2 Applications on the agenda for the first time.

18.2.1 RR/2018/702/MA – The White Cottage, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham, TN33 9NX – Minor amendment to planning permission RR/2017/2343/P in respect of: 1) The new roof is to have a central valley with double pitched roofs either side. 2) Lower sill of corner window by 250mm, making a window height of 1350mm. – *Undecided, decision due 29/3/18.*

Cllr McConkey declared an interest as he is a neighbour and he took no part in the ensuing discussion.

Members viewed the plans and resolved to submit a comment supporting the lower roof line by means of the double pitched roof but to deprecate any enlargement of the corner window which they consider to be out of character and a potential invasion of privacy of the neighbours at Suttons.

18.2.2 RR/2018/845/P - Ashburnham Recreation Ground, Church Road, Ashburnham TN33 9NU - Variation of Conditions 2 and 10 imposed on RR/2015/998/P To allow for some design changes to the approved building. *Undecided, decision due 18/5/18. Parish Council is the applicant.*

18.2.3 Green Pastures, Ashburnham Place, Ashburnham TN33 9NE - Lawful Development Certificate for an existing conversion of residential annex building and use as a separate residential building. *Undecided, decision due 4/6/18. No comment on LDC's which are granted on the basis of evidence produced.*

18.3 Breaches and Enforcement

18.3.1 Buckwell Ghyll – alleged planning breach by virtue of residential occupation. *No further information.*

19. Highways matters

19.1 Members reviewed the inaugural Strengthening Local Relationships meeting held on Wednesday 8th May 2018. They requested that the clerk write to Rupert Clubb requesting a reinstatement of the highways Weekly Brief or some alternative communication to clerks about highways happenings.

20. Correspondence received

20.1 A communication from an elector enquired about the possibility of setting up a children's playground like the recently opened one in Battle. The clerk has obtained the cost of that project which was £80k and has advised the elector that such expenditure is beyond the means of the parish council.

21. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

21.1 Cllr Hoad requested that street naming be put on the agenda for future meetings. The clerk will add this as a Highways item.

22. Dates of Next Meetings

22.1 Council meetings are scheduled for 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion on the last Wednesday of alternate months and the dates of the meetings for the remainder of the council year are -
2018: 25th July, 26th September, 28th November.
2019: 30th January, 27th March, 29th May (Annual Meeting)
Annual Assembly Thursday 25th April.

22.2 Planning committee meetings are scheduled for 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion on the last Wednesday of alternate months in which there is no council meeting.
If there are no planning matters to consider the meeting will not be called.

..... Date

Signed (Chair)