

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council  
held on Wednesday 25th September 2018 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

**Parish Councillors present:** Cllrs Nicky Bishop (Chair), Andrew Hoad, Neil McConkey, and Richard White.

**Parish Councillors absent:** Cllrs Carol Andrews and Tina French

**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 Tina French.

**2. Disclosures of interest**

2.1 Cllr McConkey declared an interest in planning at agenda item 9.2.1, should it be discussed, as he is a neighbour.

**3. Additional agenda items**

The following items were added as the Chair decided that they are urgent and due notice was given to the clerk by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

- 3.1 At 7.1.4.7 – RDC planning fee
- 3.2 At 10.4 – Street naming

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 25th July 2018 were circulated with the agenda. They were amended after their first circulation to include the names of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the C.I.O.. 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 Children's Social Care provided by the county council was inspected by OFSTED in July 2018 and judged to be outstanding – a rating rarely awarded. However, there are funding cuts pending.
- 5.1.2 The music service for children has been spared from the axe following a public petition.

5.2 RDC Cllr Gary Curtis reported as follows:

- 5.2.1 There is mounting pressure to make it an offence for travellers to move on to private land.
- 5.2.2 Sussex Police are joining a new national rural crime strategy, termed Operation Traverse. This targets a number of rural crimes with an emphasis on angling and has the support of the Angling Trust.
- 5.2.3 Speeding continues to be a problem and the Speed Watch activity in Catsfield continues. Outrageous driving with recorded speeds of 57mph and overtaking on the zebra crossing has been observed.

5.3 No representations were made from the public.

**6. Community Matters**

6.1 Rural Broadband – Cllr Andrew Hoad reported as follows:

- 6.1.1 At the May meeting of SSALC the promise was made to include rural broadband on the agenda of the next meeting. However, September was the next meeting and also the AGM so there was no broad band on the agenda. Cllr Hoad plans to write to Trevor Legg (CEO)

and question when broadband is to receive attention. In the meantime, Katy Thomas, the ESCC officer responsible for the county project, confirms that everything is still on track to finish data collection on a house by house basis by the end of 2018. This will enable Contract 3 work to commence in 2019.

6.2 Local Action Plan – The Chair tabled a draft plan which she and Cllr French have compiled and reported as follows:

- 6.2.1 Councillors are requested to read the document and bring comments to the November meeting. This would enable it to be adopted in time to be termed the 2019 – 2024 plan.
- 6.2.2 Lead councillors are still required for topics within the highways area (section 2), the transport area (section 4), village information (section 5) and wellbeing (section 6).
- 6.2.3 A contribution from Cllr White relating to the new village hall was added to the document.
- 6.2.4 ESCC Cllr Field suggested that contact details for district and county councillors be included.

6.3 BT payphone box – Cllr Tina French submitted a written progress report as follows:

- 6.3.1 The missing pane of glass in the `phone box has been fitted.
- 6.3.2 The door is partly constructed of wood, not metal, and will need repairing before any painting is started. Working groups for painting will be meeting between 13th and 20th October.

## 7. RFO Report and Governance

7.1 Financial reports

- 7.1.1 Members received and, on the motion of the Chair, approved the schedule of receipts and payments for the months of July and August 2018.
- 7.1.2 A bank reconciliation as at 24th September was circulated with the agenda and received by members.
- 7.1.3 A statement of income and expenses against budget for the half year to end of September was circulated with the agenda and received by members. There are no significant variances from budget.
- 7.1.4 On the motion of the Chair the following payments were authorised with the exception of 7.1.4.6 -
  - 7.1.4.1 Nigel Turner - £26 - pavilion window cleaning 4th September
  - 7.1.4.2 Castle Water - £41.01 - pavilion water.
  - 7.1.4.3 Church Buying Group - £104.50 plus vat, stacking chairs trolley (retrospective ccard)
  - 7.1.4.4 CSI Group, £129.30 - 3-sided roll container (retrospective ccard)
  - 7.1.4.5 Jewson - £16.37 plus vat - flexible metal banding (retrospective ccard)
  - 7.1.4.6 Herington Solicitors - £1,350 plus vat - legal costs advance payment for field entrance widening license.  
Members expressed unhappiness with needing to pay in advance and instructed the clerk to write to the trustees of the Ashburnham Estate to convey their views. They asked that trustees also be reminded of the effort required to raise funds and request that future legal costs be kept to a minimum and be based on time spent rather than fixed fees.  
Members did not authorise this payment.
- 7.1.4.7 Rother District Council - £137 - planning fees for variation regarding windows and roof cladding on new village hall.
- 7.1.5 On the motion of the Chair members approved setting up a direct debit by Castle Water for water supplies to the pavilion.
- 7.1.6 Members reviewed the current banking arrangements with Unity Trust Bank the terms of which have become markedly less favourable since the account was moved there from HSBC. Members agreed that the account should be moved to Lloyds Bank which will save bank charges of £72 per annum and a further £36 per annum for the corporate credit card.

## 8. Premises

### 8.1 New Village Hall

- 8.1.1 The clerk reported that the trustees of the new C.I.O. (Ashburnham & Penhurst Community Centre) will be obliged at their inaugural meeting at the end of October to compile a list of user groups who will have the right to appoint a trustee to represent them. The parish council is certain to be one of those listed groups and members resolved that Cllr Richard White should be appointed as the council's Representative Trustee in due course.
- 8.1.2 Members reviewed progress with obtaining permission for the field entrance widening and expressed some misgivings (see minute 7.1.4.6 above).
- 8.1.3 The clerk reported that legal opinion from the Ashburnham Estate solicitors is that the variations to the lease requested by the parish council are too significant for a Variation document and that a new lease to replace the existing one will need to be drawn up.

### 8.2 Pavilion

- 8.2.1 The Clerk reported that the new trolley for moving stacking chairs has been received and is in use.

### 8.3 Village Hall

- 8.3.1 As reported at the previous meeting, Cllr Neil McConkey has carried out some scenario planning for village hall finances so that the parish council can take an informed view about the risk of being called on to provide finance for continuity of the village hall. Cllr McConkey's review suggests that overall the village hall income and expenditure are likely to balance each other by the end of the financial year in March 2019. In terms of cash flow the low point appears to have just passed and by the year end the bank balance should be in the region of £1,300. Cllr McConkey observed that the fees charged for renting the village hall are very low, about half what other halls charge, making it unlikely that the village hall can ever be self financing and will always need fund raising events to sustain it. Members noted that the Walk and Ride event was always a mainstay of income and efforts should be made to reinstate it if organisers can be found.
- 8.3.2 Cllr Richard White reported that the car park surface is due to have some stone rolled into it before the end of October. The total cost is likely to be in the region of £800 of which £200 will come from the Appeal Fund and the balance from Ashburnham Thanksgiving Trust.

## 9. Planning

- 9.1 Members noted the current status (*in italics*) of the following applications on previous agendas of either the council or its planning committee -

- 9.1.1 RR/2018/1400/P – Brays Hill Farm House, Brays Hill, Ashburnham, TN33 9NZ - Extensions to dwelling, internal alterations and replacement of two modern windows as previously approved under RR/2014/2456/P and RR/2014/2457/L. *Approved conditional*
- 9.1.2 RR/2018/1764/P – Glydes Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham, TN33 9PB - Enlarging of ensuite and dressing room to master bedroom by increasing height of roof and adding dormer window. Plus adding two new rooflights to existing master bedroom. *Approved conditional.*

- 9.2 Members reviewed applications on the agenda for the first time.

- 9.2.1 RR/2018/1910/MA - The White Cottage, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham TN33 9NX - Minor amendment to RR/2017/2343/P to allow enlargement of 2no. windows in front elevation of extension. Formation of a porch on the side elevation.
- 9.2.2 RR/2018/2084/P - Lattendens Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham TN33 9PB - Installation of free-standing greenhouse to south-west. *The council will record that it has no objection.*

- 9.2.3 RR/2018/2169/P - Honeyland, Honey Lane, Ashburnham TN33 9PE - Hardstanding and landscaping. (Retrospective) *The council will record that it has no objection but questions the nature of the operation which needs this hardstanding.*

9.3 Breaches and Enforcement on previous agendas reviewed.

- 9.3.1 Buckwell Ghyll – alleged planning breach by virtue of residential occupation of motor home. *The Clerk has written as instructed to RDC enforcement urging them to gather evidence as to whether or not there is a planning breach and to then take appropriate action.*
- 9.3.2 ENF/107/18/ASH – Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham – Breach of condition of application RR/2012/1053/P. *First site visit by officers completed late August – either breach must cease or application to continue occupation must be lodged. 30 day follow up due 27th September. Failure to comply will lead to Notice of Breach.*
- 9.3.3 ENF/112/18/ASH – Honey Lane, Slivericks Lane, Ashburnham – Laying of large hard standing on agricultural field. *Application requested and received (RR/2018/2169/P above).*

9.4 Breaches and Enforcement monitoring.

The Chair initiated a discussion on how far the parish council should go in proactively monitoring and reporting possible breaches of planning controls and suggested that a proactive stance is required. However, members were generally not happy at acting as what they described as the ‘planning police’ but were happy to pursue alleged breaches which have been properly validated and reported. RDC Cllr Gary Curtis advised that he is happy to receive unsubstantiated reports and investigate and validate them. He further advised that RDC will not act on unsubstantiated allegations and that some evidence (as well as the identity of the complainant) is required.

## 10. Highways and Byways matters

### 10.1 Finger posts

- 10.1.1 Repairs to the finger post at Ponds Green have now been fully authorised and are waiting only for the contractor to undertake the work.
- 10.1.2 Members discussed how to show appreciation of the efforts of ‘pamperers’ of finger posts. They agreed that an annual letter of thanks from the parish council is probably sufficient.
- 10.1.3 The three posts in Penhurst need a new pamperer as the previous one has moved out of the parish. Cllr Andrew Hoad volunteered to take them over.

### 10.2 SLR Meeting

- 10.2.1 The second meeting is scheduled for the 6th November 2018 at 2pm in The Pavilion.
- 10.2.2 Members expressed the view that the customer service contact person should be asked to attend.

### 10.3 Byways

- 10.3.1 Members received a progress report from the clerk relating to the report made to the last council meeting about the gates denying access to the track which leads from the back of Ashburnham Place to The Forge.
- 10.3.2 The clerk wrote a letter to the Ashburnham Estate in a conciliatory tone, as instructed at the previous meeting, seeking to find some accommodation which would permit local residents to continue using this private track. An invitation to discuss the matter with an estate trustee followed.
- 10.3.3 At that meeting the trustee reported that the letter from the parish council was well received but that a subsequent letter signed by 23 residents, took a more strident tone which was not so well received by fellow trustees.
- 10.3.4 The trustees are due to meet on the same day as the parish council meeting and will discuss the matter and respond in due course. Preliminary discussions have already taken place

with the tenant and the shoot manager and some difficulties are foreseen. However, some limited access has not yet been ruled out.

10.4 Street Naming

10.4.1 Cllr Hoad proposed that this item be deferred until the next meeting.

**11. Correspondence received**

11.1 Members deferred until the next meeting a formal response to Mr Laurence Keeley's letter about affordable housing provision.

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

12.1 A proposal will be put to the next meeting to raise pavilion and cricket field hire rates. The pavilion rates to be in line with the increased village hall hire rates and cricket field hire rates to be renegotiated.

12.2 A draft budget will be tabled at the next meeting. Training proposals will be based on the published prospectus which is likely to include new councillor training as 2019 is an election year.

**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

8th November

10th January

14th March

Annual Assembly Thursday 25th 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

11th October

13th December

14th February

11th April

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

..... Date .....

Signed (Chair)