

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council of Ashburnham with Penhurst
held on Wednesday 29th May 2019 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Tina French, Ron King, Zoe O’Sullivan and Richard White.

Parish Councillors absent: None

District / County Councillors present: None

In attendance: Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council
Nicky Bishop, outgoing Chair
3 members of the public

Before the start of the meeting Cllrs Tina French, Ron King, Zoe O’Sullivan and Richard White signed an Acceptance of Office form.

1. Election of Chairman

Nicky Bishop, the outgoing Chair, called for nominations for Chairman and nominated Cllr Richard White who was seconded by Cllr Tina French. There being no other nominations Cllr Richard White was elected Chairman and signed the Acceptance of Office.

Cllr White assumed the Chair for the meeting and proposed a vote of thanks to Nicky Bishop for having led the parish council for the past four years.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence have been received from RDC Cllr Gary Curtis, ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field.

3. Acceptance of Office

Cllr Richard White signed the Acceptance of Office of Chairman.

4. Co-option to the parish council

- 4.1 On the proposition of Cllr Ron King, seconded by Cllr Tina French the council resolved to co-opt Andrew Hoad to the parish council.
- 4.2 On the proposition of Cllr Tina French, seconded by Cllr Ron King the council resolved to co-opt Jeremy Tucker-Wall to the parish council.
- 4.3 Cllrs Hoad and Tucker-Wall signed Acceptance of Office forms and joined the meeting.

5. Election of Vice Chairman

- 5.1 Cllr Ron King proposed Cllr Andrew Hoad and this was seconded by Cllr Tina French. There being no other nominations Cllr Hoad was elected Vice Chairman and signed an Acceptance of Office.

6. Disclosures of interest

- 6.1 No interests were declared.

7. Additional agenda items

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

- 7.1 An invoice for the annual subscription to East Sussex ALC was added as 17.2.2.17

8. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 27th March 2019 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chairman the minutes were adopted without amendment and, in the absence of Nicky Bishop, who presided, were signed by Cllr Andrew Hoad the Vice Chairman at that time.

9. Membership of Committees

- 9.1 Planning Committee, which meets as required on the last Wednesday of months in which there is no meeting of the Parish Council – all councillors were appointed as members of the Planning Committee.
- 9.2 New Hall Steering Group – Cllrs Ron King, Zoe O’Sullivan, Jeremy Tucker-Wall and Richard White (Committee Chairman) were appointed as members of the committee.

10. Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct

- 10.1 The following orders, regulations and codes were reviewed:
 - 10.1.1 Standing Orders – Adopted Sep 2015, last amended Nov 2017, re-adoption confirmed.
 - 10.1.2 Financial Regulations – Adopted July 2016, last amended Nov 2018, re-adoption confirmed.
 - 10.1.3 Members Code of Conduct – Adopted July 2012, re-adoption confirmed.

11. Asset Register

- 11.1 The register of council property was circulated prior to the meeting. Members noted the restatement showing only historic cost and insured values and not showing a current valuation. The restatement was on the advice of the internal auditor.

12. Appointment of members to serve on external bodies

- 12.1 RALC (Rother Association of Local Councils) is the only body on which the parish council is represented. Members declined to appoint a regular representative but adopted the suggestion from Cllr Andrew Hoad that the clerk should scan the agenda and alert members if a topic of significance to this council is tabled.

13. Dates and times of future meetings

- 13.1 Members resolved to continue to schedule ordinary council meetings as the last Wednesday of alternate months meaning that the dates of future meetings in the next year are: 31 July, 24 Sep, 26 Nov, 28 Jan 2020, 25 Mar, 27 May (Annual Meeting)
- 13.2 Members resolved to continue to schedule planning committee meeting as the last Wednesday of months in which there is no parish council meeting.

14. Date and time of the Annual Assembly in 2020

Members confirmed the date as Thursday 23rd April 2020.

15. Open Forum

- 15.1 The member of the public present asked if the signs warning of impending road closures, all of which are out of date or simply incorrect, could be removed from the highway verges.

16. Community Matters

- 16.1 Rural Broadband – Cllr Hoad reported that the results of the survey conducted by East Sussex broadband team last year are grievously overdue. Until then it remains a mystery as to which properties have been identified as not having a broadband connection.

The Clerk reported that residents in and around Brigden Hill and Farthing Lane, the largest cluster of properties without any internet connection at all, lodged an application under the Community Fibre Partnership scheme 6 weeks ago. In spite of the promise to normally respond to applications within 5 days the application is reported to be ‘still with the planners’.

16.2 Other Community Matters

- 16.2.1 Phone Box – Cllr French reported that the door has been repaired and the broken glass replaced. She will now order the correct paint and organise a working party to repaint the box. A call for volunteers in the parish magazine produced no offers.
- 16.3 Rother Rural Trust – Cllr French reported that she had followed the Trust’s guidelines and submitted an application on behalf of an elderly resident 10 weeks ago but has heard no more. The clerk will contact ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field, a trustee, to ascertain progress.

17. Finance and Governance

17.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Review (AGAR), part 3 (emailed to members before the meeting)

- 17.1.1 Members received a Risk Assessment from the clerk. Detailed consideration of this is to be carried forward to the next meeting.
- 17.1.2 Members reviewed the systems of internal controls and, taking guidance from the internal audit report, agreed that they are adequate.
- 17.1.3 The Chairman read aloud the statements on the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR page 4) and agreed that the requirements have been met. The statement was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.
- 17.1.4 Members received and approved the end of year account of income and expenditure and agreed to look at planned movements within earmarked reserves at the next meeting.
- 17.1.5 Members received the Accounting Statement forming part of the Annual Return (AGAR page 6) and on the motion of the Chairman approved it.
- 17.1.6 Members received the report from the internal auditor.
- 17.1.7 Members received the bank reconciliation to 22nd May 2019.

17.2 RFO Report

- 17.2.1 Members approved the schedule of receipts and payments for the months of April and May 2019 previously circulated.
- 17.2.2 On the motion of the Chairman members approved the following payments.
 - 17.2.2.1 Clerk Salary monthly as per national scale of £304.09 (30hrs/mth @ £10.163)
 - 17.2.2.2 EDF new direct debit mandate to be effective once current credit balance is zero.
 - 17.2.2.3 Richard White, Hedge plants, guards and canes, £322.84 plus £64.57 vat
 - 17.2.2.4 Fast Maintenance Services, outside tap at pavilion, £150 plus £30 vat
 - 17.2.2.5 Nigel Turner, window cleaning pavilion, £26
 - 17.2.2.6 BHIB Insurance Brokers, annual insurance renewal, £493.19
 - 17.2.2.7 Keith Robertson, Internal Audit fee, £108.51
 - 17.2.2.8 NexisLexis £110.99 Arnold Baker 11th Edition
 - 17.2.2.9 Chandlers, building supplies (retrospective) £614.53 plus £122.90 vat
 - 17.2.2.10 Robin Ratcliffe, plumbing components for pavilion, £41.83
 - 17.2.2.11 Raymond James, decorating materials for phone box, £60
 - 17.2.2.12 Champagne and Caviar, Annual Assembly refreshments, £75
 - 17.2.2.13 Castle Water, water at pavilion, £43.94
 - 17.2.2.14 Lidl, Annual Assembly refreshments, £36.26 (credit card, retrospective)
 - 17.2.2.15 Nigel White, grounds maintenance final account, £150
 - 17.2.2.16 Brightling Parish Council, re Castle Water debits in error, £24.50
 - 17.2.2.17 East Sussex ALC, annual subs including to NALC, £127.85

- 17.2.3 Members noted that the new current account at Lloyds bank (to replace Unity Trust Bank) is now open and operational.
- 17.2.4 On the motion of the Chairman members resolved to apply to Lloyds Bank plc for the issue of a Business Debit Card to the RFO.
- 17.2.5 The RFO asked members to consider the opening of an interest bearing deposit account. After a short discussion members decided that it was not worth doing as interest rates on such accounts are less than 1%.
- 17.2.6 On the motion of Cllr Hoad, seconded by Cllr King, the RFO was authorised to close the accounts at Unity Trust Bank and surrender the Lloyds Corporate Card as soon as all the alternative arrangements at Lloyds are operational.

17.3 Governance

- 17.3.1 On the motion of the Chairman members agreed to re-appoint Keith Robertson as Internal Auditor.

18. Premises

18.1 New village hall

- 18.1.1 Entrance widening at the recreation ground, to comply with a condition of the planning permission, will commence on Monday 24th June 2019. The cost was established 2 years ago since which time prices have increased. However, although the original estimate was £6k - £7k for external contractors, this has been reduced by means of retaining the displaced material on site for future use instead of sending it for disposal. The estimated cost is now £5k plus the cost of a final top surface to be applied only after the cessation of construction traffic in connection with the new village hall.
- 18.1.2 New lease – the clerk reported that Strutt & Parker are still working on heads of agreement and have advised that they will be tabling proposals quite soon.
- 18.1.3 Design and construction matters – on the motion of the Chairman members voted their thanks to Wealden AM, the proposed supplier of the steel frame of the new building, who donated the cost of soil sampling for the purposes of foundations and ground works design.

18.1.4

18.2 Pavilion

- 18.2.1 On the motion of the Chairman members resolved to waive the booking fee for the plant sale on 18th May 2019 as it was a fund raiser for the new village hall.
- 18.2.2 The clerk advised members that the Play Café are exploring the option of relocating their weekly (in term time) event from the Church Hall, which they have outgrown, to the pavilion. However, they request permission to erect a shed some 8ft x 6ft in which to keep the play equipment. Members instructed the clerk to write to Clive Mills and offer general approval with details to be negotiated with the clerk. The landlords will be advised.
- 18.2.3 The clerk reported that Nigel White, for many years the person who maintained the boundaries of the recreation ground plus the car park, has indicated his wish to relinquish this role. Members extended their thanks to Mr White applauding his sense of public service in under charging for the work he put in. The clerk further reported that Mr Danny Whyman has agreed to take on the role and he and the clerk are working through the details of what is required. However, members wished it to be recorded that the current outlay for this work is £400 per annum and hoped that the work could continue to be covered for the same outlay.
- 18.2.4 The clerk tabled proposals for the addition of planters to the hard standing of the previous pavilion which is now in the process of being landscaped. Members authorised the purchase of two ready planted troughs plus automatic watering equipment to a total value of £237.

18.3 Village Hall Management Committee - Cllr Richard White reported:

- 18.3.1 Exterior decoration of the barge boards on the three dormers is overdue and Paul Hodges has been asked to quote for the work.
- 18.3.2 Surface water drainage has become an issue as a drain test instigated by Strutt & Parker indicates that a large proportion of the water from the roof is channelled into the foul waste system. This is based on a septic tank system constructed in about 1967 and the additional volume of water cannot be coped with given the clay soil of the area. Further investigation is under way.
- 18.3.3 Car park – further surface dressing is planned for this summer and an investigation of surface water drainage will be co-ordinated so that any work on drains precedes surface dressing.

19. Planning

19.1 Applications on previous agendas – members noted the current status (*in italics*).

- 19.1.1 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.

The minor amendment to enlarge 2 windows in the front elevation has been approved. The proposed front porch was not approved as a minor amendment.

- 19.1.2 RR/2018/2316P – Peans Farm, Penhurst TN33 9QR - Single storey oak framed orangery extension to west elevation and replacement of existing window with door to north elevation. Listed building consent also applied for.

Council has opposed as being out of character. Remains undecided but the planning officer in the case has been seconded elsewhere and returns to his desk on 3rd June at which time he will resolve outstanding matters.

- 19.1.3 RR/2018/2906/P - Old Sprays Barn, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst TN33 9QN - Conversion of outbuilding to ancillary self-contained domestic accommodation, erection of shed for garden equipment and modification of S106 (RR/2000/591/P).

Approved conditional

19.2 Planning applications on the agenda for the first time – members determined the council's response.

- 19.2.1 RR/2019/855/P - Bunces Farm, Lakehurst Lane, Penhurst TN33 9PG - Proposed new barn for storage of machinery and meadow hay. *Parish Council has posted concern and urged further scrutiny questioning the need for the building and its appropriateness.*

19.3 Breaches and Enforcement –updates and progress noted

19.3.1 On previous agendas

- 19.3.1.1 Neighbouring Parish (Catsfield): Land adjacent to Deer Park Lodge. *carry forward*

- 19.3.1.2 Buckwell Ghyll – alleged planning breach by virtue of residential occupation of motor home. *No further information,*
Members resolved to ask RDC Cllr Gary Curtis to request information.

- 19.3.1.3 ENF/107/18/ASH – Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham – Breach of condition of application RR/2012/1053/P. *Officers have visited; enforcement action continues.*

- 19.3.1.4 ENF/40/19 ASH - Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham – Unlawful extension of lawful development. *(11th March list) Officers have visited; enforcement continues.*

19.4 Appeals – No new appeals.

20. Highways matters

20.1 SLR

- 20.1.1 The date for the third meeting has to be rescheduled as the proposed date fell between the elections on 2nd May and today. Members proposed a date on a weekday afternoon in June avoiding Mondays and Tuesdays.
- 20.1.2 Members were pleased to note that road sweeping has taken place at the foot of Hammer Hill though this was carried out by the District and not the County who do not have responsibility for it (which they failed to note when the matter was raised at the last SLR meeting).
- 20.1.3 Members asked that an agenda item for the next SLR meeting be an update on the plans for road resurfacing in the parishes and, in particular, a briefing on the process by which budgets are set and plans made for the parish roads.
- 20.2 Finger posts
 - 20.2.1 Members applauded the work by adopters on cleaning and maintaining finger posts. It was agreed that the parish council could provide suitable paint to those adopters wishing to paint their posts though the parish council could not accept any liability for any mishaps involving personal injury.

21. Correspondence received

- 21.1 A welcome letter to new councillors has been received from Trevor Legg, SSALC CEO.

22. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

None

23. Dates of Next Meetings

- 23.1 The next ordinary meeting of the parish council will be on Wednesday 31st July 2019.
- 23.2 The next Planning Committee meeting, if called, would be on Wednesday 26th June 2019.

..... Date

Signed (Chair)