
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of Ashburnham with Penhurst
held on Wednesday 20th March 2020 at 7.00pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

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

Parish Councillors absent: Cllrs Ron King and Paul Spicer

District / County Councillors present: ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field,

In attendance: Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council
5 members of the public

This meeting replaces the ordinary meeting scheduled for 25th March and was brought forward to address the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic.

1) Apologies for absence

RDC Cllr Gary Curtis, Parish Councillors Ron King and Paul Spicer (all are in vulnerable groups and advised to avoid social contact).

2) Disclosures of interest

None

3) Additional agenda items

The Chairman decided the following items are urgent, due notice of which have been given to the clerk by 12 noon today (S.O. 10.2).

At 9) d) Payments for concrete and reinforcing steel (Richard White) and for entrance fencing (R&M Fencing)

4) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 29th January 2020 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chairman the minutes were adopted without amendment.

5) Open Forum

- a) ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field reported on the extraordinary measures being taken by the County Council to address the pandemic and which are widely publicised online.
- b) Members of the public contributed to the discussion at the following item, item 6).

6) Exceptional Business relating to Covid-19 pandemic

a) Immediate activity

A house by house survey to assess needs will be carried out. A leaflet will be prepared and delivered by hand to every household and data about needs and risk gathered. Steve, the postman, has volunteered to accompany a parish councillor in his own time to make the calls. Where appropriate, callers will ask neighbours to keep an eye on nearby neighbours who live alone. Data about risk which is collected will be fed back to the parish clerk for compiling a risk register.

ACTION: Andrew to call Steve and arrange a schedule.

ACTION: Tina, Andrew and Richard, all of whom have offered to accompany Steve, to liaise

as necessary via Andrew who will coordinate the activity.

b) Communications and offers of help

The leaflet for house to house delivery and the parish council page in the parish magazine will carry broadly the same message. This will include

- the contact details for the parish clerk and advice to contact him in the first instance for any needs for assistance,
- a request that those able to offer any help call the parish clerk and register their offer with him,
- details of the offer from the Ash Tree Inn to obtain groceries and fresh vegetables,
- details of the offer from Ashburnham Place to arrange pick up of medication from pharmacies and of cash from cash points.
- suggestions about how to maintain mental wellbeing including visits to Ashburnham Place whose grounds remain open.

ACTION: Jay to prepare first draft and circulate to Andrew and Brian (clerk) for collaboration on parish magazine page and a leaflet / flyer.

ACTION: Jay to contact Paul Wenham for details of the Ashburnham Place offer.

ACTION: Andrew to contact Natalie for details of the Ash Tree Inn offer.

c) Monitoring of on-going welfare of the Community

- i) Councillors will participate in a weekly conference call on Mondays at 7.30 pm for a Situation Report (“SitRep”) and update.

ACTION: Andrew set up system at Google Hangouts and issue invitations to participate.

ACTION: ALL - be available online on Mondays at 7.30 pm commencing 23rd March

d) Continuation of parish council business

- i) The Annual Parish Meetings scheduled for 23 April are postponed to a provisional date of 24th September 2020.

ACTION: Clerk to advise suppliers of catering and signage.

- ii) Face to face meetings are now suspended.

- iii) The venues for meetings at the pavilion, the village hall and the church hall are closed with immediate effect until mid May when the position will be reviewed.

ACTION: Clerk to advise those with future bookings including Cricket Club.

ACTION: Zoey to advise that litter picking scheduled will go ahead but that the pavilion will not be available afterwards.

- iv) Where some procedural resolution by the council is required, such as authorising payments or responding to planning consultations, a document sharing system will be used as an interim measure until such time as a normal face to face meeting is able to ratify decisions made.

7) **Planning** (*updates or decisions in italics*)

On-going applications

RR/2019/1694/P - Brays Hill Farm House, Brays Hill, Ashburnham TN33 9NZ - Two storey extension to rear of property and first floor side extension. Internal re modelling of kitchen and bedroom. Construction of detached double garage with storage space above. Alternative to RR/2018/1400/P. *Remains undecided. Councillors wish to be kept in touch*

ACTION: Clerk to contact applicants.

a) New applications

RR/2020/7/P - Old Sprays Barn, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst TN33 9QN - Proposed bedroom within the loft void of the western (rebuilt) section of the barn with new glazed doors installed in the West side elevation of the southern outshot. *Council has responded “Having received no representations the council takes no view and is content for the planning application process to take its course.”*

RR/2019/2311/P - Honeyland, Honey Lane, Ashburnham/Dallington TN33 9PE - Proposed agricultural barns, *(Remains undecided. Following vigorous opposition from neighbours the council has posted its position as “The parish council endorses the objections fully detailed in the letters from a large number of neighbours and urges the planning authority to employ the District Surveyor to evaluate the business case for this scale of building.”*

RR/2020/95/P - Frankwell Farm, Brays Hill, Ashburnham TN33 9NZ - Construction of an orangery/conservatory, swimming pool, and associated outbuilding. *Undecided. On the resolution of the Chairman Council resolved to comment that new buildings in the AONB should be resisted if conversion of an existing building can meet the need. For example, could the pool be relocated so that there is no need for a new pool house?*

ACTION: Clerk to post comment.

c) Breaches and Enforcement – to note updates and progress

Ongoing: **ENF/107/18/ASH** – Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham – Notice of Breach of Condition of application RR/2012/1053/P served November 2018. *Breach continues. The hearing on 13th March 2020 at Hastings Magistrates court received a late request from the defendant for a large number of witnesses. This was declined and a date was set for a hearing to determine the admissibility of the proposed witnesses.*

New: **ENF/40/19/ASH** Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham – Unlawful extension of lawful development. *Enforcement report 30/5/19***ENF/208/19/ASH** – Old Chapel House, Red Barn, Potts Green – Erection of building (waiting further information)

d) Appeals

None

8) **Community Matters**

a) Affordable Housing The Chairman noted that a productive discussion had been held with officers from Rother District Council.

b) Phone box and museum Cllr French reported that the required paint has been procured.

9) **RFO Report**

a) Receipts and Payments

On the motion of the Chairman members resolved to approve the tabled schedule for the period to 16 March 2020.

b) Bank reconciliation

Members received the bank reconciliation (on file) and Cllr French confirmed that she had been on line and can verify the balances shown.

c) Income and expenditure against budget

The RFO tabled a report (on file) against budget. There were no exceptional variances.

d) Earmarked Reserves

The RFO tabled a report on the movement of funds in earmarked reserves.

e) Payments to authorise

On the motion of the Chairman members resolved to authorise the schedule of payments previously circulated with the additional late invoices and attached to these minutes. **(Action: Clerk to submit payments)**

10) **Governance**

a) Public Bodies Accessibility Regulations

The Clerk advised that the parish website has been modified so that links to documents

download to the viewer's device rather than opening in a browser window. This enables the viewer to set their device to open the document automatically in whatever viewer they use and to thereby facilitate easy enlargement of the download. Members resolved that this was sufficient action needed for compliance and that the requisite notice be posted online stating that further changes would involve Excessive Cost.

11) Premises

a) New village hall

i) Funding: the clerk reported that he is exploring the RDC Community Grants option for funding feasibility studies.

ACTION: Clerk to follow up with RDC Cllr Gary Curtis.

ii) Landlord and Legal: members noted that the new lease has been issued for comment. Members resolved to reject it completely and request that Strutt & Parker revisit the whole question. Members noted that the existing lease provides for compensation for the council in the event of the landlord exercising the break clause in the event of planning permission for development being obtained. The compensation is the financial value of buildings owned by the parish council. There is no compensation in the new lease. Furthermore, the Heads of Terms agreed between Strutt & Parker and the Parish Council was based on variations needed to the existing lease. However, the new lease tabled bears no relation to the old one and is a completely new legal agreement with detailed provisions for vat and interest payments which seem irrelevant given that the rent is one peppercorn.

ACTION: Clerk have a telephone conversation with Nick Watson before submitting a formal response to the new lease.

b) Pavilion and Sports Field

i) Lettings

(1) On the resolution of the Chairman members unanimously resolved to reduce the hiring fee for the cricket club for 2020 from the £450 paid in each of the last 5 years to £405, to be reviewed in one year's time.

ACTION: Clerk to advise the Cricket Club and request payment as soon as possible.

(2) Members agreed to modify the hiring fee policy in regard to good causes and to permit a fee less than the published rate to be charged if the council believed the hiring to be of public benefit.

ii) Pavilion maintenance

(1) Members approved the Clerk's proposal to refurbish the exterior weather boarding this year at a budget cost of less than £400.

12) Highways and Byways

a) Finger posts

The clerk reported that the budget prices for the refurbishment programme approved at the previous meeting have been confirmed by the supplier. Members requested a review of the proposal to replace the post at Slivericks and asked if a repair to the post by replacing the rotten section would not be more cost effective.

ACTION: Clerk confer with supplier.

b) SLR meeting

The next scheduled meeting is 16th June 2020, but this will now be rescheduled to a future date.

c) Street naming

The changes to the name of Lingham Lane have provoked controversy. 6 properties were consulted and 5 responded voting 3 to 2 to change the street name to The Pound. However, three of the six properties consulted are clustered around the junction at The Pound even though their address was technically Lingham Lane. The other three are further away at the other end near Mansfield Cross.

Members resolved that RDC be approached again with a request that a boundary be drawn at the bridge next to The Pound and that those below the bridge remain as The Pound, but that those the other side in the direction of Mansfield Cross revert to Lingham Lane.

ACTION: Clerk to approach RDC.

13) Correspondence

None

14) Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

None

15) Dates of Next Meetings

All remaining meetings in the current council year are cancelled.

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Signed (Chair)

Date