
**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council of Ashburnham with Penhurst
held on Wednesday 26th May 2021 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Village Hall**

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

Parish Councillors absent: Cllrs Ron King, Paul Spicer

District / County Councillors present: ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field (via Zoom)

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

1) Election of Chairman

Cllr Hoad was nominated by Cllr White and seconded by Cllr French. There being no other nominations, Cllr Hoad was duly elected Chairman.

2) Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr White was nominated by Cllr Hoad and seconded by Cllr Sinden. There being no other nominations, Cllr White was duly elected Vice Chairman.

3) Declarations of Acceptance of Office

As the required forms were not to hand it was agreed that the declarations would be signed at the next ordinary meeting.

4) Apologies for absence

Parish Councillors Ron King, Paul Spicer. RDC Cllr Gary Curtis

5) Disclosures of interest

None

6) 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 10) b) Penhurst notice board, at 10) d) Fly tipping, at 18) e) add payment approval to ION Safety for fire extinguisher maintenance.

7) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 31st March 2021 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chairman the minutes were adopted without amendment.

8) Open Forum

a) ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field reported by Zoom as follows

- i) The County Council has conducted little business since the last parish council meeting having been first preoccupied with the elections followed by a spate of appointments to committees.

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

a) On-going applications *Current position:*

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 after protracted delays. (Action: Clerk to write to RDC to protest at continuing delays and indecision.)*

RR/2020/1313/P - The Stable Block, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst TN33 9QP - Change of use. *Approved*

RR/2020/1721/P - New Buildings Farm, Church Road, Ashburnham, TN33 9NU - Change of use of buildings from agricultural to bespoke Class B8 storage of light equipment and timber materials. *Approved. Members expressed concern regarding conditions addressing the potential nuisance to neighbours. (Action: Chairman will examine the planning documents and email members with a view.)*

RR/2020/1742/P – Court Lodge Farm, The Forge, Ashburnham, TN33 9PJ - Proposed flat roofed link between farmhouse and Oast and conversion to provide further accommodation. *Members commented but remained neutral. Remains undecided.*

RR/2020/1867/P - Forge Lane and Penhurst Lane - Land to the south of, - installation of new field access and gate. *Members offered no objection. Remains undecided.*

RR/2020/2198/P - Hill Farm, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst, TN33 9QS - Proposed erection of single storey extension, alterations to rear porch and demolition of modern garden shed. *Approved*

RR/2020/1737/P and **RR/2020/1738/L** - Old Brew House, Brown Bread Street, Ashburnham TN33 9NX - Replacement front door with like for like. Creation of opening between existing bathroom and toilet by removing part of wall. Construction of 750mm high stone or brick wall to retain bank as part of garden landscaping to include timber deck, timber shed and wood storage area. New wood fencing above wall. *Members supported. Approved after a delay which was curtailed due to the intervention of RDC Cllr Gary Curtis to whom thanks were expressed.*

RR/2021/52/P - Springside Farm, Herrings Road, Ashburnham, TN33 9FB - Widening of existing access and gate, increased permeable hard standing, Agricultural Diversification and erection of a container store. (Retrospective) *Refused. Members asked to be informed about plans to restore the site to its previous condition. (Action: Clerk to follow up with RDC.)*

b) New applications

RR/2021/474/P - 1 Court Lodge Cottages, The Forge, Ashburnham TN33 9PJ - Construction of pitched roof in place of flat roof to existing single storey extension and conversion of existing loft space including two rooflights and side window. *Parish Council has posted comments that no pink notices have been posted and requested information about the consultation period. In the meantime, it was noted that revised drawings of the elevations have been submitted. (Action: Chairman will examine the planning documents and email members with a view.)*

RR/2021/506/P - Old Sprays Barn, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst TN33 9QN - Construction of three bay garage with adjacent utility room attached to existing shed. *Members raised no specific concerns but noted that on earlier applications for development at this property, the need for a garage was stated to be non-existent. (Action: Chairman will examine the planning documents and email members with a request for comments.)*

c) Breaches and Enforcement – to note updates and progress

i) (new) **ENF/191/20/ASH** - Buckwell Ghyll, Lakehurst Lane, Ashburnham - Breach of Appeal - using property for residential. *Planning Contravention Notice served in March 2021. No further developments.*

- ii) **ENF/107/18/ASH** – Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham RR/2012/1053/P – Breach of Condition Notices A and B served 28 Nov 2018. Notice A: “. . .storage of business use and agricultural items on the hardstanding surface without permission . . . not within Oak Bank Farm” ; Notice B: “. . . the hardstanding is being used for the storage of business use and agricultural items.” (permitted use is for domestic storage and parking, not for any business use.)
2-day trial at Hastings Magistrates Court on 27th and 28th May 2021.
- iii) **ENF/40/19/ASH** Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham – Unlawful extension of lawful development. *Enforcement report 30 May 2019*
- iv) **ENF/332/20/ASH** The White Cottage, Brownbread Street - Landscaping works and construction of concrete slab . *Information awaited at 24 Jan 2021*

d) Appeals – none

10) Community Matters

- a) Rural character preservation (Cllr O’Sullivan)
 - i) A further litter pick has been carried out.
 - ii) A weeding party cleared the weeds around the young hedge plants on the boundary of the recreation ground.
 - iii) The Chairman noted two recent major fly tipping incidents in the Penhurst area. Members supported his proposal to report them to the police rural crime team for comment. There was discussion about the possible use of hardware devices which could be positioned remotely for a trial period to capture date stamped images of vehicle movements near the fly tip hotspots and which could then help us to trace offenders. **(Action: Chairman to investigate hardware options and report back to council.)**
- b) Website and communications (Cllr O’Sullivan)
 - i) A report on modifications to the website to meet new accessibility regulations is due from Tim Wakeling very soon.
 - ii) Cllr O’Sullivan continues to post news events to the village web site according to a schedule but is now running short of material.
- c) Affordable Housing (Cllr French)

Nothing new to report
- d) Environment, Sustainability & Wellbeing (Cllr French)
 - i) Public transport - services have restarted after the lockdown easing and 6 or 7 passengers are using it.
 - ii) Letter box - the box mounted on a telegraph pole in Church Road has fallen off and Royal Mail did not seem interested in replacing it until the intervention of Cllr King. They are now reconsidering, but support from the parish council is thought to be useful. **(Action: Clerk to obtain details from Cllr King and contact Royal Mail).**
- e) Highways
 - i) Wildflower verges - Cllr Sinden suggested that Jay Ashworth be approached to see if she would lead one or more walks around the village visiting those verges already designated as wildflower preserves. **(Action: Clerk to approach Ms Ashworth) .**
 - ii) There has been a lot of adverse feedback received due to the recent verge cutting activities which appear at odds with our campaign of preservation. It was thus proposed to issue a communication explaining the context of the recent verge cutting and outline our plans to expand the trial of controlled cutting to preserve wild flowers. **(Action : Cllr O’Sullivan)**
- f) Rights of Way

No report
- g) Premises (Cllr White)
 - i) Pavilion - the clerk reported that the application for the siting of bollards on the verge by the war memorial was progressing now that direct liaison with the relevant officer at Highways has been established. However, there are new regulations and only bollards

selected from an approved list will be permitted. These are inherently more expensive than the parish council's preferred option and would additionally require an excavation licence to install them. **(Action: Clerk to develop costed proposals before proceeding further with the application.)**

- ii) Village hall - the hirer representing a significant proportion of the letting income, Hughes Training, has run into a problem with the accreditation body validating his electrical training courses and these may be unresolvable meaning that this source of income for the village hall will cease. Other regular users are gradually returning as Covid-19 restrictions continue to ease.
- iii) New village hall - a meeting of the committee, the New Hall Steering Group, is being convened for 22nd June 2021 to start work on preparing costed proposals for the whole project as minuted at the last council meeting.
- h) Village events and facilities (Cllr Sinden)
 - i) Public Access Defibrillators - Cllr Sinden suggested that demonstrations of how to deploy a Public Access Defibrillator are highly desirable. Members agreed and felt that the village Annual Assembly is an ideal opportunity.
 - ii) Annual Assembly programme **(Action: at the July parish council meeting firm up a date for the Assembly and for the programme (to include PAD demo)).**
 - iii) Community events - the W.I. are hosting an event called Brass on the Grass to which all are invited and the W.I. are meeting the cost. Members agreed unanimously that the hire fee for the pavilion and grounds should be waived as a gesture of support.
- i) Rural connectivity (Cllr Hoad)
 - i) Universal Super Fast Broadband - the Chairman reported on the progress with the Demand Led Community Fibre Partnership schemes which have been adopted by Open Reach and are now poised to move to the next phase. This involves wide publicity of the schemes and recruitment of households to pledge their gigabit vouchers. He and Cllr O'Sullivan will work up a communications strategy to be rolled out this summer. A detailed report was tabled by the Chairman and it was agreed that it should be read into the minutes as an attachment.
- j) Covid-19
Nothing new to report.

11) Membership of Committees

- a) The Planning Committee was confirmed as continuing to be constituted as all councillors.
- b) The committee, New Hall Steering Group, will continue to be constituted as Cllrs Ron King, Zoe O'Sullivan and Richard White (Chairman) with co-opted members as Nicky Bishop, Keith Finch, Nick Heasman and Clive O'Sullivan.

12) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

- a) On the motion of the Chairman seconded by Cllr White, members resolved to adopt the revised Financial Regulations tabled at the last meeting.

13) Asset Register of Council Property

The Asset Register is unchanged from last year and members resolved to adopt it.

14) To consider the appointment of members to serve on external bodies

Members declined to appoint any members to external bodies.

15) To confirm the dates and times of future meetings

- a) Members resolved to continue to schedule ordinary council meetings on the last Wednesday of alternate months.

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- b) Members resolved to continue to schedule planning committee meeting on the last Wednesday of alternate months when there is no ordinary meeting of the council.

16) To confirm the date and time of the Annual Assembly in 2021 and 2022

The date of an Annual Assembly in 2021 will be reviewed at the July meeting of the Parish Council. For 2022 members resolved that the Annual Assembly should be held on Thursday 21st April 2022.

17) Governance

- a) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
- i) Members received a Risk Assessment sent by the clerk prior to the meeting.
 - ii) The required review of the systems of internal controls is satisfied by the adoption of revised Financial Regulations as minuted at 12) a) above.
 - iii) The Chairman read aloud the Annual Governance Statement and on the motion of the Chairman it was resolved that the requirements have been met and the Statement was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.
 - iv) The RFO tabled the Accounting Statement forming part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Review and on the motion of the Chairman members resolved to adopt it and it was duly signed by the Chairman and the RFO.
- b) Internal auditor - On the motion of the Chairman members resolved to re-appoint Keith Robertson as the internal auditor for the financial year 2021/22.

18) RFO Report

- a) Receipts and payments since previous meeting – members received the schedule for the period 21 January to 25 March 2021 which was previously circulated.
- b) Bank reconciliation – members received the reconciliation which will be verified by a councillor.
- c) Income and expenditure – members received the report against budget to 25th March 2021 which was previously circulated. There were no significant variances other than those reviewed at previous meetings.
- d) Earmarked reserves – member received a report of movements in reserves.
- e) Payments to authorise – on the motion of the Chairman members resolved to authorise the payments on the list attached to these minutes which include the additional item minuted at 6) above.
- f) Precept stats and S.137 allowance - the RFO advised members that although the precept has not increased, the payment by electors has increased due to the smaller tax base this year. It was agreed that next year, when setting the precept, the percentage change in payment by electors will be factored in. The RFO advised that the Section 137 payments allowance for 2021/22 has been set by the Treasury at £8.32 per elector which means that the parish council is empowered by S.137 to spend up to a total of approximately £2,696 on topics meeting the general criteria of benefit to the community and for which no other powers exist.
- g) In addition to the specific payments authorised at e) above, members authorised periodic payments, some by direct debit, for utilities and for web site hosting and maintenance.
- h) Banking - the RFO informed members that the Lloyds mobile banking app is now in use which enables cheques to be photographed and paid in without the need to visit a branch.

19) Correspondence None

20) Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items None

21) Date of Next Ordinary Meeting of the Council Wednesday 28 July 2021

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Signed (Chair)

Date