
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of Ashburnham with Penhurst
held on Wednesday 29th September 2021 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Ron King, Zoe O’Sullivan, Paul Spicer, Chris Sinden and Richard White.

Parish Councillors absent: Cllrs Tina French, Andrew Hoad

District / County Councillors present: ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field

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

1) Apologies for absence

RDC Cllr Gary Curtis, Parish Cllrs Tina French, Andrew Hoad.

2) Disclosures of interest

6) b) Cllr Richard White declared an interest in that he is a close neighbour of the applicant for planning application RR/2021/1700/P Ashbourne Oast.

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):-

7) d) iv) CEE Bill.

4) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 28th July 2021 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 as follows

- i) Cabinet has decided to retender the provision of the home care service.
- ii) The council is showing interest in the Dept of Transport ‘Lane Rental’ scheme which charges street works promoters for the time they occupy the highway.
- iii) The planning department are tackling their backlog by employing three temporary staff from Capita.
- iv) Organisational changes at RDC affecting planning are the appointment of Ben Hook as Director, Place and Climate Change and Jeff Pyrah as Planning Policy Manager.

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

a) Ongoing applications *Current position noted:*

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 following reorg of planning.*

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. *Approved.*

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. Action Clerk: Ask RDC for situation report on reinstatement.*

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. *Approved.*

RR/2021/1209/P - Sprays Oast Farm, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst TN33 9QN - Construction of garden room within existing garden shelter and new greenhouse. *Approved*

RR/2021/1048/P and **1049/L** - Hill Farm, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst TN33 9QS - Proposed erection of single storey extension, removal of rear porch and demolition of modern garden shed (alternative to approvals RR/2020/2198/P and RR/2020/2199/L). *Approved*

b) New applications *To confirm or decided response to consultation*

RR/2021/1394P - Garden Cottage, Ashburnham Place, Ashburnham TN33 9NE - Proposed alterations and replacement of existing conservatory and WC with new single storey side extension. Replace existing detached garage with new garage with home office above. *Members discussed by email and posted: "Whilst the parish council does not wish to oppose this application it does have significant reservations. These do not relate to the house where, as with the garage, some upgrading is clearly desirable. However, the garage is going to be visually dominant in that landscape and although the design itself has many pleasing features, it's appropriateness in that location is questionable. Moreover, the footprint is nearly as large as the house minus its extension."* *Approved.*

RR/2021/1437/P - Olivers Hill, Herrings Road, Ponds Green, Ashburnham TN33 9FB - Erection of a two bay detached garage. *Members discussed online and posted a neutral position commenting: "The PC has no objection to this proposal but feels that it would be preferable for the garage to have a pitched and tiled roof in order to be more sympathetic with the adjacent building."* *Approved.*

RR/2021/1700/P Cllr White declared his interest in this item in that he is a close neighbour and he took no part in the vote. Ashbourne Oast, Kitchenham Road, Ashburnham TN33 9NA - Convert and extend garage building to create a holiday let with accompanying parking and landscaping. *Members voted unanimously by show of hands to post an objection to this application on the following grounds: a doubling of the size of the footprint represents over development; it is highly visible from the A271 to the detriment of the AONB; the vehicular access is very poor; the assertion that the existing building is redundant is questionable - it is simply unused. (Action: Clerk to post to the portal.)*

c) Breaches and Enforcement

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, but Enforcement Officer is keeping a watching brief.

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. *Defendants were found guilty on both counts at Magistrates court May/June 2021, were fined and must now clear the site of the landscaping business equipment and materials. Item will be removed from future agendas.*

ENF/40/19/ASH Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham – Unlawful extension of lawful development. *Enforcement report 30 May 2019. Item will be removed from future agendas.*

ENF/332/20/ASH The White Cottage, Brownbread Street - Landscaping works and construction of concrete slab . *Information awaited at 24 Jan 2021* **Action: Clerk to request situation report from RDC**

Penhurst Estate - game shooting operations review.

As actioned at the previous meeting the Clerk (with the Chairman, Cllr Hoad) met the new landowner. They obtained assurances about the future conduct of the shoot which will in fact be combined with the existing Deer Park shoot resulting in little change to the number of shoots and only a change in the location of some of the drives.

7) Community - Village Action Plan & Lead Responsibilities

- a) Rural character preservation (Cllr O'Sullivan) *nothing to report*
- b) Website and communications (Cllr O'Sullivan)
The review of compliance with the Accessibility Regulations and subsequent amendments to the parish website is nearing completion. Cllr O'Sullivan is now handing over the remaining tasks to Tim Wakeling who hosts the site.
- c) Affordable Housing (Cllr French sent a written report)
 - i) Rother Local Plan - still in development.
 - ii) Housing needs assessment - future questionnaire still to develop. Impending changes to the planning system will be significant but will not affect the Rural Exception scheme which is crucial to permitting housing development within the AONB in non housing-designated areas.
- d) Environment, Sustainability & Wellbeing (Cllr French)
 - i) Public transport - community bus is still going well. Cllr French completed a 'response form' from ESCC asking for suggestions regarding new routes for public transport. She proposed a bus route along Kitchenham road , from Battle to Boreham Bridge twice a day , which could serve guests going to Ashburnham Place from the station, staff/volunteers going to Battle, and visitors to The Orangery. Also nearer to Hammer Hill for Ashburnham village. Members present applauded this suggestion and gave it their full support.
 - ii) Refuse collection & waste management - no complaints recently.
 - iii) Payphone box museum - to be cleaned ready for occupation of museum items.
 - iv) Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill - A member of the public, Nicky Bishop, was invited to speak. Members viewed the website for the bill (www.cebill.uk/bill) and read the proposed resolution which they resolved to adopt -
 - i) Declare an ecological emergency;
 - ii) Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill;
 - iii) Inform the local media of this decision;
 - iv) Write an open letter to Huw Merriman M.P. (shared with our residents through local and social media) urging them to sign up to support the Bill, or thanking them for doing so;
 - v) Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support. (**Action: Clerk to liaise with lead councillor and action as resolved.**)
- e) Highways (Cllr King)
 - i) Roads and ditches maintenance - Cllr King has conducted a survey of the worst areas of roads in the parish where pot hole patching will not suffice and a more radical resurfacing process is required. Knowing that there is an annual programme of such works published by East Sussex Highways in March, he plans to lobby ESCC for inclusion of the five worst areas in the 2022 programme.

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- ii) SLR meetings with East Sussex Highways - the last meeting was in April and the interval is aimed to be 6 months. (*Action: Clerk to request a date for a meeting as soon as possible.*)
 - iii) Finger post maintenance - this year's maintenance programme has still not started and the contractor was reminded in August. (*Action: Clerk to chase contractor*)
 - iv) Roadside hedge owners liaison - no complaints about overgrown hedges recorded.
- f) Rights of Way (Cllr Spicer)
- i) ESCC Rights of Way team liaison
Cllr Spicer reported that a bench has been situated on the 1066 Way on Tent Hill.
The clerk reported that he continues to liaise with the Rights of Way team over resolving the issue of the difficult stream crossing on the 1066 Way shortly before it emerges onto Brownbread Street.
- g) Premises (Cllr White)
- i) Pavilion - members approved the budget for verge reinstatement tabled by the clerk at a cost of approximately £1,300. The necessary applications for a street furniture license and an excavation permit to install the bollards has been lodged with East Sussex Highways several weeks ago.
 - ii) Village hall - an estimate for replacing roof tiles has been received but the estimate for the additional work of repairing guttering is still awaited. Once the estimates have been received ATT will be approached with a request to part fund the cost on the existing basis which is 3ATT:1Village Hall.
The F&GP Committee of the Council requested that the cost of a building surveyor's report be obtained as a step towards assessing the value for money of any investment in building maintenance. The last survey was by Housemartins Surveyors ten years ago. Their indicative cost of a repeat survey is £1,000. Members requested that a second estimate be obtained. (*Action: Clerk to follow up.*)
 - iii) New village hall - the entrance gateway work has almost been completed. The new height barrier is operational and the old one has been removed. The last section of post and rail fencing has yet to be installed. (*Action: Clerk to request R&M Fencing to complete.*)
The Clerk reported that £256 has been donated to the new village hall fund being the entrance fees from the recent tractor trundle.
- h) Village events and facilities (Cllr Sinden)
- i) Public Access Defibrillators - volunteer Community First Responders will be attending the village meeting to demonstrate CPR and the use of a defibrillator.
 - ii) Annual Assembly programme - the agenda will include the usual report on planning applications and will be attended by our CPSO.
 - iii) Community events - the harvest supper attracted 40 people and other recent events included the tractor trundle, the licensing of the new priest-in-charge and Coffee Stop. A village bonfire night in November is expected to take place.
- i) Rural connectivity (Cllr Hoad)
- i) Universal Super Fast Broadband - no report
- j) Covid-19 - nothing to report
- k) Gatwick expansion consultation Members were aware of the consultation and are opposed to any increase in aircraft noise, but wish to defer deliberation until the Chairman, who has expert knowledge, is able to participate.

8) RFO Report

a) Receipts and Payments

Members received the tabled schedule of receipts and payments for the period ending 19th September 2021.

b) Bank reconciliation

Members received the bank reconciliation (on file) as of 19th September 2021. Cllr French, although not present, emailed to say that she has been on line to the bank and can verify the figure as the bank balance.

c) Income and expenditure against budget

The RFO tabled a report (on file) against budget to the 19th September 2021. There were no exceptional variances other than those previously noted.

d) Payments to authorise

On the motion of the Chairman members resolved to authorise the following payments:

Budget head	Details	Payee	£	+ vat £	Total £
	PAYMENTS >£100				
Governance	External audit	PKF Littlejohn	200.00	40.00	240.00
Reserves: Pavilion maintenance	Pavilion recoating weatherboard	DeLuxe Cleaning Services	768.00	0.00	768.00
Reserves: Community	Parish notice board refurb	Rob Dedman	276.00	0.00	276.00
Governance	Internal audit	Keith Robertson	132.00	0.00	132.00
General administration	Annual sub plus geomaps	RALC	80.00	0.00	80.00
	PAYMENTS <= £100				
Pavilion housekeeping	Window cleaning 14/7, 13/8	Nigel Turner	52.00	0.00	52.00
Community	Donation	Air Ambulance	100.00	0.00	100.00
Reserves: Pavilion maintenance	Repair leaking tap	FMS Ltd	30.00	6.00	36.00
	PAID BY DEBIT CARD				
Pavilion housekeeping	Pavilion flags (2 no.)	Leomay Ltd	12.47	2.50	14.97
Pavilion housekeeping	Janitorial Supplies	Nisbets	27.98	5.59	33.57
Governance	Annual Assembly signs	Dragon Signs	77.50	15.50	93.00
					1,698.97

9) **Governance**

- a) Financial regulations - members approved the previously tabled amendments proposed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee -
- i) amend the process of authorisation of salary payments,
 - ii) amend the requirement for hard copy invoices for amounts less than £100 to be tabled, and
 - iii) return to the practice of incorporating the schedule of payments authorised into the main body of the minutes instead of attaching them as a document (which also needs to be signed and stored in the minute book).

10) **Correspondence**

None

11) **Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items**

Cllr Zoe O’Sullivan informed members that she will soon be moving out of the parish and will therefore need to tender her resignation. Members were unanimous in thanking her for her enormous contribution during her time in office, particularly with communications and social media and for digitising the council minutes archive.

12) **Date of Next Meeting**

The next ordinary meeting of the parish council will be on Wednesday 24th November 2021.

..... Date

Signed (Chair)