
**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council of Ashburnham with Penhurst held on
Wednesday 25th May 2022 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Jay Ashworth, Ron King, Richard White (Chairman),
Fraser Williamson.

Parish Councillors absent: Cllrs Chris Sinden and Paul Spicer

District / County Councillors present: ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field

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

1) Election of Chairman

- a) Cllr King proposed and Cllr Ashworth seconded the motion that Cllr White be Chairman for the next year.
- b) There being no other nominations Cllr Richard White was declared elected as Chairman.

2) Election of Vice Chairman

- a) Cllr White proposed and Cllr Ashworth seconded the motion that Cllr Spicer be Vice Chairman for next year.
- b) There being no other nominations Cllr Paul Spicer was declared elected (in his absence) as Vice Chairman.

3) Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Cllr White signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

4) Apologies for absence

RDC Cllr Gary Curtis, Parish Councillors Chris Sinden and Paul Spicer.

5) Disclosures of interest

None

6) Additional agenda items

- a) At 17) b) planning application RR?2022/302/P Parkes Farm.
- b) On the motion of Cllr King seconded by Cllr Williamson, members resolved unanimously to co-opt Ms Nicci Gagel to fill the casual vacancy on the council occasioned by the resignation of Andrew Hoad.

7) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 30th March 2022 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chair the minutes were adopted without amendment.

8) Open Forum

- a) ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field reported as follows
 - i) The county council bid for £81m from the Service Improvements Plan fund from central government. ESCC were successful in securing £49m.
 - ii) The county council have retained a consultancy to develop a strategic approach to the provision of public charging points for electric vehicles.

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- b) Mr Clive O’Sullivan, a member of the public asked the council to consider the following matters
- i) To relocate the cricket club mowers. The storage of a petrol mower with petrol in the store room off the changing room is highly questionable in terms of good practice and insurance. There is also a smell of petrol in the building at times. A better storage place would be the shipping container in the car park. Councillors agreed and the clerk will make arrangements with the cricket club.
 - ii) To make a joint approach with Burwash Parish Council to Huw Merriman, M.P. about aircraft noise from stacking in holding patterns. This would put pressure on the authorities to look at moving the stack to a position over the sea instead of over this parish (where it has been since 1960). Such a move has been under consideration for at least seven years but nothing has happened.
 - iii) To try to get more observance of the Dark Night Sky policy of RDC. When the parish council responds to the statutory planning consultations, could it please add a comment about observance and request that it be part of the conditions attaching to granting of planning applications. Furthermore, a request to get Tarmac to modify their site lighting might resonate with their corporate ‘green’ objectives.
 - iv) To try to get the use of Astro Turf banned. This material has a detrimental effect on the natural environment and there is no obvious need for it in a rural area.
 - v) To find out more details about traffic speed monitoring guns (a follow up to RDC Cllr Gary Curtis’s promise, made at the Annual Assembly, to provide information).
 - vi) To fix warning signs either side of the height restriction barrier at the entrance to the playing field signifying the height limit of 2.1m.
 - vii) To purchase a Ukrainian flag to be flown during the Country Fair weekend (part of the fund raising proceeds are destined for Ukrainian relief).

9) Membership of Committees

- a) Members resolved to continue to constitute all councillors as members of the Planning Committee.
- b) Councillor membership of the New Hall Steering Group was confirmed as Cllrs Ashworth, King, Sinden and White although, as Chairman, Cllr White would prefer to stand down. Non councillor members will continue as before (Keith Finch, Clive O’Sullivan and Nicky Bishop) minus Nick Heasman who is leaving the district.
- c) Members resolved that the Finance & General Purposes Committee should continue to comprise Cllrs Sinden, Spicer and White. A fourth member is desirable and there is a vacancy following the resignation of Andrew Hoad. The vacancy will be carried forward to the July council meeting when lead responsibilities will be discussed. Furthermore, the F&GP Committee would not normally meet during the summer months.

10) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

- a) Members resolved to re-adopt the Standing Orders first adopted in November 2017.
- b) Members resolved to re-adopt the Financial Regulations which were adopted in September 2021 following minor revision.
- c) Online bank payments require two members to independently authorise them and past practice has been to arrange for four members to have the necessary bank authority. However, due to the resignation of two of the authorised councillors (Tina French and Andrew Hoad), it is now only Cllrs Spicer and White who are authorised. Cllr Jay Ashworth agreed to become an authoriser and the RFO will put arrangements in hand. The appointment of a fourth authoriser was left in abeyance.

11) Asset Register of Council Property

- a) Council members resolved that the shipping container in the pavilion car park be added to the register.
- b) The clerk was instructed to review the need to separately show the items of building improvements made many years ago. It may be simpler to consolidate the building items into one sum. It was noted that the asset register records historic cost unlike the insurance policy which tracks replacement cost.

12) Appointment of members to serve on external bodies

- a) Members declined to nominate individuals to represent the council on RALC which is the only external body where the parish council has the right to nominate a representative.

13) Dates and times of future meetings

- a) A change from the last Wednesday to some fixed Wednesday was considered, but both second and third clash with other meeting of either District or County Council members. It was resolved to change only from the last Wednesday to the fourth Wednesday. In an election year this would mean making an exceptional arrangement for the Annual Meeting as the fourth Wednesday will be too long after the election.
- b) The Planning Committee meeting will also change to the fourth Wednesday of alternate months.

14) Date and time of the next Annual Assembly

Members resolved that the next Annual Assembly of electors be held on Thursday 20th April 2023 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall.

15) Governance

- a) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
 - i) A Risk Assessment was circulated to members before the meeting. There were no changes proposed and the assessment was approved.
 - ii) The systems of internal controls are embodied in the Financial Regulations which were last amended and adopted in September 2021.
 - iii) The Chairman read out each element of the Annual Governance Statement. On the motion of Cllr King seconded by Cllr Williamson the Statement was approved.
 - iv) On the motion of Cllr King seconded by Cllr Williamson members approved the signing of the Certificate of Exemption from sending AGAR documents to the External Auditor.
 - v) On the motion of Cllr Ashworth seconded by Cllr White the Accounting Statement forming part of the AGAR was approved and signed.
- b) Internal auditor
 - i) On the motion of the Chairman members resolved to re-appoint Mulberry & Co as the internal auditor for the financial year 2022/23.

16) RFO Report

- a) Members received the schedule of receipts and payments for the period 26 March to 20 May 2022 tabled by the RFO.
- b) Members received the bank reconciliation at 20 May 2022 tabled by the RFO. The Chairman confirmed that he had been online to Lloyds and can confirm the balance as stated.
- c) Members received the report of income and expenditure against budget to 20th May 2022 tabled by the RFO and circulated before the meeting.
- d) Members received the report of movements in earmarked reserves to 20th May 2022 tabled by the RFO and circulated before the meeting.

e) A list of payments to authorise was tabled by the RFO as follows:

| Date if paid | Details | Payee | Budget head | £ | + vat £ | Total £ |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Paid from bank | | | | | | |
| 01-Apr-22 | Street banners re broadband | Andrew Hoad reimbursement | Reserve: Community | 18.99 | 0.00 | 18.99 |
| 01-Apr-22 | Storm damage repair to notice | Robert Dedman | Reserve: Community | 750.00 | 0.00 | 750.00 |
| 25-Apr-22 | Pavilion cleaning Jan-Mar | Carol Lovett | Pavilion and Grounds | 120.00 | 0.00 | 120.00 |
| | Fire extinguisher service | Mitch Safety (was IONSafety) | Pavilion and Grounds | 210.00 | 0.00 | 210.00 |
| | Annual subs | East Sussex ALC Ltd | General Admin: Subscriptions | 115.38 | 0.00 | 115.38 |
| | Roadside signs update | Dragon Signs | Governance: Annual Assembl | 60.00 | 12.00 | 72.00 |
| | Annual Assembly food | Champagne & Caviar | Governance: Annual Assembl | 100.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| | Painting exterior joinery | Deluxe Cleaning | Reserve: Pavilion & Grounds | 135.00 | 0.00 | 135.00 |
| Paid by debit card | | | | | | |
| 12-Apr-22 | Jubilee Union flag | Royal British Legion | Reserve: Community | 17.24 | 3.08 | 20.32 |
| 19-Apr-22 | Annual Assy beverages | Lidl | Governance: Annual Assembl | 35.82 | 0.00 | 35.82 |
| 19-Apr-22 | Annual Assy disposables | Dukes Valley | Governance: Annual Assembl | 14.83 | 0.00 | 14.83 |
| 19-May-22 | Bollards for war memorial verge | Glasdon | Reserve: Pavilion & Grounds | 379.32 | 75.86 | 455.18 |
| | | | | 1,956.58 | 90.94 | 2,047.52 |

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|--|-------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------|-------|
| Periodic payments authorisation | | | | | | |
| Renew | Website hosting and maintenar | Tim Wakeling | Community | 51.00 | 0.00 | 51.00 |
| Renew | Pavilion electricity | Opus Energy | Pavilion and Grounds | | | |
| Renew | Office 365 Business | Microsoft | General admistration | 7.90 | 1.58 | 9.48 |
| Replaces DD | Pavilion water | Castle Water | Pavilion and Grounds | settled with debit card | | |

On the motion of the Chairman seconded by Cllr Williamson members resolved to approve the payments.

- f) The RFO informed members that the Section 137 allowance for 2022/23 has been set by central government for 2022/23 at £8.82 per elector. This is the maximum which may be spent on activities not specifically authorised elsewhere in local government legislation.

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

a) Ongoing applications *Current position:*

RR2021/2956/P - Springfield, Forge Lane, Penhurst, TN33 9QR - Extensions to the front, side and rear of the property and alterations to existing dwelling.

Parish Council has posted support.

Approved conditional

RR/2022/455/P - Frankwell Farm, Brays Hill, Ashburnham TN33 9NZ - Erection of first floor side extension and balcony above existing porch.

Members viewed the application on line and resolved to post a comment that they are neither opposed nor supportive.

Approved conditional

RR/2022/28/P The Woodman's Yard, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst TN33 9BW - Demolition of existing storage building and construction of building for brewery production, parking, landscaping and associated works. Use of existing access and retention of existing buildings.

Councillors have visited. Members noted the massive support voiced on the Rother planning portal. Members confirmed their support for the application (already posted)

Undecided

b) New applications

RR/2022/302/P - Parkes Farm, Brays Hill, Ashburnham TN33 9NZ - Proposed menage and new barn for straw and hay. *Members viewed the application on line and resolved to post a comment that the parish council resolved to take a neutral stance on this application.*

RR/2022/691/P - Burnt Barns Farm, Freckley Hollow, Ashburnham TN33 9LZ - Conversion of existing garage into an osteopathic practice work studio. *Members viewed the application on line and resolved to post a comment that the parish council supports it.*

RR/2022/813/P - The White Cottage - Land opposite, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham TN33 9NX - Retention of pond and associated earth works. Retention of hardstand next to pond and summer house. (Retrospective)New planting of indigenous species throughout the site.

Members viewed the application on line and resolved to post a comment that the parish council resolved to take a neutral stance on this application.

RR/2022/849/P, RR/2022/850/L - Horseshoe Cottage, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham TN33 9NX - Removal of existing timber clad addition, rebuild with increased footprint and with dressing-room in roof. Removal of modern internal partition wall.

Members viewed the application on line and resolved to post a comment that the parish council supports it.

RR/2022/302/P Parkes Farm - Parkes Farm, Brays Hill, Ashburnham TN33 9NZ - Proposed menage and new barn for straw and hay.

Members viewed the application online but decided they needed more time to consider it.

c) **Breaches and Enforcement**

- i) Oak Bank Farm - The Clerk has written to the owners as instructed by members urging them to submit an application (retrospective) regarding the siting of a temporary agricultural workers dwelling.

18) Community - Village Action Plan & Lead Responsibilities

- a) **Website and communications** - The clerk reported that the internal auditor suggested that the council take advice about the requirement to post a privacy notice on the village website.
- b) **Wellbeing** - Play equipment for preschool children - members viewed pictures of a number of options and selected a simple see-saw and an obstacle course as the most suitable. Members left the meeting room and determined a space where it can be set out near the cricket pavilion and the seating area on the shingle rectangle. Design details for weatherproofing and safety were discussed and Clive O'Sullivan volunteered to advise. The clerk will liaise with the constructor who is currently preparing a quotation.
- c) **Highways** (Cllr King)
- i) Roads and ditches maintenance - members requested that the clerk press ESCC Highways to repair the road at the blind bend on Hammer Hill. This is a safety issue as motorists move to the centre of the road to avoid the rough patch and on a blind bend this is likely to lead to a head on collision.
- ii) Finger post maintenance - the clerk is in dialogue with Douglas Andrews to pick up the maintenance programme from last year which did not get done. Three posts are in the programme: repaint post No.3 at The Pound and post No.5 Forge Lane. Post No.7 Old Thatch Lane (lower end) needs painting plus some minor repairs to the letters.
- d) **Rights of Way** (Cllr Spicer) - ESCC Rights of Way team liaison - the clerk advised that the footpath from Winters Farm to Brownbread Street is to have a simple ditch crossing at the stream near the road following requests from the parish council.
- e) **Premises** (Cllr White)
- i) Pavilion - members raised the question of responsibility for trees on the playing field as there are ash trees which have died as a result of 'Ash Die Back' disease. Mature trees are the responsibility of the Ashburnham Estate, but the clerk will ascertain who is responsible for removing the dead trees which may be below the size at which the Estate assumes responsibility.
- ii) Village hall - the Village Hall Management Committee, the trustees of the village hall, resolved at their AGM (held in public) to appoint the Parish Council as 'Sole Charity Trustee'. The Clerk, who is also Hon Sec of the management committee, will proceed to work through the process of executing the committee's resolution.
- iii) New village hall - Cllr Ashworth reported that she has had her first meeting with the mentor appointed by Charity Mentors Sussex, a CIO based in Uckfield, whose role is to provide mentoring to those in leadership roles in the voluntary sector. This includes those leading a fund raising project. The meeting was extremely productive and the mentor is clearly very experienced. A further meeting will take place in about six weeks' time.
- f) **Village events and facilities** - The Platinum Jubilee programme is in place and ticket sales for the barn dance and the PANTS production look promising.

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- g) Rural connectivity - The Super Fast Broadband scheme has received a stimulus in that Ninfield Parish Council are now actively supporting the pledging of vouchers. Pledges to date stand at 44%.

19) Correspondence

Ms Angie Nettle has again emailed urging action on the provision of play equipment for pre-school children.

20) Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

- a) Review governance of village hall if council appointed sole managing trustee.
- b) CEE Bill Review.
- c) Review of councillor lead responsibilities.

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Signed (Chair)