
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of Ashburnham with Penhurst held on
Wednesday 27th September 2023 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Jay Ashworth, Nicci Gagel, Ron King, Chris Sinden,
Richard White (Chairman)

Parish Councillors absent: Cllrs Paul Spicer, Fraser Williamson

District / County Councillors present: ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field, RDC Cllr Chas Pearce

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

1) Apologies for absence

Cllrs Paul Spicer, Fraser Williamson

2) Disclosures of interest

None

3) Additional agenda items

9) b) iv) Aircraft noise

4) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 26th July 2023 were circulated with the agenda. On the motion of the Chair the minutes were adopted without amendment.

5) Open Forum

a) ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field reported as follows:

- i) Based on Q1 figures there will be overspend by the year end of £2m on Adult Social Care and of £15m on Children's Services.
- ii) Last year the techies foiled 7.7m attempts to hack the County Council, but there were no successful attacks. Last month the figure was 501k attempts.

b) RDC Cllr Chas Pearce reported as follows:

- i) On 1st October the RDC Community Grants scheme opens for a fresh round of bidding for grants of up to £30k.
- ii) Another source of funds is the Rother Community Lottery Fund.
- iii) The planning application for major leisure developments on the Normanhurst Estate has been refused. The applicant has stated that they do not intend to appeal.
- iv) In response to a question from Cllr King, Cllr Pearce said that all household waste goes to the Newhaven Energy Recovery facility.

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

a) On-going applications *To note progress or determination*

RR/2023/668/P - Oak Bank Farm, Farthing Lane, Ashburnham TN33 9PB - Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of permanent agricultural workers dwelling (part retrospective). *Members resolved to oppose this application which is virtually a repeat of application RR/2017/1522/P. Refused in the last few days*

RR/2023/1090/P - Springfield, Forge Lane, Penhurst TN33 9QR - Erection of annexe with linkway connected to main dwelling.

Councillors conferred by email and no objection was lodged. Approved conditional.

- b) Applications new to a council meeting. *To determine or record the council's response.*
RR/2023/1570/P - Horseshoe Cottage, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham TN33 9NX - Revised scheme to previously refused permission RR/2022/849/P for the removal of existing timber clad addition to be rebuilt with increased footprint and dressing-room in roof; Removal of modern internal partition wall.
Councillors conferred by email and no objection was lodged. Remains undecided
RR/2023/1346/P - Ashburnham Place, Ashburnham TN33 9NF - Installation of a Roof Based Solar Photovoltaic System.
Councillors conferred by email and no objection was lodged. Remains undecided
RR/2023/1862/P - Burnt Barns Farm, Freckley Hollow, Ashburnham TN33 9LZ - Proposed Swimming Pool.
Members viewed the application online. They had no immediate objections but deferred on a response until they had discussed by email.
- c) Breaches and Enforcement – *to note updates and progress*
- i) **ENF/303/20/ASH** - Springside Farm, Herrings Road, Ashburnham, TN33 9PE - Change of use of agricultural land to store materials for business use.
The Clerk has requested an update from the enforcement officer but received no reply.
- ii) **ENF/183/23/ASH**- Ashburnham Place – investigation of residential accommodation comprising 7 flats - *No breach found, No Further Action*
- iii) **Ashburnham Place** – to determine a response to complaints from local residents about excessive noise at unsocial hours at Ashburnham Place.
After discussion, the Clerk was instructed to write to ACT and request that the amplification of the singing be discontinued during unsocial hours of early mornings and late evenings. Furthermore, a request will be made for more communication about their intentions regarding the marquee adjacent to Tent Hill House as it is understood that it is planned to be in situ and in use for 7 months next year.
- d) Appeals
Honey Lane RDC planning application RR/2022/1296/P, RDC Appeal ref: 2894, Inspectorate ref: APP/U1430/W/22/3306209
The Appeal started February 2023 - has yet to be determined.

7) RFO Report

- a) Receipts and Payments
Members received the tabled schedule of receipts and payments for the period 20th July to 20th September 2023.
- b) Bank reconciliation
Members received the bank reconciliation (on file) as of 20th September 2023.
- c) Income and expenditure against budget
The RFO tabled a report (on file) against budget to 20th September 2023. Playing field lettings are likely to be less than budget as the cricket club have played very few home games.
- d) Earmarked reserves
The RFO tabled a report on movements in earmarked reserves for the year to 20th September 2023.
- e) Payments to authorise
On the motion of the Chairman seconded by Cllr King members resolved to authorise the following payments:

Details	Payee	Budget head	Total £
Website hosting and maintenance	Tim Wakeling	Community	60.00
Phone box materials	Nicci Gagel	Reserve: Community	23.40

Viking	Viking - liquid soap	Pavilion housekeeping	66.30
East Sussex Flags	Flagly	Pavilion maintenance	15.98
Key cabinet	Amazon	Pavilion maintenance	16.99
Country Fair waste removal	Litta App Ltd	Reserve: Community	147.99
Paper towels	Nisbets	Pavilion housekeeping	40.77
First Aid kit	Boots	Pavilion housekeeping	23.75
Pavilion water	Castle Water	Pavilion utilities	140.93
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			536.11

The Clerk drew members' attention to the Litta invoice for clearing rubbish after the country fair and asked if it should be recharged. Members decided that the parish council will pay it this year but will inform the organising committee that they will not pay for rubbish removal in future years.

- f) Members were asked to confirm the charitable donations to be paid this year and reminded that in previous years the following payments have been made.
Burial grounds upkeep - £350 each to Ashburnham and Penhurst churches.
Donation of £120 to Ashburnham Chapel.
Donations of £100 each to Rother Rural Trust, Battle Area Community Transport, Rother CAB, Sussex Air Ambulance.
On the motion of the Chairman seconded by Cllr Ashworth members resolved to repeat all the payments but to uplift them all by 10% in response to inflation.
- g) The internal auditors, Mulberry & Co., have offered to fix the current hourly rate of £65 for three years if clients choose to make a three year commitment. Members resolved to commit and take up the fixed rate offer.

8) Governance

- a) The Clerk advised that he had actioned the internal auditor's request to review standing orders with a view to adopting the NALC model. His view is that having compared the clauses, all the basic statutory ones are the same on both models, but that the parish council has made some standing orders to specifically address local issues. He recommended, therefore, that we keep our own standing orders under review, but that a wholesale adoption of the NALC model would not be appropriate. Members concurred.

9) Community - Village Action Plan & Lead Responsibilities

- a) The human world and society
- i) Communications - Cllr Ashworth
- (1) Updates have been made to the website including the calendar of events.
 - (2) An offer has been made to the cricket club to post topical cricket material if it is something the club would like to have.
 - (3) The Community website has attracted some unacceptable posts recently.
- ii) Village events - Cllr Sinden
- (1) Remembrance Sunday arrangements are in hand and this year the congregation of St.Michael's will be much more involved now that the vicar is responsible for both churches. This year it is the turn of the churches to organise the refreshments after the service.
 - (2) Other recent or forthcoming events are the Harvest Supper, the art exhibition and a W.I. evening event of music with a light supper.
- iii) Police liaison. Members noted that there had been an attempted break in at Old School House.

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- iv) Phone box museum - Cllr Gagel
- (1) The Harvest Supper was the most recent event to be promoted at the phone box.
 - (2) Cllr Gagel said that she was trying to find a way that the phone box could be used for a book swap point.
 - (3) The clerk displayed two notice boards which might become replacements for the existing notice board next to the phone box. Both can display 6 x A4 sheets and have a single glazed door. Greenbarnes have a board made from pseudo timber (recycled plastic) costing £583 plus vat and the Noticeboard Company have one in powder coated aluminium at £560 plus vat. Members preferred the Greenbarnes product and resolved that the next step was to assess the reuse of the existing posts.
- v) Public transport. Flexibus continues to receive very favourable reviews and volunteer staff at Ashburnham Place have started using it. RDC Cllr Pearce cited a wheelchair user who has been able to get out for the first time in ten years. The 16 seater vehicles have been configured to have only 12 seats so that wheelchairs can be accommodated.
- vi) Public health: defibrillator - Cllr Sinden
- Cllr Sinden reported some progress with posting instructions next to the defibrillator at The Ash Tree Inn and noted how difficult it is to find very basic instructions starting with how to open the door and gain access to the machine. RDC Cllr Pearce recommended that contact be made via the parish clerk at Crowhurst with Lee Oldridge. He is a lecturer on the Paramedic science degree team at Canterbury Christchurch University and an HCPC registered paramedic.
- vii) Public health: exercise facilities. Cllr White advised that he was mindful of the need for more provision for children.
- b) The natural world
- i) Verges – no report
 - ii) Rights of way – no report
 - iii) Environment: Litter - Cllr Ashworth advised that there will be a litter pick in October.
 - iv) Environment: Aircraft noise
- Members discussed the leaflet drop to all households by Gatwick Airport seeking support for regular use of the second runway for operations rather than just for ground movements. Members were not all of the same mind about supporting and Cllr Ashworth volunteered to draft some response and circulate it. As a start the Clerk was requested to forward to her the exchange of correspondence last November between the parish council and the Minister, Huw Merriman. The council wrote to seek support for expediting the move of the holding stacks to a position off shore, but the reply was only about noise abatement measures in general and sidestepped the question of moving the stacks.
- c) The built environment
- i) Highways (Cllr King)
 - (1) The anticipated disruption to traffic while engineers took core samples from Kitchenham Road appears to have been overstated even though there were periods of traffic light control.
 - (2) In conjunction with Cllr Spicer complaints from local residents about the poor standard of the recent verge cutting have been passed to Highways. They have promised to investigate and it will be an agenda item at the next SLR meeting that has been recently confirmed as 21st November 2023, the day before the next parish council meeting.
 - (3) Cllr King has responded to a local resident who has drawn attention to the cracks in the brick parapet over the stream crossing at The Forge.
 - ii) Premises
 - (1) Village Hall
 - (a) The Clerk asked if the date for the next meeting of the trustees could be set and Wednesday 1st November was agreed.
 - (b) Table tennis club have won a new table making three now stored at the village hall.

- (c) The Clerk is meeting representatives from Strutt & Parker and from East Sussex Water & Drainage on site tomorrow. The object is to explore ways of diverting surface water drainage so that it does not flow through the Klargester for which it was not designed and frequently overwhelms.
- (d) The arrangement for the regular strimming of the garden area at the front is not working (see next item).
- (2) Pavilion
 - (a) The Clerk has discussed the current strimming arrangements with Paul Harmer. It has been agreed that he will give up the task of strimming at the village hall and instead he will look after the area between the pavilion patio and the pedestrian gate. This area has never been part of anyone's work programme, is out of reach of the gang mower, and is cut on an ad hoc basis very infrequently. Strimming at the village hall will be undertaken by Terry Whyman as required.
- (3) New village hall (Cllr White)
 - (a) The New Hall Steering Group met last week and the minutes have been circulated to committee members and all parish councillors.
 - (b) The AiRS subscription service is being accessed and in the last 24 hours Cllr White has received some resource materials.
 - (c) Louise Beaton, who was in regular touch with the parish council on a consultancy basis between 2014 and 2018, has been contacted again with a view to further consultancy. The fees are, however, several hundred pounds per day. She has strongly advised speaking to the National Lottery by phone.
 - (d) Cllr Ashworth has created a page of FAQs on the village website.

10) Correspondence

- a) The parish clerk at Brightling has asked that members be made aware of that council's intention to make a gift to Cllr Andrew Wedmore as a token of thanks for the work he did, in conjunction with then Cllr Andrew Hoad, in developing the proposal for a district wide scheme for the provision of fibre based broadband. Regrettably the percentage uptake threshold was not reached and the scheme did not go ahead. Brightling are asking if Ashburnham would care to participate in Brightling's plan.
Members discussed it briefly but did not think that a gift in this situation was appropriate and a vote of thanks should suffice.

11) Information for Councillors / Future Agenda items

None

12) Date of Next Meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the parish council will be on Wednesday 22nd November 2023.

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Signed (Chair)

Date