
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of Ashburnham with Penhurst held on
Wednesday 25th September 2024 at 7.30pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Paul Spicer (Chairman), Richard White
and Fraser Williamson. Later, Cllr Fay Merrick.

Parish Councillors absent: Cllrs Jay Ashworth, Chris Sinden

District / County Councillors present: ESCC Cllr Kathryn Field

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

1. Apologies for absence

RDC Cllr Chas Pearce, Parish Cllrs Jay Ashworth and Chris Sinden

2. Disclosures of interest

None

3. Additional agenda item

On the proposal of Cllr White seconded by the Chairman, members resolved to co-opt Mrs Fay Merrick to the parish council.

4. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on 24th July 2024 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) The projected budget deficit for next year is predicted to be £55 mil rising to £83 mil over the following three years;
- ii) the cost of residential care for children has risen by 96% year on year;
- iii) proposals to be presented to Cabinet tomorrow include the closure of two day services for older people and two day centres, community support services and Steps to Work training for people with learning disabilities, with support being provided in different ways in future. There are also proposals to stop on-site support in supported accommodation for vulnerable adults and adults with mental health needs, significantly reducing funding for housing-related support services and not renew contracts for drug and alcohol recovery services.
- iv) On an RDC matter, Cllr Field was able to report that EV charging points are to be installed in Battle car park in the spring of next year.

Mrs Fay Merrick arrived, signed the Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

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

a) On-going applications *Current position*

- i) RR/2024/300/P - Church Farm, Penhurst Lane, Penhurst, TN33 9QP - Renovation of existing Grade II Listed barn. Removal of 2no. existing steel-framed barns, and erection of 2no. replacement steel-framed barns. Associated landscape works.
Council supported *Remains undecided*
- ii) RR/2024/430/P - Oak Bank Farm, Ashburnham, Battle, TN33 9PB - Relocation of a building and use as a permanent agricultural workers dwelling, together with the demolition of a lawful residential dwelling (revised resubmission of application RR/2023/668/P).
Council supported *Remains undecided*

- iii) RR/2024/862/P - Brays Hill Cottage - enlargement of existing rear extension to be extended;
new garage and front porch.
Council supported *Remains undecided*
- iv) RR/2024/890/P - Peans Farm, Penhurst - Construction of storage barn
Council has posted comments requesting an LBC application *Remains undecided*
- b) Applications new to a council meeting *To determine the Council's response*
 - i) RR/2024/605/P - Ashburnham Place, Ashburnham TN33 9NF - Installation of Solar Panels onto roofs of buildings within the complex.
Members resolved to defer a decision regarding the nature of their response until they have more information. Much as they are minded to support the decision, the fact that listed buildings are involved makes them cautious. The Chairman will contact the applicant and report back to members.
 - c) Breaches and Enforcement *None*
 - d) Appeals
 - i) Oak Bank Farm - APP/U1430/W/24/3340740 / 3000 re application RR/2023/668/P.
Appeal held 4th July 2024. *Appeal dismissed*

7. RFO Report

- a) Receipts and payments
Members received the tabled schedule of receipts and payments for the period 18th July to 18th September 2024.
 - (i) Cllr White observed an error which the RFO noted: a receipt for pavilion hire from Hailsham Young Farmers is shown in the list of payments.
 - (ii) Cllr Merrick noted a payment for bleach and suggested that more environmentally friendly alternatives are available such as Oxy-Gen eco bleach. After a brief discussion it was decided to cease the use of bleach and to use the alternative.
- c) Bank reconciliation
Members received the bank reconciliation (on file) as of 18th September 2024.
- d) Income and expenditure against budget.
The RFO tabled a report as of 18th July 2024 (on file). There were no new significant variations. The RFO drew attention to the receipt of the second half of the precept and of the VAT reclaim.
- e) Earmarked reserves
The RFO tabled a report on movements in earmarked reserves for the year to 20th September 2023. The RFO drew attention to the purchase of a replacement coffee machine for the pavilion.
- f) Payments to authorise
On the motion of the Chairman seconded by Cllr White members resolved to authorise the following payments:

Details	Payee	Budget head	Total £
Pavilion custodian second tranche	Joanne Fowler	Pavilion housekeeping	322.00
War memorial strimming 2nd tranche	Andrew Keeley	Pavilion housekeeping	225.00
Pavilion cleaning April - Aug 2024	Carol Lovett	Pavilion housekeeping	252.00
East Sussex Flags	Flagly	Pavilion maintenance	15.98
Janitorial supplies	Nisbets	Pavilion housekeeping	36.58
Bleach for pavilion	Tesco	Pavilion housekeeping	8.40
Car parking at O2 shop	The Beacon Centre	Pavilion utilities	1.40
SIM card pavilion	O2	Pavilion utilities	15.00
Mapping application license renew	Parish Online	General administration	42.00
Coffee machine replace pavilion	Nisbets	Reeve: Pavilion maintenance	248.36

8. Governance

- a) Financial Regulations The Clerk recommended that the council adopt new Financial Regulations based on the NALC 2024 model as recommended by the internal auditor in both of the past two years. The new regulations cover many issues which have had to be covered up to now by repeated amendments to the old regulations based on a 2019 template. The new template includes e-banking, debit cards and even sole managing trusteeship. On the motion of Cllr Williamson seconded by Cllr Merrick the new Financial Regulations were adopted.
- b) Standing Orders Minor amendments are required in order to align with the revised Financial Regulations and the Clerk tabled them for adoption. On the motion of the Chair seconded by Cllr White members resolved to adopt the revised Standing Order.

9. Community - Lead Responsibilities

- a) The human world and society
 - i. Communications - Cllr Ashworth has messaged to say that she continues to update the website and Facebook page whenever possible.
 - ii. Village events -
 - a. The village bonfire is on 8th November organised by the usual crew. The fire will be lit at 7 pm and there will be fireworks and refreshments.
 - b. Remembrance Sunday arrangements are in hand apart from confirmation from James Harris about the public address. Maggie Evans has volunteered to do the teas afterwards but asked for guidance as to the format. Members decided as a matter of policy that the refreshment offer should be restricted to tea, coffee or cold drink and biscuits. A dish for donations to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal will be on the table.
 - c. A country fair in 2025 has yet to be arranged and any booking of a marquee is to be deferred at least until the Sole Managing Trustee meeting on 9th October when visitors from a support group are expected to attend.
 - iii. Police liaison - Cllr Williamson had nothing of note to report.
 - iv. Phone box - no report
 - v. Public transport. Cllr White, who is part of the Flexi Bus operation, reported that a number of new buses have joined the fleet. Users have a simpler system to navigate as zoning has been scrapped in favour of setting a radius which, for Ashburnham, means that users can book a ride anywhere within a 14 mile radius.
 - vi. Public health: defibrillator - no report
 - vii. Public health: exercise facilities - Cllr White reported that an additional exercise facility is likely to feature as part of the project of improvements at the playing field that are being prepared by the retiring country fair organising group.
- b) The natural world
 - i. Verges - Cllr Spicer had nothing to report.
 - ii. Rights of Way- Cllr Spicer had nothing to report.
 - iii. Environment: Litter - Cllr Ashworth messaged to say that the first litter pick of the winter is scheduled for November.
- c) The built environment
 - i. Highways - the Clerk reported that our area has a new Highways Steward and a meeting with him has been offered. The Clerk will follow this up and keep members advised.
 - ii. Housing - no report.
 - iii. Premises: Village Hall - (Clerk)
 - a. The trustee meeting on 9th October is likely to be attended, as visitors, by Maggie Evans and Sharon Spicer.
 - b. Progress on installing a land line in order to provide WiFi is mired in BT/Open Reach bureaucracy.
 - iv. Premises: Pavilion
 - a. The Clerk asked if progress could be made on disposing of redundant materials on site, namely two abandoned fridges and the stainless steel kitchen equipment in the shipping container. Cllr White said that disposal of the stainless steel for scrap is in hand and he is liaising with Robin Ratcliffe who will provide tractor and trailer. They will attempt to get the fridges into a vehicle but alternatively RDC have a service for £40 which can be used.

- b. Members were asked to review the hire charge for a full day. At present it is inferred as being three sessions, i.e. morning, afternoon and evening. A day rate would be useful to define as hirers such as wedding or events book by the day. Members resolved to set the day rate as £120 for 2025.

10. Correspondence

- a) None

11. Information for Councillors / Future Agenda Items

The RFO noted that a draft budget will be tabled at the November meeting.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the parish council will be on Wednesday 22nd November 2024.

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Signed (Chair)

Date