

Ashburnham & Penhurst Village Action Plan 2019 to 2024



This document describes the future activities of the Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council, aimed at supporting the continued all around wellbeing and development of our local community.

This Village Action Plan is focussed on topics that are within the remit of the Parish Council, with the aim of delivering the greatest benefit to all.

It is the desire of the Parish Council to be progressive, transparent and efficient in its endeavours. Regular updates on the progress of the Village Action Plan will be given at Parish Council meetings and the Annual Village Meeting. They will also be made available on the Parish Council website and via appropriate social media channels.

Revision 1, Jan 2021

Your Parish Councillors



Chairman : Andrew Hoad 01424 893033



Vice Chairman : Richard White 01424 892481



Clerk : Brian Holdstock 01323 832082



Councillor : Tina French 01424 892580



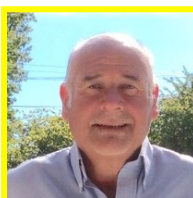
Councillor : Zoe O'Sullivan 07788 654138



Councillor : Ron King 01424 892597



Councillor : Paul Spicer 07780 602978



Councillor : Chris Sinden 07917 826051

Village Action Plan : 2019 to 2024

The Village Action Plan was first issued in 2019, containing seven themes. With this “Revision 1” it has now been expanded to nine themes, with allocations to the extra resources available from more recently joined Councillors. The themes are now as follows:-



- (1) Preservation of the rural character of our villages
- (2) Smooth and safe roads
- (3) Footpaths, Bridleways & Rights of Way
- (4) Communication and Involvement
- (5) Environment, Sustainability & Wellbeing
- (6) Community Events
- (7) New Village Hall & Sports Pavilion
- (8) Superfast Broadband Connectivity for all
- (9) Finance & Strategy

On the following page you will find a quick reference table to help you identify which Councillor is leading each theme. Thereafter we have set out more specific detail for each of the themes, to explain our objectives and proposed actions. The lead Councillor for each theme is your ‘go to’ person for the topics contained therein and you may contact them for more information or to raise any queries that you may have. Any general queries can be directed to the Clerk.

We very much hope that you find all of the themes and actions described in this plan interesting and relevant.

For and on behalf of the Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council

Andrew Hoad – Chairman

Councillors Responsibilities - Quick Reference Guide

Preservation of the rural character of our villages

Keep abreast of developments in planning strategy at Local Planning Authority level
 Keep abreast of developments in planning policy at national government level
 Track planning breaches and enforcement
 Litter picking
 Dark night sky

Zoe

Communication & Involvement

Schedule postings to web and social media
 Encourage page owners to keep website content up to date on village web site
 Compliance: Keep abreast of statutory requirements re websites and web postings
 Aim for website to be one stop shop for what's on

Environment, Sustainability & Wellbeing

Bus service liaison
 Sustainable affordable housing review
 Needy households awareness (Rother Rural Trust)
 Refuse collection and Recycling
 ESCC Waste management policy awareness
 Zero carbon village
 Natural world protection
 Wildlife pathways

Tina

Smooth and safe roads (Highways)

Potholes and road mending
 SLR agenda and rapport with Highways
 More reporting of potholes by community
 Safety related cutting of roadside hedges, verges and triangles
 Wildflower protection through selective seasonal cutting of verges
 Oversight of salt bins topping up + provision of same
 Drainage: ditches clearing, gulley pot emptying programme
 Finger post maintenance programme
 Finger post pamperers liaison

Ron

Footpaths, Bridleways and Rights of Way (Byways)

Rights of way, foot paths, bridleways - upkeep
 Landowners liaison re hedges and bridleways
 ESCC rights of way team liaison
 Cycling and walking infrastructure plan
 Byway hedgerow & stiles maintenance

Paul

New Village Hall & Sports Pavilion

New village hall - overall project management
 Maintenance of existing Sports Pavilion

Richard

Internet Broadband Connectivity

Broadband provision - superfast for all

Andrew

Finance and strategy

Lead the setting of financial objectives
 Set the council's strategic objectives

Community Events

Remembrance service
 Carol singing
 Fairs and coffee mornings
 Village bonfire
 Plan for annual assembly inc VAP report
 Maintenance of defibrillators

Chris

Preservation of the rural character of our villages

Objective

Support retention of the unspoilt rural character of our villages and resist any inappropriate development that could adversely affect their character.

What we will do

- Promote the retention of hedgerows, woodland and wildlife habitats.
- Promote the retention of our crossroad “triangles” and fingerposts.
- Resist the erection of inappropriate signs, other street furniture and painted road markings
- Resist the introduction of street lighting and support the preservation of our dark skies at night.
- Review planning applications, as reported via the Rother District Council Planning Portal and prepare objective responses that do acknowledge the need for some housing/business development whilst respecting the policies applicable to our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Ensure that site visits are made whenever necessary, to gather information that will enable us to give objective feedback to the Rother District Planning Officers.
- Keep abreast of, and make our voice heard, when there is new or emerging Planning Policies coming from National or County level that might affect us.
- Support lobbies for reduction in aircraft noise

Lead Councillor

Zoe O’Sullivan

Smooth and safe roads

Objective

Keep our roads in the best condition possible (within prevailing funding constraints), free from serious damage and defects that could jeopardise the personal safety of our road users, their vehicles and local wildlife.

What we will do

- Rally for support from the community to pro-actively report road damage to the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Highways Department. Promote awareness of how reporting is done.
- Build rapport with the Highways Department and help them by providing any up-to-date or supplementary information that can enable correct prioritisation of which roads get repaired first.
- Push for faster reaction times on roads that have been identified to have serious damage and which are in greatest need of repair, particularly those where personal and vehicular safety may be at risk.
- Co-ordinate activities in the community through a volunteer system that ensures that our fingerposts get duly pampered and properly maintained.
- Help co-ordinate (when necessary) the activities of Local Authorities and Land Owners to ensure that verges and roadside hedges are kept trimmed and do not encroach on roads / highways. Work with ESCC to develop a programme to preserve our wildflowers through selective seasonal verge cutting.
- Ensure that roadside salt caches are attended to and restocked by the Local Authority well ahead of winter icy weather conditions.

Lead Councillor

Ron King

Footpaths, Bridleways & Rights of way,

Objective

Keep our 'byways' open and easily accessible to all.

What we will do

- Take actions when needed to help keep our footpaths, bridleways and rights of way in good condition and safely accessible.
- Liaise with landowners when needed to have hedges cut and maintained when they begin to encroach on our byways.
- Liaise with East Sussex County Council rights of way team where appropriate.
- Liaise with Landowners for matters relating to access and use of bridleways.
- Develop a cycling and walking infrastructure plan.
- Liaise with the relevant landowners when maintenance of hedgerows and footpath stiles is needed.

Lead Councillor

Paul Spicer

Communication and Involvement

Objective

Substantially increase the level of two-way communication between the Parish Council and the community, thereby enabling the Parish Council to focus its efforts on matters that truly give most benefit to the community and to make such efforts visible to all.

What we will do

- Let people know who we are and what we are doing via regular posts on the Parish Council website, Parish Magazine and suitable social media channels.
- Actively ask the community to tell us of any topics to be raised and discussed at Parish Council meetings.
- Issue periodic communications that aim to raise public interest in the activities of the Parish Council and which lead to significantly increased public attendance at Council meetings.
- Generate true belief within the community that the Parish Council is adding value by being transparent, non-bureaucratic and a 'can do' body.

Lead Councillor

Zoe O'Sullivan

Environment, Sustainability & Wellbeing

Objective

Support and lead activities that ensure the well-being of all members of the community. Ensure good care of our environment and put emphasis on sustainability. To continue bringing people together in ways that foster community spirit and better health for all.

What we will do

- Explore the need for affordable housing and if a real need is found to exist, help to build the case for small-scale sustainable development.
- Lead themed community events such as litter picking, pot hole mapping.
- Support the local public bus services that enable young and old to be able to travel to/from our villages.
- Support nature preservation related initiatives.
- Pass on helpful tips for recycling and relevant energy saving ideas.
- Promote the use and maintenance of our public footpaths and foster appreciation of our surroundings.
- Maintain close links with other village organisations (such as the WI, Penhurst Retreat Centre ...) that promote events aimed at healthy living and enjoyment of our countryside.
- Restore the old red phone box located at The Pound and going forwards, maintain it as the Ashburnham Museum.

Lead Councillor

Tina French

Community Events

Objective

To help facilitate the smooth running of community events such that our villages maintain a vibrant and active calendar of events, all year round.

What we will do

- Promote village activities such as sporting events, hobby clubs and community walks, taking in to consideration all age groups.
- Ensure that plans are made in good time for key events, including but not limited to the following:-

Remembrance Service
Carol Singing
Village Bonfire
Annual Assembly

- Provide support and assistance for other events that may from time to time require assistance from the Parish Council, for example:

Charitable / Fund raising events
Coffee mornings
Country Fair

- Ensure that the defibrillators installed around the villages are correctly maintained and kept in a serviceable condition. Promote awareness of how these devices are to be used.

Lead Councillor

Chris Sinden

New Village Hall & Sports Pavilion

Objective

To build a new Village Hall at the Sports Ground that is primarily designed to support the needs of our villages, to cater for their needs and those of future generations, the construction of which is to be funded largely by external sources. In parallel, keep the existing Sports Pavilion properly maintained.

What we will do

- Secure the necessary planning approvals from Rother District Council and negotiate an appropriate lease agreement to underpin the development.
- Create a design for the building that caters primarily to the needs of our villages. Ensure that the design is sized and arranged such that it accommodates the needs of all of our local activity groups.
- Lead fund raising initiatives, locally and at national level (such as Lottery bids), to ensure that adequate funds are at hand to allow the project to proceed in a timely manner and without becoming a financial burden to the community.
- Lead the tendering of construction packages in a fair and open manner, obtain competitive quotations from reputable contractors and enter in to contractual agreements that deliver value for money.
- Oversee the governance of the whole project, addressing risks/issues that could adversely impact the project and make regular reports of the status to the community.
- Oversee the cost effective maintenance of the existing Sport Pavilion, to protect the fabric of the building, keeping grounds cared for and ensuring that equipment/fixtures/fittings are kept in good working order.

Lead Councillor

Richard White

Superfast Broadband Connectivity for all

Objective

Get the infrastructure in place to enable every property in our villages to have the option for easier access to information via a ‘Superfast’* connection to the Internet. This can greatly assist people in managing their daily personal lives and running their business activities.

What we will do

- Keep abreast of the plans at East Sussex County Council (ESCC) level to get Superfast Broadband delivered to rural areas such as ours.
- Encourage ESCC to have easier to find and accurate information available on the eSussex.org website that will enable people to find out when their property can have Superfast Broadband.
- Keep abreast of any subsidy schemes that could benefit our villages and make sure the relevant information is shared with the community.
- Keep abreast of technology changes that could benefit our villages and make sure that ESCC is factoring these in to their future plans with their sole contractor (Openreach).
- Push ESCC at the highest level to prioritise the provision of internet connectivity infrastructure for those remaining properties in our villages that today do not have a usable internet connection.

Lead Councillor

Andrew Hoad

(* ‘Superfast’ has been defined by the UK Government as being connectivity to the internet with data speeds in excess of 24 megabit/second)

Finance & Strategy

Objective

Ensure that through prudent financial control, the Parish Council is able to discharge its duties and achieve its stated goals without undue burden on the community. Devise and communicate publicly a clear strategy plan that sets out the long-term (5 year) objectives and goals of the Parish Council.

What we will do

- Prepare an annual budget that carefully allocates usage of the precept to activities aligned to the long-term strategy of the Parish Council.
- Put in place financial governance measures that ensure that all spend is correctly scrutinised before approval and any payments made.
- Conduct an annual audit using an independent auditor.
- Make sure that reserves are maintained for known future events and keeping a sensible contingency for unknown events.
- Devise a clear strategy plan that sets out the long term objectives and goals of the Parish Council.
- The strategy plan (to be named “Village Action Plan”) will span the period 2019 to 2024. It will be updated periodically to reflect changing circumstances and changes in Councillors remits.
- The strategy plan will be communicated publicly via website and social media. Periodic newsletters will also be used to provide update together with the provision of face-to-face presentations made at the Annual Assembly.

Lead Councillor

Andrew Hoad