

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.

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 been devised with seven themes in mind and is effective immediately. The seven themes are as follows:-



- (1) Preservation of the rural character of our villages
- (2) Smooth and safe roads
- (3) Communication and Involvement
- (4) Community and Environment
- (5) New Village Hall
- (6) Superfast Broadband Connectivity for all
- (7) Sports Pavilion

For each of the themes we have set out on the following pages our objectives and proposed actions. You can also see who is the lead Councillor for each theme, such that you may contact them for more information or raise any queries that you may have. General queries can also 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

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

- Promote awareness in the community of the process by which road damage can be reported such that repair work can be triggered. Rally for support from the community to pro-actively report road damage to the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Highways Department.
- 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.
- 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

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

Community and Environment

Objective

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

What we will do

- Promote village activities such as sporting events, hobby clubs and community walks, taking in to consideration all age groups.
- 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

New Village Hall

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.

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.

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 (BT 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)

Good upkeep of our Sports Pavilion

Objective

To keep our Sports Pavilion in the best possible condition such that it remains to be a valuable asset that can support and host many of our village activities.

What we will do

- Oversee the cost effective maintenance of the fabric of the building and make timely repairs as required.
- Make sure that the surrounding grounds are suitably cared for and not allowed to become overgrown or untidy.
- Ensure that equipment/fixtures/fittings are kept in good working order and fit for purpose.

Lead Councillor

Clerk **

(** Temporary assignment for the moment)