



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on Tuesday 1st May, 8.00 pm at the Council Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Phillips (Chairman); R Bright, M Bussell, J Forbes, K Lindsay, J Samways and D Wailes.

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Leet (Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 2

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

661. Elections

Responsibility of

a Election of Chair for the ensuing year

Cllr Forbes proposed Cllr Phillips to continue as Chairman; Cllr Bussell and Wailes seconded. **Cllr Phillips was unanimously re-elected as Chairman.**

b To receive the Chairman's declaration of office

Received.

c Election of Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year

Cllr Phillips nominated Cllr Samways; Cllr Forbes seconded. **Cllr Samways was unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chairman.**

d To receive the Vice-Chairman's declaration of office

Received.

662. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Village Council held on 3rd April 2018

The minutes were **approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct account of the meeting.**

663. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Judge and Loveday apologies were received and **resolved; the reasons were accepted.**

664. To receive the Councillors Declaration of Acceptance of Office for the ensuing year

Cllr Forbes questioned why this was necessary when councillors are required to only make their declaration formally at or before the first meeting after they have been elected. The Clerk replied that the agenda had noted that declarations were already made at the point of being elected, but verbal declaration each year was good practice. Declarations **received verbally by Members in attendance.**

665. To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda

Cllr Samways declared a personal interest with 26a, for mileage expenses.

666. To review and confirm committees, structure, terms of reference and delegated powers

The **existing structure, terms of reference and delegated powers for the following committees were reapproved:**

a Planning

b Finance and Administration

c Public Services

- 667. To elect Chair-person and Vice-Chair for each Committee**
- a Planning Committee:** Cllr Forbes was unanimously re-elected as Chair; and Cllr Samways was unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chairman.
 - b Public Services Committee:** Cllr Loveday was unanimously re-elected as Chairman; and Cllr Judge was unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chair. Both of these were subject to their agreement as they were not at the meeting.
 - c Finance and Administration Committee:** Cllr Bright was unanimously elected as Chair; and Cllr Bussell was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman (previously Chair of the Committee).
- 668. To appoint members for each Committee**
- a Planning Committee:** All Councillors would serve on the Committee.
 - b Finance and Administration Committee:** Cllrs Bright, Bussell, Forbes, Loveday, Phillips, Samways and Wailes would serve on the Committee.
 - c Public Services Committee:** All Councillors would serve on the Committee, with the exception of Cllr Wailes.
- 669. To review and confirm the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**
Cllr Forbes said that the Financial Regulations had been rewritten and adopted in February 2018. The Standing Orders were still valid and update as needed. However, they were in the process of being reviewed. The Council agreed and **resolved to continue with and adopt the current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.**
- 670. To approve Council Policies: Financial Risk Assessment / Complaints Policy / Freedom of Information publication scheme / documentation and email retention scheme / grant funding policy / Code of Conduct / Pre application meetings with developers / DBS policy**
It was noted that some of the policies would require some updating to reflect the changes with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR); these were being reviewed and would be presented once the GDPR Privacy Notice and Privacy Policy had been finalised. **The Council resolved to continue with the Council policies in their current form.**
- 671. To confirm the list of bank signatories for the Current and Deposits accounts**
The bank signatories were resolved as Cllrs Bussell, Bright and Forbes.
- 672. General Power of Competence – to note: the Council continues to meet the conditions as resolved at its meeting 12th May 2015**
Cllr Phillips confirmed that the Council met the eligibility conditions under the Localism Act 2011, s8 and that it holds this for the Council's term. The Council **noted, for good practice, that it continues to meet the conditions of General Power of Competence and that it had been resolved at the first meeting of this Council in May 2015.**
- 673. To review Working Groups and appoint members for each group**
- a Events Working Group**
Cllr Loveday was unanimously re-appointed as Chairman; other members included Cllrs Bussell (only Sports Day and Christmas Market events), Forbes, Judge, Lindsay and Samways. Cllr Bright said that he would be supporting Ashstock and attending its meetings. It was noted that there were also non-council members on the this Group

b Office Working Group

Cllr Phillips mentioned that the account did need to be closed off and there was still the matter of the heating to resolve. It was agreed the Group would continue to function until these details had been finalised. Previous members would continue on this Group: Cllrs Bright, Bussell, Forbes and Phillips, as well as Don Sinclair.

674. To approve list of Council Assets

The Council reviewed the assets list. Members **confirmed the list of Assets.**

Clerk

675. To review and confirm the insurance schedule; and to confirm the expenditure of up to £900 for the Council's insurance and up to £300 for buildings insurance

Last year the Council entered in to a new three-year agreement with Came and Company. The insurance schedule for the coming year had been received; the Clerk had raised a couple of minor queries regarding the assets cover, but was not expecting any significant changes. Cllr Phillips reminded members that this was within the budgeted amount. Members confirmed the schedule met the needs of the Council and **resolved to approve the expenditure of up to £900.** The Council noted that the Village Centre Trustees organised the building insurances to include the Council facilities and **resolved the expenditure of up to £300 for buildings insurance.**

Clerk

676. Outside Organisations: To elect representatives for each:

a Ashurst Wood Village Centre Management Committee

Cllr Forbes was re-appointed. It was noted that Cllr Bussell was currently a Trustee.

b Ashurst Wood Youth Club Committee

Cllr Lindsay was re-appointed.

c Community Forum (and Neighbourhood Watch)

Cllr Bright said that the format had evolved in that PCSOs were invited to attend a meeting with Councillors prior to a Public Services Committee; however, he was happy to remain as a link to the PCSOs and Neighbourhood Watch.

d West Sussex County Council Local Committee (CLC)

It was noted that any Councillor could attend these meetings. Cllr Samways agreed to be the designated representative of the Council.

e Parishes Cluster Group

Cllrs Forbes and Phillips would continue as representatives. It was noted that all Councillors were invited to attend these meetings, but space was limited.

f Mid Sussex District Council Emergency Planning Local Council (EPLG)

Cllr Samways was re-appointed.

g Parish, Town and District Communications Group (PTDComms)

Cllr Samways was re-appointed. It was noted that these meetings were held prior to the EPLG meetings and were open to any Councillor and Clerks.

h Mid-Sussex Association of Local Councils (MSALC)

It was noted that although the Council was not a member of Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils (SSALC), they were still being invited to attend Mid-Sussex Association of Local Councils (MSALC) meetings. Cllr Forbes was re-appointed as a representative of the Council, but any Councillor could attend MSALC meetings.

i Conservators of Ashdown Forest Parish Liaison Group

Cllr Bright said that this was not on the agenda, but as the Council had been attending the Parish Liaison Group meetings, perhaps representatives should

formally be appointed. Cllr Wailes and Phillips were appointed as representatives; Cllr Bright would deputise.

677. To confirm annual subscriptions

- a Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) membership for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk – to approve the annual membership and expenditure of up to £320**

The Council resolved to continue with the membership subscriptions for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk and the expenditure of up to £320.

- b Association of Local Council Clerks (ALLC) membership for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk - to approve the annual membership and expenditure of up to £60**

The Council resolved to continue with the membership subscriptions for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk and the expenditure of up to £60.

678. To confirm contracts, agreements and licenses (amounts are based on 2017/18 (or already agreed) and may change slightly at renewal)

- a MSDC Rural Management Agreement for John Pears Recreation Ground**
- b British Telecom: Telephone and Broadband (direct debit)**
- c KCS: Photocopier and stationery (direct debit)**
- d Shopping Bus – Community Transport Sussex (budgeted up to £1,800)**
- e Rialtas Business Solutions (RBS) - ALPHA account software (£120)**
- f Moneysoft Payroll management (£70)**
- g Easyspace - annual email and web host** note: domain fee biennial next payable 2019 (£130)
- h Easyspace – website host and technical/maintenance support (£100)**
- i ESNET – NOD PC security (£40)**
- j Information Commissioners Office (Data Protection Register) (up to £45)**
- k Parish Online (no fee)**
- l Public Sector Licence – Royal Mail mapping (no fee)**
- m MSDC Small Lotteries Licence (£20)**
- n MSDC Premises Licence for John Pears Recreation Ground and Pavilion (£70)**
- o MSDC trustees– lease for John Pears Recreation Ground for the Street Snooker MUGA Wall (£200 fixed lease agreement)**
- p Utilities and grounds maintenance paid to Village Centre Management Trustees (£750)**
- q Internal Auditor (up to £300)**

Members resolved to continue with the above (a-q) existing contracts, agreement and licences.

679. To confirm the schedule and dates of meetings for the ensuing year

The meeting dates for the Council year 2018/19 were agreed.

Cllr Forbes noted that the elections for 2019 would be on 2nd May; acceptance of office by newly elected members is normally after the fourth day (if it is between the ordinary elections and the fourth day thereafter, the declarations of newly elected councillors must be made at that meeting in the presence of a member of the outgoing council). It was agreed that from the two provisional dates (7th or 14th May) next year's Annual meeting of the Village Council, would be 14th May.

Clerk

The Annual Meeting of the Village Council ended at 20:18



20:18: District Councillor John Belsey joined the meeting

680. County and District Councillors' Reports

a Cllr Phillips passed on County Councillor Jacquie Russell's apologies.

District Councillor John Belsey reported that since he had been elected he had been in discussions with residents at the Abbey, Yewhurst Close and English Rural over maintenance and cutting of the trees and hedges. He was delighted to be able to advise that finally an agreement had been made to prune and trim the overhanging branches of the boundaries which would at least smarten the hedge and buffer zone.

b Public Questions

Revd Angela Martin (Vicar of The Parishes of Forest Row, Ashurst Wood and Hammerwood) said that a couple of years ago (2016), she was dealing with a family and was completely amazed to find that Ashurst Wood residents were being charged three times the amount than those who lived in the parishes of Forest Row or East Grinstead. Until 2000 Ashurst Wood had been within the civil Parish of East Grinstead and burial fees were the same as for East Grinstead residents. After Ashurst Wood's civil Parish Council was formed in 2000, it now falls outside of the civil boundaries of both East Grinstead and Forest Row. Ashurst Wood does not have its own burial ground or cemetery and neither does the church.

20:22 The Clerk had to make her apologies to leave the meeting

Residents falling outside the civil parishes are charged triple for East Grinstead (instead of the minimum £440 for interment) and for Forest Row the fees were now quadrupled (instead of £345 for interment). This becomes a four figured sum for Ashurst Wood residents, and is especially harsh for those who have lived in the village for a long time and who have family already in the Forest Row Cemetery. In 2016, she made representation about how unfair this was to Forest Row Parish Council (FRPC) and they agreed initially to drop their fees to double. They also have a policy that if family are already buried there, they will charge the rate of a Forest Row resident, but unfortunately they do not let everyone know this.

20:24 The Clerk re-joined the meeting

FRPC argue that it is their precept (paid by Forest Row residents) which goes towards the upkeep and maintenance of the cemetery. Revd Martin acknowledged that there had been discussions between FRPC and the Village Council, but that FRPC were unable to provide a figure for maintaining just the cemetery as all ground maintenance costs were lumped together. In order for the fees to be reduced, the Village Council would be expected to make a contribution and thus would likely mean an increase on its Precept. She said that she could understand that before this could be considered a solid figure would be required from FRPC. She said that the average funeral costs were over £4,000 before the burial fees; the Church's fee is only £29. Finally, she mentioned that since 1st June 2016, St Stephen's Church, Hammerwood came in to the ecclesiastical parish and Ashurst Wood residents can be buried there. The cemetery belonged to the Church itself so the fees are set by the Church of England and these would apply to all residents of Ashurst Wood who lived and died in the parish.

Members discussed. Cllr Forbes said that the Council had been made aware of this some years back by a resident, but that councils were within their rights to set the fees and charge more for non-residents. She also said that residents may consider it unfair to pay extra for East Grinstead especially as their

Clerk

council tax previously went to East Grinstead. She sympathised, and said it is a difficult issue and that Ashurst Wood could have its own cemetery, if there was a suitable site proposed. Cllr Phillips said the Village Council could consider contribution for the upkeep of the cemetery, but would need to have figures first. There was some discussion with regards to scattering ashes.

Discussion continued over the possible contribution. It would be difficult to pay a fee towards each burial or cremation, but a lump sum or percentage cost contribution to the maintenance of the Forest Row cemetery could be considered

Revd Martin said at the moment there were already 400 Ashurst Wood residents in Forest Row cemetery and 200 plots reserved. She also said that residents were struggling with these costs. Most of the burials which she does were not for regular church goers and that this was an issue for the larger community not just the Church and the Village Council should know about this. Cllr Wailes asked if St Dunstan's would consider creating a memorial garden. Revd Martin said this could be possible, but would cost money and would only be for people with ashes. Cllr Wailes also asked if the parochial church would support cemetery costs at Forest Row. Revd Martin replied no; because it was not the church's responsibility it is a civil responsibility.

Cllr Bussell said the Council would need to know the figures before anything could be considered and then budgeted. Cllr Phillips said that the Council had contacted FPRC to ask how much it was costing to run the cemetery, but had not heard from them. If the cost for maintaining the cemetery was known, and the number of burials and Ashurst Wood burials was known, perhaps a percentage could be calculated which would be one way to get a view of an amount to be considered.

Revd Martin said that she could appreciate the dilemma; perhaps another option could be Ashurst Wood Village Council could adopt an area within Forest Row cemetery. There was some discussion including space issues (both Forest Row and East Grinstead were reportedly running out of space) and also that people do prefer to have family members buried in the same place.

Revd Martin said that she would look in to the idea of a memorial garden and also go back to Forest Row. The Clerk was asked to contact FRPC again for figures and possible proposals.

Clerk

681. Chairman's Announcements

Cllr Phillips said it was with sadness to report that Andrew Bass, who was the first Chairman of the Council in 2000, had died in February. He had attended a Service of Remembrance for him on 24th March. He apologised for not raising this at last month's meeting.

682. Recorded meetings: to approve deletion of recording – *there were no recordings currently being held.*

683. To receive the minutes of Committees and reports from working groups and to consider any recommendations arising:

a Planning Committee

The minutes of the meeting on 16th April were received and the meeting on 1st May was noted.

b Youth Club

The Clerk's report was received noting weekly attendance remained at about 24 and forthcoming activities included ceramic painting, tie-dye and a rounders game. Cllr Lindsay reported that the Youth Club Car Wash event on Sunday

22nd April, was a great success, 23 cars were washed and the event raised about £100 for the Club. She thanked the 10 youth club members who turned out to wash cars with the help of Chris and David Loveday, Geoff Bussell and Brendan Joyce. Looking to June, Cllr Lindsay advised that the annual BBQ would be on 20th June; this then allowed a further two weeks for year 6s to sample the Club. Last session would be 4th July. She commented that if the year 7s continued in their current numbers in September, there may be a potential membership problem depending on the number of year 6s.

c Events Working Group – Ashstock Saturday 7th July

Cllrs Forbes and Samways reported the Events Working Group had met on 30th April. Preparations were going well.

684. Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received.

a To receive feedback on the Annual Village Meeting – 24th April 2018

It was noted that overall it was a good meeting; 69 people attended (less than previous years). However, during the public questions and especially matters with highways, there needed to be a method to stop individual residents from continually raising the same topic over and over again. This would allow others the opportunity to speak.

b To note: a second defibrillator awareness training/workshop session on 19th June, 7.00 pm, at the Village Hall

Noted.

685. Finance

a Accounts to pay

The accounts paid from 4th to 30th April 2018 **were ratified**; the FairFX prepaid debit card accounts payments from 1st April to 1st May **were ratified**; and the accounts payable for 1st May **were approved by the Council**. The file of invoices was available to be viewed.

Clerk

The Clerk referred to an email sent with the finance papers advising that there were three further payments, but each had queries to resolve before payment: the stage hire for Ashstock; the dog bins invoice for 2017/18; and the council's insurance for 2018/19. It was noted that these could be paid once the Clerk was satisfied.

Clerk

b To receive the RBS income and expenditure report up to 1st May 2018

The RBS/Alpha income and expenditure report was received, dated up to 1st May. There were no questions.

686. Annual Return

a To receive the internal auditor's report

The internal auditor's report was received and noted; there were no issues. However, it was noted that under B3, advice was given to encourage Councillors to have sight of the invoices and initial these invoices when authorising expenditure. Members discussed; they agreed that the current procedures, as outlined in the Financial Regulations, were sufficient and did minimise risk: the Clerk currently checks the invoices against the payments which are approved online by two councillors; payment reports are also presented to Council and the invoices were available for inspection.

b To approve the annual governance statement for 2017/18

The Chairman read aloud each of the annual governance statements. The Council **approved the statements 1-8; statement 9 was not applicable**.

c To resolve the accounting statements for 2017/18

The end-of-year accounting figures were presented to the Council for

Clerk

approval; total balances carried forward were £53,232. The Council **approved the accounting statements for 2017/18; and the Chairman signed the end-of-year return.**

Clerk

687. To receive an update on the Village Centre Development / Car Park resurfacing

Cllr Phillips said that the specification for the replacement heating for the Council facilities had yet to be sent out to a minimum of three contractors for quotes. Referring to the car park resurfacing, he had spoken to the contractor who currently required about six weeks notice. MSDC had yet to confirm if planning permission was required. The Clerk was asked to follow this up.

Clerk/BP

688. To receive an update on the War Memorial cleaning and refurbishment project

Cllr Phillips reported MSDC had confirmed that planning permission was not required for the cleaning and refurbishment to the War Memorial. The Clerk had advised the War Memorial Trust and a meeting had been arranged with Burslem, the Contractor to discuss the work and confirm the dates to commence the works. Arrangements for the hedge to be cut will be made after this meeting.

Clerk

689. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

a To receive an update on the preparations for GDPR

Cllrs Forbes and Wailes reported that the policies and Data Audit were a lot of work, especially as understanding and opinion differed across the sector's bodies; however the advice and templates provided by the SLCC were very helpful. Cllr Samways added that at the recent Parish, Town, District Communications (PTDComms) meeting there had been some discussion over who should be the Data Protection Officer (DPO); some had appointed an external provider with some having reciprocal arrangements to other clerks. MSDC have said that they cannot undertake the DPO duties or other roles which might transfer liability to them. Their advice was to follow the National Association of Councils (NALC) guidance. There had also been some discussion on possible individual liabilities for councillors, but overall the view was that local authorities were considered low risk bodies.

DW/JF

b To receive an update on the Data Audit

Cllr Wailes said that due to other commitments he had not been able to complete this as yet, however, the Audit Data template was in hand and the Audit would have started before 25th May.

DW/Clerk

c To approve and adopt the Privacy Policy

Cllr Forbes advised that this was the Privacy Notice and that the Privacy Policy would be a longer more detailed document. Members **resolved to adopt the GDPR Privacy Notice.**

690. To receive and adopt the update Health and Safety Policy

Members received the updated Health and Safety Policy which had been prepared by Cllr Samways and presented to the Finance and Administration Committee and **resolved to adopt the new Health and Safety Policy.**

Clerk

691. Mourning protocol in the event of death of a Senior Royal or other national figure:

a To consider if the Council should hold a condolence book on the day after a senior Royal death is announced

Cllr Samways said that MSDC had circulated its London Bridge Protocol and

were asking parishes to confirm their arrangements for opening a Book of Condolence. Councils can choose its own arrangements for venue and available times, but the Book would need to be available from the first day through to the day of the funeral. Supervision of the Book would be necessary to control public flow of people and to monitor entries. The list of senior officials is listed on the Protocol. Cllr Bussell said that she remembered when Princess Diana died, she knew many people who felt the need to make an entry in a condolence book, but asked if East Grinstead was perhaps better served for providing this. The Revd. Angela Martin suggested that as St Dunstan's Church foyer was always open and provided a gathering space, perhaps this could be considered. She also said that many residents would perhaps not find it easy to get in to East Grinstead. She added that this was a community matter that the two groups could work together and both provide volunteers to oversee the signing of the Book. Cllr Wailes proposed that the Council did provide a Condolence Book, but for the Council to produce its own black lined pages; these could be offered up in a folder or bound. Other options could become quite expensive and were no better. He added that the other decision would be what to do with the Book afterwards: send to Buckingham Palace, archive with other books at MSDC, or keep for own archived. Members discussed and **resolved:**

- **To open a Condolence Book in the event of death of a Senior Royal or other national figure**
- **To produce its own lined pages**
- **To accept the offer to place the Condolence Book in St Dunstan's Church foyer and to work together to organise volunteers**

Clerk

Opening times to be agreed with the Church and Clerk. The decision on what to do with the Book would be made on individual basis.

b To consider and confirm if the Council's Chairman will publicly read the Proclamation on day 2 at 2.30 pm

It was noted that MSDC and East Grinstead Town Council would publically read the Proclamation in the event of death of a Senior Royal or other national figure. However, it was felt that this was not necessary at parish level.

692. To consider if the Council's meeting should display a photograph of the Head of the Royal Family

Members discussed if the Council's meeting room should display a photograph of the Queen. Overall, there was little enthusiasm and it was put to the vote: 2 No: 5 abstained.

693. To consider a file hosting service for central access to council meeting documents

It was noted that Cllr Wailes had resolved the recent issues with the Council's website and it was now up and running again. Cllr Wailes said that he had included a page under Council to trail for Councillors to access meeting papers. Members discussed. Using Dropbox was suggested, but for GDPR Cllr Wailes said that the Council would need to know where Dropbox is hosted. It was agreed to trial three different options: 1) via the website; 2) Dropbox, 3) continue with the email.

Clerk/DW/ALL

694. Consultations

a West Sussex County Council bus strategy proposals – closing date 6th June

Cllr Lindsay said that she would prepare a response on behalf of the Council. Councillors were also encouraged to respond to the consultation



independently.

KL/ALL

b Draft revised National Planning Policy Framework – closing date 10th May

The Consultation was noted. Cllr Forbes would try to submit a response on behalf of the Council.

c Standards in Public Life into local government ethical standards consultation – closes 18th May

JF

Noted.

695. To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies

Cllr Samways had attended a PTDCOMMS meeting and an Emergency Planning Liaison Group meeting at MSDC (26th April); his reports from both meetings were received. Cllr Forbes, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk had attended a recent Parishes Cluster meeting (25th April). Cllrs Bright, Forbes, Samways, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk had attended a Planning training session (30th April) organised by East Grinstead Town Council and presented by Lesley Frost, Independent Planning Consultant. Cllr Forbes said asked the Clerk to forward copies of the slides which were very comprehensive to all Councillors.

Clerk

696. Items of Correspondence

a List on Clerk’s report, correspondence previously circulated

Received.

697. Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda

Walnut tree, Maypole Road, to be viewed by the tree warden (refer to Public Services Committee)

Clerk

Nominations for MSDC Community Volunteers

Cllr Wailes reported a resident had approached him purporting to have letters from the developers of 89-93 Hammerwood Road promising assets for the school. He had advised her to forward these to the Clerk.

Cllr Lindsay reminded members of the Great British Tennis Weekend 13th and 14th May offering free tennis at the John Pears Tennis Courts.

698. Date of next meeting - Tuesday 5th June

Meeting closed: 21:29

Chairman.....

Date.....