



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD VILLAGE COUNCIL held on
Tuesday 1st February 2022, 7.00 pm at the Council's Meeting Room

PRESENT: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Draper, Haite, Lee, Loveday, Owen, Phillips, Spoor and Tyrrell

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Roberts (Clerk), County Councillor Russell and District Councillor Belsey
and **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

ABSENT: None

1. a. County and District Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Russell informed members that she had met with Richard Speller of West Sussex Highways and they visited the substandard footpath at Wall Hill bends and he agreed that the work that had been carried out was incomplete and that he will get the contractor back to finish the work. They also discussed extending the footpath back past the Forge and Richard Speller said that the Village Council needs to submit a request for a Community Highway Scheme and talk to the landowners on both sides of the road as any footpath will affect the hedging on one side and require land on the other.

Cllr Russell also mentioned that Cllr Belsey had raised concerns over parking in Allens Close. There is a huge grass verge there which could be made into a car parking area. If the residents want this to happen, they have three options:

- They could pay for the area to be made into a parking facility themselves and then the parking would be for those residents alone. County would endorse grasscrete. This would cost approximately £5,000 - £6,000
- Use of S106
- Community Highway Scheme – this takes ages and will be up against other worthy projects in Mid Sussex

Cllr Russell also reported that there had been a request to extend the 30mph limit to the County boundary – this will require an application to extend the traffic regulation order

West Sussex County Council – the draft budget has been discussed and there is a 1.99 base with 1% uplift for social care. Highways will gain an extra £21million. Children's Services will receive an additional £8.5 million. £1.8 million will go into phase 2 of the Foster Care review. Cllr Russell said that a seventh children's home will be opened and this will focus on children with the most complex of needs and this stops them being put into unlawful placements. County has seen a dramatic spike in youth's mental health problems and this money helps with bespoke multi-agency triage work.

It has been 2 years since the Children's Service was given an inadequate Ofsted rating, but the service continues to improve and the Commissioner has just submitted the report and so they wait to hear if Children's Services will be placed into a trust.

Cllr Belsey reported that he East Grinstead Town Council confirmed a 4.8% increase in their precept at their recent meeting. Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) are hoping that they will shortly be back with a surplus on Leisure, following a drop in income due to Covid.

Cllr Belsey also reported that MSDC are finalising a grants scheme to help communities organising events for the Platinum Jubilee.

With regards to the Forge Application, the Planning officer is still in discussions and pushing for a permissive path in front of the development.

The review of the District Plan has been paused as the review would currently add a further 7,000 homes to the 17,000 the district has already been allocated. Land at the Paddocks is under early consideration for 8 houses whilst Ivy Dene Industrial Estate is remains allocated under employment. Members are going back to ministers to lobby for a reduction in the amount of houses Mid Sussex is allocated. MSDC can still demonstrate a 5-year land supply which means that a free-for-all of housing cannot happen.

Finally, Cllr Belsey reported that he and Cllr Forbes had a very positive meeting with Clarion regarding the on-going parking problems in Wray Close and Allens Close. Clarion are seeing if they can find it within their budget to demolish the garages in Wray Close and use the space created for parking. Discussions are on-going.

b. **Public Questions** – None

2. **Apologies for absence** - None

3. **To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda**
Cllrs Loveday and Tyrrell declared a personal interest in item 7c as Cllr Loveday's wife is the Youth Leader and his son is the Treasurer and Cllr Tyrrell is now the club Chair.

4. **Chairman's Announcements** – None

5. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Village Council held on 7th December 2021**– the minutes were **approved** and were signed by the Chair as a true and correct account of the meeting.

6. **Clerk's Report** – the Clerk's report was received and noted.

7. **To receive the minutes of Committees and reports from working groups and to consider any matters arising:**

- a. Planning Committee – the minutes were received and noted from 7th and 13th December 2021 and the 10th January 2022
- b. Finance & Administration Committee – no meetings
- c. Youth Club – Cllr Tyrrell reported that the Youth Club had held their AGM and that the management committee had now changed. The new Chair is Cllr Tyrrell, the Secretary is David O'Driscoll and the Treasurer is Alex Loveday. The Village Council would like to express their grateful thanks to Karen Lindsay and to Geoff Bussell for all their work with the Youth Club over the last few years. Their hard work and dedication to the club has been very much appreciated by the Council.

8. **Finance**

a. **Accounts to pay**

The accounts payable from 1st to 31st December 2021 totalling £12,498.63 and 1st to 31st January 2022 totalling £3,805.18 were **ratified and approved by the Council**.

- b. To receive the RBS income and expenditure report up to 31st January 2022 – the report was received and noted. Cllr Phillips reminded members that staffing was not split with HMRC and Pension payments and reported that staff would receive back dated pay to April 2021 next month as they hadn't received their annual pay increment.
- c. To receive the bank reconciliations for December 2021 – the reconciliations were received and noted
- d. To confirm the precept for 2022-2023 at £70,000, as recommended by the Finance & Administration Committee and provisionally agreed by the Full Council on the 7th December 2021 – Cllr Phillips proposed the figure, seconded by Cllr Forbes. Members **resolved to agree to set the precept at £70,000**.

9. To discuss the possibility of holding a Village Meeting in May 2022 – The date of 10th May 2022 was suggested as Easter falls mid-April when this meeting is usually held – **Resolved** - Members agreed to the date. It was reported that Mims Davies had been asked if she is able to give a

presentation on her working life in Parliament. It was agreed to ask the local paramedic if she would give a talk on defibrillators. Updates will be provided on the Speed Indicator Device, a short talk on the proposal for a Bonfire Society and an update on the event for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

10. To discuss options for an uninterrupted power supply for the office computers – Cllr Phillips reported that following a recent power cut in the village, the power supply to the 2 office computers and z-drive had been knocked out and in order to restore the connections between the computers and z-drive, we had to enlist the help of a computer company. In order to prevent this happening again, Cllr Phillips will look into uninterrupted power supplies, which are inexpensive and get a proposal together. Members agreed that the office needs an uninterrupted power supply.
11. To receive an update on the Three Crowns – Cllr Forbes reported that she had visited the pub the previous day, which was also the handover day of the keys to the new landlady, Stephanie Everett. Cllr Forbes met with Ms Everett and was shown around the venue. It is anticipated that the pub will open in March.

12. To consider Grant Applications

- a. To consider a request from 4Sight Vision for a grant of £250 – this will support 5 people for a year – **Resolved**; members approved the donation of £250. It was noted that 4Sight Vision already helps 2 village residents.

13. Public Services

- a. To receive an update on the Film Club – there hasn't been any progress with the Film Club to date – people are interested, but no confirmed volunteer to run the club.
- b. To consider action to be taken in order to level the ground in front of the Street Snooker Wall at John Pears – the Clerk has received one quote, but it is extremely high. Cllr Phillips and the Clerk met with another contractor who will supply a further quote.
- c. To receive an update on proposed outdoor gym equipment at John Pears – Cllr Forbes, Cllr Phillips and the Clerk met with a representative of Proludic at John Pears, who was very helpful and gave some good ideas. A further meeting with another supplier; the Great Outdoor Gym Company is scheduled for 2nd February.
- d. To receive an update about work to the boundary hedge at John Pears – a meeting took place with MSDC and both parties now know what work is required to re-lay the hedge.
- e. To receive an update on the Queen's Green Canopy Project – a map showing the preferred location for the Jubilee tree to be planted has been sent to MSDC and we are waiting for approval on that. It has been agreed to plant an English Oak. Rob Bright, the local tree warden has kindly offered to look after the tree once it has been planted. The tree needs to be planted by the end of March.
- f. To discuss with West Sussex Highways road safety measures to include; traffic lights on the A22 (Lewes Road and junction with Hammerwood Road) and a 20mph speed limit through the village – Cllr Draper would very much like to see traffic lights installed to make it easier for residents to exit the village. Cllr Russell said that this had been requested before and she will speak to Highways on our behalf to see if this would be viable. There is a possibility that traffic lights could be partly paid for by S106 if the development on the Lewes Road does actually go ahead. The Village Council can request a 20mph limit – again Cllr Russell will discuss this with Richard Speller initially and get back to the Clerk.
- g. To revisit obtaining electronic bus information boards for some bus stops in the village - Members agreed that these were a good idea, but had been very expensive when looked

at in the past. The Clerk will talk to other local councils to ascertain what requirements are needed and if they can offer any advice.

14. **Events** – to discuss the following events:

- a. Queen's Platinum Jubilee Thursday, 2nd June 2022 – Cllr Forbes reported that the Council was pleased to hear that we could potentially obtain a grant from MSDC to go towards the event. High Gain Events have now sent their quote for the event, to supply the bar and stage. The Porta-loos and crowd barriers have been booked and a deposit paid.
Jazz, who has previously played at Ashstock has requested to play and we would be delighted to have her.
The Sussex Community Responders have kindly agreed to oversee the car parking for a donation.
Cllr Owen has looked at our current beacon and will be able to fabricate a basket to go round it – the Beacon lighting is at 9.45pm.
The Community Café have confirmed that they are happy to do teas and cakes in the pavilion.
The Clerk was asked to contact Team Waste to see if they can supply bins for the event as MSDC no longer supply a collection service – it is considered commercial waste. Cllr Russell has kindly offered to see if the Imberhorne Waste Recycling centre will let the Handyman deposit the waste there as it is for a free community event.

15. **Consultations** - None

16. **To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside bodies** – Cllr Forbes attended a meeting of the Village Centre Trustees – all is going well, apart from a complaint logged to Environmental Health following a party. Cllr Forbes also attended the meeting with Clarion as mentioned in the report by Cllr Belsey.

17. **Items of correspondence** - Previously circulated.

18. **Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda:**

Road safety
Electronic Bus Signs

19. **Date of next meeting** - 1st March 2022

Meeting closed: 8.55pm

Chairman.....

Date.....